

TOWARDS A SHARED VISION OF THE MISSION OF HELLENIC COLLEGE

THE PURPOSE OF A SHARED VISION

Every organization has a deep purpose, a vocation, which expresses the organization's reason for existence. A mission statement reveals an institution's genesis for existence as well as its ongoing vision. Visions that engender commitment and aspiration tap into an organization's deeper sense of purpose, and articulate specific goals that make its purpose real. To be genuinely shared, such visions must emerge from many people reflecting on the organization's purpose.

Members of an organization have a collective sense of its underlying purpose. Like mental models, this shared sense of purpose is often tacit. At the heart of building a welcomed shared vision is the task of designing and evolving ongoing processes in which people at every level of the organization, in every role, can speak from the heart about what really matters to them and know that they will be objectively heard—by senior management and by each other. The vocation of the institution is tied deeply to the individual vocation of each member at every level of the college. The content of a true shared vision cannot be dictated; it can only emerge from a reflection and conversation.

We are challenged to learn the deep purpose of the organization we work in, yet there is often an innate pull that emerges when we hold clear pictures of our vision juxtaposed with current reality. Learning to work within this “creative tension” makes this process of building shared vision a never-ending process.

THE WORK SO FAR

In the 2004–2005 academic year, the faculty and staff at Hellenic College participated in retreats sponsored by the Lilly Endowment Inc. grant to Hellenic College for “the theological exploration of vocation.” At each of these retreats, participants examined the Hellenic College mission statement and how it related individually and collectively to their sense of the vocation of the College. The feedback from these reflections was presented to senior administration and became the basis for discussion. It is the clear inspiration for the work that will continue.

In the process of beginning a discussion of a sense of shared vision, what emerged in every group was that the mission statement did not seem to reflect fully what Hellenic College means to those who work here. As a result of this, the college leadership has desired to revisit the mission statement. A good mission statement is never a fixed document; it is always a work in progress. It is therefore imperative that Hellenic College regularly review its vocation because of the natural changes that occur within the environment and organization. Hellenic College must strive to assure that its mission statement is a vibrant beacon of its aims and goals.

THE WORK AHEAD

In the process of reflection on shared vision and the mission statement, the senior administration has decided that it is important to involve all stakeholders of the Hellenic College community. As a result of this, President Nicholas C. Triantafilou has appointed a Steering Committee that represents key stakeholder groups: trustees, senior administration, Hellenic College faculty, Holy Cross faculty, staff, students, alumni, the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council, friends and benefactors.

Two meetings of the Steering Committee are scheduled: Tuesday, September 20 and Tuesday, November 15, 2005. During the time between the two meetings, each stakeholder group will meet to discuss the purpose and vision of Hellenic College by using the present mission statement as a jumping-off point. The results of these conversations will be mailed to the Steering Committee by November 1 for discussion on November 15. The Steering Committee will then review the information from all the stakeholder groups and a sub-committee will create a draft of a new mission statement reflecting the ideas and thoughts of all the groups. This draft will be sent back to the community for final discussion and review. These final comments will then be drawn up into a mission statement for Hellenic College to be presented to the Board of Trustees for final approval in February.

The test of a shared vision is in the directional force it gives the entire College community. This focused review of the Mission Statement allows for a renewed sense of the vocation of Hellenic College, and of the vocation of all its members.

SUMMARY TIMELINE

September 12-14, 2005	Fr. Nicholas Triantafilou launches campus-wide mission statement work
September 20, 2005	Mission Statement Steering Committee (MSSC) meeting
By October 30, 2005	Stakeholder meetings to review mission statement
By November 1, 2005	Input from stakeholder meetings mailed to MSSC
November 15, 2005	MSSC reviews and compiles stakeholder feedback
December 1, 2005	Steering Committee sub-committee finalizes draft of mission statement and submits to President Triantafilou
January 10, 2006	Revised mission statement mailed to Board of Trustees
February 2006	Board of Trustees reviews and finalizes mission statement

Prepared by the Office of Vocation and Ministry under the advisement of President Nicholas C. Triantafilou.