



Building Enrollment and Regional Service Capacity

Overview

During her first weeks in office in 2015, the president outlined a strategic planning process with charges and key questions for six task forces, each to be chaired by faculty with the single exception of the Mission task force, which would be chaired by the president. Faculty chairs were selected to encourage faculty voice and participation. The process would be intentionally focused on enrollment growth and regional service. In mid-October 2015, following the exit of the decennial SACS review team, Dr. Stuart Gulley, president of Woodward Academy and formerly president of LaGrange College, met with the task force chairs and led them in a process of discussing and establishing their responsibilities. No additional consultants were employed.

The focus on enrollment growth and regional service grows out of a shared understanding of Andrew College's mission of regional service and its need for long-term viability. For many years, the college has maintained a goal of enrolling 500 students per year; documentation from a 1995 SACS report and at least two previous strategic plans refer to 500 students. Yet the academic program has remained unchanged, even in the face of longitudinal enrollment data that reveal that the college has averaged 307 students per year for over 20 years. Andrew must grow in enrollment in order to attain financial viability, and Andrew must change in order to grow.

At the start of the planning process, a due date of March 1, 2016, was established for the presentation of final reports from the task forces, allowing sufficient time for each task force to gather data and to deliberate adequately. The task force charged with Academic Programming submitted their report before December 1, 2015. With both the faculty and board of trustees agreeing to fast-track the proposed nursing and regenerative agriculture programs, the task force also recommended the addition of several other academic programs, including a few at the baccalaureate level. Nursing and regenerative agriculture are pursuing an aggressive implementation schedule, with the intent of enrolling students for agriculture in the fall of 2016 and nursing in fall of 2017.

In the spring following submission of all reports, the president met with the task force chairs, and the group of chairs each discussed their own as well as the other reports. Highlights of each report were formulated and posted for discussion. A week or so later, the president invited the members of the cabinet to each assume responsibility for one of the reports, and the cabinet went through the same process, posting highlights from each report. These poster sheets were then compared to those from the previous meeting of task force chairs. Most major points triangulated fairly readily.

The result of this process is an intentionally focused, short-term strategic plan that aims to position the college for a subsequent phase of growth. The actions described in this plan include the following:

- the launch of several academic programs;
- a stabilized faculty and staff;
- enhanced facilities including instructional space on campus, beautified grounds, and development in town of existing space on or near the city square;
- intentional community involvement; and
- outreach to the United Methodist Church.

The academic years of 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 are included in this plan, setting the direction for growth and sustainability, and offering the flexibility to assess progress after this three year period and plot a forward or appropriately redirected tack into the year 2020 and beyond.

Task Force 1, Mission and Purpose

Current mission statement:

Andrew College is a small, residential, two-year college related to the United Methodist Church. Its mission is to provide an academically challenging liberal arts curriculum within a nurturing community.

Recommended mission statement:

Andrew College - the United Methodist beacon of educational, spiritual, and cultural uplift to Southwest Georgia since 1854 - prepares students for lives of servant leadership and purpose through higher education relevant to its region and beyond.

Values:

1. Support – Concern for academic and personal development
2. Integrity – Accountability and civility in discourse and behavior
3. Resilience – Flexibility and grace through challenges
4. Growth – Meeting students where they are and facilitating personal and professional progress
5. Service – Awareness of individual gifts to be used in both local and global communities

Slogan:

Reach Higher

Task Force 2, Academic Program

Emphasis: grow enrollment

Key questions posed:

1. How do we position the college to attract at least 500-600 students?
2. How can we improve our current academic program to prepare students for success and for transfer to four-year institutions?
3. What are the educational needs within the region to which we can respond?

Key issue: As mentioned in the introduction, the academic program of Andrew College has not significantly changed for well over 20 years. One “labelling” effort designed to enhance marketing to prospective students resulted in over 50 concentrations which had no academic content, such as dental hygiene and turf management, and yet did not increase enrollment. In the October 2015 SACS site visit, one of four recommendations was to eradicate such misleading labels, and the 2016-17 catalogue shall reflect this adjustment. Increasing enrollment through new, quality academic programs, whether at the associate or baccalaureate level is the primary focus of this strategic plan.

The recommendations:

1. Launch an associate of science degree in regenerative agriculture in fall of 2016.
2. Launch an associate of science in nursing degree in fall of 2017.
3. Position the college to launch a baccalaureate degree in business in fall of 2017.
4. Position the college to launch baccalaureate degrees at some appropriate time after 2017 in elementary childhood education, agribusiness, mass media communication, fine arts, or social/behavioral sciences, while remaining open to new associate degree programs as well.
5. Develop a stronger set of practices for advising and retention to ensure student success.
6. Explore online and certificate programs in accordance with the needs of the region.
7. Establish internship opportunities for students.

Costs:

- nursing - \$1,000,000
- other program development and start up - \$200,000
- faculty-staff training for advising, software training, conference attendance - \$50,000

Task Force 3, Recruitment and Retention of Talented Faculty and Staff

Emphasis: Stabilize faculty/staff base in order to grow enrollment and reduce disruptions in program development

Key questions posed:

1. How can we better attract and retain talented employees to carry out the mission of Andrew College?
2. What is a fair and equitable salary structure that we might implement as resources allow?
3. Other than remuneration, what factors might we devise and implement as resources allow?

Key issue: The Andrew College faculty includes 20 full time lines. As of Spring 2016, three quarters of those faculty had been with the college fewer than ten years. Both faculty and staff are paid significantly below average for equally qualified professionals on any benchmark data used. In the 2015-16 faculty survey, six indicated intent to leave during the next three years. For program growth to occur, the college must stabilize its workforce.

