

BEING AND BECOMING: BEREA COLLEGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BEREА COLLEGE

Revised May 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When conceived as a direction-setting “compass” for an institution, a strategic plan requires the implementation of initiatives that are the “roadways” traveled by a community to reach its desired destination. The original Berea College strategic plan, *Being and Becoming: Berea College in the 21st Century*, was approved by the General Faculty and Trustees and published in 1996. Since that time, the plan has been implemented in various strategic initiatives, programmatic reviews, and new mission-related projects across the campus. Since 1996, *Being and Becoming* has undergone two revisions, the first in 2006 and the second in 2011. Each revision built upon previous efforts, lessons, and accomplishments to provide a recalibrated compass for continuing the advancement of Berea’s mission. With its foundation firmly rooted in Berea’s unique mission to provide a high quality education for talented students with limited economic resources, the College continues to honor its historic commitments to interracial coeducation and Appalachia that originate in its inclusive Christian roots. The clearest statement of the College’s mission is in the eight Great Commitments, most recently revised and affirmed in 1993:

Berea College, founded by ardent abolitionists and radical reformers, continues today as an educational institution still firmly rooted in its historic purpose “to promote the cause of Christ.” Adherence to the College’s scriptural foundation, “God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth,” shapes the College’s culture and programs so that students and staff alike can work toward both personal goals and a vision of a world shaped by Christian values, such as the power of love over hate, human dignity and equality, and peace with justice. This environment frees persons to be active learners, workers, and servers as members of the academic community and as citizens of the world. The Berea experience nurtures intellectual, physical, aesthetic, emotional, and spiritual potentials and with those the power to make meaningful commitments and translate them into action.

To achieve this purpose, Berea College commits itself

- *To provide an educational opportunity primarily for students from Appalachia, black and white, who have great promise and limited economic resources.*
- *To provide an education of high quality with a liberal arts foundation and outlook.*
- *To stimulate understanding of the Christian faith and its many expressions and to emphasize the Christian ethic and the motive of service to others.*
- *To provide for all students through the labor program experiences for learning and serving in community, and to demonstrate that labor, mental and manual, has dignity as well as utility.*
- *To assert the kinship of all people and to provide interracial education with a particular emphasis on understanding and equality among blacks and whites.*
- *To create a democratic community dedicated to education and equality for women and men.*

- *To maintain a residential campus and to encourage in all members of the community a way of life characterized by plain living, pride in labor well done, zest for learning, high personal standards, and concern for the welfare of others.*
- *To serve the Appalachian region primarily through education but also by other appropriate services.*

In 1996, again in 2006, and now in this 2011 revised plan, the Strategic Planning Committee/Strategic Planning Council (SPC)* concluded that these Great Commitments still serve well as the primary framework not only for defining the mission of Berea College but also for meeting the needs of our contemporary world. Therefore, the core content of the Great Commitments is a consistent thread throughout the College's strategic plan and campus-wide initiatives.

In this extensive Executive Summary of the revised *Being and Becoming: Berea College in the 21st Century* (2011), the document's major concepts, internal and external factors, and recommendations are presented in abbreviated form. Thus, key external and internal challenges and opportunities are identified, but not fully described. Likewise, the four pairs of Common Learning Goals are presented, but not with their full rationales. And finally, the approved texts of the nine strategic initiatives (three of which are now assigned to campus programs/offices for implementation) are repeated here without their full context or subsequent action goals. Therefore, the reader should find this to be an essential summary of the complete document, but will need to refer to the larger text for the context and explanations of each section.

External and Internal Landscapes

A major part of the strategic planning process involved the examination of certain forces that shape the College's external and internal landscapes. These two sections of the document include extensive research by teams of SPC members about trends in higher education and society in general and thus describe the contexts that will shape Berea College's attempt to realize its mission in the 21st century.

External forces and challenges in higher education (see pp. 9-28) include: (1) substantial public criticism of higher education; (2) a national decline in students' preference for private liberal arts colleges; (3) significant changes in student and faculty lives and roles in the new millennium; (4) institutional governance concerns; (5) an increased national emphasis on assessment and institutional effectiveness; and (6) continued interest in the value and application of technology and diversity.

General skepticism and criticism of higher education have ebbed and waned over the past decades, while faith in the value of higher education has remained fairly constant. The increasing expectation that most students should seek a college degree has occurred at a time when there is a diminished interest and enrollment in private liberal

* Beginning with the 2006-2007 academic year, the Strategic Planning Committee became the Strategic Planning Council as part of changes to Berea's governance structure. Throughout this document, "Strategic Planning Committee" will be used only when referring to the SPC's work prior to the governance changes; "Strategic Planning Council" will be used in all other references.

arts colleges and greater reliance on vocational/educational opportunities such as technical and community colleges. The changing demographics of students (i.e., more women and minorities) along with their different learning styles represent a challenge for faculty, who are increasingly experiencing professional pressures related to teaching/learning models, institutional governance, tenure, technology, diversity, and an increased national emphasis on assessment and institutional effectiveness. All of these external factors point to the constant need for balancing the interests and decision-making responsibilities of all constituencies¹ in order to provide a high quality education for students.

Major internal strengths at Berea College (see pp. 29-50) include: (1) the College's founding as an inclusive Christian and interracial coeducational learning community; (2) a strong sense of the College's mission and history; (3) continued commitment to serve the Appalachian region; (4) an increasingly diverse student body with great potential; (5) an unusual blend of liberal arts and professional programs; (6) extraordinarily dedicated faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and friends; (7) a belief in the positive learning potential that a residential campus affords; (8) a strong commitment to the Labor Program; (9) ecological renovations of many key academic, administrative, and residential campus buildings; and (10) a healthy endowment relative to external economic challenges. Some of the general challenges for Berea include living up to its extraordinary mission, its rural location on the edge of Appalachia, and the need to adjust constantly to a shifting external environment—especially the financial sector. Specific challenges that Berea faces or has recently faced include: (1) the size and nature of the curriculum; (2) restructuring faculty loads and responsibilities; (3) pedagogical issues associated with burgeoning digital technologies; (4) campus governance and decision making; and (5) the evaluation and character of Berea's academic community.

In recent years the College has focused on strengthening its foundation as an inclusive, interracial Christian institution by evaluating how well it provides an interracial education and by educating the community about Berea's distinctive Christian character. This process has been enhanced by the fact that so many dedicated Bereans, whether faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, or friends, know and give life to the "Berea story" or legacy. The College has also strengthened its commitment to serve the Appalachian region even as the population and problems of the region have changed significantly over time. In addition, Berea students enjoy access to a traditional liberal arts education balanced with professional programs that encourage learning for its own sake as well as provide essential skills for lifelong vocations. Beyond the classroom, Berea's residential campus, international studies program, and labor program provide expanded learning opportunities for students and other community members. Similarly, the many ecological renovations and initiatives on campus serve as a living model for individual and institutional sustainability. The College is also fortunate to have a healthy endowment to support these important attributes of Berea College's mission even though the economic crisis of 2008-09 made clear the special vulnerability of Berea's funding model. In spite

¹ The term "constituencies" normally refers to internal and/or formal groups of constituents that are directly affected by governance issues (i.e., faculty, students, staff, administrators, and trustees). Other, and often external, constituencies are referenced specifically as necessary (i.e., alumni and friends of the College).

of these strengths, it is important to acknowledge that Berea's rural location might not feel welcoming to all who come here to learn and work. There are also other institutional challenges that need to be addressed, such as the large major and general education curricula which limit students' elective choices.

Integrated Learning Institution

The overall vision for the contemporary Berea is simply stated: *The Berea College of the 21st century can best be conceived as an integrated and continuous learning community that is inclusive of all its students, workers, offices, programs, and physical spaces.* The vision of Berea College as spelled out in the full strategic plan provides a compass for Berea College to become an integrated and continuous learning community for all who study or work at Berea College. The concept of Berea College as an “integrated and continuous learning community” is delineated by four pairs of Common Learning Goals and realized in nine strategic areas of intended action. As such, this plan (our compass) and its initiatives (our road maps) are an attempt to apply the Great Commitments of Berea College in our 21st-century world. Throughout this document, Berea's mission is placed in the context of the external and internal environments, specific learning goals, and strategic recommendations and provides a foundation for the continued integration of the learning, labor, and service arenas of Berea College. The four pairs of Common Learning Goals are an educational application of the imperatives of (a) Berea's mission, (b) the external landscape, (c) the internal landscape, and (d) global dynamics.

There are five primary “global dynamics” that represent external factors beyond a national scope that affect “all peoples of the earth” as well as the earth itself. First, ours is an increasingly interdependent global society. Second, it is a highly scientific and technological world. Third, ours is an age of increased interdependence of our natural and fabricated worlds. Fourth, the world is marked by rapid change in all dimensions of life. Fifth, our rapidly changing and “high tech” age is also one in which age-old human problems such as human conflict and poverty undergird the ethnic and religious strife in Europe, Asia, and Africa as well as the events of 9/11. These global dynamics provide an extended frame for the Common Learning Goals that acknowledges the broader context of the world in which we live.

An important part of Berea's future success is to become a more integrated learning institution where students, faculty, and staff actively engage in intellectual growth as well as personal and professional development in all aspects of their campus life—the classroom and lab, the workplace, the residence hall, etc. This will be accomplished, in part, through continued allocation of significant resources for staff education and training as well as more traditional faculty development.

In order to sustain a fully integrated and continuous learning community at Berea College, the following four sets of *Common Learning Goals* for all members of the community—students, faculty, and staff—serve as a motivation and guide for divisions, departments, and programs to focus their resources in implementation plans.

Common Learning Goals

1. *We seek to develop mature and critical thinkers who also have the capacity for moral reflection, personal growth, and thoughtful action.*
 - We seek to develop in ourselves and our students the intellectual ability to enjoy a life of learning and the arts as well as the capacity to address complex problems from multiple disciplines and perspectives.
 - We seek to develop in our students and ourselves the capacity for moral and spiritual development, and a commitment to service for the common or public good.
2. *We seek to understand the interconnectedness of our natural, fabricated, and human worlds.*
 - We seek to understand the workings of our natural environment and the consequences of human interventions.
 - We seek to reflect seriously upon the benefits and limitations of scientific and technological creations.
3. *As citizens of a global world, we seek to develop an understanding of and appreciation for “all peoples of the earth” to promote peace and non-violence in the world.*
 - We must first seek to comprehend our distinct backgrounds as well as our common American culture.
 - Because we live in an interdependent global community, we must actively seek to learn from cultures around the world.
4. *We seek to create an educational environment that develops the capacities of individuals while forging a caring campus community of mutual respect and collaboration.*
 - We seek to educate our students and staff to be independent thinkers and doers.
 - We encourage all of our students and staff to understand the interdependence of all people and the need for collaboration and cooperation within a shared learning community.

These four pairs of Common Learning Goals represent an application of Berea’s Great Commitments within the context of our contemporary world and should guide the learning and work of all members of the campus community.

Strategic Action Areas

The nine strategic questions at the end of this document (pp. 61-92) represent Berea College's current efforts to better achieve its mission by addressing key issues that require attention: (1) engaged and transformative learning; (2) admissions and student success; (3) ecological sustainability; (4) interracial education; (5) coeducation and equality of women and men; and (6) reflective, effective, and sustainable community. In 2011, the Strategic Planning Council (SPC) concluded that three of the College-wide strategic initiatives can now best be handled by a combination of standing committees and administrative offices with annual reports to the SPC as to each initiative's progress. These include: (7) Appalachian focus (formerly #1); (8) inclusive Christian identity (formerly #3); and (9) Labor Program (formerly #6).

The following abbreviated summaries of the nine strategic initiatives provide information about these substantial areas of exploration and implementation that the College community will focus on in the coming years. *Of course, Berea College's focus on the attraction and development of faculty and students, of academic majors and general studies curricula, and of providing necessary academic support will always be at the heart of Berea's work. The following initiatives can be viewed as campus-wide enhancements that usually apply within and beyond the College's academic focus:*

1. Engaged and Transformative Learning. Following an intensive scenario planning process in 2009-10 as a response to the financial crisis of 2008-09, Berea College reduced program and staff budgets by approximately 15% while seeking additional revenues and focusing institutional resources to produce a stronger overall student-focused educational program. After extensive consultation with all campus constituencies and with editorial review by the Strategic Planning Council, the Administrative Committee drafted the "Scenario: Engaged and Transformative Learning" that built upon the work of the Scenario Planning Taskforce. This new initiative was endorsed by the General Faculty Assembly in December 2009, and approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2010. The Engaged and Transformative Learning initiative (pp. 63-66) incorporates this scenario as an integral part of Berea's strategic plan that will help direct the institution's educational programs and fiscal resources for the foreseeable future. The recommendation is that:

(1) The Berea College community focus on engaged and transformative learning for its students, faculty, and programs, and (2) that this focus be a guide for decision making in reshaping the budget and offices/programs to ensure that the College responds with a sharpened programmatic focus on decisions that must provide long-term financial and programmatic flexibility and sustainability.

2. Admissions and Student Success. The second initiative is twofold and concerns *admissions and student academic success* (pp. 67-71). This recommendation builds on recent successes and seeks to clarify which students Berea seeks to serve and how it can support their academic achievement. Actions include continued recruitment within traditional Appalachian counties; increasing the number of international students;

targeting several urban areas to increase minority enrollment; and modifying considerably Berea's financial eligibility policy.² Berea's formal admissions policy is:

Berea College should seek to recruit students mostly from Southern Appalachia, black and white, men and women, (a) who have limited economic resources; (b) whose "great promise" is defined by significant potential for academic success and leadership; (c) who will be attracted to Berea's Great Commitments and its clearly articulated emphasis on learning, labor, and service as worthy educational and personal goals; and (d) who, along with students from other areas of the U.S. and abroad, will compose a diverse cultural and ethnic mix that will create a 21st-century learning environment. The College seeks to inspire, educate, and graduate service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond. The total student body should number 1,600.

In addition to the statement of Berea's admissions policy above, this initiative also articulates a commitment to continue Berea's high academic standards while increasing student academic success:

Berea College commits itself to provide its students with a high quality liberal arts education that maintains high academic standards. It also seeks to improve its capacity to help the students it seeks to serve by (a) studying the national literature and conducting studies of its particular population of students to better understand the academic, personal, and attitudinal characteristics of Berea students; (b) systematically identifying the diverse strengths and weaknesses that students bring with them to Berea, building on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses; (c) assessing the effectiveness of Berea's current curriculum, teaching, advising, academic support, student services, and residential programs in addressing student preparedness; (d) creating the necessary curricular, academic support, faculty/staff development, and residential/student-life structures and programs to better support students' academic and personal success; and (e) monitoring the progress of this initiative.

3. Ecological Sustainability. This initiative (pp. 72-74) emerged from a three-year Strategic Planning Council subcommittee process that began in 2007 with the appointment of the Subcommittee on Sustainability II (SOS II), which sought to create a compelling vision of sustainability that can be realized at Berea College. The SOS II report (issued in September 2008) called for a culture of comprehensive sustainability as a core aspect of Berea's mission as an educational community that was committed to a goal of service to others. The SOS II built its findings upon the work of SOS I, whose report of December 1998 placed sustainability within the context of Berea's Christian

² The new financial eligibility policy was designed to simplify the formula for determining a prospective student's eligibility for admission to Berea College. It also clearly defines "limited economic resources" and the students that the College seeks to serve. The policy states: *In order to serve better those students with great academic promise and limited financial resources, Berea College considers financially eligible for admissions those applicants whose computed Parental Contribution, or in the case of financially independent students their Student Contribution, is equal to or less than the estimated Expected Family Contribution of the 33rd percentile of college-bound students in the United States.*

principles of social justice and “plain living.” Acting upon this vision, the Strategic Planning Council recommended and the faculty and trustees approved the following vision of sustainability:

The College’s ultimate goals must be (1) to become truly sustainable, that is to operate without negative physical impact on the lives of others in the world, and (2) to have positive impacts on the world through education, through the creation of a model sustainable community, and through practical engagement with other local sustainability initiatives.

4. Interracial Education. A fourth initiative focuses upon Berea College’s legacy as *an interracial educational community in a highly segmented world* (pp. 75-78). This recommendation addresses Berea’s commitment to egalitarian community by focusing on interracial education. The 1996 plan sought broader goals to promote a “diverse community” but found that the lack of specific focus made implementation difficult to define or measure. Therefore, it is clear that we must lift up such issues individually as well as together. Actions in this area include: increasing and sustaining the overall interracial diversity of faculty, staff, and students; providing formal and informal opportunities for interracial dialogue and understanding; and further examining and applying studies about the experience of African Americans in both the classrooms and workplaces of higher education. The recommendation states:

Berea College should reassert “interracial education” in its contemporary learning, working, and living environments. We will build on our efforts to recruit and retain African American students and will increase attention to the recruitment and retention of African American faculty and staff. Our purpose is not simply to create greater numerical diversity but to engage white and black Bereans more fully in what it means to live together and to learn from and about each other. This initiative seeks to create an integrated and interracial learning and working community and to demonstrate Berea College’s interracial commitment through deliberate and diligent action.

5. Equality for Women and Men. The fifth initiative stems from Berea’s commitment to “*education and equality for women and men*” (pp. 79-82). The recommendation concludes that additional research and campus conversations are necessary to fully understand the experiences of women and men at Berea—and beyond. Actions include gathering information about gender experiences in both the classrooms and workplaces of higher education, and clarifying Berea’s definition and application of “education and equality for women and men.” The recommendation is that:

Berea College affirms its commitment to the equality of women and men by ensuring that: (a) policies, practices, and procedures at all levels of the institution exhibit this commitment; (b) our curriculum and pedagogies enhance our ability to recognize when sexual or gender identity affect one’s experience and to address the pertinent differences in experience and perception; (c) our learning, living, and working environments embody and promote relations among men and women that are grounded in respect and understanding; and (d) scholarship

about women and men, gender and sexism is used to help us think creatively and comprehensively about Berea's mission, its responsibility to society, and the civic engagement of Berea College students and graduates.

6. Reflective, Effective, and Sustainable Community. The sixth initiative focuses on ensuring that Berea College is “a reflective and effective learning and working community with sustainable workload expectations for its faculty, staff, and students” (pp. 83-85). This initiative recognizes that members of the Berea College community, and faculty in particular, must manage multiple and sometimes competing priorities that demand our professional time and attention, and it includes a framework for identifying and providing ways to create a flexible, reflective, and sustainable learning and working environment at Berea College. The recommendation states:

Berea College will seek to understand more fully the interrelated challenges and obstacles of retaining our distinctive mission while strengthening current, and creating new, policies and structures that promote a more reflective, collegial, and effective learning community with sustainable workloads for faculty, staff, and students.

Strategic Initiatives Now Assigned to Offices/Programs

7. Appalachia. Now assigned to the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center, this initiative concerns the College's *Appalachian focus* (pp. 86-87). This recommendation continues to seek ways to meet our Appalachian commitment more fully after taking into account the gains of the past 15 years. Proposed actions include integrating this focus into all aspects of the College where possible—curricular, co-curricular, labor, service, and residential programs. Succinctly stated:

Berea College should (a) develop, primarily through undergraduate education, service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond; (b) take advantage of the learning and service opportunities that are abundant throughout the region through the integration of curricular, co-curricular, and outreach programs; (c) continue Berea's outreach activities within this learning and service context and be willing to fund them; and (d) seek to imbue the College's curriculum and programs with an understanding of Appalachia that will provide better education and service for the region.

8. Christian Identity. Now assigned to the Willis Weatherford, Jr. Campus Christian Center, this initiative continues to pursue and deepen Berea College's inclusive Christian identity (pp. 88-89) as understood following five years of research and campus-wide conversations. Building upon this re-appropriation of Berea's Christian self-understanding, primary activities include: educating Berea's various constituencies about Berea's unique Christian heritage; extending the Campus Christian Center's outreach on campus and in the wider community; promoting interfaith dialogue; and integrating Berea's inclusive Christian identity in the curriculum, student life, and institutional policies where appropriate. The recommendation is:

In the tradition of John Fee and subsequent Berea faculty and staff leaders, members of the Berea College community should seek to apply systematically its stated “inclusive Christian” understanding in ways that (a) take seriously the educational commitment to foster an understanding of Christianity in its many forms; (b) create learning spaces for the spiritual and moral development of faculty, staff, and students; (c) extend Berea’s inclusive Christian understanding by nurturing respectful dialogue among Bereans of different and no religious faiths; and (d) create a campus where the principles of welcoming, respect, compassion, service, and civility are exemplified in working and living environments.

9. Labor Program. Now housed in the Labor Program Office, the ninth initiative concerns *the “re-vitalization” of the Berea College Labor Program* (pp. 90-92). This initiative contains recommendations for implementing the labor proposal approved by the faculty in December 2003.³

Berea College understands student labor as student- and learning-centered, as service to the College and community, and as providing necessary work (i.e., work that needs to be done) being done well. The Student Labor Program will systematically and consistently employ this vision to address tensions that may occasionally emerge between student labor as work that needs to be done, as service to the community and College, as students’ experiential learning, and as a contribution to educational costs.

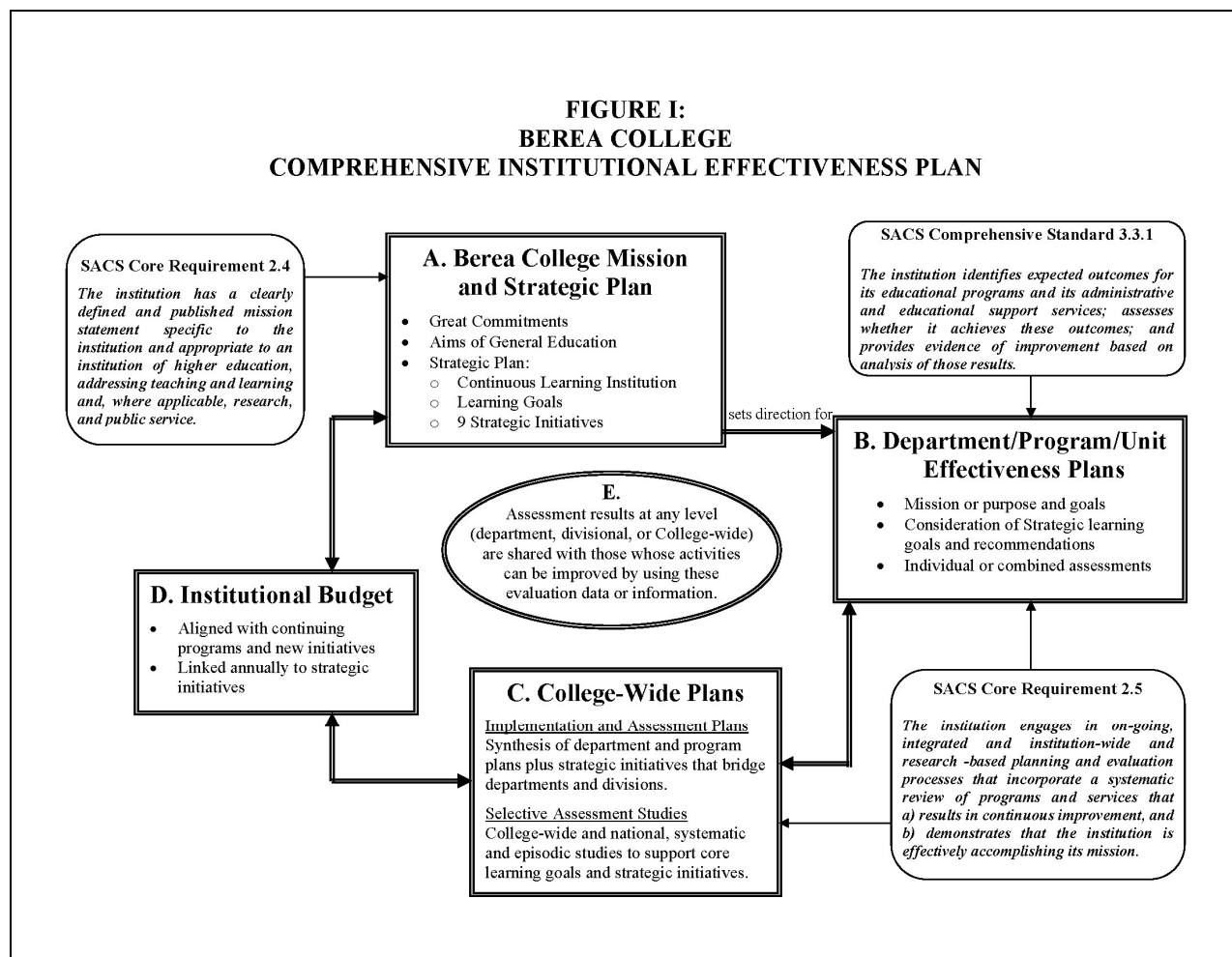
It is important to note that, while these strategic initiatives arise from Berea College’s core mission and contemporary extension of that mission, this list is not exhaustive and represents only College-wide issues that require concerted institutional attention and administration. For example, there are other strategic initiatives that are being addressed by other standing committees and/or administrative offices such as the current governance conversations, general education revisions, and the College’s SACS review. The SPC sometimes plays a supporting role in these activities but expects that standing committees will address major issues that have a singular focus (e.g., general education) or a limited audience (e.g., tenure review policy).

³ The “fundamental recommendation” of the Labor Review Team was: “To see, anew and again, the Student Labor Program as [an] aspect of an integrated, continuous learning community, governed in its policies, procedures, structures and operations by a unifying vision of labor as learning and service to community and College” (“Report of the Labor Review Team,” 2001, and “Labor Program Revision and Revitalization,” 2003, p. 2).

Implementation and Assessment

This document ends with a brief description of a Comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Plan for Berea College (see pp. 93-96). In what follows, a graph and text outline the four steps of institutional planning and assessment that include: (a) developing a strategic plan with campus-wide assessment, (b) implementing that plan on the department and program level, (c) synthesizing the individual plans and broader initiatives into a College-wide Implementation and Assessment Plan, and then (d) translating these plans into an integrated institutional budget. This chart provides a transition to the implementation and assessment activities in which Berea College engaged during the 2004-05 academic year. In addition, see Appendix B (pp. 101-105) for the five primary areas of ongoing assessment (i.e., academic programs, total student learning environment, admissions, financial and facilities resources, and staff/faculty/trustee development).

**FIGURE I:
BEREA COLLEGE
COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PLAN**



For a full-size representation of this chart, see page 96.

Being and Becoming concludes: “In response to those who questioned the rather substantial changes of policies and programs at Berea College in the mid-1940’s, Dean Louis Smith said, ‘Berea must both be and become.’ Throughout Berea’s history, there have been periods of significant change in programs, policies, facilities, and applications of the College’s mission. Berea College has always sought to remain faithful to its founding values and mission even as it embraced new opportunities for action or ended old programs. Berea is at such a critical juncture once again. In the recommendations throughout this document there has been an attempt to hold in balance the traditions and values of the past with the opportunities and challenges of a global 21st-century world in which Berea must carry out its mission. In understanding our time to be one of persistent and rapid change, we have set forth in this document the vision of Berea College as an integrated and continuous learning environment. The four pairs of Common Learning Goals and nine strategic recommendations emerge from the College’s Great Commitments and yet respond to the character of our modern age. This notion of an institution grounded in common and traditional values, and yet set in constant motion as it attempts to educate all of its citizens, forms Berea’s vision for the next century. Being and becoming are both imperatives for a Berea College steeped in traditional values and yet well positioned to educate students and workers for our 21st-century world” (p. 97).

INTRODUCTION⁴

“The non-profit organization exists to bring about change in individuals and society. The first thing to talk about is what missions work and what missions don’t work, and how to define the mission.... The ultimate test is right action.”

Peter Drucker

Berea College was founded by John G. Fee with the help of other “ardent abolitionists and radical reformers” who believed in the equality of all people regardless of race or gender because “God has created of one blood all peoples of the earth.”⁵ Fee’s improbable vision of a non-sectarian Christian college inclusive of black and white people, men and women, became a reality on the Berea ridge in the mid-1860’s. Like the slaves and children of slaves who were among the first students at Berea, the people of the Appalachian mountain region had an extraordinary need for education. The Reverend John A. R. Rogers was among the early leaders who helped to focus Berea’s commitment to Appalachia. The 1866-67 catalog said Berea’s education should be directed to the “emancipated Negro [sic]” and the “white people of the mountainous portion of Eastern Kentucky and the similar regions in other States adjoining” in a coeducational context. This multifaceted mission inspired by Fee’s Christian spirituality confronted the educational, social, and religious conventions of the day. Opposition to Berea’s bold mission took the forms of physical threats to the early settlers, legal opposition to its interracial education, and strong regional and local pressures to conform to separatist ideologies.

Throughout its history, Berea has pursued its original, complex mission in ever-changing ways as the external environment provided new opportunities—or limitations. For example, during the presidency of William Goodell Frost, the Labor Program was formalized as an integral feature of Berea’s learning environment. That same Labor Program has undergone significant alterations to accommodate changes in the needs of the institution. Students no longer work in a dairy at Berea College, but they do manage a major portion of the computer service needs on the campus. Commenting upon the post-World War II years of rapid social and educational change, Dean Louis Smith argued that Berea should continue to rely upon its formative traditions and yet adapt to external circumstances. He concluded, “Berea must both be and become.”

⁴ This document includes parenthetical citations, explanatory footnotes, and a comprehensive bibliography. APA style parenthetical citations are used after direct quotations from a consulted source, whereas footnotes are used to provide further explanation or additional resources about a particular issue. The detailed publishing information for footnote references are in the bibliography; therefore, footnotes include author, title, and year only. The bibliography is in Chicago style and includes all consulted and cited sources for this document.

⁵ Berea’s motto comes from Acts 17:26 and first appeared in a Berea publication in 1869.

Berea is uncommon among higher educational institutions in the United States in the extent to which it has remained faithful to its original charter. It has, nevertheless, also had to readjust its programs and activities when external or internal circumstances required such changes. Such was the case in 1904 when the Day Law was passed, prohibiting interracial education in Kentucky; or in the 1940's when the V-12 sailors came; or in the 1960's when Knapp Hall and the Foundation School were no longer able to attract the students they sought (even though such students likely existed in considerable numbers). For nearly 50 years Berea had no black students and now has considerable competition for talented black youth. The Berea story cannot be the same now as it was even 25 years ago. Dramatic events and rapid changes occur, as the September 11, 2001 tragedy has amply demonstrated, which reshape the external environment in which Berea College seeks to realize its mission.

The past decade has been a period of extraordinary, rapid change in the United States and around the globe: from the transformation of national economies into interdependent world markets to the socio-political disintegration of countries like Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Rapid change has become a way of life. Perhaps most critically, the technological developments of the past two decades have shrunk the globe through the increased speed and breadth of communications. The Southern Appalachian region has, likewise, been a place of enormous changes—socially and economically. Once again, Berea must ask how it can best be faithful to its original mission and yet seek new ways to meet its students' needs. This task is the central purpose of this strategic planning document.

In formulating this document, we assume as our first premise that the Great Commitments—first formulated by Dean Louis Smith in the 1950's, formally accepted in 1969, and reaffirmed in 1993—still represent the best succinct statement of Berea College's traditional mission.⁶ These ideals have guided our strategic thinking process and rooted this document's recommendations in the ongoing traditions and mission of Berea College.⁷ Our second premise is that the internal and external environments in which Berea enacts its educational mission are ever-changing and must be taken into account when interpreting and implementing the Great Commitments. This understanding has led to a careful analysis of obstacles and opportunities, both internal and external, which require Berea College to reconceive its programs and educational emphases. It is upon these two premises that the learning goals and strategic recommendations for the Berea College of the 21st century have been founded.

Berea College is an educational institution that has also served its region with special outreach programs throughout its long history. While the region, faculty, students, and external environment have all evolved, some fundamental educational values and traditions that Berea has always promoted are still very much needed. Thus, this document is not simply an academic plan, but rather an inclusive vision of what it means

⁶ See pp. 6-7 for the full text of Berea College's Great Commitments.

⁷ See "Recommendations from the General Faculty and Report from the Committee to Review the Commitments to the Board of Trustees," adopted by the Board of Trustees on April 24, 1993.

to say that Berea College *is a learning institution in all of its many activities and programs.*

- **Academic and Educational Effectiveness.** First of all, Berea is an academic institution that has historically emphasized a liberal arts education intertwined with professional programs. Therefore, attention to the College's curricula, student and faculty needs, and academic support programs should remain the central focus of planning and budgetary efforts. In recent years, the general studies and disciplinary curricula have expanded to fill virtually each student's four-year schedule. How can the College accomplish its liberal arts mission and provide for its students the curricular flexibility and personal growth they desire and need? Faculty also have extra time pressures on them to keep up with burgeoning knowledge in their disciplines, to incorporate appropriate technology into their teaching, and to engage new initiatives (e.g., internationalization, service-learning, and diversity-related challenges) in their development and teaching. How can development and review processes be improved to reflect the new realities of teaching, scholarship, and service at Berea College?

- **Integration of Academic, Student Life, Service, and Labor Programs.** Berea's Student Life program, set within a residential campus, is a key dimension of the College's learning environment. Outreach and service to surrounding communities and to the mountains have changed dramatically over the decades but still represent an important element of the College's mission. The Labor Program, a distinctive feature of Berea's educational program, receives strong support among students, faculty, and staff and recognition well beyond the College. While all of these collateral dimensions of Berea's educational program are strong, they must be more fully integrated to support Berea's goal of becoming an "integrated and continuous learning community" for all students and employees. Berea College needs to improve coordination of learning opportunities throughout all of its programs, and labor, learning, student life, and service programs should all reflect campus-wide learning goals.

- **Admissions.** In the 1996 version of *Being and Becoming*, no other issue had greater priority than the question, "Whom should Berea College serve in the next decade?" On one level, the Great Commitments answer this question by stating, "Berea College commits itself to provide an educational opportunity primarily for students from Appalachia, black and white, [...women and men ...] who have great promise and limited economic resources." However, demographic, social, and economic forces have altered the nature of the populations of Appalachia. For example, the Kentucky and Appalachian region from which Berea draws 73% of its students has only an 8% black population. Community colleges in the region offer many mountain students a less expensive alternative to Berea College because they allow them to live at home. In addition, the creation of more modern schools, roads, and communication systems in Appalachia have reduced the need for some of the services Berea provided in the past. How have these and other changes altered the traditional "in-territory" admissions base for Berea

College? The answers to such questions must guide Berea to a greater clarification of its 21st-century educational mission.

- **Budgetary and Facility Planning.** Just as it is important to integrate all of Berea's learning, labor, and service dimensions, so is it necessary to integrate budgetary planning with institutional learning goals and priorities. Significant facility renovations have been accomplished and yet much remains to be funded. There are computer and equipment needs for academic and administrative purposes that are still unmet. Ecological responsibility has emerged as a serious consideration in all aspects of campus life and institutional policies and practices. Additional positions are needed in several areas of the institution to address new external and internal realities. How these and other economic demands are prioritized and met in the next decade will determine to a great extent how well Berea can achieve its mission. One of the outcomes of Berea's strategic thinking process has been to link more systematically budgetary planning with institutional priorities.

- **Development.** No aspect of Berea College's ability to achieve its mission has been more important than its successful development program. Berea's endowment of nearly \$975 million ranks among the top 70 endowments of colleges and universities in the United States. However, Berea's large endowment is misperceived by potential private and foundation donors, not to mention many Bereans, who do not understand that it serves as a "tuition trust," supplying almost 75% of the funding for the College's annual unrestricted educational and general operating budget. In the face of uncertain federal and state appropriations and an uncertain market, Berea's development program will be challenged to keep pace with the College's needs. The initiatives that emerged from the 1996 *Being and Becoming* planning efforts placed new programmatic demands upon the College's development efforts. By 1999 it was clear that a comprehensive campaign would be needed to endow such programs as EDGE, which puts a computer in the hands of every Berea student, but needed an endowment of \$8 million to be implemented. Berea's six-year comprehensive campaign, "Extending Berea's Legacy," raised more than \$160 million by its target date in 2005. Nearly \$30 million of the campaign was designated to endow initiatives in internationalization, technology, sustainability, entrepreneurship, etc. with the other \$120 million serving as an endowment for Berea's core programs. Over 90% of the campaign dollars went into the endowment. This is just one illustration of the challenges facing Berea's development efforts.

This strategic planning document considers Berea College's mission and internal environment as well as the external environment in which its mission will be realized. Taking into account these important contexts, the document then articulates the learning goals that should permeate the whole institution. It also contains a set of strategic questions and recommendations designed to sharpen Berea's focus and to help the College better achieve its educational mission. The document concludes with a section on implementation and assessment.

Every office and program of Berea College will need to engage in thoughtful reflection about the ways each can adjust its work and resources to meet the goals and initiatives set forth in this document. These determinations must then be translated at the departmental, divisional, and institutional levels into effective implementation plans that are reviewed each academic year. In collaborative discussions between the Strategic Planning Council and other standing committees, divisional vice presidents, and individual departments and divisions, implementation strategies will be established and an institutional budget set. Herein, the nature and direction of that mutual journey will be defined.

BEREA'S MISSION

Under the leadership of the Committee to Review the Commitments (CRC), Berea College reviewed its mission in 1992-93. This committee, chaired by President John Stephenson, consisted of 22 members (faculty members, staff, students, and the Chair of the Board of Trustees). The CRC presented its "Recommendations from the General Faculty and Report from the Committee to Review the Commitments to the Board of Trustees" in March 1993, and the Board of Trustees adopted the recommendations contained in this document on April 24, 1993. What did this Great Commitments study recommend?

First, the CRC recommended that the inclusiveness of the Acts 17 wording on the College motto and seal be made more explicit by saying, "God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth," rather than "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." The CRC's intentions were to translate this Greek Biblical passage more accurately and inclusively, and thereby to make Berea's core motto clear to all who would read it. Second, the seven 1969 "Commitments of Berea College" were reworded in some places and separated in one case to make eight separate "Great Commitments of Berea College."

In considering whether an additional "mission statement" was needed, the CRC concluded, "Berea's mission currently is most clearly expressed in the Great Commitments.... These seven [now eight] statements represent both a recognition of Berea's historic purposes and its intentions regarding the future" (p. 4). The adoption of this report by the campus community and the Board of Trustees suggested that there was widespread agreement that these commitments serve "as a succinct representation of our distinctive purposes." This report likewise assumes that the 1993 report and recommendations serve as a community statement of mission and purpose.

A preamble to the Great Commitments was also added during the 1993 revision in order to provide a context for reading them:

Berea College, founded by ardent abolitionists and radical reformers, continues today as an educational institution still firmly rooted in its historic purpose "to promote the cause of Christ." Adherence to the College's scriptural foundation, "God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth," shapes the College's culture and programs so that students and staff alike can work toward both personal goals and a vision of a world shaped by Christian values, such as the power of love over hate, human dignity and equality, and peace with justice. This environment frees persons to be active learners, workers, and servers as members of the academic community and as citizens of the world. The Berea experience nurtures intellectual, physical, aesthetic, emotional, and spiritual potentials and with those the power to make meaningful commitments and translate them into action.

The Commitments address elements of Berea's learning, labor, and service programs and are summaries of Berea's statement of purpose:

To achieve this purpose, Berea College commits itself

- To provide an educational opportunity primarily for students from Appalachia, black and white, who have great promise and limited economic resources.
- To provide an education of high quality with a liberal arts foundation and outlook.
- To stimulate understanding of the Christian faith and its many expressions and to emphasize the Christian ethic and the motive of service to others.
- To provide for all students through the labor program experiences for learning and serving in community, and to demonstrate that labor, mental and manual, has dignity as well as utility.
- To assert the kinship of all people and to provide interracial education with a particular emphasis on understanding and equality among blacks and whites.
- To create a democratic community dedicated to education and equality for women and men.
- To maintain a residential campus and to encourage in all members of the community a way of life characterized by plain living, pride in labor well done, zest for learning, high personal standards, and concern for the welfare of others.
- To serve the Appalachian region primarily through education but also by other appropriate services.

Discussions of the CRC, of the SPC, and of the broader faculty revealed significant differences in the understanding and interpretation of the Great Commitments. This recognition led the SPC to form special subcommittees to address several of the commitments (e.g., Appalachian, Christian, interracial, etc.). It is also clear that some of the commitments have lent themselves well to academic study, and others better to the co-curricular, labor, or outreach programs. For example, the liberal arts emphasis has most often been addressed in the classroom, while serving the Appalachian region has often led to outreach programs beyond the classroom. The 1993 study acknowledged that a variety of interpretations of the Great Commitments exist at Berea, and, as a result of this multiplicity, the CRC chose to retain certain phrases that were ambiguous in order to enhance discussion in the community.

This document, like the original report in 1996, supports the purposes of the Great Commitments by formulating learning goals and strategic questions/recommendations that incorporate the essential intent of these mission-defining statements. This strategic plan promotes Berea's traditional emphasis on social justice by directing its educational mission toward "a world shaped by Christian values, such as the power of love over hate, human dignity and equality, and peace with justice." In light of the events of September 11, 2001, it is clear that the values and education Berea College seeks to impart are needed more than ever. The SPC and Berea College community agree with the preamble to the Great Commitments that such a learning context "frees persons to be active learners, workers, and servers as members of the academic community and as citizens of the world." It is upon such an understanding of Berea's mission that the SPC has based its work.

THE EXTERNAL LANDSCAPE: A CHANGING CLIMATE

National and regional political, economic, and social forces impinge upon every institution in the United States, including colleges and universities. Public criticism of higher education that reached a crescendo in the 1980's and 1990's continues in the new millennium, creating continued questioning by external and internal constituencies. Concerns about the cost and accessibility of private higher education continue to arouse an increasingly anxious public. The shift in attention and admissions to public institutions by students has made the future for many private colleges less certain. Demographic, cultural, and technological trends in the 1980's and 1990's have fundamentally reshaped the learning environment for students and faculty of many colleges and universities. Many observers question whether traditional, time-consuming governance processes can respond effectively to the challenges confronting institutions of higher learning. Increasing governmental expectations for the accountability of colleges and universities has occurred at the same time that state funding for such institutions has decreased in real dollars. Changes in the academic environment have required adaptation on the part of many faculty, and have given rise to questions about faculty workloads, tenure, and post-tenure review. These and many other factors have created a rapidly changing and often critical public climate in which higher education institutions must operate.

Public Criticism

What began in the early 1980's as internal grumbling about curricular and educational concerns burgeoned into full-scale public criticism of higher education in the 1990's. With the 1983 publication of the National Commission on Excellence in Education's study, *A Nation at Risk*, an onslaught of more than 30 published national reports on education began. Only occasionally in the history of the United States has the public been urged to think so negatively about institutions of higher education. At the beginning of the 1980's, criticisms focused mainly on college curricula; as the decade ended, more attention was given to the privileges, productivity, and attitudes of college faculty. The late 1990's saw a continuation of some concerns (e.g., tuition costs and governance), but also an improved "grade" for higher education.⁸

In 1984, four separate national studies challenged all aspects of college and university curricula. A National Science Foundation study concluded that undergraduate curricula in the sciences were too specialized, and that post-secondary schools were deficient in providing the full range of abilities and perspectives that skilled scientists and doctors require. The National Endowment for the Humanities said in its report, *To Reclaim a Legacy*, that high school and college students had lost touch with the American and Western traditions contained in "the great books" of our past. The National Institute of Education's report, *Involvement in Learning*, concluded that students were passive learners rather than active participants in the learning process. These criticisms were given the strongest voice in the Association of American Colleges' document *Integrity in the College Curriculum*, which

⁸ See "A Report to Stakeholders on the Condition and Effectiveness of Postsecondary Education" (2001).

argued that college curricula were in shambles because of faculty indifference, disciplinary myopia, over-departmentalized governance structures, and negligent administration.⁹

In the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) 2002 report, *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College*, the criticism of both K-12 and post-secondary institutions continues. According to the AAC&U report, access to colleges is hindered by such barriers as uneven academic preparation in high schools, patterns of discrimination, limited interpretations of learning, and the misalignment of high school work with college expectations. College barriers to students' learning include the fragmentation of college and university curricula, professors who are prepared as scholars not teachers, exclusive definitions of quality, the dearth of meaningful assessment, and the increasing financial burden put on students. *Greater Expectations* calls for a "practical liberal education" (p. xi) that "prepares students for active participation in the private and public sectors, in a diverse democracy, and in an even more diverse global community" (p. 25).¹⁰ This report draws significantly on notions of vocational opportunity, civic democracy, and the public interest as the necessary foci of college and university educations.

Over the past two decades, college faculties have remained a target of public criticism. Charles Sykes' book *ProfScam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education* (1988) charges faculty with creating "tribal villages" whose mores center on departmental and personal self-interest and the protection of special prerogatives. Roger Kimball's book *Tenured Radicals* (1990) argues that the humanities, and English in particular, have been overrun by "politically correct thinking." Page Smith, in his book *Killing the Spirit* (1990), claims that the curriculum on most university campuses is so politicized that some issues, such as those of race and gender, may be forced upon students while others, such as those concerning religious beliefs, cannot be mentioned. Martin Anderson's treatise *Impostors in the Temple* (1992) and Dinesh D'Souza's book *Illiberal Education* (1992) extended and deepened these concerns about faculty privilege, liberal thinking, and self-interested indulgence in teaching and research. Then, more recently, critics have denounced higher education for its "politically correct" responses to and explanations of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. In the fall 2001 issue of its newsletter, *Inside Academe*, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni accused academics of being the "weak link in America's response to the attack" for alleging historically based reasons for the atrocities (p. 1).¹¹ Criticisms such as these have led to renewed cries, from within and beyond the academy, for the removal of tenure, or more recently, for the creation of post-tenure reviews.¹²

⁹ With the 1987 publication of Ernest Boyer's Carnegie Foundation study, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, these critical themes of the 1980's were repeated with added force.

¹⁰ See also the *Liberal Education* issue on the theme "The Courage to Question: Liberal Education for the 21st Century" (2003).

¹¹ See also Jerry L. Martin and Anne D. Neal's "Defending Civilization: How Our Universities Are Failing America and What Can Be Done About It" (2001).

¹² See Richard Chait's "Thawing the Cold War Over Tenure," C. Peter Magrath's "Eliminating Tenure Without Destroying Academic Freedom," Neil Hamilton's "Peer Review: The Linchpin of Academic Freedom and Tenure," and William Tierney's "Academic Community and Post-Tenure Review" (1997).

Out of this arena of conservative public criticism of college curricula and faculty have come myriad suggestions for how higher education must change and what its true challenges are. Clark Kerr's *Troubled Times for American Higher Education: The 1990's and Beyond* (1994) states that rapidly expanding knowledge, changes in student and faculty self-perceptions and community, the struggle for economic resources, and the issue of merit versus equality would be the four challenges that colleges would face in the late 90's and early millennium. Kerr emphasizes that faculty and student unrest is caused by the increasing scrutiny of student abilities and faculty accountability by the general public.

A Pew Higher Education Roundtable *Policy Perspectives* publication entitled "Twice Imagined" (1995) provides an additional context for understanding both public criticisms and suggestions. First, the article argues that college attendees are now less white, more urban, and include more women than in the past. Second, changes from an industrial to an information and service economy have led to greater emphasis on technology, lower entry jobs for college graduates, and a displacement of middle class managers. Third, there is a loss of public commitment to "the public good" in governmental policies, taxation, and support of education. Fourth, increased communication technologies and a condensed perception of the world have created greater impatience with colleges that change their more traditional perspectives slowly. Despite the resurgence of interest in affirming collaborative community after September 11, 2001, the American public appears to remain divided over which outcomes are most appropriate for higher education to pursue.

Former college professor and president George Dennis O'Brien questions the basic assumptions and solutions of current higher education discussions in his book *All the Essential Half-Truths about Higher Education* (1998). He says, "A central thesis of this book is that discussions of higher education are anywhere from misplaced to mistaken because they address the *idea* of higher education, not the *institution* of higher education" (p. xviii). O'Brien's book focuses upon the ideals of the faculty, academic freedom/tenure, and the liberal arts curriculum and governance as they are translated into institutional realities. He argues that many prevailing assumptions that guide academic and institutional discussions on college campuses are at best half-truths and that real progress on the central issues that confront higher education and its institutions "will require new structures of faculty responsibility *for the institution*." O'Brien challenges faculty, administrators, and trustees to address the real complex and messy issues as they encounter them on college campuses rather than their corresponding ideal counterparts that ignore economic and institutional realities.¹³

Higher education has not escaped the attention of a discontented and divided American public in the 1990's and early 2000's. Whether many of the criticisms of higher education (e.g., high tuition or research faculty's attention to scholarship instead of teaching) really apply to private, teaching-oriented institutions like Berea College, student families, the taxpayers of Kentucky, and donors to such institutions are unlikely to make such fine distinctions. Furthermore, many of the insights or criticisms do apply. As Berea seeks to

¹³ For additional critiques of higher education by "insiders" in the early 21st century, see John A. Flower's *Downstairs, Upstairs: The Changed Spirit and Face of College Life in America* (2003) and Peter Smith's *The Quiet Crisis: How Higher Education is Failing America* (2004).

attract committed faculty, qualified students, and new donors, it must take external criticisms of higher education into account in its planning and decision making if it is to speak clearly and persuasively to its external audiences.

Private Colleges in the New Millennium

Three 1994-1995 Association of Governing Boards (AGB) articles on private higher education in the United States suggested that the very existence of liberal arts colleges would be threatened in the new millennium.¹⁴ They argue that out-of-date curricula, centralized decision making, and the disorganized planning and implementation of new ideas undermine the vitality and future of private institutions. They recommend that the Board of Trustees, the college administration, and the faculty must work toward common aims if financial soundness, coherent policy, and successful strategic planning are to be achieved. They suggest that liberal arts colleges must focus on changing their curricular and departmental structures, and must achieve consolidation and collaboration across traditionally separate disciplinary lines if they are to prosper in a competitive higher education environment. While these essays promote rather radical changes, one author cautions, “one value of a small liberal arts college must not be sacrificed, no matter what the financial squeeze. That is the relationship between teachers and students” (Hotchkiss, 1995, p. 23). By the time of the 2004-05 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the concern about tuition costs for students (especially at private colleges) led to the introduction of a new bill in Congress by Representative Howard “Buck” McKeon that would limit increases in college and university tuition with a penalty for non-compliance being a loss of federal financial aid dollars.¹⁵

John Frazer, the retired Director of the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities (AIKCU), expressed his concerns about the potentially bleak future of private schools in Kentucky and elsewhere. In his essay “Concerns about the Future of Private Schools Justified” (1995), Frazer says that in 1950, 50% of college students in Kentucky were enrolled in private colleges, while in 1990 only 12% were. According to AIKCU, this percentage remained the same in 2000 for Kentucky. One reason is that Kentucky public universities have expanded their many branch campuses and new community colleges have been created, providing formidable competition for Berea because their subsidized tuition is lower than their actual costs. Frazer points out that while private colleges only enroll approximately 12% of the post-secondary students in the state, they graduate 20% of all baccalaureate students in Kentucky. It is the case that nearly half of students in private colleges in Kentucky come from low-income families, which means that private colleges are serving many of the very students whom state institutions and community colleges were originally intended to serve.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the State of Kentucky

¹⁴ See John D. Sellar’s “The Warning Signs of Institutional Decline” (1994); Ruth B. Cowan’s “A Prescription for Vitality for Small Private Colleges” (1994); and Eugene Hotchkiss’ “Rx for Small Liberal Arts Colleges” (1995).

¹⁵ See the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities’ “House Committee Attacks College Cost, Accountability” (2003); “McKeon Unveils College Affordability Legislation” (2003); and Michael S. McPherson and Morton Owen Schapiro’s “Sticker Price Is the Sticking Point” (2001).

¹⁶ Frazer says that 45% of private college students in 1990 came from families with \$20,000 or less income. Decades later, this trend persists.

spends \$6,333 per student in public institutions (Watts, 2001, p. 28), while spending only about \$800 for each student in private institutions.¹⁷

Frazer's article raises the specter of increasing competition between private and public higher education in Kentucky, and this competition has led to some grim outcomes. Two colleges in Kentucky (Lee and Sue Bennett) closed their doors within three years of the publication of Frazer's article. Lee eventually became a branch of Hazard Community College and Sue Bennett's campus is currently being used by local non-profit agencies. In addition, many independent colleges in Kentucky are experiencing difficulties in admissions and retention of students. In the 2001-02 academic year, 8 of the 19 independent colleges in the Commonwealth had declining enrollments from the previous year. In the spring of 2001 (revised June of 2003), AIKCU adopted a strategic planning process intended to confront the public policies issues (e.g., inequitable state funding and unreasonable expansion of public institutions) that give public higher education institutions unfair economic and student recruitment advantages. Finally, national statistics reveal that more and more families who can afford private higher education are choosing public institutions instead. This has led to the surprising phenomenon of higher average family income in many public institutions than in private institutions, a shift that can be explained to some extent by the changing perceptions of public and private higher education.

George C. Dehne's report, *Another Look at the Future of the Private Colleges* (2000), is based on his firm's survey of more than 35,000 students in a five-year period (1994-98) and on a survey of the literature of higher education during that period. The evidence suggests that there will be increased competition between public and private schools of higher education because of affordability and perception issues. In the first instance, a family's ability to pay the extraordinary costs of private institutions is decreasing as their willingness to do so also decreases. Most families and students do not see the advantage of small classes over large classes, the advantage of individual contact between faculty and students over impersonal mass lectures, or the financial aid opportunities that make it possible to attend liberal arts schools. In an earlier report on the same topic, Dehne reported "an eroding interest in small colleges" because of changing attitudes that perceive public institutions, not private colleges, as providing a higher quality of education (*A Look...*, 1995, p. 4). His latest report indicates that this trend is continuing. While the college-bound student in 1994 said that ideal student body size was 3,500, the 1998 student said the ideal size was 5,000. In addition, the 1998 college-bound student was more urban-oriented in selecting a college or university, wanting greater diversity in entertainment, housing, and dining opportunities. Dehne concludes, "Gone is the bucolic setting for college. These young people want action" (*Another Look ...*, p. 4).

There are some bright spots in Dehne's latest report for liberal arts colleges to consider. While in 1998 only 25% of bachelor's degrees in colleges were awarded in the arts and sciences, the "new economy" will require skills that a broad liberal arts education can provide. Business leaders and their company recruiters say they want college graduates who

¹⁷ See *Report on State Assistance Programs Benefiting Independent Colleges and Universities and Their Students* by the National Association of Independent Colleges and University State Executives (1999) as referenced in *The Role and Effectiveness of the Independent Colleges and Universities in Kentucky* by MGT of America on behalf of the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities, pp. 3-13 (2001).

(1) are flexible and can adapt to change, (2) can work in teams, (3) are independent self-starters, (4) have excellent communication skills, and (5) demonstrate an “eagerness for lifelong learning” (*Another Look...*, p. 3). Liberal arts colleges are well positioned to educate such learners and workers. According to Dehne, colleges that can best teach such desired abilities must also be flexible and adaptable to change and provide students with curricular choices and opportunities for self-direction (e.g., independent studies, self-directed majors, etc.).

Dehne’s conclusions are supported by an earlier 1995 Pew Higher Education Roundtable *Policy Perspectives* publication entitled “Cross Currents.” This document indicates that liberal arts colleges’ values and strengths are at “cross currents” with the public’s mood and willingness to support such an education—and the gap is widening. Because the public is less convinced that the value of private higher education is worth the price, campus cultural values appear to be at odds with those of the public. Indeed, the general public’s self-interested, secular, and vocational educational goals for higher education are sometimes at variance with those of private institutions like Berea College. However, the new economy’s demands on workers as outlined above fit well with a contemporary liberal arts curriculum and education. It is clear that the clash between the values of many private small colleges and those of the broader public is an important consideration in the future viability of such institutions. It is also clear that there are authentic opportunities for adaptable and focused liberal arts colleges to emphasize the connection between the skills provided by a liberal arts education and employers’ expectations for employees in this new economy. Here, Berea College’s Labor Program, which integrates labor and learning, distinguishes it from traditional liberal arts colleges.

Among the many critics and concerned supporters of private higher education, there is some agreement about the necessary qualities for liberal arts colleges to prosper in the new millennium. First, the walls between disciplines must be lowered so that more collaboration occurs across disciplines. Second, in the new educational climate, diversity of perspectives and the application of knowledge should be valued equally with disciplinary expertise and theoretical knowledge. Finally, liberal arts colleges must expand their definition of learning to include the residential, labor, service-learning, and other dimensions of the college as part of the overall learning environment. By adopting these tenets, it is possible to regard liberal arts education, the private educational institution, and the world they serve as interrelated “wholes.”¹⁸

Although Berea College is not immediately threatened by some of the financial issues facing many private colleges, it has certainly shared aged facilities, the high cost of technology, a traditional discipline-based curriculum, and other challenges. One such challenge for Berea College stems from the migration of students from private colleges to public universities. Namely, many private schools now must provide full-tuition (and increasingly, full-cost) scholarships to attract the same students who are considering Berea as a full-tuition scholarship choice. The gap between materialistic and secular cultural values in the United States and the values articulated in the Great Commitments poses a special challenge to Berea College. For example, Berea’s inclusive Christian self-understanding that

¹⁸ See Judy Brown’s “Barriers to Becoming a Learning Organization” (1995).

welcomes students and staff of other faiths conflicts both with the United States' secular pluralism and with the Religious Right, which has increasingly claimed the right to define Christianity in America. Finally, Berea has had a rather traditional organizational structure in terms of academic disciplines, few student elective choices in their curriculum, and overlapping administration and faculty governance systems. It is precisely such traditional structures that tend to mitigate against the flexibility, adaptability, and capacity to change that all sources agree will be required of successful liberal arts colleges in the decades ahead.

Students of the New Millennium in Appalachia and Beyond

The United States and all global communities are undergoing the kind of deep and systemic economic change that occurred in the late 19th century when a primarily agricultural economy was replaced by the industrial age. The “information age” is characterized by high-speed global communications and transportation, and an increased emphasis on technological and information expertise as the cornerstones of work and wealth. It has spawned a “new economy” that is global in scope and dependent upon the technology of the Internet to provide around-the-clock access to information and business functions. This economy is not dependent upon time, place, and traditional workplaces. Not surprisingly, students and their parents increasingly view a college degree as a necessary key to successful participation in the new economy. This vocational view of the necessity of higher education is supported by employment statistics. In 1970, 36% of the labor force had less than a high school diploma and only 14% had four or more years of College. In 1990, fewer than 13.5% of those in the workforce had less than a high school diploma and 26% had four or more years of College. By 2000 the trend continued, with 10% of the labor force having less than a high school education and over 30% having a bachelor's degree. This trend toward recognizing a college degree as a necessary means to economic survival continues unabated.