The recommendations:

1. Increase base salaries.
2. Increase the current threshold of faculty members eligible to be granted tenure (currently 50%) to allow non-tenure track faculty lines to become tenure track.
3. Develop salary structure with promotion pay steps.
4. Develop non-salary benefits including professional development funding.
5. Develop means of illustrating employee value to the college.

Costs:

- Raise faculty baseline salaries - \$150,000
- Raise staff and cabinet salaries - \$100,000

Task Force 4, Facilities

Emphasis: accommodate enrollment growth and enhance existing structures/areas

Key questions posed:

1. How can the college best use existing space to accommodate enrollment growth?
2. What new space might be needed, such as residence hall beds, to accommodate growth?
3. What are the priorities for renovating existing space, whether currently used or not?

Key issue:

When the academic program grows, more teaching space will be needed, and current classroom venues are near maximum use. Andrew College is fortunate to have vast square footage under roof that is currently not in use. Besides the building known as Warren Bush Hall, the entire floor above the theater as well as both fourth and fifth floors of Old Main are not in use. All of that square footage would require extensive renovation. All units of the 400 current residence hall bed spaces need remodeling, some cosmetic, but all 100 bathrooms need new fixtures and finishes. The essential layout of the campus is attractive and intimate, but an investment in the grounds and external appearance would improve aesthetic appeal and the quality of life, as well as appeal to prospective students. In addition, existing real estate is available around the Cuthbert city square that would be low-cost to purchase and relatively inexpensive to renovate into useful space for a variety of purposes.

The recommendations:

1. Update existing indoor and outdoor spaces.
2. Renovate Warren Bush Hall.
3. Renovate student housing space whether on campus or using space purchased downtown/off campus.
4. Expand and update student space such as the student center and fitness space.
5. Explore renovation of the floor above the theater if fine arts degree offerings expand.

Costs:

- Campus grounds and parking lots - \$400,000
- Warren Bush renovation - \$2,000,000; furnish and equip - \$200,000
- Residence hall remodeling – Patterson \$1,000,000; other three \$1,000,000
- Acquisition and renovation of downtown properties - \$350,000
- New metal roofs on four residence halls – approximately \$1,000,000

Task Force 5, Community Involvement

Emphasis: Creating synergy between the college and the community so that both may benefit from advances that either one achieves.

Key questions posed:

1. How can the college strengthen relationships with Cuthbert and Randolph County?
2. How can the college participate more meaningfully in the life of the community? How can the community use the college more meaningfully?
3. Is there a need in the community for non-credit bearing continuing education or personal development offerings?

Key issue:

A pervasive and active perception exists both in the town and in the college that the college purposely isolated itself from the community. Enrollment trends would indicate that fewer students from a 20 mile radius commuted to the college during the last twenty years, and the anecdotal remarks about the college collected this academic year supported the “insular” and “isolated” perception. Since the beginning of this planning effort, the opportunity to obtain space downtown has presented itself and will be pursued as a way to bridge this image of separation between the college and the community.

The recommendations:

1. Regular meetings with regional stakeholders.
2. Serve as “convener and catalyst” for regional and community efforts whenever feasible.
3. Insert more college personnel into community organizations to ensure exchange of information.
4. Supply local media with more information about college news.
5. Pursue opportunities to obtain and utilize buildings downtown when in the best interest of the college for housing, fitness center, art gallery, etc.
6. Consider contributing to a daycare operation that would serve both the college’s non-traditional students and the community.
7. Consider offering credit or non-credit bearing classes or seminars on or off campus to meet needs in the community as the demand might justify.
8. Consider using the Carnegie Library as a convenient connection with the community.
9. Initiate new academic programs that respond to immediate regional workforce needs.

Costs:

\$50,000-\$500,000

Task Force 6, Church Involvement

Emphasis: Renewing and strengthening ties between the college and the United Methodist Church on the local, regional, and national level whenever appropriate.

Key questions posed:

1. How can Andrew College serve the United Methodist Church, with particular emphasis on the South Georgia Conference as well as on a national and international scale?
2. How can church connections be used to the mutual benefit of the church and the college?
3. How can the college serve as a resource to local churches of all denominations in the local community?

Key issue:

Similar to the relationship between Andrew College and its geographic host region, the historic ties between the college and the Church, and the Church and the college, need constant consideration in order to seek mutual benefit.

The recommendations:

1. Utilize United Methodist materials to educate and inform faculty/staff and students about what it means to be related to the church.
2. Serve as a venue for UM meetings in the SW Georgia region for ministers, lay leaders, or church groups, particularly during the summer.
3. Use the Choraliers and other musicians as ambassadors to extend the college's influence by providing music throughout the region.
4. Through Andrew Serves, place a student in the Cuthbert United Methodist Church to develop a youth ministry function.

Costs:

\$25,000-\$75,000

Total costs of all of the items listed above is approximately \$8 million. It may be possible that nearly \$6million of the total could be funded initially by a USDA loan. Summary of costs appear on next page.

Summary of Costs

1. Start-up costs of associate degree in nursing:	\$1,000,000
2. Other academic program development and start up:	\$200,000
3. Faculty staff training/development for new programs:	\$50,000
4. Raise faculty baseline salaries:	\$150,000
5. Raise staff baseline salaries:	\$100,000
6. Improve campus grounds and parking lots:	\$400,000
7. Renovate and equip Warren Bush building:	\$2,200,000
8. Renovate four residence halls:	\$2,000,000
9. Metal roofs for four residence halls:	\$1,000,000
10. Acquisition and renovation of downtown properties:	\$350,000
11. Various community initiatives:	\$50-500,000
12. Church initiatives:	\$25-75,000

Total: \$8 million