Employers' expectations for increased technological sophistication and higher levels of communication and thinking skills in the workforce occur in a context in which the gap between the rich and the poor and the gap between the majority and the minority populations are widening. At first glance, it would appear that Berea is well situated to address the needs of the economically disadvantaged segment of the population of our region, but further investigation might question this conclusion. In sheer numbers, the United States' population of eighteen-year-olds declined from 4,340,000 in 1980 to 3,195,000 in 1994 and then began to rise again. Surprisingly, throughout the past two decades the number of students attending college has actually risen because of certain age and gender trends in the college-going population. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of women attending college has increased from 41% of undergraduates in 1970 to 56% by the year 1998. In that same period, the percentage of “non-traditional students” (25 years of age and older) who attended college increased from 28% to 41% of their age cohort. By 1997, the college-going population was 73% white, 11% black, 9% Hispanic, and 7% other ethnicity, according to the latest data from the National Center for Education Statistics. Most strikingly, 11% of America's college and university population in 2000 was foreign born, according to 2000 Census data. These national trends are, of course, in stark contrast to demographic trends of the territory that Berea College serves, where the black population

has actually decreased in recent decades to its current 9%.¹⁹ During this same period the Hispanic population in Appalachia has risen to 339,179 or 2% of the population.

The migration trend from private to public college attendance that Dehne observes is occurring in Berea's admissions territory as well. There are 214 institutions of higher education in Berea's territory,²⁰ more than a quarter of which (mostly community colleges) have been created in the past 30 years. Of the 686,500 college students in Berea's territory, 24% attend the largest state universities in the territory,²¹ 60% attend regional state universities or community colleges, and only 16% attend private colleges, according to Berea's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. While the population of the Appalachian region has grown by about 20% since 1972 (after the large exodus of the 1960's), the college-going population has actually increased nearly 75% for reasons stated earlier (i.e., increasing numbers of women, non-traditional, and previously non-college segments of the population are now attending college). During this same period of significant population and admissions growth, the percentage of students attending private colleges in the region actually dropped slightly from 16.5% to 16% of those in school, even in the face of enormous increases in tuition discounting, the addition of new scholarships, and the addition of programs for non-traditional students. This trend is continuing.

Berea College's territory has experienced other predictable cultural changes in the last decades of the 20th century. The rapid out-migration of population that took place between 1930 and 1970 has diminished considerably, and since 1970 the region's population has actually grown. Despite this apparent balancing of population shifts, an imbalance continues because many of those who leave are young people in their prime working ages. Furthermore, the 15.9 million inhabitants of the territory are increasingly urbanized. Approximately 52% live in metropolitan areas of 100,000 or more people, another 24% live in smaller cities, and only 24% live in rural areas. According to Berea College's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, approximately 36% of Berea's entering class of 2000 came from cities of 10,000 or more people, 27% came from small towns, and 36% came from rural areas.²²

The people in Berea's territory are much more likely than people in the rest of the country to have incomes below the poverty line, not to have a high school education, and to receive public assistance. In Kentucky, 25% of residents do not have a high school diploma,

¹⁹ Data provided by the Berea College Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) based on statistics from the 2000 Census data.

²⁰ Berea's "In-Territory" includes the entire states of Kentucky and West Virginia, and includes designated Appalachian areas in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. "In-Territory" also includes "permanent residents (non-citizens who have formally established residency in the U.S.) and refugees who reside in the territory." Berea's "Out-of-Territory" refers to "Students who come from outside the In-Territory area, including U.S. Citizens living in foreign countries. Out-of-Territory also includes permanent residents (a non-citizen who has formally established residency in the U.S.) and refugees who reside out of the territory." This information is from the Berea College OIRA online "2003 Geographical Report," http://www.berea.edu/ira/pdf.files/geo/geo_2003/pg.1.and.2.pdf.

²¹ Including the University of Kentucky, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Ohio University, Appalachian State University, Clemson, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and West Virginia University.

²² Note: the residential origin of 1% of the student population is unavailable.

as compared to 18% nationally. Rates of poverty among children under 18 in Eastern Kentucky range from 21% in Madison County to 50% in Owsley County. For the Eastern Kentucky region as a whole, almost 36% of children live in households below the poverty level, and in the ten poorest counties the rate is 45%.²³ In 1998, per capita income in Eastern Kentucky was only 61.5% of the national per capita income.²⁴ Increasingly, young people live with single parents and/or in households where a parent is forced to work multiple jobs. About 1.3 million people in the Appalachian part of Berea's territory²⁵ (approximately 9%, many in the cities) are African Americans who face additional problems created by the endemic racism in the region. The continuing decline of traditional industries such as coal and textiles means that people in the Berea territory will be forced to learn new skills and to join the growing number of workers in service-sector employment.

Not only do demographic and economic trends challenge Berea College's admissions and education efforts, but so do the different educational abilities and learning styles that students bring with them. Each generation of students represents new teaching/learning challenges that are sometimes confusing to faculty and staff who grew up and went to college in a different age. In a study published in 1983, Marjorie Davis and Charles Schroeder identified the students of the 1980's as more worldly wise, and more ethnically and economically diverse than the previous generation of college students, even as they were less personally mature and less well grounded in traditional values and less facile in social relationships and communications (pp. 147-168). This study further suggested that such "new students" bring to the classroom different learning styles than those of their professors. Over the past 25 years, there has been a dramatic shift in the learning styles of students relative to those of their mentors. In 1970, 75% of the students entering college felt comfortable with a theoretically- and conceptually-oriented way of learning that resembled that of their faculty mentors. However by 1985, those percentages were reversed, with 75% of the students learning better from a more concrete or applied approach and only 25% of the students feeling comfortable with the more theoretical/intuitive learning style typical of most professors. This trend has continued. Much of the teaching/learning challenges that Berea professors must face in the classroom of the future may have less to do with students' interest in vocational education than their different learning styles.

In an essay published in 1995, William Plater says that students of the 1990's were more diverse, had greater expectations of the faculty who taught them, were less well-prepared academically than students of the 1980's and before, and yet came to college with greater sophistication in computer technologies than many faculty members had. Many professors have already recognized this shift in the learning styles and abilities of their students, and have adjusted their pedagogies to reach young people who have become used to acquiring information in brief electronic doses or through experience rather than through reading and sustained reflection.

²³ Information provided by Berea College's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, based on calculations from the 2000 Census data.

²⁴ See Richard Couto's "Appalachian Trends and Issues" (2002).

²⁵ The Appalachian part of Berea's "territory" excludes Lexington, Louisville, and Western Kentucky.

Recent research suggests that there is not one general typology of students attending colleges in the early 2000's. First, there are the so-called "Generation X" students about whom many books have already been written. These students are often characterized as individualistic, mistrustful of institutions (including colleges), and yet oriented to provide service to individuals and selected causes. Second, Arthur Levine and Jeanette Cureton's 1998 work, *When Hope and Fear Collide: A Portrait of Today's College Students*, draws a portrait of a "transitional generation" which demonstrates decreased social and academic engagement and increased personal and academic neediness. Both of these "generations" of students reveal many of the traits of which Davis, Schroeder, and Plater speak. However, a third "generation" of students is now arriving on college campuses to add to the rich complexity of college learning environments.

Children born in the early 1980's (and thereafter) arrived on college campuses in the fall of 2000 and exhibit traits and perspectives that represent a significant divergence from their immediate predecessors. This new generation of students is called by different commentators the "Net," the "Millennial," or simply the "Y" generation. Neil Howe and William Strauss in their book, *Millennials Rising*, report considerable research on this new generation of students.²⁶ As the most cared-for generation of students by parents, coaches, teachers, relatives, etc., the Millennials are more confident, happy, positive-minded, and trusting than their immediate predecessors. They are more trusting of institutions and of people in authority. They believe in themselves as individuals and believe that theirs will be the next "great generation." They are more social than their predecessors and tend to collect in groups of similar thinking peers, and yet they are more comfortable with diversity and cross-racial and ethnic boundaries in their thinking and socializing. They have played with electronic games and computers from a very young age and thus feel very comfortable with the centrality of technology in their learning environments.

The challenge of teaching this group of students is that while they are brighter (by external measures) than their predecessors as a group, they have had to study less. Because they have come to expect smaller group accommodations and social arrangements, they bring such expectations to their residential living and learning arrangements on college campuses. And with much of their learning coming through electronic means (i.e., videos, Internet, etc.), they have less *experience* with sustained reflection and are less comfortable with traditional textbook and lecture formats. They do bring a positive mindset to their learning and also significant capabilities with computer technologies. Hence, they are generally a capable, confident, and challenging group of students to teach. However, the world in which they will live and work has been dramatically refocused by the events of 9/11.

It is not yet clear what impact on the current and future generations of students the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on United States' soil will have. We know that the Cold War and the nuclear threats of the 1960's and 70's had demonstrable effects on students' sense of wellbeing and negative views about what the future might hold for them. Globalization in such things as news coverage and cultural borrowings of food and dress has been a reality for most students now in high school or college. The events of September 11

²⁶ For a full portrayal of the "new millennial" students, see Neil Howe and William Strauss' *Millennials Rising: the Next Great Generation* (2000) and *Millennials Go to College* (2003).

and the following “War on Terrorism” have introduced an awareness, among all Americans, of the United States’ true interdependence with other peoples and religions of the world and a lost sense of security caused by unexpected and gratuitous violence against the United States and its allies around the world. How these events will shape the motivations and expectations for learning among the current and future generations of Berea students, we do not know. However, it is clear that some sense of innocence has been lost for all who experienced September 11 and that these events create both challenges and opportunities for teaching and learning on all levels of education.

Faculty in a New Millennium

William Plater’s 1995 essay “Future Work: Faculty Time in the 21st Century” indicates that considerable development will need to occur to prepare faculty to teach “millennial” students well. First of all, Plater states that faculty time will be centered more on students and the teaching/learning interchange than on scholarship. Second, computer technology will become increasingly a tool of what Plater calls “hyper-learning” (i.e., enhanced learning). Third, teaching will become more multi-disciplinary and focused on real world problem-solving if the curriculum and pedagogy of the 1990’s is to engage students and transform them in desired ways. This challenge will require new academic structures that move beyond the boundaries of current academic departments. Fourth, faculty will be held more accountable for how well students learn—not simply how well faculty members teach. This increasing emphasis upon assessing learning, instead of assessing teaching, challenges the traditional structures of tenure and promotion, which have rewarded teachers and scholars independently of how well their students learn. Fifth, Plater concludes that time will become the most valuable commodity for faculty, as they must find a balance between their own development in addressing the new students and their learning challenges and the many other responsibilities of faculty.

In an electronic report sent to Berea College on January 10, 2001, George Dehne addressed the issues associated with teaching “The College Students of Today and Tomorrow,” that is, the “Millennial students.” The teaching trends that Plater outlined six years earlier (and as noted in the previous section) have all been accelerated by the Millennial generation of students. Dehne suggests that for this more diverse, differently prepared group of students now arriving on our campuses, computer and other technologies will allow “customizing” of learning to help meet each student’s needs. Such customization is also an expectation of the most talented group of students who are coming to our campuses today. Beyond the resources of a traditional residential campus, distance-learning providers offer one avenue of expanding a small college’s curriculum to meet the special needs and interests of individual students.

The question of how faculty can find the time to develop these new pedagogical talents and expertise while maintaining their disciplinary competence in fields that are expanding exponentially is a critical one. Institutions must seek solutions in conceiving of the learning environment in new ways, in revised tenure and promotional processes, in faculty development strategies, and in ways of evaluating classroom success. The many forces that impinge on faculty who want to be teachers, scholars, and public servants make

the utilization of time a critical issue. Many professors, who choose the academic life because they want to read, think, and reflect, find little time for thoughtful teaching, scholarship, or intellectual development given the current demands on their time.²⁷ In addition to the challenges of the new technologically sophisticated and pedagogically enhanced classroom described above, there are also the demands of campus governance, accreditation and assessment requirements, and the burgeoning of information in all disciplines that have put enormous pressure on committed faculty. There is no doubt that this is one of the most important issues that must be addressed on Berea's campus.

For some faculty, these many forces have created a working environment quite different from the one they entered two or three decades earlier. In their book *American Professors: A National Resource Imperiled* (1986), Howard Bowen and Jack Schuster suggest that morale has never been lower for faculty in higher education. Increasing pressures brought about by the new challenges faculty face in the classroom and in their scholarship, coupled with attacks upon their integrity and credibility by the public, have contributed to a low morale among faculty in many colleges and universities in the United States. Likewise, higher publication standards for tenure on many campuses, the leveling off of compensation, and perceived loss of power in governance have led many faculty to conclude that their work lives have become less meaningful than when they began teaching.

Typically, faculty at private liberal arts colleges have considerably higher morale than their colleagues at state universities where the "publish or perish" standard is the norm. At Berea College, where many take inspiration from a strong sense of mission, faculty morale may be more positive and less reflective of general national trends. However, the issues of time management and increasing expectations for pedagogical and scholarly development along with concerns about governance, teaching evaluation, tenure review, and the quality of community weigh as heavily upon the Berea teaching faculty as they do on faculty elsewhere.

Partly as a result of faculty members' reluctance to change traditional modes of teaching and campus governance, and partly as a result of the increased criticism of faculty productivity and professional integrity, many critics suggested in the 1990's that tenure be abolished on college campuses. In the early 1990's, Macalester College in Minnesota decided to move away from tenure contracts with faculty to a system of more highly paid five-year contracts. In the mid-1990's, the College of the Ozarks decided to continue tenure contracts for those who already had them but no longer to grant tenure for new faculty who were hired. While these two examples during the 1990's were exceptions to the rule, they reveal how seriously the tenure question has been taken in some higher education institutions in the past decade.

During the mid-1990's, the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) initiated a project called "New Pathways: Faculty Careers and Employment in the 21st Century," which began in the fall of 1995. The 1995 President of the AAHE, Russell

²⁷ See Stuart Sherman's "Time in Teaching, Teaching in Time" (1996) and R. Eugene Rice, Mary Deane Sorcinelli, and Ann E. Austin's *Heeding New Voices: Academic Careers for a New Generation* (2000).

Edgerton, recommended in “From Tenure to New Pathways” that higher education associations explore tenure and its alternatives before private colleges on the brink of survival are forced to deal with the issue in less deliberate and systematic ways. Consistent with that philosophy, in one of the working papers in the “New Pathways” series, Richard Chait indicates that one of the goals of the New Pathways project is to generate tenure options for consideration by the academic community. He explains, “The objective is not, and never has been, either to undo tenure, at one extreme, or to enshrine its traditional tenets, at the other. Rather, we hope to explore whether any variations on standard practice might be more advantageous to the interests of both the faculty and the institution” (Chait, *Ideas*, 1998, p. 4). In that spirit, Chait’s report proposes three options for modification of traditional tenure policies: 1) a reconfiguration of the probationary period or “tenure by objectives” in which the tenure decision is based on explicit criteria, performance-based agreements, and demonstrated competence to reduce ambiguity and the corresponding stress felt by untenured faculty; 2) post-tenure reviews that focus more on departments than on individual performance; and 3) preservation of academic freedom through codification agreements rather than tenure.

In the latter half of the 1990’s and early 2000’s, the debate on tenure has matured. Many of the voices calling for attention to tenure are those of faculty. The American Association of University Professors’ *Academe* published its May/June 2000 issue on the theme of tenure. One essay concluded that the effort to abolish tenure is failing nationally (Finkin, p. 4). Another article argued that tenure is a “device for building institutional loyalty” and that loyalty declines as tenure track positions are reduced (Poston, p. 26). The AAHE’s 2000 report, *Heeding New Voices: Academic Careers for a New Generation*, indicates that younger faculty value tenure as a way to protect academic freedom, provide employment security, and to systematize peer evaluations, and yet their experience says that the tenure process does not live up to its potential (Rice, Sorcinelli, and Austin, p. 12). Perhaps the greatest change in the tenure discussion in recent years is the focus on post-tenure review as a way to increase public confidence in tenure.

Academe has also devoted numerous articles to the subject of post-tenure review from 1995-2002. Some faculty see post-tenure review as a kind of professional intimidation or managerial control that is damaging to the academic community (Tierney, 1997, p. 23). Other faculty advocate post-tenure review as a “self-policing” system intended to sustain and stimulate faculty members’ habits of critical inquiry (Edwards, 1997, p. 26). Similarly, some faculty and administrators see post-tenure review as inculcating a culture of continuous improvement, especially at institutions in which existing systems for planning, assessing, and rewarding faculty fail to support excellence, experimentation, quality, and adaptability.²⁸ Still other commentators see post-tenure review as an effective tool for ensuring faculty competence and strengthening institutional quality.²⁹ With regard to both the tenure and post-tenure review considerations, it is clear that business as usual will no longer suffice for

²⁸ See Christine Licata’s “Precepts for Post-Tenure Reviews” (1999); James Slevin’s “Preserving Critical Faculties: Faculty Leadership in Rethinking Tenure and Sustaining the Academy’s Values” (2000); and William M. Plater’s “A Profession at Risk: Using Post-Tenure Review to Save Tenure and Create Intentional Future for the Academic Community” (2001).

²⁹ This notion was espoused in 1982 in the report by the National Commission on Higher Education Issues and has been championed by policymakers in numerous states as well as various governing boards.

more engaged, inquisitive boards of trustees and for a critical public, who will insist upon accountability if colleges and universities do not provide it on their own.

Governance on College/University Campuses

A review of recent literature in higher education journals shows that governance was one of the most contentious and widely debated issues during the 1990's. Many essays and reports on governance on college and university campuses published in such journals as *Academe*, *Trusteeship*, *Change*, and *Liberal Education*,³⁰ indicate that the larger context for the governance debate includes the public's criticism of higher education, internal pressures to address governance on college campuses, the diversity and democratization of the student cohort now attending colleges, and a significant assessment shift from faculty teaching to student learning in the recent decades.

There are three overriding themes in the national conversation on governance: (1) trustee activism, (2) faculty concerns about collaborative or shared governance, and (3) the role of the president in campus governance. With regard to trustee activism, proponents argue that faculty and administrators have failed to control excessive budget increases or to address faculty entitlements (e.g., tenure). Critics argue that the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) 1998/99 report "AGB Statement on Institutional Governance" promotes trustee activism and interference with campus decision making. The AGB report says that its "purpose is to encourage AGB member boards to examine the clarity, coherence, and appropriateness of their institution's governance structures, policies and practices, and to revise them as necessary" (p. 3). On some college campuses, a tendency toward hierarchical corporate models of decision making has led to more "top down" decision making.

Regarding faculty concerns about collaborative or shared governance, Jerry Gaff of the American Association of Colleges and Universities says that collaboration is critical on college campuses between faculty and administrators. He asserts that the curriculum is out of control due to "individualism, autonomy, and specialization often at the expense of community, collaboration, and common learning" (1997, p. 12). He believes that if we put the needs of students as our first priority, collaboration will naturally result. Numerous articles speak to the feeling of many faculty that they have been left out of the governance equation by activist trustees and CEO-type presidents and academic administrators. Most who research and write on this topic agree that the essential tension is between the values of individual freedom and collaboration for the common good. One faculty commentator argues forcefully that the preferred scenario is "the invigoration of shared governance among trustees, administrators, and faculty" (Lazerson, 1997, p. 15).

The third theme on governance in recent literature deals with the role of the president. The AGB, in its 1996 report called *Renewing the Academic Presidency: Stronger Leadership for Tougher Times*, argues for a stronger role for the president in campus decision making. Critics argue that the AGB model is of a hierarchical, corporate CEO who would undermine collaboration in decision making on college campuses. Others argue that a stronger president

³⁰ For a full account of the working groups' findings, see the report of the EC/SPC Governance Working Group" (2000).

is needed to stand between more activist trustees and recalcitrant faculty. What is clear from the literature of the recent decades is that the president is often placed in the role of mediator between campus and board issues and constituencies. Moderates among presidents, faculty, and trustees argue that only shared governance between these three key constituencies will enable most colleges to flourish.³¹

Whatever their perspective, all who have researched and written on the issue of college governance agree that it is a conundrum that will occupy much time and consideration well into the future. Many of the vexing issues that face higher education, from budget and curricular challenges to faculty tenure and post-tenure debates, will be resolved in decision-making processes that are carefully scrutinized by on-campus and off-campus constituencies. The ability of campus governance and decision-making bodies to act wisely, expeditiously, and with credibility on such matters will, to a great extent, depend upon the ability of faculty, administrators, and trustees to accept appropriate collaborative and distinctive governance roles.

Accreditation, Assessment, and Institutional Effectiveness

When Berea College completed its institutional self-study in 1994 and received the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Visiting Team report outlining 49 major recommendations, it became apparent that the external environment for accreditation and assessment had changed from the College's accreditation review ten years earlier. The SACS self-study manual of 1995, *Criteria for Accreditation*, contained over 400 "must statements" that institutions were required to address in their self-studies. By the year 2002, SACS and most regional accrediting bodies had increased their accountability measures for colleges, and they had responded to campus calls for procedural reforms. Thus, during the 2003-04 academic year, when Berea College was preparing for its 2005 SACS review, the standards and the accreditation process had been significantly revised. The new SACS standards are streamlined and the process has been significantly altered (e.g., a small institutional team addresses SACS' 75 compliance standards while the entire campus is expected to focus on the "Quality Enhancement Plan" or QEP). Still, SACS' criteria for institutional effectiveness touch virtually every part of a college's activities and operations. In its attempt to ensure that colleges and universities are accountable both to their own mission statements and to accreditation eligibility criteria, SACS serves as a peer review agency implementing an external mandate.

Federal involvement in college and university assessment has also increased dramatically in recent years, and the efficacy of regional accrediting bodies like SACS has even been called into question. One regional agency, the Middle States Association, was put on probation by the Department of Education for a period of time in the 1990's. This incident resulted in a nationwide conversation about peer review versus federal government accreditation and led to active attempts on the federal level in the late 1990's to establish a nationwide entity for overseeing both regional and disciplinary accrediting associations. In a

³¹ See Patrick Ellis' "The Managerial Presidency According to the AGB" (1998); Larry G. Gerber's "Reaffirming the Value of Shared Governance" (1997); Ruth Cowan's "A Prescription for Vitality for Small Colleges" (1994); and Larry D. Shinn's "A Conflict of Cultures: Governance at Liberal Arts Colleges" (2004).

special issue of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation's *Letter from the President* (2004), Judith Eaton suggests that the current educational reauthorization legislation before Congress seriously questions the fundamental tradition of self-regulation in higher education: "Will higher education, through accreditation—its primary form of self-regulation—continue to carry out its responsibility for academic quality or will the federal government be successful in shifting more of the responsibility for academic quality to the federal level?" (p. 1). She then explored the negative implications this shift would have on such fundamental values as academic autonomy, academic freedom, and the centrality of institutional mission. In its 2006 HEA bill, Congress sought to weaken peer-accreditation and encourage state-authored accreditation of colleges and universities. While that portion of the bill ultimately failed by a narrow margin, it is clear that state and federal oversight hovers over the future of both public and private higher education in America.

Issues of accreditation, accountability, assessment, and institutional effectiveness have increasingly been objects of public, legal, governmental, and higher education association debates during the 1990's and early 2000's. The American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) took the lead (until it disbanded in May 2005) in the assessment movement by linking assessment issues to those of accountability and institutional effectiveness. AAHE national assessment conferences met annually over the past decade to apprise colleges and universities of effective modes of classroom assessment as well as legal and governmental assessment issues. It is not clear who will take up the AAHE's work on assessment in the future. What is clear is that assessment has moved beyond the issues of accountability and governmental oversight to issues of teaching, learning, and institutional effectiveness in the achievement of educational missions.³²

The best way for Berea College to engage with SACS and other accrediting groups is through a partnership that improves Berea's realization of its unique mission. In its *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation* (2003), SACS' Commission on Colleges identifies several "paramount concepts" for accreditation: peer review, institutional integrity, and a commitment to enhancing the quality of student learning (p. 2). Although the importance of compliance is still prominently featured throughout the *Handbook*, SACS also devotes a page to enumerating the many institutional benefits of participating in the accreditation process. SACS' new process includes four significant components: (1) a compliance certificate rendered by the president and on-campus SACS team; (2) a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focused on improving student learning; (3) annually submitted profiles to provide SACS with current institutional data; and (4) focused reports in response to SACS' judgments of non-compliance. Berea's strategic planning process has led us to (a) focus on the programs and processes of student learning; (b) understand Berea's residential, co-curricular, labor, and service activities as an integral part of our educational program; and (c) measure our progress in meeting our learning goals according to our accepted plan. There is a great deal of apparent overlap in SACS' criteria for accreditation and the processes we have developed here at Berea over the past decades. In assessing, understanding, and improving the achievement of our learning goals, our interests coincide with those of SACS.

³² See George D. Kuh's "Assessing What Really Matters to Student Learning" and Debra Friedman and Phillip Hoffman's "Enhancing Learning, Assessment, and Accountability" (2001).

Institutions of higher learning have been slow to apply what has been learned from research and experiments involving human learning, memory, and thought to the classroom.³³ However, increased emphasis on accountability and assessing the achievement of desired learning outcomes has brought an increasing emphasis on understanding the learning process as an essential part of teaching.³⁴ By 1995, the distinctions between the traditional instructional focus on input factors such as teacher qualifications and course design characteristics and the emerging focus on student learning had become sufficiently apparent to support the claim that a shift in paradigm was in progress. Since the 1995 publication of Barr and Tagg's somewhat provocative article, "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education," many of the nation's most respected educational authorities have strongly endorsed the value and significance of this shift.³⁵ Many faculty on college campuses anticipated or have responded to this focus on student learning. Likewise, most regional accreditation commissions are in the process of significantly altering their assessment criteria and processes by which member institutions are evaluated to include more emphasis on measuring and improving student learning outcomes.

After the expansionist days of the 1980's and early 1990's, contraction in services and reductions of staffs and budgets are the trends of the 2000's. Though Americans still value higher education as an avenue to vocational and lifelong success, they are much more critical of the high cost and seeming lack of accountability of higher education institutions than they have been in the recent past. Federal and state governments have been active critics of higher education even as they seek to support higher costs in a shrinking budget environment. One example of this trend is the government's failure to increase the Pell grant maximum award of \$4,050 from its 2003-04 level, even as it failed to fully fund the program at that level.

Concerns about the affordability, accountability, economic support, maintenance of aging facilities, and responsiveness to a critical public will make the success of private colleges even more challenging in the years ahead. Meanwhile, faculty and students bring new attitudes and orientations to their work and new skills to the teaching and learning process. The rapid changes on campuses and the external scrutiny of the public have made life in the academy less idyllic than it was sometimes perceived to be in the past. At Berea College, these issues vary in their relevance and urgency (e.g., rising tuition costs are not relevant to Berea students, but are relevant in Berea's cost-of-education budget-setting). Therefore, these external imperatives should be viewed as opportunities for reflection that must be factored into our institutional planning.

³³ See Robert A. Bjork's "An Information Processing Analysis of College Teaching" (1979).

³⁴ See Ernest L. Boyer's *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (1987); David B. Porter's "A Perspective on College Learning" (1991); Lee S. Shulman's "Toward a Pedagogy of Substance" (1989); and Diane F. Halpern and Milton D. Hakel's "Applying the Science of Learning" (2003).

³⁵ See Thomas A. Angelo's "Doing Assessment as if Learning Mattered Most" (1999); Robert B. Barr and John Tagg's "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education" (1995); Peter T. Ewell's "Organizing for Learning: A New Imperative" (1997); Richard H. Hersh and Roger Benjamin's "Assessing Selected Liberal Education Outcomes: A New Approach" (2002); Richard L. Morrill's *Strategic Leadership in Academic Affairs: Clarifying the Board's Responsibilities* (2002); and Catherine A. Palomba and Trudy W. Banta's *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing and Improving Assessment in Higher Education* (1999).

Additional Emerging Academic/Educational Issues: Technology and Diversity

In addition to the governance, student, and faculty issues, two other major educational trends were ubiquitous in higher education literature and discussions. The first is the explosive impact of computers, technology, distance learning, and the Internet on educational institutions and processes. The second is the persistence and expansion of “diversity” as a demographic and educational concern. While both of these issues were present in the mid-1990’s, they have become even more salient in national educational debates.

First of all, the information age is fully upon us. The Internet has changed the way companies conduct their businesses, has caused financial markets to merge internationally, and has enticed educational institutions to access traditional and electronic forms of information and to engage computer technologies in the classroom. The so-called “new economy” is one predicated upon a workforce that is flexible with regard to the time and place where work gets done and that is proficient with electronic modes of communication from cell phones and pagers to computers and Internet search engines. It is not just on college campuses where issues of the rapid changes in computer hardware, software, and their uses have created enormous employee development challenges. Yet on college campuses, we can already see how extensive the issues are regarding how best to educate ourselves as teachers and workers to be mentors to the new “Millennial students.”³⁶

Many educational issues that emerge from Internet communications and commerce are pedagogical, financial, and mission-centered. As the Internet provides access to a previously unimaginable quantity of information of widely varying quality, how are we to educate students to discern reliable sources from unreliable ones and good arguments from poor ones? With the burgeoning of distance learning sites from the Kentucky Virtual University to the for-profit Phoenix University, how should residential liberal arts colleges like Berea respond to new distance learning opportunities? As the computer abilities of the new generation of students and faculty increases, how are we to assist those faculty, administrators, and staff who did not grow up in the digital age? And as the pace of technological change continues to accelerate, how can small colleges with limited budgets and human resources keep apace with their larger and more affluent competitors? These are but a few of the issues raised in the educational literature over the past decades. What is unmistakable is the fact that no college or university can ignore the digital age with its benefits and encumbrances. Berea College will be no exception to this externally imposed challenge.

A second heightened trend in higher education literature is deeper exploration of “diversity.”³⁷ This issue tends to be divided into two distinct but related issues in the literature: racial/African American diversity and multicultural/international diversity. While

³⁶ See Judy S. Brown’s “Growing Up Digital: How the Web Changes Work, Education, and the Way People Learn” (2000); Kenneth C. Green and Steven W. Gilbert’s “Great Expectations: Content, Communications, Productivity, and the Role of Information Technology in Higher Education” (1995); John S. Daniel’s “Why Universities Need Technological Strategies” (1997); Arthur E. Levine’s “The Future of Colleges: 9 Inevitable Changes” (2000); and Helen Scott, Jon Chenette, and Jim Swartz’s “The Integration of Technology into Learning and Teaching in the Liberal Arts” (2002).

³⁷ For example, see the “Diversity on Campus” theme issue of *Academe* (2000).

attention to racial and ethnic issues on college campuses overlap with multicultural issues involving international students, there are also distinctive issues associated with these different kinds of diversity. The major issues in higher education literature surrounding black/white or African American diversity include: (1) the status and future of preferential admissions practices based on affirmative action goals; (2) the need to diversify faculty, administrator, and staff cohorts as the number of black students increases on college campuses; (3) ways to improve the academic performance of black students, especially in scientific and technological fields; and (4) attention to new research and justifications for diversity as a positive educational goal.

Legal and social challenges to race-sensitive admissions policies have arisen in the past decade. The landmark 1978 *Bakke v. University of California* court decision that permitted race to be considered in admissions decisions has been successfully challenged in three different state settings. The erosion of affirmative action in admissions became during the 1990's a distinct threat to racial diversity on many public and state university campuses. Such opposition led in 1997 to *Grutter v. Bollinger* where a white student challenged the admissions policy of Michigan's law school and to *Gratz v. Bollinger* where another white student challenged Michigan's undergraduate College of Literature, Science, and the Arts admissions policy. These two suits were finally decided in June of 2003 by the United States Supreme Court with split decisions: the law school's admissions policy was deemed legal by a 5-4 vote, and the undergraduate college admissions policy was considered illegal by a 6-3 vote. The generally accepted interpretation of these two highly contested landmark cases was that taking race into consideration in admissions was impermissible as long as quotas, numeral scoring and other numerical methods were used "mechanically" and permissible as long as each student's admissions file was given individual attention and race was considered as only one among many variables. Perhaps the most compelling result of the Supreme Court actions was that race was considered to be a compelling U.S. government interest that colleges and universities could pursue in their admissions policies.³⁸

To compound the obstacles to student diversity on college campuses, efforts to hire African American employees in the faculty, administration, and staff have been only modestly successful. Recent research at the University of Michigan shows that racial diversity enhances the learning of both white and black students and thus is an important consideration for all constituencies on a college campus.³⁹ All three of these issues are related to the contemporary research by Claude Steele and others about new ways to approach underachievement by black students on college campuses. Steele's research suggests that such underperformance is not primarily a matter of motivation, pre-college preparation, talent, or socioeconomic class. An explanation that he and his colleagues see as more powerful (and more hopeful given the promising results of some intervention experiments) is "stereotype threat," the threat brought about by awareness of an existing negative stereotype and the associated fear that one might inadvertently behave or perform in

³⁸ See "Affirmative Action in Higher Education after *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger*," prepared for the American Council on Education by Hogan & Hartson L.L.P. (2003).

³⁹ See Peter Schmidt's "Debating the Benefits of Affirmative Action: Defenders Use Research to Bolster Their Case" (2001).

ways that would serve to it.⁴⁰ Experiments at Stanford and Michigan Universities by Steele suggest there are remedies for such minority academic underperformance. What is clear from the literature on this topic is that academic black/white issues persist on college campuses and invite innovative and positive responses.

Multicultural or international diversity is a second area of considerable interest and conversation over recent decades. The areas that emerge from conversations about “internationalization” or multiculturalism include: (1) study abroad by American students, (2) internationalizing the curriculum and the broader college or university, (3) ways to include international students in college campuses academically and socially, and (4) faculty development. Study abroad by United States students continues to rise steadily. In 1985-86, 48,483 U.S. students studied abroad. In 1998-99, the number rose to 129,770 students. In addition to this increase in study abroad and the study of foreign languages was an increase in attention to international issues on college campuses. Disciplines as diverse as business and other professional studies, the humanities, and the social sciences attended to international topics and concerns as the electronic media made such studies more possible and necessary. Finally, the tightening of immigration regulations (especially with Mexico) along with new government-imposed fees on international students have made the U.S. appear less hospitable to international workers and students. It is not clear yet how post-9/11 policies will affect international students studying in the United States. Opposing exclusionary trends has been a U.S. economy that needs unskilled workers from beyond its borders, even after the 2002-03 economic downturn.

As U.S. colleges and universities prepare to address racial and ethnic diversity that arises out of their institutional missions and the diversity of U.S. citizens, new challenges will come with the incorporation of international students into colleges where additional issues related to language and cultural differences must be addressed. In an age where all persons live in a global village and where the new economy unites our financial and business institutions, U.S. colleges must welcome international students and international study if they want to create a truly diverse learning environment. Given Berea’s founding as an interracial college and its steadfast commitment to providing a diverse student and staff learning environment, what is called “affirmative action” in the wider world has been the very cornerstone of the College’s mission for nearly 150 years (minus the hiatus mandated by the Day Law). Thus the legal challenges to considering race in admissions decisions such as those in the Michigan cases pose a real threat to the realization of Berea’s mission. This is just one obvious case where external policies and actions can have an enormous impact on the College’s capacity to fulfill its mission.

⁴⁰ See Claude M. Steele’s “A Threat in the Air: How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance” (1999).

THE INTERNAL LANDSCAPE OF BEREA

Berea cannot pursue its educational mission in a vacuum. External environmental forces will either assist or limit Berea's ability to achieve its idealistic aims. So too will the structures, traditions, and mission particular to Berea College shape its response to the challenges and opportunities delineated above. The following discussion is only a summary of selected internal environmental factors that do—and will—impinge upon what Berea College can and should become. This section contains some primary features of our common community that must be considered in any future plans for the College. Obviously, the list is not exhaustive. Likewise, some of the internal environmental features—such as changing faculty roles—also have broader contexts external to Berea.

Berea's Founding as an Interracial Christian College

The primary impetus for John Fee to establish the Berea schools in 1855 was to create an interracial and coeducational learning community founded upon the Christian gospel of “impartial love.”⁴¹ Fee chose a scriptural text from Acts 17:26, “God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth,” as the motto of Berea College because it captured the inclusive nature of his interpretation of the Christian faith, which gave rise to the Berea community and schools. Students, black and white, male and female, were welcomed to live and learn in the early Berea community and schools. Then after a half-century of educating black and white people together, the 1904 Kentucky Day Law formally ended the interracial part of the Berea educational experiment. For the next 46 years, the Berea schools (elementary through college) had only white students (although the Lincoln Academy in Shelbyville was established by the Berea Board of Trustees to continue the education of black youth). Since 1950, the College has tried to reestablish its interracial commitment as a necessary part of Berea's living and learning community. Few question the need for such an educational emphasis based upon Berea's founding mission and the urgent needs for interracial reconciliation in American society. Today, competition exists in the admission of black students and the hiring of black staff that did not exist in 1904. Still, the College experienced encouraging results from 1995-2010 in attracting African American students (now approximately 17% of the student body)⁴² and, to a lesser degree, faculty (now approximately 9%). While increasing these numbers, especially in Berea's hourly staff and administration, will continue to be important in the years to come, a related challenge that lies before the College now is how best to address the issues and opportunities that arise when a college community becomes more diverse.

While African American numbers have nearly doubled since 1995, the number of international students (including permanent residents and dual nationals as well as F-1 students) has increased to just over 9% of the student body. The result is that approximately one in four Berea students has a different ethnic and/or racial background from the majority.

⁴¹ See Richard Sears' book, *A Utopian Experiment in Kentucky: Integration and Social Equality at Berea, 1866-1904* (1996).

⁴² Racial categories for 2010 Census data were changed as mandated by the Federal Government; students were asked to answer questions about ethnicity (Hispanic or not) and race (choose one or more). For internal reporting purposes, total African American student population at Berea is based on the number of students who identified themselves as “Black or African American” alone or in combination with another race.

Many believe that this level of diversity holds rich educational potential for all students. Set in the national context of Claude Steele's and other faculty researchers' work, pedagogical opportunities exist at Berea that would help the College realize more fully this core element of its mission. Likewise, given Berea's interracial mission and the level of racial and ethnic strife in the United States and around the world, reaching toward its lofty goal of "equality with justice" is a challenge of special significance for the campus-wide educational program beyond the classroom. Perhaps the biggest challenge for Berea College is to attract and retain African American faculty and staff. The competition for such professionals is great, and the town of Berea requires a special fit for a black person or family. There is much work yet to be done in this area.

In contrast to Berea College's commitment and concerted efforts to achieve interracial diversity, new political and legal challenges across the United States have shed doubt on the viability of some race-sensitive admissions policies. Despite widespread claims about the benefits of diversity as an educational strategy, there has been little supporting research to help educational institutions go beyond simple assertion to providing data the courts would find persuasive. It may be important for Berea College to join other like-minded institutions in seeking to document the educational and community benefits of racial and ethnic diversity as a means of protecting our right to consider race among other mission-related factors for admission.⁴³ Certainly, Berea College's interracial founding and mission put it in a better legal position to pursue its interracial focus than most other colleges and universities.

A related challenge that Berea has had to address throughout its history is how best to explain its Christian self-understanding to internal and external audiences. From the earliest days of its existence to the present day, there have been contending voices regarding who should define the character of Berea's Christian identity. The inclusiveness of Fee's Christian vision stemmed from a radical sense of the equality of all people in God's sight. His was a theology that welcomed men and women "of every clime and nation" (as indicated in his "Introductory Address" at Fairchild's inauguration on July 7, 1869). But Fee's anti-sectarian passion meant that Berea College has never been aligned with a denominational church or creed. Therefore, it is not surprising that during the 1995-96 planning discussions the question arose, "Can we articulate our institutional vocation in a way that clarifies the relationship between our contemporary educational mission and our Christian roots?" (*Being and Becoming*, 1996, p. 40). From 1996 to 2001, an SPC subcommittee sponsored many campus discussions, invited non-Bereans to address the community, and wrote five position papers for the community to discuss. Out of this lengthy period of research, discussion, and debate came nine guiding statements (contained in "The Christian Identity of Berea College" in Appendix A) that confirm Berea's Christian self-understanding as one that is grounded in a "gospel of impartial love," is welcoming of all peoples of Christian and other faiths, and is embodied in a college (not a church) community of learners and seekers. To understand the contemporary mission and the origin of all of the Great Commitments of Berea College, therefore, one must understand the College's uncommon Christian roots and their contemporary expressions. The subcommittee's statement on Berea's Christian identity was

⁴³ See Jonathan R. Alger's article on "The Educational Value of Diversity" (1997); Benjamin Baez's "Diversity and Its Contradictions" (2000); Philip Uri Treisman's "A Practitioner's View From Texas" (1994); and Richard J. Light's "Assessment and Student Diversity" (1999).

adopted by the General Faculty on March 14, 2002, and by the Board of Trustees on May 11, 2002.

Strong Sense of Mission and Past

Given the extraordinary elements of the College's origin and subsequent Great Commitments, it is not surprising that one of Berea's defining features is its appreciation for its historic mission. In the spring of 1995, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Visiting Team commended Berea for the extent to which faculty, students, and staff at the College understand and affirm the Great Commitments. This strength has also resulted in a tendency to look back at Berea's past in somewhat idealized ways. One example is the extent to which the "Berea story" has sometimes been told in publications or development contexts in a way that emphasizes a "mountain Appalachia" of the past. Focusing on the College's past conserves the best of Berea traditions even as it sometimes impedes needed changes. Likewise, a tendency to be selective about which of the College's Great Commitments to support or lift up for special consideration has sometimes created unnecessary tensions within and among Berea constituencies. Nonetheless, many benefits have accrued to Berea College because of its reluctance to abandon its core values and complex commitments. Though their interpretations may vary, most Berea students, faculty, and staff deeply respect the aims and values incorporated in the Great Commitments. This is an internal strength that Berea College has that will continue to serve it well. In this planning process, the SPC and community have sought to honor and to promote *all* of the eight Great Commitments.

Berea's Location and Appalachian Focus

Since the founding of the Berea schools in 1855 and the post-Civil War reestablishment of the College, Berea has been committed to serving "mountain youth." In the mid-19th century, Berea College was situated in a remote setting in Kentucky on the eastern edge of the Bluegrass region and the western edge of its mountainous service region. In the first half-century of Berea's existence, Eastern Kentucky and the surrounding mountain areas of what is now called "Middle and Southern Appalachia" had large populations of both freed slaves and mountain youth who had virtually no access to education. Even into the mid-20th century, this variously circumscribed Appalachian region had poor if any roads, little access to clean water and sewer treatment, and mostly independent schools for the small percentage of the population that attended school. In the later half of the 20th century, the War on Poverty, the creation of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and the public works and services that followed improved the living, transportation, and educational situation of many people of this region. But one thing has been constant: there has been much disagreement on what constitutes the boundaries, the culture(s), and the native religions of "Appalachia." Berea's own boundaries of the Appalachia it serves (i.e., which counties are included and from which states) have changed over time and have often differed from that of the ARC. Currently, its "In-Territory" includes 439 counties from nine states in the middle-South. Therefore, Berea is located neither in the midst of the mountain area that has long defined its character and mission nor close to a city large enough to support a more diverse student body and faculty. For many,

the small-town atmosphere of Berea provides a safe and friendly environment for students and staff. It provides an excellent location for raising families, enjoying outdoor activities, and living in a relatively safe environment. On the other hand, Berea's location limits its options in reaching some non-traditional and non-Caucasian populations of students (e.g., Hispanics) that make up the fastest growing segment of college-age youth in the United States. It is not always easy for faculty, staff, or students who are of minority ethnicity to live in Berea. Also, single faculty and staff members have fewer opportunities for social outlets in Berea's family-oriented setting.

Berea College does not—and could not—have the same educational options (e.g., evening or weekend schools) that its more urban counterparts have. Opportunities for adult and extended (e.g., distance learning) educational programs are made more possible by modern technology, but their fit with Berea's liberal arts focus and residential campus focus is not a logical one. Therefore, Berea's location, educational mission, and facilities limit some contemporary possibilities even as they enhance its ability to be an integrated residential learning environment.

The changing nature of the Appalachian region itself also raises questions about how the College can best continue its Appalachian commitment and traditional admissions policies. A 1995 discussion paper, "Berea's Appalachian Commitment: A Regional Mission with Global Implications" identifies five tensions associated with this commitment. Both the first Commitment (i.e., "To provide an educational opportunity primarily for students from Appalachia...") and the eighth (i.e., "To serve the Appalachian region primarily through education but also by other appropriate services") clarify Berea College's historic commitment to Appalachia. But Berea's foundation as an interracial school and its steadfast commitment to service of all peoples of the earth have sometimes come into tension with its Appalachian focus.

The 1995 paper asked, "Why should Berea College continue to serve the Appalachian region in the 21st century?" First, Appalachia remains one of the most economically and educationally depressed regions in the nation. Second, Berea's geographical, cultural, and ecological location is Appalachia. Third, Berea has made a 150-year commitment to the region that has produced relationships, connections, and expectations that serve us well and would be hard to create or duplicate elsewhere. Fourth, Berea's commitments to Appalachia, to interracial education, and to service broadly understood have provided a distinctive and enduring mission. For these reasons, the Berea College community concluded in 1996 that "the College should not simply continue, but strengthen, its institutional focus on Appalachia" (*Being and Becoming*, p. 35). We have reaffirmed that conclusion in the progress made over the past several years to integrate all of Berea's Appalachian programs, to create a new physical home for the Appalachian Center, and to establish new programs for faculty and students to understand this region we serve. Yet much work remains to be done in fully appropriating Berea's Appalachian commitments.

In a related development, the College solidified its commitment "to serve the Appalachian region," and "to emphasize the Christian ethic and the motive of service to others." The Center for Excellence in Learning Through Service (CELTS) not only provided a physical home but also a centralized structure for the existing student-led service programs

(Bonner Scholars, Habitat for Humanity, People Who Care, Students for Appalachia), the programs focusing on educational opportunities for youth (Educational Talent Search, Special Programs, Upward Bound, Woodson Institute), and the new initiative to integrate learning through service into the academic program of the college. While CELTS emphasizes “service as learning” and focuses mainly upon nearby Appalachian communities, its role as a service-learning center extends well beyond Appalachia.

Characteristics of Berea College Students

Berea College’s diverse commitments coupled with the changing demographics of the Appalachian region have created tensions, challenges, and opportunities throughout our College’s history. Several of the most important of these tensions relate to our applicants’ academic, economic, and racial characteristics, geographic origins, and gender. Demographic data from recent entering classes of new students show that the College maintains its commitments to serving students of great academic promise,⁴⁴ limited economic means,⁴⁵ black and white,⁴⁶ primarily from Appalachia,⁴⁷ and of both genders.⁴⁸ However, the College’s intentional focus on improving entering students’ academic qualifications and increasing the proportion of African American students in each class appear to have had additional and mostly positive consequences.

In the mid 1990’s, nearly half the students in each entering class required remediation through the College’s Basic Mathematics Program. Since 1998, the College’s admissions focus on students’ academic qualifications has reduced the proportion of new students requiring mathematical remediation to less than 25.6%. This increased emphasis on candidates’ academic qualifications is also reflected by an increased proportion of new students who are from the top academic quintile of their high school class (from 39% in 1996 to 57% in 2010) and higher mean ACT scores (from 21.7 to 24.1). Similarly, the College’s efforts to recruit more African American students have resulted in the near doubling of their proportion among first-year students (from 8% in the mid-1990’s to 17-19% in the 2000’s and up to almost 23% in some years).

⁴⁴ In 2010, 57% of all new students came from the top academic quintile of their respective high school classes; their average ACT score was 24.1, which was significantly higher than both the national and state averages (21 and 19.4 respectively).

⁴⁵ Approximately 88% of Berea’s new students over the past decade have received Pell Grants that indicate that they have come from families in the lowest economic third nationally (i.e., in 2010, their families were expected to contribute less than \$4,750). In fact about 50% of domestic dependent students come from families that are not expected to contribute anything to their children’s educational cost (viz., are “full need” students).

⁴⁶ In the past decade, increased emphasis on recruiting African American students has resulted in the proportion of these students in entering classes averaging almost 19%.

⁴⁷ Approximately three-quarters of each new entering class is drawn from Berea College’s designated “In-Territory” (most counties in the Appalachian Regional Commission’s Southern Region as well as the entire state of Kentucky).

⁴⁸ In recent years, the generally superior academic qualifications of women applicants have resulted in more women than men being admitted to the College. However, special efforts have ensured that approximately 40% of the students in each new class are male.

The combination of academic and racial initiatives, as well as other external factors, has unfortunately resulted in small decreases in the proportion of entering classes claiming rural or small town origins (from 69% in 1995 to 62% in 2002). Similarly, the average economic need of admitted students has increased (in constant dollars) over the past decade, and the number of “full need” students has increased. The academic and racial initiatives have also increased our difficulty in maintaining a gender balance (Berea’s male-to-female ratio was 45/55% in 1994 compared to a 41/59% ratio in 2010).

One reason for the initiative to admit students with higher academic qualifications was a concern about students’ ability to succeed at Berea. In the 1990’s, retention rates had fallen below 70%, and the five-year graduation rate was consistently below 50%. The five-year graduation rate of the class of 1998 was over 60%, the highest in over 40 years, which has held true throughout the most of the early 2000’s and is a strong indication of this academic initiative’s success. Furthermore, the retention rates of approximately 80% to 83% over the past decade indicate that graduation rates near 60% should continue. The success of the racial initiative might be measured simply by the significant increase in the proportion of African American students in the entering class. However, success as well as presence is important. The fact that African American students at Berea College now show retention and graduation rates nearly identical to those of other domestic students despite significantly lower ACT scores⁴⁹ is a testament to their potential and the effectiveness of support they receive after their admission to the College.

Exploring this apparent success and its relation to other demographic characteristics has led to a deeper understanding of our students’ development and created opportunities for even further improvements. One example is Dr. Shinn’s recent comparative study of Berea College students from families with incomes above and below \$25,000 for the Council of Independent Colleges. In striking contrast to national data that suggest that socioeconomic status is a powerful positive predictor of academic success, students at Berea College with greater economic need are actually even more likely to be retained and graduate than those with less economic need. Such findings, along with further administrative adjustments to admissions processes and financial aid practices provide reason to be optimistic about the College’s ability to build on its success in attracting, retaining, and graduating service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond.

Berea’s Blend of Liberal Arts and Professional Programs

Berea’s curricular and co-curricular programs have been rooted, especially since the 1920’s, in a traditional understanding of the liberal arts. This rich heritage continues to find expression in the General Studies curriculum, which consists of core courses, disciplinary distribution courses in the arts and sciences, and theme courses centered on world issues or Christianity in the contemporary age. Berea’s faculty say that this curriculum “aims for liberal arts education as the liberation of the individual in a lifelong pursuit of truth. This pursuit is undertaken for pleasure as well as for practical reasons.”⁵⁰ However, Berea’s

⁴⁹ In 2009, African American students’ average ACT score was 20.7; it was 24.2 for all other domestic students.

⁵⁰ Preamble to the aims of General Education, as quoted in the June 1993 brochure “General Education and the Liberal Arts at Berea College.”

curriculum has, from its very beginning, included practical and professional studies. With one of the oldest departments of nursing and earliest majors in agriculture, Berea's curriculum has always included studies connected to the needs of the Appalachian region. Berea's contemporary curriculum illustrates a nearly even split in students majoring in liberal arts majors and in professional majors, although all majors require a common General Studies core.

In his 1990 book *Dateline 2000: The New Higher Education Agenda*, Dale Parnell mirrors Berea's philosophy when he says, "No longer can the debate of the importance of the liberal arts or career programs be allowed to degenerate into an either/or argument. They are both important, balance is needed, and the technological-learning age demands it. Educational excellence at all levels must be defined in terms of connectedness and applicability. The liberal arts and technical education need each other" (p. 248). In a day when it is common to understand liberal arts and professional programs as opposite in intent and focus, Berea's mutually supportive presentation of diverse liberal arts and professional programs (e.g., agriculture, business, child and family studies, education, industrial technology, and nursing) that have a common core of educational aims stands as a strength upon which Berea College can build in the future.

Berea College has, from the early 20th century, organized the delivery of its liberal arts and professional curricula through traditional departments structured around disciplinary methods and subject content (e.g., the natural sciences such as biology and chemistry or humanistic disciplines such as philosophy and history). Likewise, there have always been at Berea those departments where multiple disciplinary methods are used in a "field of study" (e.g., religion and business). Not surprisingly, the way in which many academic departments originated at Berea College was through disciplinary associations with similar departmental/professional disciplinary structures and professional associations around the rest of the United States. The concept of a "discipline" minimally includes a disciplinary methodology (or multiple methodologies) with in-depth study of a particular content area. In a study of how disciplines are taught, the President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Lee Shulman, concludes that a disciplinary method is best understood as "how you organize your evidence into a powerful and persuasive argument." This study also concluded it was important for scholars and students alike to be situated within a discipline or field of study as well as grow in interpretative abilities "at the borders of disciplinary imagination" (1989, pp. 8-13). Increasingly there has been a blurring of disciplinary/departmental boundaries through the adoption of multiple disciplines (e.g., biochemistry, biophysics, psycho-history, etc.). Likewise, there has been a diversity of methodologies or "disciplines" that exist within single academic departments or areas of study. Disciplinary methods, therefore, have not been confined to departmental boundaries alone, and most professional fields such as education, business, agriculture, etc. utilize multiple disciplines within the context of a "field of study."

In recent decades, Berea College has followed the pattern of other liberal arts colleges in recognizing the need to study a common subject matter through the lens of interdisciplinary studies (see "Curriculum," pp. 42-44). This has led to the creation of area studies programs such as Women's Studies, African and African American Studies, Sustainability and Environmental Studies, Asian Studies, etc. Berea College has always had an unconventional

commitment to both the liberal arts and practical or professional studies that makes its ability to appreciate both “the life of the mind” and “applied studies” greater than many of its liberal arts college peers. A strength of Berea College is that it has welcomed traditional disciplinary structures as well as interdisciplinary and applied structures throughout most of its history. Most recently, Berea College has offered B.A. and B.S. degrees in 28 fields of study in 26 academic departments and interdisciplinary programs of study.⁵¹

Dedication and Sense of Commitment in Berea Constituencies

Berea College has a dedicated faculty and staff who believe in its special educational mission. This dedication is affirmed by students’ near universal appreciation for mentoring efforts that occur in the College’s Labor Program. Also, it is common to have Berea families represented in the support staff of Berea College for several generations. Longevity is common also among faculty and administrators. A 2000 survey of all employees reveals that a deep commitment to Berea’s educational mission and an appreciation for the work environment exists among its employees.⁵² Such dedication is in part based on the idealistic, service-oriented mission of Berea College, a mission (i.e., the Great Commitments) that is widely known among employees. Any future changes that would dramatically alter Berea’s educational mission would likely be opposed by those who have understood their work at Berea as a meaningful vocation of service (understood often in a specifically Christian sense) to Berea’s special population of students. This type of commitment, uncommon for most educational organizations of Berea’s complexity, is an internal strength that cannot easily be measured—or replaced.

Employees’ longevity and sense of commitment to a shared and historical mission also have their limitations. Some of those who live and work only at one institution all of their careers may hold on to policies and practices beyond their useful lives. Also, traditional regional and/or religious views of the roles of women and minorities have helped shape the nature of Berea’s curricular debates and working environment. At a time when the College is faced with constant challenges caused by dramatic changes occurring around it, Berea’s conservative tendencies may sometimes have been an impediment to desirable change. At other times, these same tendencies may have helped to preserve important traditional values and policies.

From its inception, Berea has sought to create a learning and living community marked by ethical and egalitarian ideals. Its strict smoking, drinking, and residential policies

⁵¹ The Berea College Scenario Planning Taskforce (SPT) was formed in response to the 2008-2009 global financial crisis and the need for a sustainable institutional budget, and the SPT recommended three possible scenarios. In February 2010, the College Faculty and Board of Trustees approved a fourth “Engaged and Transformative Learning” scenario of which the new academic divisional structure, replacing academic departments, was the third Building Block. That scenario supports “(a) excellence, flexibility, and innovation in Berea’s faculty and curriculum, (b) opportunities for increased faculty oversight of the whole curriculum, and (c) flexibility and cost management in the faculty and academic units’ budgets while continuing tenure.” The new academic division structure was approved by the College Faculty on February 17, 2011 and by the Board of Trustees on February 26, 2011 and will be implemented in 2011-2012. (See “Scenario: Engaged and Transformative Learning,” pp. 8-9.)

⁵² See “Employee Satisfaction Survey,” William M. Mercer, Inc. (2001). An electronic copy of the survey results is available on the Berea College People Services electronic bulletin board.

in the past were reflections of a traditional Berea community rooted in conservative Christian and social values. Some college residential and Student Life policies were supportive of Berea's liberal arts' educational values while others were not. Berea's inclusive definition of the "General Faculty" reveals an egalitarian dimension in decision making—an inclusion that is uncommon on most college campuses in the United States. Yet Berea's previous practice of commissioning actually created a group of employees who felt unequal in status in the community. Some real progress has been made in Student Life policies (e.g., the "guided learning" initiative) and in the General Affairs Council's work, which led to the discontinuation of commissioning. Nonetheless, in a community committed to egalitarian values, Berea needs to continue to address issues of race, gender, and class in its definition and practice of community for the 21st century.

Alumni of Berea College also represent one of its important constituencies. Berea College alumni are dedicated to the College and its Great Commitments. This is evident through their participation in the Alumni Association, where approximately 1,100 alumni volunteer each year. Led by the Alumni Executive Council and on-campus staff, former Berea students provide support of various kinds, including financial. The growth in alumni giving over the past fifteen years has been steady, increasing from 12% to 21% of total dollars raised. Berea alumni are an important group in assisting Berea College to achieve its mission and should be factored into solutions for Berea's pressing problems (e.g., admissions recruiting and financial support). The Appalachian College Association alumni survey enabled Berea College to gather information from its graduates of the previous 25 years. The results were striking as they revealed Berea alumni's very strong satisfaction with their academic and labor experiences. Also striking was the fact that more than half of Berea's graduates are employed in non-profit or service professions. It appears that Berea's educational goals for learning, labor, and service are realized in our graduates' vocational and advocational choices.⁵³

Finally, Berea College's trustees reflect the passion for and dedication to the College's mission that is found in other College constituencies. The Board of Trustees is composed of approximately 30% alumni and 100% friends of the College. It has 20% with strong Appalachian roots, 30% women, and 30% minority members. In addition, the Berea College Board of Trustees is uncommon in its policy of including persons from many professions and walks of life and not restricting its membership to those who are wealthy or from business and financial vocations primarily. An egalitarian and diverse mix of trustees over time has produced the same kind of devotion and commitment to Berea's Great Commitments that is found on campus.

A Residential Campus

Throughout its history, Berea College has understood education to include all aspects of life on campus, which means that the school has been committed to a residential concept of the learning environment. The dedication and sense of ownership of Berea's traditions by faculty and staff have led, at times in the past, to protective "in loco parentis" policies with

⁵³ See "Appalachian Region Alumni Outcomes Survey (Preliminary Findings)," Ernest T. Pascarella, Gregory C. Wolniak, Christopher T. Pierson, and Patrick T. Terenzini (2001).

regard to the College's treatment of students. Students have complained that such "paternalism" negatively affected their experience at Berea, especially in terms of their social and residential lives. In recent decades many faculty and staff have expressed similar concerns. From 1995-2001 there was a concerted effort by faculty, staff, and students to create a more integrated "guided learning" environment where the aims of general education and the Common Learning Goals are realized in Student Life policies and practices. Leadership training for all student residence hall staff has led to the assumption of greater levels of responsibility by students in the residence halls and in all of the student activities areas. Students have responded very favorably to these philosophical and policy changes. However, some faculty and staff have seen these changes as a threat to the preservation of long-standing policies of the College.

In a day when distance learning and branches of state and community colleges have proliferated, the question "why remain a residential learning community" must be asked. The answer of the Berea College community is that we choose to offer a genuine alternative to education conceived as merely learning information and seeking credentials. A residential campus offers the opportunity to treat all facets of a student's life—as well as those of all employees—as interdependent and, consequently, as part of a larger learning environment. Berea College has always been a learning community committed to the education of the whole person—head, hands, and heart (i.e., learning, labor, and service). Defining education in a broader way means that all aspects of a student's life on campus (e.g., living, working, and serving) are seen as arenas where our Common Learning Goals and liberal arts aspirations can be realized. It is the education and development of the whole person that a residential learning environment like Berea's seeks to provide.

Freshman and senior surveys have been standard since 1996 as a way of evaluating the impact of the total Berea College experience (classes, co-curricular activities, residence hall programs, etc.) upon the values and perspectives of Berea's students. Overall, the results reveal that the overwhelming majority of students rate their Berea experience very positively in terms of helping them to improve their thinking and reasoning skills, developing their intellectual ability to address complex problems from multiple disciplines and perspectives, promoting their understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, enabling them to develop the skills to work with others, and fostering their desire to engage in life-long learning.⁵⁴ Furthermore, in studies of how Berea students actually change their perspectives from freshman to senior year, results show that students make significant, positive gains over time in how they value learning about the arts, solving environmental problems, working for social change, and volunteering service to one's community.⁵⁵

Labor Program

The Berea College Labor Program is made possible by the College's residential character. The Labor Program adds to students' sense of immersion in campus life and provides another rich arena for learning. As one place where students contribute to the

⁵⁴ See *Exit Survey Results and Trends, 1996-2001*, Berea College OIRA.

⁵⁵ See *Rating the Importance of 22 Value Statements: Changes Made by Berea College Students*, December 2001 report, Berea College OIRA.

welfare of the whole community and learn valuable skills and attitudes, the Labor Program is a central feature of Berea's implicit curriculum (i.e., what it teaches in its administrative structures, governance processes, residential policies, and other "hidden" arenas of campus learning). The Labor Program involves virtually all employees of the College as supervisors or co-workers of students.

The report by the Labor Review Team (May 31, 2001) challenged the College to "re-vision, revitalize, and re-structure the Labor Program, building upon its current strengths, to see, anew and again, the Student Labor Program as an aspect of an integrated, continuous learning community, governed . . . by a unifying vision of labor as learning and service to community and College." After nearly two years of conversations and public meetings, the SPC, the Labor Review Team, and the Labor Program Council offered an abbreviated recommendation called "Labor Program Revision and Revitalization" (April 18, 2003) that was sent to the campus in May 2003 and discussed by the General Faculty in the fall of 2003. After two months of conversations on campus, the General Faculty accepted the SPC's proposal at its December 11, 2003 meeting. Significant opportunities exist for enhanced learning at Berea as its academic, labor, residential, and service programs become more integrated. Surveys of Berea alumni reveal that their labor experience on campus typically helped shape their whole College experience. The revision and strengthening of the Labor Program is an initiative that will require considerable attention in the immediate years ahead.

Physical Facilities and Equipment

Berea College has a large and impressive physical plant for a school of 1,550 students. With more than 1.4 million square feet of floor space, Berea is endowed with ample room for its educational, residential, support, and recreational programs. The enlarged and renovated library and computer center offers an attractive place for students to study and to learn. The renovation of the Science Building provided Berea faculty and students with an environment for both collective and individualized scientific studies. The new Seabury Center provides not only athletic and physical education facilities, but also facilities and programs for wellness activities for all Berea students and employees and many Berea community members as well. It also provides convocation and special event space that Berea desperately needed. Beyond these buildings renovated or built within the past 20 years, the picture was not very rosy in 1996.

In 1996, Berea's administration and trustees recognized that, in spite of concerted efforts to keep the College's buildings maintained, there loomed on the horizon renovation work of a magnitude not seen before at Berea College. Most of Berea's buildings (academic and residence halls) are at the age when major renovations are necessary. According to a 1995-1996 physical plant assessment, 34 academic and residential buildings required substantial renovations. This realization led to a renovation plan in 1996 that exceeded more than \$140 million over a 20-year period. In 1999, the Frost building was the first building renovated at a cost of \$3,300,000. The Woods-Penniman, Alumni Building, and Fairchild Hall complex were remodeled in 2000 at a cost of \$7,536,700. During the summers of 2000 and 2001, Danforth and Kettering residence halls were renovated at a cost of \$5,200,000. During the 2001-02 academic year, Draper Hall and Kentucky Hall were completely renovated, and the systems of Blue Ridge Hall were upgraded at a cost of \$15.2 million.

During the 2002-03 academic year, Talcott, Lincoln, and Presser buildings were completely renovated at a cost of \$20.5 million. The renovation of James Hall, which was completed in 2004, cost \$4.9 million. In 2005, construction of the new heat plant and campus-wide energy retrofits were completed at a cost of \$23 million. In 2006-07, Pearson Hall, Sturt Cottage, and the Middletown School were renovated at a cost of more than \$5.6 million. The renovation of Elizabeth Rogers Hall was completed in 2009 for more than \$3.8 million. In 2008-09, the Emery building was renovated for about \$4.1 million. Portions of several other buildings have recently been renovated as well. In 2010, the LEED Gold-certified Boone Tavern renovation was completed for a cost of almost \$10.5 million. In total, approximately \$139 million of renovations and retrofits were completed over the past fifteen years, and yet 22 buildings remain to be renovated at a current cost of more than \$135 million. There is much work and fundraising to be done if Berea College's physical plant is to be renovated to its 21st-century educational and ecological standards.

Not surprisingly, computer technology has added to the College's capital and physical needs in ways that could not have been anticipated even a decade ago. An aging campus computer/communications network was replaced during the years 1998-2001 at a cost of \$3.6 million. All of the dollars for the network were raised from external sources to provide this critical learning resource. The Universal Access Program that placed portable computers in the hands of all faculty and students in the fall of 2002 requires an annual expenditure of \$1.3 million and the raising of an \$8 million endowment to fund just a third of this project. As a result, some classrooms still must be adapted to new modes of teaching with modern technologies if our students are to be fully educated by Berea's own standards. Physical renovations of space and computer and communications technologies will put extraordinary pressure on future Berea budgets in the years ahead. Such budget considerations cannot be neglected, nor can they be allowed to overwhelm other Berea College priorities.

Berea's sustainability initiatives have added both complexity and cost to campus facility and heat plant renovation planning. Since 1995, the College has sought ways to decrease its ecological footprint for ethical and economic reasons. The replacement of the heat plant is one example. To reduce the energy demand for heating and air conditioning by 40% will cost the College more than \$8 million in building remodeling (e.g., new windows, insulation, etc.), but over a 25-year period will more than pay for the renovation costs through energy savings and will reduce by more than 30% the amount of carbon dioxide emissions from renovated buildings and the central heat plant. Berea College has accepted its moral responsibility to reduce its ecological footprint and to provide an educational model for others in its educational and institutional practices. The Ecovillage, a wedding of the single parent and ecology initiatives, is perhaps the most striking example of Berea's broad definition of "ecology," as this family residential complex provides housing, childcare, and energy savings of more than 75%—all of which are conceived as interdependent activities. While the renovation and sustainability initiatives have produced very positive outcomes in the buildings that have been completed, there has been considerable disruption to faculty and staff as well. Projects like the Draper renovation and the Lincoln Hall structural accident uprooted nearly 20% of all Berea employees in a single year. Renovations of residence halls have produced similar discomfort for Berea students. There was a real human and social cost to the twelve years of intensive renovation between 1997 and 2009.

“Up to Full Tuition” and the Endowment

Perhaps no internal feature is more publicized than Berea College’s “no tuition” policy, which is made possible by the College’s large endowment and donors’ generous annual giving. This policy does not mean that Berea is less expensive (counting room, board, and fees) than some other options our students have, such as local community colleges. Neither does this policy suggest that Berea is an extraordinarily wealthy educational institution, since some elite, private colleges with fewer students have even larger endowments—and charge nearly \$20,000 per year in tuition. Berea’s uniqueness in its admissions/financial aid policy lies in its commitment to providing education “for students from Appalachia, black and white, who have great promise and limited economic resources.” Its insistence upon limiting the Berea educational opportunity only to those students and families who have economic need and could not otherwise afford a Berea education makes Berea College literally unique in American higher education.

Our presentation of the College’s “no tuition” policy in the past led many prospective (and enrolled) students to conclude that they are “poor” when they had not so labeled themselves previously. This meant that some prospective students saw Berea College as “a place for poor kids” and not as a strong liberal arts college that challenges talented and motivated students. This perception problem was confirmed in an admissions study conducted for Berea by George Dehne and Associates in 1997. As a result of the admissions survey, the College now uses the language “full tuition scholarship” instead of “no tuition” in communicating to prospective students their financial/academic situation. It is clear that focusing only upon students’ financial need (i.e., “no tuition” admissions focus) and ignoring their academic promise can lead them, and us, to misconstrue who it is that we invite to learn at Berea College. Berea’s admissions program seeks students who have “great promise” as well as “limited economic resources,” students capable of engaging an educational opportunity “of high quality with a liberal arts outlook and foundation.” A related concern is that some faculty and staff may understand Berea as “a place for poor kids” with special academic needs, fostering an institutional atmosphere marked by paternalism and focusing on the weaknesses rather than the strengths and promise of the students we teach and serve. It is clear that this issue is about more than “no tuition” language; it goes to the heart of how students, and those at Berea who serve them, perceive themselves and define the educational task.

Yet another outcome of Berea’s strong financial foundation is the way people on and off campus perceive the institution. First, the sheer size of the College’s endowment and its consistent market success in the past ten to fifteen years discourage some insiders (e.g., faculty, staff, and alumni) from giving to such a “rich” institution. Second, as Berea’s endowment grows beyond \$975 million, it will become increasingly difficult to persuade donors and foundations with far less endowed wealth to contribute to Berea’s endowment. However, the manner in which Berea College finances its mission and budget tells a different story. In the absence of tuition income, the College’s endowment must provide approximately 74% of annual educational and general operating costs, and the Development Office must raise approximately 11.1% of the budget every year (\$4,200,000 in the 2011-12 budget). Since most liberal arts institutions like Berea fund 70-80% of their operating budgets from tuition, Berea’s endowment acts essentially as a tuition replacement fund rather

than a traditional endowment. Consequently, a better way to compare Berea College's financial strength is to ask how many dollars it can spend educating each student, which is a nationally-recognized measure of institutional wealth. That number for 2008-09 was \$37,398 compared to \$40,000 to \$60,000 per student (i.e., tuition plus endowment and gift income) in other institutions with endowments of Berea's size. It is clear that the College must explain well its unique way of financing itself and the urgency of unmet needs (e.g., renovation of facilities, support of critical programs, and compensating its employees well) if it is to succeed in fundraising in the future.

Emerging Academic Challenges at Berea

Several emerging challenges to the academic program at Berea College revolve around the interrelated issues of the size and nature of the curriculum, faculty loads and new responsibilities, pedagogical issues, campus governance and decision making, and the character of Berea's academic community. These challenges have taken shape over the past two decades but their urgency intensified in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

Curriculum

One continuing curricular challenge at Berea College, identified in the 1996 edition of *Being and Becoming*, is the development of the critical, intellectual ability to address complex problems from multiple perspectives and to nurture moral and personal growth with a commitment to serve others. This is a fundamental aspect of what a liberal arts education has meant at Berea College where its curriculum from the beginning has been a blend of the liberal arts and applied studies. *Being and Becoming* suggested in 1996 that to accomplish this goal, "it is important for Berea College to create a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary environment for learning that is focused on real world problems and practical applications" (p. 31). If majors and disciplines offer complex thinking and depth of studies within a given subject matter or methodological approach, interdisciplinary studies offer what David Orr of Oberlin College calls the "lateral rigor" that applies knowledge and disciplinary approaches from different fields and disciplines to complex problems (e.g., to environmental issues, inequality of wealth distribution worldwide, global peace, etc.). Orr argues that to complement the "vertical rigor" (i.e., conceptual or methodological rigor and content depth) of traditional disciplinary majors, students should be educated to think and act across disciplinary boundaries because living lives of service in today's world requires that capacity.⁵⁶ However, most college curriculums like Berea's are organized around disciplinary departments and majors that teach systematic and analytical thinking specific to their traditional disciplines of study (e.g., chemistry, English, philosophy, sociology, etc.). It is often assumed in the academy that "area studies" that require multiple disciplinary approaches or discipline-bridging questions (e.g., environmental, international, peace studies) are a less rigorous, and thus less preferable way to organize a curriculum and faculty staffing. While there is ample literature applauding the benefits of interdisciplinary studies, Berea College must develop a systematic means of assessment with which to measure the actual impact of interdisciplinary studies on the quality of the education that we offer.

⁵⁶ See Orr's "So That All the Other Struggles May Go On" (1998).

The importance of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary opportunities to study, understand, and address the complex problems we and our students currently face seems to be consonant with a stated Berea College global learning outcome: “The Berea experience nurtures intellectual, physical, aesthetic, emotional, and spiritual potentials and with those the power to make meaningful commitments and translate them into action.”⁵⁷ The developments at Berea College in the past decade provide a mixed picture of the progress of the curriculum in addressing this global goal of complex and multidisciplinary thinking. On one hand, the emphasis on disciplinary specialization of recent years (e.g., the gradual increase in the number of courses required for almost all major programs over the past decade) has left less room for double majors, student experimentation, and interdisciplinary studies. On the other hand, there are three long-standing interdisciplinary programs—Appalachian Studies, African and African American Studies, and Women’s Studies—that are directly related to Berea’s mission as articulated in the Great Commitments. One of these, Women’s Studies, was approved by the faculty in May 2001 as Berea’s first official interdisciplinary major. Another interdisciplinary program, Sustainability and Environmental Studies (SENS), was conceived and instituted in 1997 and offers students a well-formulated interdisciplinary program and minor. At about the same time as the emergence of SENS, the Asian Studies program was developed to offer an interdisciplinary program that draws from several academic departments to offer a minor and support Berea’s internationalization efforts. These programs demonstrate what it means to structure interdisciplinary curricula that place high priority on rigorous study beyond disciplinary specialization and on the engagement of large ideas and complex problems. For such programs to be successful, strong institutional support and committed staffing are essential. How well the College balances traditional disciplinary depth of study with lateral rigor and applied problem-solving across disciplines will have much to do with how successful the College will be in addressing Berea’s most fundamental educational aims.

Related curricular issues for Berea College include the demands placed on students and faculty as the College seeks to maintain a robust General Education Program and strong majors’ programs. In the early 1990’s, the College adopted a General Education Program that included a core sequence of nine courses and a number of additional requirements in areas such as social science, cultural areas, laboratory science, and wellness. The 1990’s also saw a dramatic expansion of general and specialized knowledge in most disciplines, which led to increased pressures on the majors’ curricula to offer and even require more courses. One negative result of the large number of the General Studies requirements (GSTR) and expanding requirements for disciplinary majors is that most students have little opportunity to choose electives during their four years at Berea.⁵⁸ A related problem is how to staff the larger GSTR and majors’ curricula. For example, the General Education Program, as passed by the College Faculty in 1993, required more staffing than earlier versions, which is due both to the number of required courses and to the small class sizes mandated for the first-year core courses. Consequently, the General Education Program relies more on temporary faculty (approximately ten FTE more) than before 1993, even as the continuing faculty’s size has increased (from 114 to 119 full-time positions from 1995-2010). Another difficult aspect

⁵⁷ See the Preamble to the Great Commitments of Berea on p. 6.

⁵⁸ John Bolin brought this issue before the faculty in spring 2000. Also see George Dehne’s 1997 “Berea College Institution-Wide Observations and Recommendations and Report of Results Based on Surveys of Inquiring and College-Bound Students.”

of assessing the distribution of faculty resources is the lack of a standardized metric for what constitutes a “course” or what faculty “workload” is at Berea College. Such a standard must be established in order to accurately assess both General Studies and departmental faculty loads.

Given Berea College’s current curricular structure and composition, a multifaceted question that the faculty and academic administration must address is how the College can meet its disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and General Studies learning goals without increasing the number of required courses for students. In 1999, the Academic Program Council (APC) suggested that the size of many majors might be reduced if departments designed leaner disciplinary programs on the assumption that each student’s education should include “an opportunity to undertake study in depth” but not necessarily preparation for graduate school in a discipline.⁵⁹ Then, the APC created the Committee to Increase Elective Opportunities (CIEO) in the spring of 2000 with the charge to reduce Berea’s General Education Program from 15 courses to 12 courses out of the 33 courses students need for graduation. In the spring of 2001, the College Faculty rejected the CIEO’s General Education reduction plan. The faculty decided late in the fall of 2001 to establish a full-scale General Education Review Committee that was charged “to review the current General Education Program.” Work began in Spring 2002, and in October 2003 the College Faculty reviewed the final document, a “Proposal for Revision of Berea College’s General Education Program.” The College Faculty discussed the proposal and made significant amendments to it in three meetings in November and December of 2003. Discussion continued throughout spring 2004, and the College Faculty approved the final proposal in May 2004. The new program reduces the number of core courses from nine to five and the total number of required courses for most students by five. In fall 2005, the College began phasing in the new program, and some easing of staffing and enrollment pressures are evident: the new program has been fully staffed by continuing faculty and students have more elective opportunities.

Much of the faculty discussion about the new program focused on the disciplinary versus interdisciplinary; theoretical versus applied studies; and core content versus skills and abilities dichotomies. The dichotomy focused on disciplinary depth versus interdisciplinary breadth will continue at Berea and all college campuses where faculty and students seek both depth and breadth in the learning required for a 21st century marked by “complexity, ambiguity, and rapid change” (p. 57). It is such interrelated curricular and educational challenges that are already under review at Berea College, and our continued discussion of such issues in the years ahead will help determine how well Berea students in the future will be served by a Berea College education.

Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

For Berea College faculty (as with faculty nationally), there is a persistent and increasingly urgent set of intertwined issues that often reveal themselves under the single rubric of “time pressure.” One source of this perceived intensification of faculty work-life is a result of conscientious and resourceful teachers taking advantage of a range of new

⁵⁹ See “Majors, Interdisciplinary Majors, Multidisciplinary Majors, Concentrations” by the Berea College Academic Program Council. This report was presented at the February 1999 Faculty Meeting, and the definition of “major” presented in this report was adopted by the College Faculty in April 2000.

pedagogical options. Incorporating study abroad, service-learning, undergraduate research, internships, or use of the artifacts collection into one's work with students can enrich the learning-teaching environment for both students and faculty, but new activity in any of these areas requires significant investment of faculty time and energy. One striking case of increased faculty investment of time is in the use of informational technologies. Sometimes considerable time is required in learning new pedagogical software or hardware for seemingly modest gains in instructional or learning effectiveness. Yolanda Moses, former president of the American Association for Higher Education, speaks of information technology as a teaching-learning tool with "transformative" potential leading toward a "still to be defined" end.⁶⁰ While information technology appears to be a powerful catalyst for innovative teaching and learning at Berea, the faculty as a whole must address the opportunities and challenges posed by Berea's Universal Access Program and the broadening access to information resources. What should be the primary role of information technology in the Berea College learning environment? Toward what learning ends should faculty and students apply such technologies? As new learning technologies emerge, what are the implications for the work demands on faculty, for the way students engage learning, and for the educational outcomes of Berea's various programs? Answers to these persistent and important questions will not be easily forthcoming, and it seems clear that a new significant investment of time will be required of Berea faculty to steer toward the enriching potential and to avoid the potholes that learning technologies provide. A similar story could be told by faculty who are incorporating international, service-learning, or new modes of instruction into their classrooms, labs, and other learning environments.

There are many other sources and dimensions of faculty time pressure that include the classroom but spill beyond it as well. The increasing racial and ethnic diversity on Berea's campus provides new teaching/learning, advising, and residential life challenges for faculty and staff who primarily serve African American and international students at the College. Likewise, the broader socio-economic spectrum of students attending Berea and other colleges results in greater diversity of learning styles in the classroom, and many professors struggle to motivate students to incorporate reading and sustained reflection into their modes of learning. Increased expectations for faculty include involvement in admissions (e.g., Blue Ribbon Day), orientation (e.g., Summer Connections Orientation Workshops) and advising of new students (e.g., summer faculty advising workshops). Furthermore, institutional planning and assessment practices have required new time expenditures from many faculty and staff. Meanwhile, a heavy, seven-course teaching load with many different preparations was previously the norm at Berea College, which is not the case at most colleges within its frame of reference.⁶¹ The demands of scholarship, campus governance, and student labor supervision also contribute to a faculty experience that makes a sustainable balance between professional and personal life increasingly difficult to achieve. All of these factors underscore the importance of finding ways to provide adequate time for faculty to engage and reflect on their work and to invest in new learning opportunities for their students.

⁶⁰ See Yolanda Moses' "Scanning the Environment. . ." (2001).

⁶¹ In 2008, Berea College faculty, administration, and trustees approved the reduction of teaching faculty's standard yearly teaching load from seven to six courses.

Another pressure is that of faculty evaluation and tenure review, which is not confined to early-career faculty. The extent to which these processes, along with those of post-tenure review and institutional assessment, are based on communal understandings that are diverse and in flux has great impact on the strength and quality of community at Berea College. In *Restructuring American Education*, Michael Katz writes of the ideal college as a “community of persons united by collective understandings, by common and communal goals, by bonds of reciprocal obligation, and by a flow of sentiment which makes the preservation of the community an object of desire, not merely a matter of prudence or a command of duty” (as quoted in Tierney, 1997, p. 25). Current discussions about tenure processes, instructor evaluation questionnaires, post-tenure reviews, and appropriate faculty/administration roles in these processes can be useful in clarifying misunderstanding and in adopting common language and knowledge of these important professional benchmarks and activities. A step forward was taken in May 2003 when the Berea College Faculty passed a significantly revised tenure policy and procedure that is intended to streamline the process, bring clarity to the roles of all who are involved in the process, and make the process more transparent to the faculty who go through it. After the Administrative Committee (AC) reviewed the new tenure policy and made several minor edits that the College Faculty endorsed, the Berea College trustees accepted this policy as recommended by the AC at their October 25, 2003 meeting. Discussions that seek to refine the text of the tenure standards and the clarity of the tenure process are continuing.

Technology

Information and science technologies have undergone enormous changes in the past decade on Berea College’s campus. The science departments now have capital budgets that allow them to plan major technological equipment purchases for their laboratories and classrooms. Computer resources that required less than 1% of the education and general budget in 1995 accounted for more than 8.6% of that budget in 2010-2011. In 1999, an outdated campus network was replaced with a switched IP network at a cost of \$3.6 million, and it provides 6,500 ports in classrooms, offices, public spaces, and residence hall rooms. Since that time, the network switching equipment has been upgraded to support video and voice transmissions, and wireless access points have been installed to provide cable-free network connection in all campus buildings and many outdoor spaces. Berea’s Universal Access Program placed a laptop computer in the hands of every Berea student beginning in Fall 2002. Facility renovation projects in the late 1990’s and beyond have all benefited from emerging ecological technologies (e.g., geothermal heating and cooling of five renovated buildings, use of high insulation windows, etc.). The Ecovillage apartments use, on average, 50% as much water and energy as conventional housing of this type in the region.

Of the remarkable changes noted above, none has been more pervasive than computer technologies. All Bereans have been affected by the burgeoning information revolution. We have already discussed how faculty members are utilizing computer technologies in their classrooms and research environments. There are faculty workshops, development funds for classroom projects, Appalachian College Association mentors and an annual symposium, and other opportunities to apply the benefits of computer technology to Berea’s teaching and learning environment. Other staff use computers extensively in their work as well. More than 100 secretaries and administrative assistants have undergone systematic and continuous computer training over the past decade. Twenty Office-Based Consultants (OBC) act as peer

mentors for computer usage with faculty and staff in their buildings as well as liaisons with IS&S for technology deployment and problem resolution situations. The OBC group regularly interacts with IS&S technicians for training and project support. Training videos, CD-ROMs, support literature, and Web-based materials are also available to a wide range of users of computer software at Berea College. During the past several years the College adopted the Banner computer software system for all of the major administrative areas on campus. This innovation has required more than \$1.5 million of training for dozens of Berea workers at all levels of the institution.

Computer technologies have placed enormous stress on virtually every administrative and support office on campus. In almost all cases, learning the new software and business protocols has compounded the responsibilities of already fully employed staff. As with teaching faculty, many workers throughout the campus feel the pace of their work-life has increased due to the pervasiveness of computer technologies from the classroom to the boiler-room, from the library carrel to the secretary's desktop, and from the science laboratory to the water treatment plant. When all students received laptop computers in the fall of 2002, the Berea College campus truly became a continuous and ubiquitous learning environment, presenting technological and pedagogical opportunities and challenges. A December 2002 survey of faculty indicated that 96% of respondents expect students to use computers for assignments in their classes. In a December 2003 survey of mid-year graduates, 87% of respondents reported using their computers in class. Across campus, one can observe that students not only use their computers in classrooms and residence halls but in the library and labor positions as well.

Governance

Berea College's Executive Council (EC) recognized the need to review and revise the College's governance structure since the early 1990's. Since that time, the EC initiated reviews of the charges, practices, and memberships of various councils and committees and convened several public forums to discuss governance issues. The EC also conducted a Listening Project in an effort to hear the voices of all community members. This work led to some incremental changes in the governance structure, but the need for further review continued.

During the 2001-02 academic year, the Executive Council took several steps to move the review and revision forward. First, a joint SPC/EC subcommittee read numerous articles on governance in higher education literature and reported its findings to the campus community. Second, a small EC subcommittee was formed to consider adjustments that could be made to the current committee structure in order to improve communications among constituencies and the effectiveness of decisions. Third, another EC subcommittee, the College Governance Review Subcommittee, was appointed to examine the larger governance picture (including an external literature review and consideration of Berea's governance structures and culture) with a specific charge to understand and then make substantial recommendations to improve how governance is engaged at Berea College.

The College Governance Review Subcommittee reviewed the literature summary provided by the joint EC/SPC subcommittee, did an additional literature search, examined available information and data on Berea's campus to distinguish the separate responsibilities

of governance groups and processes, and then sought to provide recommendations to address both cultural and structural governance issues at Berea. The “Final Report to the Executive Council from the College Governance Review Subcommittee” (May 15, 2003) sought to improve Berea’s governance system based on five core goals that would provide: (1) “meaningful participation;” (2) “mission-driven governance with strategic thinking at its center;” (3) “a structure that is simple, transparent, flexible, responsive, and accessible;” (4) “a rich and continuing flow of information;” and (5) “good use of human resources (especially of people’s time).” (The Executive Council later added a sixth goal—“effective and timely decision making.”) The Executive Council held forums during 2003-04 to seek campus input regarding the Subcommittee’s report, while the EC was considering each of the recommendations at length.

During 2004-05, the EC again sought input from councils and committees and devoted many hours to discussion of its developing proposal. The goal of the EC was to clarify the responsibilities of the community members with regard to governance and to develop a manageable system that inspires trust and results in effective decision making.

After receiving feedback from a draft of the proposal distributed to the faculties in the spring of 2005 and making revisions over the summer, the Executive Council presented a governance revision proposal to the faculty for discussion in October 2005. The primary changes were (a) to disengage Commissioning from governance/voting, (b) to open up governance participation to all employees who constitute “The General Faculty,” (c) to create a new General Faculty Assembly, (d) to create a new Staff Forum, and (e) to streamline the charges and membership of current committees and councils. These modifications were proposed, discussed at length, and accepted, and the proposal was approved by the faculties in April and by the Board of Trustees in May 2006. The approved modifications to Berea’s governance structure were implemented Fall 2006. Meaningful participation was highlighted, and the EC made it clear that governance is not the primary responsibility of any single member or group within the Berea College community. Rather, governance is the shared responsibility of the trustees, administrators, teaching faculty, staff, and students. The proposal, as designed, intended to provide a means for everyone to engage in some way in the conversations that define and develop our institution.

The EC views these revisions as creating a broader campus conversation about governance and about our underlying institutional governance cultures. As the conversation unfolds, it is likely that we will identify additional changes that are needed.

Self-Study and Accreditation

Berea College’s evaluation culture changed slowly but significantly during the decade after its 1994-95 SACS review. The College entered into its 2005 SACS institutional audit and enhancement plan with real optimism. Serious self-reflection concerning the College’s identity and priorities, admissions policies, governance structures, tenure processes, and the role of department chairs in guiding the faculty toward continuous educational improvement had all contributed to more positive and productive interactions among students, faculty, and staff regarding modes of evaluation and assessment. By 2005, the campus was prepared for its decadal SACS review.

In December 2003, the new SACS Leadership Team was created. It was composed of the president, provost, dean of faculty, director of OIRA, and a faculty member as specified by SACS. This team attended an orientation conference in Atlanta, worked throughout the next year (2004-05) to produce a Compliance Report that addressed all 75 standards (not including the QEP), and submitted that report electronically in March 2005. The Compliance Report was read by an off-site committee that found Berea in compliance with 65 of the standards, and asked for more information for 10 of the 75 standards. In August of 2005, the Leadership Team submitted two documents to SACS: (1) a “Focused Report” on the 10 compliance areas questioned by the off-site review team and (2) a 69-page Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that focused on “probation” and “retention” issues for Berea’s at-risk students.

In late September 2005, a six-person Reaffirmation Committee (composed of faculty and administrators from peer colleges) visited Berea College for two days after having read the two documents Berea submitted to SACS in August. On October 28, 2005, the Reaffirmation Committee reported to Berea and SACS that the College had met 75 of the 76 standards with only “a rewrite” of the QEP needed to complete Berea’s ten-year reaccreditation. That rewrite of the QEP (still focusing on the issue of student academic success, with a clear emphasis on the learning—not just retention—of all students in the first year of college as well as those on probation), entitled “Route 101: Highway to Enhancement of Student Learning at Berea College,” was submitted to SACS on February 23, 2006. On July 7, 2006, SACS notified Berea that it had reaffirmed Berea’s accreditation. What the new SACS reaccreditation process revealed was that accreditation was now taking seriously student learning in a substantial way. All QEP’s have student learning as their goal.

Several positive trends have emerged alongside Berea’s SACS evaluations that reveal significant changes in Berea’s learning culture that are measurable and in accordance with SACS’ accountability expectations. Studies of student experience, inclusion, engagement, and achievement have all shown sustained improvement at Berea over the past decade. For example, both national and institutionally-developed survey instruments show significant increases in student satisfaction with many aspects of the campus and collegiate programs. In 2003, 2007, and 2010, the highly respected National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) showed that Berea College students were significantly more engaged in a wide range of behaviors associated with the highest levels of student learning than the national norm. Retention and graduation rates at the College have also improved dramatically. Graduation rates that had dipped below 50% for most of the 1990’s and increased to 64% for the Class of 2004. Also freshman-to-sophomore retention rates have averaged 80% over recent years, representing more than a 10% gain from the 1990’s. The fact that during this time Berea’s enrollment of African American students has more than doubled and that retention and graduation rates for these students are nearly identical to those of other domestic students is also a significant accomplishment. Both seniors and recent graduates evaluate their overall collegiate experience and the attainment of their learning goals significantly higher than comparison groups at other colleges and universities. New study/feedback mechanisms have been at the heart of these positive changes.

Community

While some of the above issues and questions are already under consideration, there is no challenge of greater importance or urgency to Berea's academic program than the need to reaffirm the centrality of community and to strengthen the bonds of mutual obligation. Working together on matters related to faculty evaluation, tenure and post-tenure review, and assessment practices provides good opportunities to explore and develop the shared understandings, goals, and bonds that unite Bereans in the pursuit of community that will promote "an education of high quality with a liberal arts foundation and outlook." Likewise, the development of "Workplace Expectations" from the Great Commitments and *Being and Becoming's* Learning Goals for all non-faculty workers was a step forward in seeking common ground for all who work to achieve Berea College's mission. The "Feedback Circle" program for individual worker's evaluation and development based on the Workplace Expectations is supported with a Staff Development Fund and People Services' programs designed to enhance each person's vocational abilities. The People Services Office also organizes a Fall Festival, a Christmas Party, and a Retirement Celebration each year as ways to create stronger bonds among all Berea workers.

The internal features, the actual "landscape," of Berea's learning community mentioned above are offered to remind all of us that we must consider more than the College's mission when charting Berea's future directions. While none of the above features have remained unchanged throughout Berea's history, each has had some influence in determining the nature of the contemporary Berea College community. These internal imperatives will have to be considered as Berea sets its future course. They determine, to a large extent, how Berea can achieve its aims.

Conclusion

With the preceding presentation of Berea's mission in the context of external and internal forces that shape our challenges and opportunities, we seek to define Berea College as we have been and want to become. The learning goals and strategic recommendations that follow attempt to incorporate the essential elements of Berea's mission as articulated in the Great Commitments. Likewise, an understanding of the College's strengths and limitations (i.e., "Internal Landscape") set in the context of what we believe are the challenges and opportunities provided by the external environment (i.e., "External Landscape") have shaped these goals and recommendations. While we understand that all of the external or internal opportunities and challenges will not have equal weight in determining how well Berea College can achieve its goals, we also recognize that all members of the community need to become aware of the variety of factors that affect the future welfare and success of the College as a whole. Finally, all of the learning goals and recommendations are set within the context of Berea College as an *integrated and continuous learning community for all students, faculty, and staff*. It is this conception that forms the vision for what Berea seeks to become and that is explicated in the next section.

BEREA AS A LEARNING INSTITUTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Twenty-first Century Imperatives

In the preface to their book, *Reinventing the University* (1995), editors Sandra Johnson and Sean Rush state simply, “We believe a sea of change is in the making, demanding a new vision for America’s 3,600 institutions of higher learning” (p. xx). Johnson and Rush say that colleges must continually evaluate how they govern themselves, how they manage their resources, how they hold themselves accountable, and how well they have planned strategically for the future. George Keller agrees when he says, in “Creating a Vision for the Future” (1995), that “...the environment has become very turbulent, and educators are increasingly being asked to respond to the radical changes and ‘reinvent’ their structures and services for the new environment” (p. 386). Keller says that a vision enables campus constituencies “to think seriously about the purposes, priorities, and distinctiveness of their college or university without threats to current positions and arrangements” (p. 386). The next two sections of this document offer such strategic thinking or “re-imagining.”

If Berea College is to create a vision of what it wants to become, its mission and internal imperatives as well as the external threats and opportunities outlined in the preceding sections must all be viewed in a context of the fundamental characteristics of the 21st century. Any vision that Berea seeks to achieve must be broad enough to incorporate the external and internal contexts in which our students will live and learn at Berea College and in the wider world. That vision must also make clear the distinctive competencies or characteristics that apply to Berea especially or alone. To begin such constructive thinking, we need to understand the learning related characteristics of our 21st-century world.

First, ours is an increasingly interdependent global society. We all live in a global village of incredible complexity. The Tokico plant on the edge of Berea represents a blending of Japanese industrial policies with a rural Kentucky workforce. This plant produces automotive brakes with raw materials from South America that are forged in Japan, machined and assembled in Berea, and installed on an “American” Ford car in Mexico. Kentucky’s coal mines struggle to compete with Colombian and Argentinean mines in a world energy market. Every vocation is now set in an international context. How do we educate Berea students to work in such a global village even as they return to Appalachia? From the ethnic food they eat and the clothes from around the world they wear to the world news they watch on television, Berea students already live in the global village in which they will seek meaningful lives and vocations. United States’ troops are stationed around the globe and often serve the security needs of others under the United Nations’ banner. After September 11, 2001, United States’ soldiers actively engaged an elusive terrorist enemy abroad that has taken away our sense of security here at home. How can we prepare Berea students for living and working in such an interdependent, multicultural, and conflicted world?

Second, ours is a highly scientific and technological world. Stem-cell research, self-contained mechanical hearts, and genetically altered organisms are but a few examples of the ways in which modern medicine and science blend sophisticated technology and

scientific imagination. Smart cards, miniature computers, the World Wide Web, and satellite communications have altered our sense of privacy, community, and citizenship. Multimedia computers and digitized video influence our students' lives from their entertainment to their education. The emergence of the "new economy" that removes the constraints of time and space from workplaces through the use of computer technology fundamentally challenges the industrial models of what constitutes an educated labor force. The human Genome Project that has now mapped the genetic structure of humans has paved the way for new levels of genetic research and treatment of human illnesses. The 21st century is truly a technological and information age that will require more and more sophisticated learners as workers and citizens.

How will our students know which of the hundreds of articles their computer can locate are worthy of their serious consideration? How will they distinguish a good argument from a bad one? Teaching students discernment in recognizing good sources of information in the construction of knowledge is one educational challenge that is intensified by the technology of our age. Differential access to and knowledge of computers and other technologies will widen the educational, and therefore economic, gap between the affluent and the economically disadvantaged—including many students from Appalachia. How best can Berea College address this so-called digital divide? And in a day when some conservative religious groups question the very foundations of science (e.g., evolution or astronomic theories of the universe's creation), how can we help our students who come from such backgrounds to be open-minded in their learning without fear of losing their faith? These are but a few of the Berea-specific challenges the technological and scientific advances of our day pose for us.

Third, ours is an age of increased interdependence of our natural and fabricated worlds. Synthetic fertilizers have created the "green revolution" even as they have poisoned the wells of the farmers who grow hybrid crops in abundance. Sophisticated medicines and manufacturing chemicals have created hazardous wastes we now must burn or neutralize. Disposal of chemical weapons of the past and biological weapons of the future frame one set of environmental challenges. Environmental crises in Appalachia and around the world are one result of new technologies and sciences and include polluted water, polluted air, and polluted soil as threats to the very survival of the human species. How can we teach our students to take the long view on creature comforts and technological development, the long view that comes from an understanding of the need for sustainable population and economic growth? Replacing human workers by robots, computers, and other machines has created a new vocational era marked by huge temporary employment firms, chronically underemployed segments of our population, and a move from an industrial to a service and information economy. Finally, the interactions between people more and more through technological means (email, faxes, videoconferences, etc.) raises questions about the human qualities of family, school, community, and employment environments. How can we teach our students to live in harmony with the natural world even as we create more artificial and technological means to modify, threaten, and distance that world?

Fourth, our world is marked by rapid change in all dimensions of life. We are undergoing a worldwide revolutionary change from an industrial to an information/service age. Likewise, social and political changes are increasing with an unparalleled rapidity

because of the capability of high-speed communications and transportation and the resulting cultural exchanges. Tom Peters told business leaders that *Thriving on Chaos* (1987) would be the norm of the 1990's. In this age when the sheer amount of information that bombards us electronically and in written form threatens to overwhelm us, how can we teach ourselves and our students to develop intellectual maturity, personal self-confidence, and an ethical sense of direction? The explosion of Internet companies in the late 1990's and the quick demise of many of them by the year 2000 is only one reminder that not all new opportunities are good ones and that fundamental changes often take time to take root. Change is often greeted with resistance or bewilderment. How can we teach ourselves and our students to consider change, welcomed or unwelcomed, as an opportunity for learning and growth? This will be a critical educational challenge for Berea and other colleges.

Fifth, our rapidly changing and "high tech" age is also one in which age-old human problems deepen. The gap between the rich and the poor has increased in the past decades and will likely widen. In an information age and new economy, those who have access to higher education enter the marketplace with distinct vocational and economic advantages. Violence in the United States and around the world continues as the result of poverty, ethnic and religious rivalries, and the breakdown of moral, social, and family structures worldwide. Issues of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and class have polarized citizens in the United States and virtually all other countries of the world. In the United States, the battle between our rugged individualism and our sense of shared community has led to a point where we "have all but lost the vision of the public...a vision of our oneness, our unity, our interdependence upon one another" (Palmer, 1981, pp. 19 and 21). The self-centered mood reflected in the exaggerated insistence on individual "rights" in the United States is just another indication of the fragmented society from which our students come. Ironically, when the United States government reacted to protect its citizens from more terrorist attacks, it went to extremes in abridging the basic rights to privacy and individual freedom. How will we prepare Berea students to have their own voice and independent sense of judgment and self-worth, and yet develop collaborative habits as world citizens who seek to unite their divided communities, country, and world?

It is in such a complex and challenging world that Berea students of the 2000's and beyond will live and work. Given our special mission and our 21st-century world, how shall we conceive a sharpened focus for Berea College's achievement of its stated mission? In what ways must Berea College re-envision and recreate its institutional structure and direction?

The Vision: Berea as an Integrated and Continuous Learning Institution

Berea College has always been a special kind of educational institution. Its mission has focused upon providing a high quality education for underserved students in the neglected Appalachian region. Its early commitment to black and white men and women from the mountain region stemmed from a deep sense of human equality and social justice contained in the Christian faith of its founders. Berea continues to emphasize Christian compassion and service to others in both on-campus and outreach programs. Over the past century, the College has broadened its invitation to students of all races, nationalities, and ethnic backgrounds to study and to live together.

Berea is first of all an academic community. Berea's academic program is embedded in the liberal arts even as it provides opportunity for in-depth study and career preparation. While inspiring and enabling a "life-long pursuit of truth" is a central aim of the General Education Program, many learning experiences in and outside the traditional classroom seek understanding of the need and means to apply knowledge from different fields and "to make meaningful commitments and translate them into action."⁶² Berea's formal teaching and learning activities (e.g., in the classroom, laboratory, or studio) form the core of the campus' rich and complex learning environment and seek to encourage students' intellectual and personal growth. Berea's learning environment is intended to be student-centered. Therefore, special attempts are made to create small classes and individualized learning opportunities where faculty and students work one-on-one or in small groups. Flexible access to information technology (a powerful catalyst for innovation in teaching and learning) and to opportunities for experiential learning (e.g., study abroad, service-learning, internships, undergraduate research) enriches the learning environment and increases pedagogical options for faculty. Faculty development programs such as Communication Across the College, begun in 1989, and the January New Faculty Seminar, begun in 2000, provide opportunities for faculty to explore teaching and learning theories and practices. Berea's participation as a Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (a program sponsored by AAHE) provides additional opportunities for faculty to become part of a national pedagogical conversation. The racial and ethnic mixture (nearly one in four new students is either African American or international) holds rich potential at Berea College for the learning environment in and beyond the classroom and challenges faculty to engage a diverse student body. Therefore, interdisciplinary studies such as African and African American Studies, Women's Studies, or Sustainability and Environmental Studies offer students opportunities to address complex problems from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Likewise, internships, international study, and service-learning courses all expand formal learning beyond the classroom. These complex and expanded curricular options underscore the importance of continuous new learning on the part of faculty. Improving the quality and effectiveness of the formal learning environment should continue to be Berea's top priority.

Berea's residential character provides for continual extension of the learning environment beyond the classroom into students' organizations, activities, and living spaces. Ideas generated in classes and convocation programs percolate through the residence halls as well. "Guided Learning" principles and approaches in Student Life programs bring students and staff together in settings and projects where both are teachers and learners. Living experiences become learning opportunities on a residential campus like Berea's.

Berea's Labor Program provides opportunities for learning through work experiences and service with faculty, staff, and students working side by side in nearly all aspects of the College's programs and services. Students and full-time employees tend the grounds, repair equipment, and maintain facilities. Faculty and students collaborate on research and creative projects. Faculty, students, and staff come together to celebrate work well done (Labor Day) and to serve others (provide local relief, conduct food drives, etc.). Since all students work in the Student Labor Program and most employees serve also as labor supervisors, all Bereans

⁶² See the Preamble to the Great Commitments of Berea College on p. 6.

are provided an opportunity for integrated and continuous learning in their daily work. Thus, it is not students alone who must be constant learners. All students, faculty, and employees must continually learn and grow in their capabilities if they are to participate in the creation of an integrated learning environment at the College. *The Berea College of the 21st century can best be conceived as an integrated and continuous learning community that is inclusive of all its students, workers, offices, programs, and physical spaces.*

The predominant characteristics of the 21st century suggest that rapid developments in science and technology will require constant learning by even the most well-educated workers and college graduates. Furthermore, such intractable human problems as persistent poverty and ethnic and racial discord will require creative solutions based upon new paradigms of thinking and action. Global environmental problems will yield only to new understandings of the responsibility humans have to a sustainable interaction between their fabricated and natural worlds. Most importantly, the very rapidity of change will require new levels of information processing and a greater speed of responses by individuals and communities to new challenges—responses that are nevertheless deeply rooted in ethical values and mature intellectual perspectives. These features of the 21st century require all of us at Berea College to be constantly learning throughout our lifetimes.

If Berea College is to direct its human and fiscal resources toward a sharpened sense of mission for a 21st-century world, the idea of an integrated and continuous learning community best conceptualizes this new future. Such a Berea should aspire to be an interdependent learning community, all persons and parts of which participate in Berea's threefold mission of learning, labor, and service. *Such a vision requires that all members of the community engage in continuous, multifaceted learning—whatever their roles and tasks. From deepening disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and liberal arts knowledge and perspectives to learning new computer technologies and teamwork skills, the development of faculty, administrators, and all employees must be a central priority of Berea College.* Such a learning community must be clear about ways in which improvements can occur and then assist employees in achieving those improvements. To realize such a learning community, Berea must make real and sustained investments in its people at all levels and in all roles at the College. Such a Berea must have flexible administrative and governance structures to meet complex and changing educational challenges. Such a Berea will require reconceiving learning, labor, and service/outreach activities as integrated dimensions of a single educational mission. Such a coherent and interdependent institution will require common learning assumptions for all students and all faculty and staff. These assumptions will encourage re-perceiving our world and our relationship to it—they will encourage us to reconceive and recreate our work and ourselves.

Common Learning Goals for All Workers and Learners at Berea College⁶³

If Berea College is to become a truly vital, integrated learning community that serves its students, faculty, and staff well in all its programs and activities, it must affirm Common Learning Goals for *all* of its constituencies. Of course, these learning goals apply to the faculty and students engaged in the formal learning processes. But at the Berea College of the 21st century, *all members* of the community, from residence hall staff and facilities management workers to administrators and secretaries, must attend to these learning goals. Only when all members of the Berea College community understand and incorporate the following Common Learning Goals into their work will Berea's "implicit curriculum"—that is, what we indirectly teach by our institutional structure, governance, processes, and behavior—undergird the lessons we seek to impart. *Therefore, the following learning goals will guide all departments, offices, and staff in writing their implementation plans, including budgetary allocations and assessment measures. These learning goals are presented in pairs to express the positive relationships, and sometimes tensions, which exist between them in higher education. This plan, however, conceives of them as interdependent and complementary goals for the learning climate at Berea College:*

1. We seek to develop mature and critical thinkers who also have the capacity for moral reflection, personal growth, and thoughtful action. As noted in a national study by the Association of American Colleges called *Integrity in the College Curriculum* (1985), "Leaders in a complex, pluralistic society require not only technical or professional expertise but the ability to make consequential judgments...on multifaceted problems" (p. i). Too many educational institutions have separated intellectual development from moral and personal growth. The results are obvious—the lack of an ethical compass in some of the brightest and most successful business, financial, and political leaders of our time. This pairing of intellectual and personal growth goals acknowledges that we and our students are whole beings whose thinking and acting are interdependent.

- **We seek to develop in ourselves and our students the intellectual ability to enjoy a life of learning and the arts as well as the capacity to address complex problems from multiple disciplines and perspectives.** Berea's commitment to the liberal arts seeks to instill a love of learning, a capacity for sustained and rigorous reflection, and an ability to seek truth and beauty in all aspects of life. Similarly, in a rapidly changing, highly technological and scientific world, all citizens need to have the capacity to think and to make decisions based on voluminous and conflicting sources of information and on various interpretations of that information. Some of the greatest challenges of our day will be to teach ourselves and our students to manage the explosion of information in all fields of study and to cope with our inability to know all we would like to know. Faculty and students must have more

⁶³ In August of 1995, the fall faculty conference consisted of a two-day off-campus retreat where teaching and general faculty together developed a long list of characteristics of the 21st century toward which we must teach and a list of learning goals that might address such a world given Berea's mission and resources. The five characteristics of the 21st-century world and the four pairs of learning goals were then distilled from the longer lists and presented to the faculties for comment and editing. It should be noted that while the Aims of General Education and the four pairs of Common Learning Goals overlap considerably, the latter list is understood to be applicable to the integrated and continuous learning community in which all Bereans study and work.

than a single competency, discipline, or perspective from which to assess conflicting information presented by numerous “authorities.” So, too, must laborers and office workers at Berea College be asked to think in complex terms and on multiple levels as they are asked to assume more decision-making responsibilities. Thus, it is important for Berea College to build upon its traditional disciplines and their strengths by creating a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary environment for learning that is focused on real world problems and practical applications. This goal is consistent with Berea’s broad understanding of the liberal arts providing human, social, and scientific ways of knowing that support lifelong, reflective learning in vocational, personal, and civic settings. Such learning is marked by the capacities to read, think, and communicate effectively in the midst of complexity, ambiguity, and rapid change.

- **We seek to develop in our students and ourselves the capacity for moral and spiritual development, and a commitment to service for the common or public good.** Berea students come to us with diverse religious, secular, and moral perspectives, but they all need to grow personally in ways that can unlock their true academic and personal potentials. Those employees who labor within Berea’s total learning environment must have opportunities for intellectual, personal, and moral growth if their lives and work are to reach their full potential. We should attempt to provide safe spaces and diverse opportunities for students’ and employees’ spiritual and/or personal growth so that all may gain not only intellectual but personal maturity. Such growth should be directed primarily to Berea’s commitment to stimulate a “motive of service to others.” We must help our students and ourselves to be active in addressing the needs of our communities—both human and natural, local and global. Through its emphasis on a Christian faith broadly understood and exemplified in service to others, Berea can help all students and employees to forge thoughtful personal commitments (whether Christian or not) and then act upon them. This traditional emphasis on service can be a distinctive element in a Berea College education for the 21st century if we clearly make connections between the value of individuals and their interrelatedness in community and between learning and service.

2. *We seek to understand the interconnectedness of our natural, fabricated, and human worlds.* We seek to prepare ourselves and our students to live thoughtfully within our natural and human-made environments and to take responsibility for the healthy development of both. We should seek to teach Berea students the obvious and subtle interdependencies between our human and natural, and our human and fabricated worlds.

- **We seek to understand the workings of our natural environment and the consequences of human interventions.** Such learning requires students to study the sciences as disciplines that take different approaches to understanding our natural world as well as to study other disciplines that consider the relationship between humans and their natural habitat. We all should seek to understand the character and urgency of local, regional, and global issues involving environmental degradation, non-sustainable growth economies, overpopulation, and inequities in the allocation of natural resources. This goal will require of us all an attention to the natural resources for which Berea College provides stewardship. We should prepare ourselves and our

students to be leaders in providing solutions for local environmental issues and problems. As we seek to understand our natural world, we must attempt to comprehend the impact of humans and their technological and scientific inventions upon it.

- **We seek to reflect seriously upon the benefits and limitations of scientific and technological creations.** Through computer technology and atomic energy systems, as well as anti-bacterial cleaning agents and hydroelectric dams, humans have in recent history increasingly altered their natural and social environments. By using computers and scientific technologies, Berea College has enhanced its learning environment. All of us at Berea should ask how we can be good stewards of the technological artifacts and synthetic products we create and thereby preserve our natural resources and our human communities. On one level, this goal requires that we learn to use such technologies as computers and scientific equipment to assist us in creating a vibrant learning environment. On another level, we must constantly ask how such technologies are altering in positive and negative ways our social and natural living environments. We all need opportunities to learn about the interconnectedness of our technological and human worlds.

3. As citizens of a global world, we seek to develop an understanding of and appreciation for “all peoples of the earth” to promote peace and non-violence in the world. This learning goal extends Berea’s traditional inclusive focus to encompass the global 21st-century community in which our students and we now live. All of the differences that divide us in the United States (e.g., race, gender, and class) are found in international or global cultures as well. The ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences that derive from people’s national identities require special attention if Berea’s students and employees are to learn to live and work in our global village. Therefore, we should seek ways to integrate international perspectives and opportunities for learning into Berea’s learning, labor, and service programs.

- **We must first seek to comprehend our distinct backgrounds as well as our common American culture.** Each person brings with him or her a distinct blend of racial, religious, gender, linguistic, and ethnic cultures. Even as we learn to accept others, especially those different from ourselves, we should also seek opportunities to understand ourselves and the backgrounds we bring with us to any relationship. Berea College should provide opportunities for its students and employees—women and men, African Americans and other ethnic groups, Appalachians and those from other regions in the United States, Christians and those from other religious traditions of the world—to learn about their distinctiveness. We must assist Bereans native to the United States to understand their common history and culture with its particular attitudes and perspectives toward “the foreigner” that assist or inhibit learning across cultural boundaries. We must seek to create a hospitable environment for Berea’s international students so that they too may reflect on their cultural norms and conventions in light of their educational experience in the United States. Residence halls and working spaces on campus may also be utilized to celebrate the American and/or international distinctiveness of all Bereans. The goal is for all of us at Berea to come to appreciate the value of our own and others’ cultures.

- **Because we live in an interdependent global community, we must actively seek to learn from cultures from around the world.** All external evidence points to an increasingly interdependent global world. Berea College should encourage all its students and workers to explore their interconnections with others different from themselves, at home and abroad. We must truly welcome and work alongside “the stranger” and seek to understand what is common within our human community. In addition to providing faculty, students, and staff with off-campus and international service and learning opportunities, the College should find ways to incorporate the perspectives that these Bereans gain to enhance multicultural understanding on campus. Even as Appalachian, African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and other ethnic and racial groups in the United States should find a hospitable, multicultural environment for their work and study at the College, so should they be encouraged to reflect upon their commonalities and interconnections to Berea’s international students and staff. Berea’s traditional commitment to egalitarianism should be reaffirmed and reimaged in light of this more global, multicultural educational emphasis. The primary goals of such education are to reduce prejudice and violence globally and to bring about a more vibrant and accepting learning community locally. We seek to emphasize our common aspirations and experiences even as we are enriched by our differences.

4. *We seek to create an educational environment that develops the capacities of individuals while forging a caring campus community of mutual respect and collaboration.* Within the previous learning goals, a tension persists between the interests of the individual and the concerns of our shared community. Berea College seeks to address this polarity directly without succumbing to a simplistic acceptance of one learning dimension over the other. The act of learning, at its core, is both individual and collaborative.

- **We seek to educate our students and staff to be independent thinkers and doers.** In one sense, Berea’s task is the education of each student and employee—one at a time. Though our learning quite often takes place in a group context, one person cannot learn for another. Likewise, intellectual, spiritual, personal, and professional growth takes place individually and collectively. Berea College has always sought to develop independent-mindedness in its students and employees so that they do not take the status quo as a given in any dimension of their lives or work. This disposition will continue to be needed in Berea students and employees as they face a rapidly changing world. Individual creativity and imagination will be needed by each student and employee who seeks to manage the new social, work, and political realities of the current decade and the 21st century.

- **We encourage all of our students and staff to understand the interdependence of all people and the need for collaboration and cooperation within a shared learning community.** On the more purely academic level, our students should come to know the extent to which all learning is an act of collaboration. The increasing specialization of academic disciplines and the team-oriented environment of the global workplace both call for more collaboration in the learning and working environments on our campus. This goal will likely express itself in collaborative

pedagogies for the classroom and for the other learning locations on campus (residence halls, student and staff workplaces, etc.). In other learning and working contexts, Berea College students and employees should come to know the interdependence of all aspects of Berea's learning community (e.g., learning, labor, service, and institutional support functions). Team-based study and self-directed work groups are a likely outcome of this recognition. Group classroom assignments, peer teaching, and collaborative computer assignments are but a few of the possibilities. So, too, must Berea's administrative and governance structures reduce hierarchy and encourage process-oriented work groups and habits that reach across offices, functions, and divisional lines. Only then can Berea's learning and labor programs become good locations for collaborative learning and working.

These four pairs of learning goals remind us of the complexity of the learning process in its intellectual and personal, theoretical and applied, and individual and collaborative dimensions. Some of these goals may be better achieved by formal study while others may be best addressed in the labor or residential context. These goals will be effectively realized when all of the learning, labor, and service programs of the College incorporate them into their strategies. For example, interracial education can occur in the formal curriculum, in residential living, in intercollegiate athletics, in the labor context, and in service programs. Team learning can occur in the classroom, within labor assignments, within residence halls, or academic departments. Such integration of these goals within and across learning and working areas of the College is our aim.

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following questions and recommended actions share at least two features—namely, their scope is institution-wide and their need for continued attention is critical to the success of Berea College’s mission in the 21st century. All arise from an attempt to interpret and implement Berea’s Great Commitments and Common Learning Goals in light of the nature and character of our contemporary world. Many strategic questions have been posed but not pursued by the SPC. Of the nine listed in the following pages, six are under the oversight of the Strategic Planning Council (SPC) and three have been assigned to programs or offices to continue their implementation (see Historical Note below).

Strategic questions/initiatives are understood to be pivotal issues that arise from Berea College’s core mission and contemporary extension of that mission and are of College-wide scope (i.e., which usually apply across academic, residential, co-curricular, and administrative boundaries). Therefore, new initiatives within existing departments and programs that assist Berea College in accomplishing its educational and service mission *are encouraged and will be funded through Berea’s annual budgetary processes*, but are not included in this presentation. Furthermore, there are important strategic questions and initiatives that have arisen in the SPC in conjunction with other standing committees and/or administrative offices *that are better handled in ongoing campus structures*. For example, the governance conversations that began in the Executive Council (EC) and that included work with the SPC moved forward through the work of the EC’s College Governance Review Subcommittee. Likewise, the internationalization initiative, a collaboration between faculty and administrators, is now handled through the International Center in collaboration with standing committees and academic and student life administrative offices. Therefore, presented in this document are the core initiatives linked to Berea’s Great Commitments and Common Learning Goals for which there is no single standing committee or administrative office that can focus on the breadth of the issues involved. Thus, these campus-wide initiatives are presented in the form of questions to be addressed.

Historical Note on Evolution of SPC Initiatives:

The five initiatives listed in the 1996 version of this plan were considered to be the most important ones to address immediately. Ten years later, in its 2006 full revision, the SPC and Berea College community concluded that three of the 1996 strategic areas (i.e., Question #1 on Appalachia, Question #2 on Admissions, and Question #3 on Berea’s Christian Identity) had been partially addressed but should be continued in a modified form. The community also concluded that one of the original strategic focus areas (i.e., Question #5 on fiscal, facility, and employee development) was successfully addressed and that its continued implementation and oversight now lies in the appropriate administrative offices and programs. Two new related strategic areas emerged in 2006 from the original Question #4 on Berea’s egalitarian community, one focusing on Berea’s commitment to interracial education and the other on the commitment to the equality of women and men. Another new initiative formalized the labor revitalization proposal approved by the faculty, and the last new initiative focused on creating a more reflective, effective, and sustainable learning community. The SPC concluded that some of the new College-wide strategic initiatives can best be handled by a combination of standing committees and administrative offices and do

not need the specific attention of the SPC (e.g., 2005 considerations of governance). Most of the recommendations included in this document encourage immediate action that will be carried out in yearly implementation plans, and one recommendation suggests further study before any specific action plans are developed.

This 2011 partial revision of *Being and Becoming* has focused on and now adds two new initiatives. The first on engaged and transformative learning came out of a year-long scenario planning process. The second on ecological and environmental sustainability came out of a nearly three year SPC subcommittee process. The first was a direct response to the 2008-09 financial crisis and the second was delayed in consideration due to that financial crisis. Both of these initiatives were adopted by the General Faculty, the Administrative Committee, and the Board of Trustees. Three 2006 initiatives (#1 on Appalachia, #3 on Berea's Christian commitment, and #6 on Berea's Labor Program) have been assigned to administrative/academic programs or offices for oversight. These three initiatives are considered well along in implementation but still need continued development. The programs and offices that now bear the responsibility for these initiatives (i.e., Appalachian Center, Campus Christian Center, and the Labor Program Office respectively) are expected to provide annual reports to the Strategic Planning Council. These three initiatives are listed in order following this list of those initiatives still under the active supervision of the SPC.

Question #1: How can Berea College best promote engaged and transformative learning as an integrated and college-wide initiative?⁶⁴

The scenario planning processes of 2009-10 at Berea College sought to respond to the financial crises of 2008-09 by reducing program and staff budgets by approximately 15% while seeking additional income and focusing its human and fiscal resources to produce a strengthened overall educational program. The Scenario Planning Taskforce's report, "Of Journeys, Landscapes, and Destinations," provided three differently focused scenarios with programmatic and budgetary changes ("Building Blocks") that would better focus the College's limited resources to accomplish its ambitious historic mission. After extensive discussions within and among all campus constituencies the fall of 2009, the Administrative Committee drafted "Scenario: Engaged and Transformative Learning" that combined elements of all three Taskforce scenarios. This scenario was endorsed strongly by the General Faculty Assembly on December 10, 2009 and approved by the Board of Trustees on February 27, 2010.⁶⁵ This proposal intends to incorporate the scenario Engaged and Transformative Learning as an integral part of Berea's strategic plan that will help direct the College's human and fiscal resources for the foreseeable future.

The adopted scenario and building blocks do not change the mission of Berea College, but seek to achieve it more effectively. Therefore, this initiative assumes that the Great Commitments and their implementation in *Being and Becoming* commit Berea College to be an interracial, coeducational institution that serves the Appalachian region primarily by educating talented students with economic need; promote the College's liberal arts and professional curricular balance of theory and practice; retain and enhance Berea's Labor Program; and seek ecological, fiscal, and human sustainability all within the context of Berea's inclusive Christian heritage. *In short, this Engaged and Transformative Learning initiative attempts to provide a clear focus for an integrated and continuous learning environment that will achieve Berea's historic mission with fewer resources.*

Engaged and Transformative Learning

Research on student learning in colleges in America has demonstrated that students' "engagement" is a critical if not singular factor in their academic success.⁶⁶ This is particularly true for students from lower income backgrounds. Students learn well, stay in college, create a vibrant college community with their peers, and graduate when they are

⁶⁴ The text for this initiative is mostly paraphrased or adapted directly from "Scenario: Engaged and Transformative Learning" that was adopted by the General Faculty Assembly on December 10, 2009 and by the Berea Board of Trustees on February 27, 2010. Therefore, quotation marks that would clutter the text are omitted.

⁶⁵ See SPC Public Folder for the full text of the "Scenario: Engaged and Transformative Learning."

⁶⁶ The National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) is one assessment tool that Berea College uses that evaluates our students' engagement with their academic studies. NSSE measures the self-reported levels of student involvement in their formal academic learning experience from number and size of required classroom writing assignments and number of hours students study each week to the types and levels of conceptual "work" students do with their faculty mentors and their student peers. The NSSE survey data of Berea students over the past decade reveal increased engagement with their academic studies, and in these same years retention and graduation rates increased. Berea's survey results support the more general claims now being made by higher education scholars about the critical importance of student engagement.

engaged in the learning process and in their learning community, and when the learning they encounter encompasses and expands their interests. Studies document that a student's full engagement with his or her academic learning can be deepened through a wide range of classroom pedagogies and co-curricular learning opportunities. There is no doubt that Berea's success in retaining and graduating students at a higher rate than statistics would predict can be attributed, at least in part, to a faculty that works closely with students in the classroom and as advisors outside the classroom and to the wide range of opportunities for engaged learning outside the classroom—e.g., study abroad, ensemble participation, undergraduate research, service-learning, guided learning in student life, internships, the labor program, and a staff dedicated to student success. Thus, this initiative seeks to enhance a rich and diverse learning environment at Berea College within and beyond the classrooms and laboratories.

Students may come to college to study a particular subject or gain specific skills, but often experience learning that seeks to develop integrative skills, values, habits, and practices of mind. Such learning encourages ethical and courageous thinking that leads to an active life of meaningful work and civic engagement.⁶⁷ This kind of transformative learning increases students' capacity to think critically and to engage complex issues; it also expands their understanding of the world and their place in it, while simultaneously deepening connections to a personal life of meaning. A college experience that fuels a lifelong passion for learning requires broad campus involvement since this kind of learning is deeply relational. Berea's faculty and staff have always been committed to providing a transformative learning environment for its students. The first pair of learning goals in *Being and Becoming*, says, "We seek to develop mature and critical thinkers who also have the capacity for moral reflection, personal growth, and thoughtful action."⁶⁸ The education of the whole person is integral to Berea's founding principles, and the transformative impact of a Berea education is evident in surveys of our alumni. Finally, this proposal understands the notion of transformative learning to be congruent with the goal that we as a Berea community have expressed in *Being and Becoming* to build an "integrated and continuous learning community" around four pairs of Common Learning Goals.

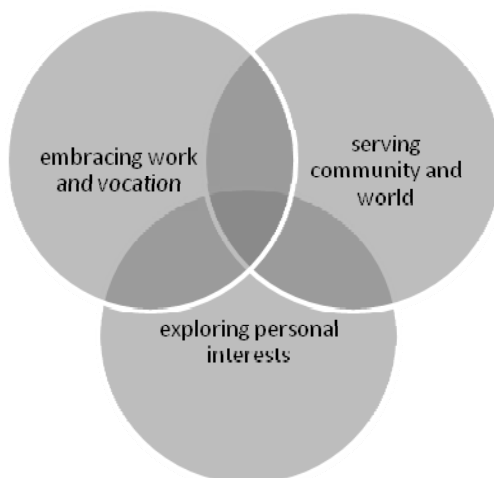
A focus on engaged and transformative learning includes the liberal arts tradition's goals of (1) unfettered learning for pure pleasure and for the development of meaningful lives where moral discernment is required, (2) numerous linkages between theory and practice that provide strong connections to work and vocation, and (3) ongoing engagement with contemporary world issues such as poverty, the environment, peace and social justice. As the diagram below suggests, the natural tensions between the liberal arts and professional studies and between making a life and making a living are embraced in this inclusive scenario as Berea's curriculum has sought to do throughout our institutional history. The

⁶⁷ For more about the transformative role of learning in human lives and the power of transformative education through the college experience, see William G. Perry's *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (1968); Lawrence Kohlberg's *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (1981); James W. Fowler's *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (1981); Sharon Parks' *The Critical Years: Young Adults and the Search for Meaning, Faith, and Commitment* (1986/1991); Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982); Jackson Kytle's *To Want To Learn: Insights and Provocations for Engaged Learning* (2004).

⁶⁸ See *Being and Becoming: Berea College in the 21st Century*, p. 56.

notion that student learning points ultimately toward service in one's work, one's life, and one's community is embedded in Berea's admissions goal of graduating "service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond." Thus, this scenario is intended to integrate and deepen these important Berea traditions in an institutionally focused way.

An intentional focus on engaged and transformative learning can be pictured this way:



The engaged and transformative learning initiative honors elements of what Berea already does well even as it seeks to intentionally focus Berea's resources and programs to enhance student engagement and learning. We expect such learning to expand students' capacities to be "service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond" (Berea's stated admission's goal). Simply put, this Engaged and Transformative Learning initiative anticipates evolutionary change that builds upon Berea's current strengths and seeks to extend them systematically. Therefore, we recommend that:

(1) The Berea College community focus on engaged and transformative learning for its students, faculty, and programs, and (2) that this focus be a guide for decision making in reshaping the budget and offices/programs to ensure that the College responds with a sharpened programmatic focus on decisions that must provide long-term financial and programmatic flexibility and sustainability.

To accomplish these institutional aims, Berea College will engage in activities such as:

1. Create a new divisional academic structure that promotes both traditional disciplinary majors and interdisciplinary/theme-based majors of high quality with clear policies for creating and eliminating majors;
2. Seek ways to ensure that Berea's General Education program intersects well with both majors and co-curricular programs (e.g., internships or study abroad) so that student engagement is enhanced;

3. Restructure and develop centers and administrative support offices and their programs with a focus on student engagement and transformation;
4. Shape the labor and residential life programs and activities with this initiative and its goals in mind;
5. Provide development and support for faculty and staff who seek ways in their teaching, scholarship, or program responsibilities to enhance student engagement; and
6. Align operating and capital budgets to support this initiative as appropriate.

Approved by the General Faculty Assembly on December 10, 2009

Approved by the Board of Trustees on February 27, 2010

Question #2: What population of students does Berea College seek to serve and how can the College best serve them?

Whom does Berea College seek to serve?

In the 1860's, Berea's publications identified "the colored [sic] people and the mountain people" as the particular populations best suited for a Berea education (Fairchild, 1875, p. 59). During the first 100 years of its existence, Berea provided education from the elementary years through college. After the passage of the Day Law in 1904, nearly a half-century passed during which Berea's schools educated only white students, mostly from "the mountains," while the Lincoln Institute, established by Berea College trustees, educated black students. Since the 1950 amendment of the law that made interracial education illegal, many new educational opportunities for both African American and mountain youth have emerged. In addition, out-migration has reduced the African American population in Berea's territory to less than 10%. However, national and regional evidence makes clear that significant need still exists within Berea's two traditional target populations.

Currently, students who show the greatest academic promise are likely to have several choices for higher education despite a lack of economic means. These options are likely to include state universities and other private colleges as well as community colleges close to home. Though significant differences in the quality of these educational alternatives exist, they are seldom apparent to students and their families—especially "first-generation" college students. Nonetheless, the choices of post-secondary education for most students with great economic need are already limited and are forecasted to decrease in the future. It is from the group of students whose academic potential may not yet be fully reflected in their performance that Berea will continue to select most of its students.

After considerable conversation in 1996 and again in 2004, the campus reaffirmed Berea's traditional assumptions concerning the question, "Whom should we serve?" We agreed that Berea College should commit itself to students (a) "who have great promise and limited economic resources," (b) who will provide a racial and gender diversity sufficient for a robust coeducational and interracial education, (c) who are primarily from Appalachia, (d) who will benefit from a high quality liberal arts education, and (e) who are likely to graduate. The faculty, administration, and trustees have consistently reaffirmed Berea's focus on students who have great financial need. On October 21 and 23, 2004 respectively, the faculty and trustees of Berea College modified Berea's family financial eligibility policy to limit admission to those students from the lowest third of family incomes of all students pursuing post-secondary education.

Berea College's admissions policy should be consistent with its explication in the Great Commitments and yet be shaped in its application by the changing realities of the 21st century. This means that we should continue to seek a student body that is interracial, coeducational, with significant economic need, and primarily from the Appalachian region. As Berea College educates only 1,500 students of the approximately 686,500 who attend post-secondary institutions in the nine southern Appalachian states, we have identified our educational goal to be the education and inspiration of students to become "service-oriented

leaders for Appalachia and beyond”—that is, our goal is to graduate those who will serve the communities where they live and work.

The decision to remain a residential college focused on Appalachia necessarily excludes other choices for the College. Alternatives such as becoming a national liberal arts college, providing a significant adult education program, or focusing primarily on distance learning, are not compatible with Berea’s current mission or circumstances. Given its material assets (i.e., endowment and physical plant), Berea’s student body size should remain at approximately 1,500-1,550 students. Given the overrepresentation of women students nationally in liberal arts colleges, we understand “gender balance” of male and female students to mean that we should select entering classes with a gender difference of no more than 20% (i.e., 40% male and 60% female). Therefore:

Berea College should seek to recruit students mostly from Southern Appalachia, black and white, men and women, (a) who have limited economic resources; (b) whose “great promise” is defined by significant potential for academic success and leadership; (c) who will be attracted to Berea’s Great Commitments and its clearly articulated emphasis on learning, labor, and service as worthy educational and personal goals; and (d) who, along with students from other areas of the U.S. and abroad, will compose a diverse cultural and ethnic mix that will create a 21st-century learning environment. The College seeks to inspire, educate, and graduate service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond. The total student body should number 1,600.

How can Berea College best serve the students it seeks to serve?

In the years since Berea’s admissions initiative was established, considerable progress has been made on many of its goals. The Admissions Office has been reorganized; its literature has been revised; and recruitment of Appalachian and African American students has intensified. From 1995-2005, African American enrollment increased from 8% to 19%. International student enrollment is now slightly more than 8% of the student body. Single parents have become another special population of students (up to 40 at any one time) that the College seeks to serve. Related to both the sustainability and single parent initiatives, the newly constructed Ecovillage provides 32 student family apartments and 120 spaces for pre-school children in the new Child Development Laboratory. Much progress has been made in attracting the diverse student body outlined above. Likewise, progress has been made in retaining and graduating these students. The 1996 freshman-to-sophomore retention rate was 65%, and the graduation rate for that class was only 47%. In contrast, the average retention rate from 2001-2004 has been above 80%, and the graduation rate has reached 60% for all student groups. Nonetheless, faculty and administrators continue to consider significant questions regarding how best to attract and educate the students Berea College seeks to serve.

“The External Landscape: A Changing Climate” presents a general picture of today’s college students and their preferences.⁶⁹ Students are more diverse in race, age, and

⁶⁹ See “Private Colleges in the New Millennium” and “Students of the New Millennium in Appalachia and Beyond” sections of the External Landscape for the demographic and other background data that informs this recommendation (pp. 12-19).

educational backgrounds than in previous generations. They have less interest in a liberal arts education and tend to seek colleges of 5,000 students or more in urban settings with greater diversity in living, dining, and entertainment experiences. With more than 65% of high school graduates pursuing post-secondary education, today's students are a very diverse group in their learning styles, high school preparation, and vocational interests. The so-called "New Millennial" student tends to be socially rather than individually oriented, more trusting of authority and institutions, brighter according to national tests, and yet spends fewer hours studying than students a decade ago. These students are more comfortable with diversity and crossing racial and international boundaries. They also are very comfortable with technology and have grown up in an increasingly visual culture.

Contemporary Berea students have grown up in the visual and group-oriented "Millennial" culture and, as such, bear many similarities to other students. However, Berea students as a group represent the lowest one-third of socioeconomic status among college-bound students across the country, and therefore share some particular characteristics that differ from many of their contemporaries. Berea's admissions commitment to serving students from Kentucky and Appalachia "with limited economic means" brings with it special challenges for faculty and students. For example, a child born in a family with an income below \$25,000 has only a 5% chance of graduating from college by the time she or he reaches the age of 25, whereas a child born in a family with an income of \$70,000 has a 50% chance of attaining a B.A. degree by the same age. Once in college, the student from a family with an annual income of \$25,000 or less has a 47% chance of graduating in six years, while a student from a family with an annual income of \$70,000 or more has a 68% chance of graduation.⁷⁰ The average income of Berea College student families is approximately \$28,000. These data reflect the reality of contemporary society and are not a critique of individuals.

According to Berea's Academic Services Office, Berea students reflect their national socio-economic cohort in many ways. For example, many students who have attended either rural or urban public schools with limited economic support are less likely to possess the academic skills essential for college success. About half of Berea College students come from single-parent homes where socio-emotional support may be less available or reliable. Despite strong academic credentials, many students with significant economic need enter college without the reserves of self-esteem necessary to overcome first-year academic challenges and thus are discouraged when their fears about their own inadequacies are confirmed by classroom experiences (cf., Claude Steele's "stereotypic threat").⁷¹ Though mental health services have reportedly risen for students of all income levels, the needs tend to be the greatest among those with the greatest economic need. First-year students entering Berea College in 2004 reported that they frequently felt depressed at rates about twice as high as entering students at similar colleges. These results provide additional insight into the challenges Berea's students and faculty may face in the classroom.⁷² In his 1999 study of low-income students, Clifford Adelman found that the relative level of a student's "academic

⁷⁰ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, "Descriptive Summary of 1995-96 Beginning Postsecondary Students: Six Years Later," NCES 2003—151, by Lutz Berkner, Shirley He, and Emily Forrest Cataldi. Project Officer Paula Knepper. Washington, DC: 2002, p. 163.

⁷¹ See pp. 27-28 for a fuller summary and a complete footnote citation of Steele's work.

⁷² Cooperative Institutional Research Project, Berea College Freshman Survey 2004.

resources” (i.e., a combination of high school curriculum, class rank, and GPA) is the strongest determinant of academic success.⁷³

Despite these many challenges, the success of many Berea College students is a source of great institutional pride, including students’ relatively high rate of admission to and success in graduate programs and professions such as teaching and nursing. It is likely that some of the College’s current programs and policies as well as particular aspects of the College culture contributed to this success. However, it is also possible that a careful analysis and better understanding of our educational policies, programs, and culture might reveal ways in which the College could enhance student motivation and achievement.

Given Berea College’s commitment to providing a high quality liberal arts education and the particular educational challenges likely to be presented in its chosen student population, there is a gap between the skills of some entering students and the College’s challenging curriculum and high academic standards. Some faculty members are disappointed in their students’ apparent lack of motivation and perseverance. Some faculty and staff also argue that Berea must either lower the educational standards or accept current levels of attrition (40% by graduation). Others argue that every admitted student is educable. Studies of low-income high school students show that setting high academic standards *and* providing support structures and learning environments that aid student achievement are a key to academic success.⁷⁴ The expectations of faculty members are also likely to exert a powerful influence on student performance.⁷⁵ To ask the question, “How best can Berea College serve the students it seeks to serve?” is, in considerable part, a question of how the College and its faculty and staff can develop a culture and structures that enable students to be successful. It is with this question in mind that Berea College establishes an academic success initiative in which:

Berea College commits itself to provide its students with a high quality liberal arts education that maintains high academic standards. It also seeks to improve its capacity to help the students it seeks to serve by (a) studying the national literature and conducting studies of its particular population of students to better understand the academic, personal, and attitudinal characteristics of Berea students; (b) systematically identifying the diverse strengths and weaknesses that students bring with them to Berea, building on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses; (c) assessing the effectiveness of Berea’s current curriculum, teaching, advising, academic support, student services, and residential programs in addressing student preparedness; (d) creating the necessary curricular, academic support, faculty/staff development, and residential/student-life structures and programs to better support

⁷³ U.S. Department of Education, “Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor’s Degree Attainment,” by Clifford Adelman, Washington, DC: 1999, page vi.

⁷⁴ Patricia M. McDonough, *The School-to-College Transition*, Washington: ACE, December 2004, p. 9. On this same topic, see also “States Test End-of-Course Exams: Seeking Consistency, Quality in Every Classroom,” *Perspectives: Newsletter of the Prichard Committee*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Winter 2004, pp. 1, 4-5 (<http://www.prichardcommittee.org/pubs/Winter04Perspectives.pdf>).

⁷⁵ Robert Rosenthal, “Interpersonal Expectancy Effects: A 30-year Perspective,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 3, 1994, pp. 176-179.

students' academic and personal success; and (e) monitoring the progress of this initiative.

The net effect of this student success initiative is to reaffirm Berea's current admissions goals of supporting a diverse and low-income population of students primarily from Appalachia while providing institutional learning structures and support that enables such students to meet the demands of the high-quality liberal arts education, with opportunities for study in pre-professional and professional programs, that Berea College provides.

To accomplish this institutional aim, Berea College will:

1. Focus its admissions program on: (a) exploring new ways of identifying students of "great promise"—including ways to measure their educational preparedness and motivation; (b) developing admissions materials to attract the most highly motivated and best prepared students; and (c) emphasizing Berea's high-quality academic programs, its residential character, the Labor Program, its inclusive Christian traditions and practices, and its commitment to service and leadership development;
2. Assess the effects of the College's current educational structures (e.g., policies, programs, and practices) and culture (e.g., faculty and student roles, norms, and values) on student learning and achievement, and determine how well the College is achieving its aims of conducting excellent educational programs that provide opportunities to the students it seeks to serve (retention and graduation rates will provide one set of measures of academic success but must be complemented by others that directly measure student performance); and
3. Ask the Executive Council to form a "Task Force on Student Success" that elaborates and extends the initiative outlined above; is encouraged to explore experimental, systemic, and targeted initiatives and pilot projects to enhance student academic success; will report back to the faculty each semester and seek to complete its work in one year (including the summer); and will submit its recommendations to the College and General Faculties for action or to appropriate administrative or academic support offices for implementation.

Question #3: How should Berea College's vision of ecological sustainability be realized?⁷⁶

The comprehensive state of our world's environment – including climate change, population growth, decrease in biotic diversity, and overuse of the world's natural resources – is worsening. These trends have been extensively researched scientifically and are indisputable. In 2005 the United Nations' report of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment project, entitled *Ecosystems and Human Well-being* (2005), provided a five-year assessment of 24 basic natural systems worldwide (i.e., air-quality, fresh-water-availability, health of fish populations, ozone-depletion, etc.). That report concludes that 15 of the world's 24 natural systems are in decline or are unsustainable. Further, the report identifies the impact of carbon emissions and fossil fuels on our atmosphere as the single most pressing issue.

The scientific community's deep concerns related to climate change (e.g. air, oceans, etc.) have now permeated the mainstream media. For example, Thomas Friedman's book, *Hot, Flat and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution – And How It Can Renew America* (2008), summarizes the pressing global-environmental issues that include climate change, population growth, decrease of biotic diversity, and overuse of the world's natural resources. Friedman also focuses on the strong evidence for climate change and the human contribution to carbon emissions. Since the rise of the industrial revolution, CO₂ levels have risen about 100 parts per million (from 280 to 387 PPM) and have been the main cause of a warming of the earth's average surface temperatures that already has begun to have deleterious effects (e.g., glaciers and permafrost are melting at alarming rates). Those of us in the United States with slightly less than 5% of the world's population use approximately 20% of the fossil fuels and natural resources (raw and manufactured) in the world and this fact constitutes the clearest sign of the unsustainability of our current way of life. Friedman concludes "We cannot afford any more Americas" even as China and India's middle classes have surpassed our own.

In 2007, the SPC appointed the Subcommittee on Sustainability II (SOS II) to investigate how a compelling vision of sustainability can be realized at Berea College. The report from SOS II (September 2008) asserted that environmental "sustainability is the defining challenge of our time" and that "Berea College challenges itself to live up to its tradition of visionary and principled leadership by becoming a model of sustainability and stewardship of the environment." This focus on creating a culture of sustainability speaks to the core of Berea's mission as an educational community committed to the goal of service to others. We must consider ourselves to be teachers and learners of sustainability in all dimensions of campus life and practice. Likewise, it is our responsibility to reach out beyond our campus community to local, regional, and national communities to join in moving together towards sustainability broadly understood. It is upon these combined understandings of sustainability as an extension of the College's traditional values and educational mission, that this proposal situates its vision, principles, and recommendations.

⁷⁶ The text for this initiative is mostly paraphrased or adapted directly from "SOS II: Strategic Directions for Sustainability at Berea College" that was adopted by the General Faculty Assembly on November 11, 2010 and by the Berea Board of Trustees on February 26, 2011. Therefore, quotation marks that would clutter the text are omitted. See SPC Public Folder for the full text of "SOS II: Strategic Directions for Sustainability at Berea College."

The report from the SOS I (December 1998) placed sustainability within the context of the College's Christian principles of social justice and a commitment to "plain living": "Sustainability... refers to the capacity of individuals, communities, and societies to coexist in a manner that maintains social justice, environmental integrity, and economic well-being today and for future generations" (p. 3). In its 2007 report, SOS II characterizes sustainability as a *moral* imperative. A sustainability commitment is driven by the concern not to live at the expense of others:

To live unsustainably—to consume resources beyond their rate of recovery, to impact ecosystems beyond their capacity to regenerate—is to live in a way that takes resources from others, elsewhere in the world, now and in the future. It is to live at a level of luxury, or with a carelessness, that must be paid for by someone else. (p. 10)

Drawing upon Thoreau's principle that it is not right to pursue one's interests "sitting on another man's shoulders," and Bill McKibben's dictum that we should not make ourselves wealthy at the expense of impoverishing the earth, the SOS II report further urged that Berea College's commitment to sustainability should be as substantial, as radical, as defining of its residential experience as was John G. Fee's utopian vision of the nineteenth century: "to live unsustainably is to live irresponsibly, indefensibly, and against the historical commitments of Berea College to aid those most in need." Therefore, the College must "increase efforts to create a culture of sustainable behavior by educating our community about the global and regional ecological crisis and methods for reducing our impact."

To that end, the SPC recommends the following vision of sustainability:

The College's ultimate goals must be (1) to become truly sustainable, that is to operate without negative physical impact on the lives of others in the world, and (2) to have positive impacts on the world through education, through creation of a model sustainable community, and through practical engagement with other local sustainability initiatives.

In order to achieve this vision, the College will:

1. Systematically and continuously reduce consumption of natural resources directly (e.g., water, raw materials, etc.) and indirectly (e.g., manufactured goods);
2. Immediately and continuously reduce Berea College's consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels and CO₂ production;
3. Create a culture of sustainability through education of Berea's community regarding global and regional ecological crises and methods for addressing these crises;
4. Share sustainable ideas and practices with both the community of Berea itself and the larger community beyond the campus in the process of extending the College's educational and action initiatives; and

5. Create a new governance/action-group, the Sustainability Committee, which will provide a bridge between the system of shared governance by faculty, staff and students and the administrative system in decision making for the College, and will:
 - a. Provide oversight across the institution for sustainability, in administrative offices, and in shared governance;
 - b. Assist in setting targets and monitoring progress towards reducing natural resource consumption; and
 - c. Provide recommendations to the Faculty and Administrative Committee to shape future sustainability efforts.
 - d. Provide communication to the community on sustainability issues and initiatives.

Approved by the General Faculty Assembly on November 11, 2010

Approved by the Board of Trustees on February 26, 2011

Question #4: How can Berea College best reassert and extend its founding legacy in interracial education and community in our 21st-century context?

As stated earlier, “The primary impetus for John Fee to establish the Berea schools in 1855 was to create an interracial and coeducational learning community founded upon the Christian gospel of ‘impartial love.’ Fee chose a scriptural text from Acts 17:26, ‘God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth,’ as the motto of Berea College because it captured the inclusive nature of his interpretation of the Christian faith, which gave rise to the Berea community and schools. “Students, black and white, male and female, were welcomed to live and learn in the early Berea community and schools” (Internal Landscape, p. 29). Fee argued for “impartial education” in the Berea schools and “interspersed” in the Berea community. In the schools, this meant integrated classes and equality in educational opportunities for all students in their academic lives and social integration in their residential and social lives. In the larger Berea community, it meant purposeful placement of homes and workplaces so that black and white families were interspersed. Fee’s interracial vision encompassed not simply the learning environment but also the living and working environments and required right action in addition to right thinking. The later Berea College community distilled this founding impetus in the fifth Great Commitment “To assert the kinship of all people and to provide interracial education with a particular emphasis on understanding and equality among blacks and whites.”

Nine years ago, our community tried to address collectively the issues of racial diversity, gender, class, and community by asking the question, “How can we structure our common lives to create a learning community characterized by Berea’s egalitarian educational commitments and learning goals?” Unfortunately, this is the primary area in which we have made the least progress among all of our strategic initiatives. This ineffectiveness is partly because the term “diversity” itself has become a cliché with very different meanings for different people. Indeed, higher education literature eventually affirmed that “in the 1980’s ‘diversity’ became a buzzword in the academy representing a movement advocating the appreciation and celebration of (social) difference...” (Benjamin Baez, 2000, pp. 43-47).⁷⁷ By working on all diversity concerns simultaneously, Berea College was unable to focus on any of them seriously. In an attempt to refine the focus of the egalitarian community initiative, the original SPC Community Issues Subcommittee soon abandoned the larger and more diffuse community diversity project to focus upon race as a more traditional Berea College concern that could provide focus for the community initiative. Building upon the work of the Community Issues Subcommittee, we offer the following definition of interracial education at Berea College:

Interracial education is the education of black and white people together for the benefit of their learning (both inside and outside the classroom), their understanding of one another, and the reconciliation of the breach in our lives

⁷⁷ The 2000-01 SPC Diversity Working Group later conducted a higher education literature review of diversity issues that confirmed the previous Community Issues Subcommittee’s belief that the community question was too broad to be effective. The higher education diversity literature of the past decade has focused upon racial diversity and international diversity as two separate and high priority issues for colleges and universities (see External Landscape, pp. 26-28).

caused by slavery, institutional racism, and the resulting personal prejudices found in both black and white communities.⁷⁸

The Subcommittee also examined broader multicultural issues with an awareness of the more complicated racial mix on our campus and in our nation. However, we have chosen this definition of interracial education at Berea College because black/white diversity is most relevant to Berea's mission and because the legacy of slavery in America is the continuing and complex matrix of systemic racism and personal prejudices that inhibit the social progress of African Americans today. In this context, by simple virtue of their social and cultural experiences, African Americans bring with them an ability to advance the campus-wide conversation that is so central to Berea's mission to a level virtually inaccessible without them. Thus, the intentional education of black and white people together is seminal for achieving racial reconciliation and respecting broader cultural diversity. Moreover, it continues the work of the founders of Berea College. We believe that the content of this definition and its curricular, extracurricular, and pedagogical implications offer focus for developing a diverse, equitable learning community and a deeper understanding of the myriad ways discrimination and oppression undermine human institutions, communities, and relationships.

The College has made some notable gains toward achieving its goal of interracial education and community, many of which reflect the recommendations in the Community Issues Subcommittee's 1997 report. A Diversity Training Program was initiated in 1999 to provide faculty and staff with the necessary skills to facilitate community dialogues and "increase understanding and acceptance of others." The College has broadened the range of courses and convocations related to interracial issues. Also, the creation of the "Tukule: Tusome" Lunchtime Lecture Series offers a concrete opportunity for the campus community to engage in "dialogue about cultural and racial issues" ("Report of the Community Issues Subcommittee," July 14, 1997). Additional achievements include the creation of a position for the Black Cultural Center director, the formalization of the African and African American Studies Program, and new spaces provided for each. Perhaps the most notable achievement of the past several years is the increased enrollment of African American students from 8% to 19% with a freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate that has improved from 65% to 80+% and a five-year graduation rate that has improved from 35.9% to 58.9%. Many of these gains have been made as part of the initiatives prompted by *Being and Becoming* in 1996. But perhaps the most difficult work remains.

Unfortunately, a persisting racist dimension of American culture is still evident both nationally and locally. Racially motivated events such as the burning of black churches (more than 100 in a five-year period in the late 1990's), violence against black citizens (e.g., James Byrd, Jr. in Texas), and numerous other events make it very clear that racism is deeply embedded all across America. Racial prejudice is expressed publicly on college campuses from Harvard Law School on the East Coast to Transylvania University here in Kentucky. Campus events suggest that interracial issues are pervasive and extend beyond the classroom to the whole College community. Should it be surprising, then, that Berea College African

⁷⁸ While Berea College's core commitment is to African Americans, the College will expand and apply these lessons to address the multi-cultural constituents as well.

American students, faculty, and staff sometimes experience overt racism in the broader community of Berea as well as more subtle forms occasionally at the College? Although the College has made significant gains in the recruitment and retention of black students, it has had modest success in recruiting black faculty, and almost no success in attracting black employees in the hourly and top administrative positions (currently, 3.6% of hourly workers are African American). In a 2002 letter to the SPC, an interracial group of sixteen faculty and staff expressed concern that the College should not approach Berea's interracial mission exclusively in academic (i.e., student and faculty) terms. These members of our community indicated that, beyond the demographic problem in our non-academic workforce, there is a problem of "benevolent complacency" across campus in which some persons disregard interracial issues by claiming there is not a real problem at a school with Berea's legacy and Great Commitments. Therefore, the broader interracial education issue for students and staff at the College is that it is easier for African Americans to be aware of and learn from white culture than it is for white students and staff to gain a similar interracial education.

Without collective assent from faculty and staff in 1996 about the importance of interracial education and community, it has been difficult to focus campus-wide attention on the specific problems and opportunities that interracial education and community present. Many spokespersons in our culture claim that a focus upon interracial concerns is just "political correctness" or treat this topic with a certain level of indifference because it is assumed that the Civil Rights Movement and subsequent legal and social initiatives have made this issue moot. However, we believe that contemporary national and international currents and events argue just the opposite; namely, that interracial education and community have never been more necessary.

Therefore, we recommend that:

Berea College should reassert "interracial education" in its contemporary learning, working, and living environments. We will build on our efforts to recruit and retain African American students and will increase attention to the recruitment and retention of African American faculty and staff. Our purpose is not simply to create greater numerical diversity but to engage white and black Bereans more fully in what it means to live together and to learn from and about each other. This initiative seeks to create an integrated and interracial learning and working community and to demonstrate Berea College's interracial commitment through deliberate and diligent action.

To accomplish this institutional aim, Berea College will:

1. Explore relationships between pedagogy and interracial education and enhance interracial education for all students at Berea College by:
 - a. Continuing to examine and apply contemporary studies about the academic experience of African American students; and
 - b. Continuing to collect data and surveys that can both challenge our assumptions and support Berea's quest for an intentional interracial community;

2. Find ways that all students, faculty, administrators, and staff can more fully appreciate and experience each other's commonality as well as diversity;
3. Provide greater opportunities for informal and formal interracial education in academic, residential, and workplace settings;
4. Conduct interracial education in ways that foster community;
5. Provide adequate and appropriate time, structures, and personnel to achieve this interracial education initiative; and
6. Study the effectiveness of the recruitment, retention, and education strategies for faculty, students, and staff and modify for improvement as necessary.

Question #5: How can Berea College best address its commitment to provide an educational and working environment that acknowledges and affirms the equality of women and men?

Berea College was founded with black people and women as equal partners with white people and men in the Berea educational venture because of John G. Fee's conviction that the scriptures required equality (e.g., the two "Great Commandments" and Acts: 17:26). Guided by his understanding of Christian teachings, Fee also wanted to eliminate "caste" or class distinctions as social barriers between groups. The interrelated Berea commitments on race and gender represent ideals for our educational community at the College. The sixth Great Commitment says that Berea seeks "To create a democratic community dedicated to education and equality for women and men." This initiative asks how contemporary Bereans are to understand this commitment and thoughtfully act to achieve it.

As with its commitment to interracial community and education, Berea's commitment to the coeducation of women and men was ahead of its time in many respects. A more recent application of Berea's commitment to coeducation and equality was the formation of a "Task Force on Gender Issues," which started meeting in 1987 to address "questions about equity and equal treatment of women on campus. The purpose of this group [was] to make recommendations to the administration for changes in situations where women's rights and issues are ignored, violated, or misunderstood." While there were several concrete results of this group's work, the most enduring outcome is the formal Women's Studies program.⁷⁹ Women's Studies was first formally introduced into the General Studies curriculum in 1970. The 1991 establishment of the Office of Women's Studies and the interdisciplinary minor was followed by the hiring of a full-time director for the program in 1996 and the official approval of Women's Studies as the College's first interdisciplinary major in May 2001.⁸⁰ Women's Studies courses and programs have enriched interdisciplinary studies at Berea College and provided a forum for addressing various gender-related issues on campus.⁸¹

However, such issues reach beyond academic programs to the economic, vocational, religious, and social realities for women. During the century and a half since Berea's founding, there has been a profound shift in the place, role, expectations, and level of equality for women in the United States and worldwide. Wide-ranging research concerning sexual and gender differences and the ways they have been constructed, politicized, and falsely generalized provides an essential context for any serious consideration of coeducation

⁷⁹ In 1988, the "Task Force on Gender Issues" created a brochure on Berea's sexual harassment policy, supported the hiring of a Campus Ministry position to address women's spiritual needs, and sponsored an open lecture by Peggy McIntosh on issues of inclusion and curriculum change. Also, John Bolin assisted the Task Force in organizing an informal panel discussion on women's issues and studies at Berea College. While there was an official charge by President Stephenson in the early 1990's to follow up on this group's work with an administratively supported "Commission on Women," such a focused effort to address gender-related issues on campus never got off the ground.

⁸⁰ See "A Natural Balance," by Zachary Pence in the Summer 2002 issue of the *Berea College Magazine*.

⁸¹ "Gender-related" refers to a broad range of issues, including but not limited to: sex and gender roles, identities, and orientations; systemic and interpersonal power structures; sexism; and feminism. While each of these issues has a distinct meaning and focus, the term "gender-related" is used here to emphasize their interdependence and complementary potential for addressing Berea's commitment and goal of the coeducation and equality of women and men.

and sexual equality today. While there has been significant research about the contributions and experience of women in the world, inequality and even abuses persist in spite of women's relatively equal numerical status.⁸²

Economic inequality and sexual violence are two examples of gender disparity. While gender pay equity has shown gradual improvement over time, in 2003 women overall made an average of 75.5 cents to a man's dollar regardless of race.⁸³ That same year, the average annual income of a woman with a bachelor's degree was \$41,327 compared to \$56,502 for a man with the same education.⁸⁴ Although the gap is not as significant for women in higher education, faculty salaries for women still trail behind those of men of the same rank.⁸⁵ Sexual violence against women is also still a problem in America and on college campuses. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the average annual number of attempted and completed rapes and sexual assaults between 1992-2000 was 366,460 (94% of which women are the victims),⁸⁶ and about a third of all female homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner.⁸⁷ Another U.S. Department of Justice study indicates "that nearly 5 percent (4.9 percent) of college women are victimized in any given calendar year [and that]....Over the course of a college career—which now lasts an average of 5 years—the percentage of completed or attempted rape victimization among women in higher educational institutions might climb to between one-fifth and one-quarter."⁸⁸ Furthermore, in many cultural and religious traditions, women's roles are narrowly defined and women are expected to subjugate themselves to men personally and professionally.

By the late 1970's, men and women were enrolling in institutions of higher learning in approximately equal numbers, but since that time, the number of women has increased to the point that they now form a substantial majority. While there are only slightly more women than men in the U.S., this pattern is more pronounced at 4-year higher education institutions where women students outnumber men nationally by approximately 57/43%. This trend is also apparent in Berea's own female/male ratio of typically 60/40%, and the recent increase in qualified and interested female college applicants presents a challenge for

⁸² According to the 2004 *Statesman's Yearbook*, women account for 49.64% of the world's population and men 50.36%. In the U.S., there are slightly more women (50.9%) than men (49.1%).

⁸³ See "Table P-40. Woman's Earnings as a Percentage of Men's Earnings by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1960 to 2003," U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/histinc/p40.html>.

⁸⁴ See "Table P-24. Educational Attainment—Full-Time, Year-Round Workers 25 Years Old and Over by Median Earnings and Sex: 1991 to 2004," U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/histinc/p24.html>.

⁸⁵ For national data on faculty salaries related to rank, see "Survey Report Table 5: Average Salary for Men and Women Faculty, by Category, Affiliation, and Academic Rank, 2002-03," *Academe*, March/April 2004, <http://www.aaup.org/surveys/03z/table5.htm>. According to the American Association of University Professors, at Berea College the average salary levels are equal for women and men at the Assistant Professor rank (\$48.8), are higher for women at the Associate Professor level (\$55.9 for women vs. \$55.1 for men), and are higher for men at the full Professor level (\$71.1 for men vs. \$63.5 for women).

⁸⁶ See *Rape and Sexual Assault: Reporting to Police and Medical Attention, 1992-2000* (NCJ 194530), U.S. Department of Justice, August 2002.

⁸⁷ See *Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001* (NCJ 197838), U.S. Department of Justice, February 2003.

⁸⁸ See *The Sexual Victimization of College Women Research Report* (NCJ 182369), U.S. Department of Justice, December 2000.

maintaining a gender balance for coeducation.⁸⁹ However, the reasons for this shift are complex, and it is not clear whether greater numbers of women on college campuses result in a safe and equitable learning environment for female students. While historically women have been underrepresented in leadership positions among students and other work groups at Berea College, there have been recent significant gains in this area. Despite such gains, many are concerned that the perception and expectation of women's subordinate roles persist and are reinforced by subtle discriminatory practices at Berea College. Because this is a topic of such complexity, varying viewpoints, and intellectual and emotional significance, it is often avoided rather than addressed with careful reflection. Thus, seriously engaging our commitment to the equality of women and men may require multiple discussions and actions.

Understanding and acting upon the various aspects of this issue will require sustained research, reflection, and imagination. It involves not only continued vigilance of basic equity issues (e.g., hiring practices, salaries, opportunities for promotion, etc.), but also a willingness of the community to question and explore assumptions, structures, and societal norms that may unwittingly perpetuate a false or limiting understanding of women and men.

Therefore, the SPC recommends that:

Berea College affirm its commitment to the equality of women and men by ensuring that: (a) policies, practices, and procedures at all levels of the institution exhibit this commitment; (b) our curriculum and pedagogies enhance our ability to recognize when sexual or gender identity affect one's experience and to address the pertinent differences in experience and perception; (c) our learning, living, and working environments embody and promote relations among men and women that are grounded in respect and understanding; and (d) scholarship about women and men, gender and sexism is used to help us think creatively and comprehensively about Berea's mission, its responsibility to society, and the civic engagement of Berea College students and graduates.

To address this goal, Berea College will:

1. Form a task force charged with the most wide-ranging exploration of equality of women and men (and relevant gender-related issues) at Berea College to produce a comprehensive report to be brought to the faculty for a discussion and vote within three years;
2. Gather information on and initiate campus-wide discussions in a variety of contexts, including student life, the workplace, and the classroom;
3. Regularly monitor its practices, policies, and procedures and compile relevant data for ensuring that they are just and equitable in relation to gender;

⁸⁹ See "Coeducation Depends on Coexistence," interview with Joe Bagnoli in the Summer 2002 issue of the *Berea College Magazine*.

4. Seek expert assistance, including off-campus leadership as appropriate, in identifying and addressing key issues related to the College's commitment to coeducation, sexual equality, and social justice, including how being female or male interact with other key aspects of identity, such as race, religion, and class, in relevant ways for our learning community;
5. Provide for faculty, staff, and student development on gender-related issues; and
6. Evaluate the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations and modify for improvement as necessary.

Question #6: How can Berea College support a reflective and effective learning and working community with sustainable workload expectations for its faculty, staff, and students?⁹⁰

In *Being and Becoming*, we set forth a vision of a learning community that can achieve Berea's lofty educational mission in our contemporary world: "The Berea College of the 21st century can best be conceived as an integrated and continuous learning community that is inclusive of all its students, workers, offices, programs, and physical spaces.... Such a vision requires that all members of the community engage in continuous, multifaceted learning—whatever their roles and tasks. From deepening disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and liberal arts knowledge and perspectives to learning new computer technologies and teamwork skills, the development of faculty, administrators, and all employees must be a central priority of Berea College" (p. 55).

In the preceding five strategic questions, especially the one on increasing student success (pp. 63-66), Berea College seeks to attend to important college-wide expressions of its mission in a 21st-century context. To do so will require serious study, assessment, reflection, and the collaborative development of creative solutions to address challenging workloads. This initiative seeks to explore ways to re-imagine and re-create a sustained and reflective learning environment while attending to the sustainability of a vibrant and changing learning community of faculty, staff, and students. Just as the student success initiative seeks to create "the necessary curricular, academic support, faculty/staff development, and residential/student life structures and programs to better support students' academic and personal success," this complementary initiative recognizes the need to provide the structures and support necessary for faculty, staff, and students to meet these challenges. Clear priorities, reasonable and sustainable workload expectations, and appropriate reward structures will all be necessary to establish the "integrated and continuous learning community" we seek.

Faculty and administrative studies at Berea over the past decade have examined the internal and external environments for higher education and have identified several challenges in creating an integrated and continuous learning environment at Berea College.⁹¹ From the 1996-97 "Subcommittee on the Academic Program" to the 2000-01 "Faculty Issues Subcommittee Report," these issues have been stated and restated as important considerations for teaching and learning at Berea College. Important faculty/curricular issues include faculty development and evaluation (including tenure and post-tenure reviews), interdisciplinary studies, experiential learning, program evaluation, and the increasing complexity of faculty work (i.e., new emphases and time commitments in technology, governance, accreditation, and meeting the developing needs of students). Perhaps the most salient issue in the external literature and confirmed by the experience of many Berea faculty is that of "demanding workloads and difficulties in balancing new responsibilities for

⁹⁰ For many, the term sustainability has mostly ecological connotations, which are evident in Berea College's ecological building renovations. However, the overall concept and movement of sustainability also includes social components for ensuring the most efficient, effective, and healthy application of human resources and relationships. In this strategic question, the phrase "sustainable workload expectations" refers to this concept of social sustainability.

⁹¹ See pp. 19-28 of the External Landscape and pp. 42-50 of the Internal Landscape.

teaching, research, and committee work and in simply keeping up with their discipline” (Rice, Sorcinelli, and Austin, 2000, p. 17). Similar claims have been made about students who are asked to learn how to communicate more effectively, reason more deliberately, and learn more content than their pre-college education and experiences have prepared them to do. Time pressures for both faculty and students are also made more acute by the collective enormity of the General Studies and major’s curricula. Just as important, the services for such a dynamic learning community (both academic/co-curricular and residential/extra-curricular support) place additional stress on many staff as well. Likewise, the College Labor Program demands the commitment of considerable time and resources by faculty, staff, and students alike.

The cumulative demands upon faculty, staff, and student time represent perhaps the greatest challenge to attaining the goal of an integrated and reflective learning environment. Simply put, the number and rapidity of responses to the external and internal imperatives (e.g., pressure for globalization, technology, general education reform, consideration of academic and academic support structures that will enhance student success, staff-wide Workplace Expectations directly derived from the Great Commitments and the Common Learning Goals, etc.) may not be sustainable without restructuring the Berea College learning community in a holistic way—in a way that makes time for individual and collective reflection and innovation. The many challenges and pressures at Berea, and elsewhere in higher education, have a negative impact on the ability of faculty, staff, and students to find sufficient time for reading, discussion, reflection, and the innovations necessary to fully realize our goal of an “integrated and continuous learning community.”

In recognition of the interrelationship of *all* of the above pressures and challenges as well as opportunities, the SPC seeks to create a more reflective and effective learning environment while attending to the multiple, competing, and interrelated demands upon faculty, staff, and student time in a comprehensive rather than piecemeal way. With this background in mind:

Berea College will seek to understand more fully the interrelated challenges and obstacles of retaining our distinctive mission while strengthening current, and creating new, policies and structures that promote a more reflective, collegial, and effective learning community with sustainable workloads for faculty, staff, and students.

To accomplish this institutional aim, Berea College must:

1. In consultation with the “Task Force on Student Success,” employ a holistic approach to identify and articulate global perspectives on the relationships between multiple imperatives, pressures, challenges, and opportunities, as well as to understand and develop institutional policies and structures (e.g., revised academic calendar or incentives for pedagogical experimentation) that provide a more reflective, effective, and sustainable learning community;

2. Investigate various ways to create policies and structures (e.g., work expectations and rewards, course scheduling, course credit vs. semester hours) that recognize the distinctive perspectives and experiences of faculty, staff, and students, and:
 - a. Adopt measures to align faculty workloads, professional expectations, mentoring, and rewards that will contribute to the development of a more reflective and sustainable teaching/learning environment and that will foster a collegial faculty culture marked by dedication, high morale, and continuous professional development;
 - b. Adopt policies and structures that attend to the unique demands (e.g., space, training, etc.) and contributions of staff and that promote and support their professional roles and continuing development; and
 - c. Adopt policies and structures that will facilitate an integrated, reflective, and sustainable educational experience for students in their curricular, co-curricular, labor, service, and residential environments and activities; and
3. Charge the Executive Council to utilize appropriate standing committees and/or an ad-hoc committee (e.g., an SPC subcommittee) to address the above goals in consultation with the “Task Force on Student Success.”

Campus-wide Initiatives Now Assigned to Programs/Offices for Implementation

Question #7: What should it mean for Berea College to serve the Appalachian region in the 21st century?⁹²

Given the persistent economic and educational issues of the region, the College should not simply continue but strengthen its focus on Appalachia. Even as Berea College reaffirms its commitment to serve the Appalachian region, it must also recognize that the region is changing. For 150 years, Berea has served the Appalachian region primarily through the education of its youth but also through a variety of service programs. Although many of Berea's historical educational and outreach activities have been superseded by state and federal programs, non-profit agencies, and other educational institutions, there is clearly still a need for Berea's educational and outreach services. Berea's CELTS (Center for Excellence in Learning Through Service) program has strengthened the integration of service and learning while increasing civic engagement of students and staff. The reorganized Appalachian Center has better facilities and integrated programs both to educate students and to serve the region. However, as earlier sections of this report confirm, poverty, exploitation, and injustice still exist in the Appalachian region, and the vast majority of students who come to Berea College do not have access to other affordable, high-quality four-year liberal arts/professional programs. Just as important, all who work and study at Berea College but are not from Appalachia can learn much about this diverse and yet definable region that has many distinct cultural, religious, and social features. In addition, the College employs many workers whose religious and cultural backgrounds are Appalachian. Therefore, to know and to serve Appalachia is a reciprocal benefit to the College and to the region.

Berea's mission and historical traditions argue for Berea's continued focus on Appalachia. From the Appalachian Center, the CELTS Program, the *Appalachian Heritage* magazine, the Appalachian Artifacts and Exhibits Studio, and Hutchins Library's Southern Appalachian Archives, to the many people in the region who have come to think of Berea College as a part of the region, the College is intertwined with the Appalachian region in complex ways that would be hard to disengage. Likewise, many of the donors to Berea's endowment and annual fund have given their resources because of the College's self-conscious focus on the Appalachian region. Therefore, we recommend that:

Berea College should (a) develop, primarily through undergraduate education, service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond; (b) take advantage of the learning and service opportunities that are abundant throughout the region through the integration of curricular, co-curricular, and outreach programs; (c) continue Berea's outreach activities within this learning and service context and be willing to fund them; and (d) seek to imbue the College's curriculum and programs with an understanding of Appalachia that will provide better education and service for the region.

⁹² This initiative was #1 in the 2006 version of *Being and Becoming* and now has been assigned to the Appalachian Center for oversight and implementation with an annual report due to the SPC each year that addresses the progress and areas of future work to achieve the stated goals.

Since 1996, the College has successfully developed “an appropriate and integrated administrative structure for the Appalachian-related programs on campus to ensure that the service and educational efforts are well coordinated and funded adequately to produce the expected outcome while avoiding duplication.” This was one of the central goals of the original planning process. In addition, renovated space has brought the Appalachian Center and the CELTS Program into a common facility, thus increasing their planned interaction. Nonetheless, there are other important goals that yet remain to be achieved.

To accomplish this institutional aim, Berea College will:

1. Seek opportunities to integrate an Appalachian focus into all aspects of the College including, where possible, curricular, co-curricular, labor, service, and residential programs;
2. Continue to integrate service to the region into our curricular and co-curricular programs in appropriate ways so that serving the region is woven into our educational program;
3. Encourage and support continued self-study within the Appalachian programs and offices according to the principles stated above, and support proposed changes that will allow them better to express Berea’s Appalachian commitment;
4. Seek to expand the base of understanding for Berea faculty and staff of the interdependence of the people, the economy, the culture, and the ecology of the Appalachian region and their intimate connection to Berea’s mission by providing faculty and staff education about the region that introduces information and analyses on the complex traditional and changing Appalachian people and institutions; and
5. Encourage the Appalachian Center and the CELTS Program to provide leadership with assistance of appropriate administrative offices and governance committees to carry out the goals outlined above.

Question #8: How does Berea's Christian identity express itself in the College's curriculum, programs, and community life?⁹³

As those of us at Berea College in the early years of the 21st century have attempted to receive Berea's inclusive Christian legacy, we now seek ways to extend that legacy to Berea College's total educational environment. Many students (and their parents) assume that Berea's Christian commitment is like their own understanding of Christianity, an assumption that sometimes causes disillusionment or frustration with Berea when they arrive. Some would have Berea's goals more closely aligned with those of a church. However, many of those same students and alumni report that they have been challenged to broaden and deepen their understanding of the Christian faith by their Berea College experience. Berea's students, faculty, and staff hold a variety of religious and non-religious views that can sometimes cause friction and frustration. These tensions arise as they have throughout Berea's history in the academic, residential, labor, social, and service arenas. Nonetheless, Berea's Christian commitment has fostered a sense of inclusiveness in its curricular offerings, service programs, services of worship, and climate of open academic inquiry.⁹⁴ In order for those who now work and learn at Berea College to extend their common sense of purpose in the tradition of John Fee and subsequent Berea faculty and staff leaders and with regard to Berea's accepted Christian identity, we recommend that:

In the tradition of John Fee and subsequent Berea faculty and staff leaders, members of the Berea College community should seek to apply systematically its stated "inclusive Christian" understanding in ways that (a) take seriously the educational commitment to foster an understanding of Christianity in its many forms; (b) create learning spaces for the spiritual and moral development of faculty, staff, and students; (c) extend Berea's inclusive Christian understanding by nurturing respectful dialogue among Bereans of different and no religious faiths; and (d) create a campus where the principles of welcoming, respect, compassion, service, and civility are exemplified in working and living environments.

To accomplish these institutional aims, Berea College will engage in such activities as:

1. Provide for the development of admissions literature and other publications that make clear to prospective students Berea's "inclusive Christian" heritage and current self-understanding;
2. Assist People Services in appropriate staff orientation and development to understand Berea's Christian identity as expressed in the adopted statement;
3. Invite the Dean and Associate Dean of Faculty to include discussion of the nature of Berea's Christian identity in faculty orientation;

⁹³ This initiative was #3 in the 2006 version of *Being and Becoming* and now has been assigned to the Campus Christian Center for oversight and implementation with an annual report due to the SPC each year that addresses the progress and areas of future work to achieve the stated goals.

⁹⁴ For a statement of Berea's Christian self-understanding, see Appendix A "The Christian Identity of Berea College" (pp. 98-100).

4. Support the Dean, Committee on General Education (COGE), General Education Review Committee (GERC), and other appropriate bodies to include discussion of the nature of Berea's Christian identity in course development;
5. Delegate the Campus Christian Center (CCC) to promote an understanding of Berea's inclusive Christian heritage in its many worship and outreach activities with students and staff, and to create positive dialogue between persons and groups of different faiths;
6. Entrust the CCC and other offices with reaching out to pastors and church communities in Berea and other appropriate communities to minimize tensions and misunderstandings;
7. Ask the Student Life Office and offices in related residential life and student policies areas to promote an understanding of Berea's Christian identity; and
8. Encourage the College community to apply its inclusive Christian identity to institutional policies and practice where appropriate.

Question #9: How should Berea's Student Labor Program be revised and revitalized consistent with the unifying vision for it adopted by the General Faculty?⁹⁵

Two of Berea's Great Commitments, most recently revised and affirmed in 1993, reflect the College's commitment to the Labor Program:

- To provide for all students through the labor program experiences for learning and serving in community, and to demonstrate that labor, mental and manual, has dignity as well as utility.
- To maintain a residential campus and to encourage in all members of the community a way of life characterized by plain living, pride in labor well done, zest for learning, high personal standards, and concern for the welfare of others.

"Since 1859, labor has been a part of student life at Berea and has been viewed variously as a means to pay expenses, as part of one's education for life, and as an education in itself" (Wilson, 1987, p. 1). The 1859 Constitution and By-Laws of Berea College stated that, "... labor is to be provided as part of the facilities of a thorough education, and to provide education at the least possible expense." By 1906, all students were required to "share in the necessary labor of the school," by performing at least seven hours of labor per week. The office of Dean of Labor was formed in 1915, and beginning in 1917, the minimum work requirement was increased to ten hours per week. The shape of the modern-day Labor Program dates to the mid-1970s. Improvements focused on "efficient supervision and utilization of student workers; project development; integration of labor and academic approaches to education; and the development of a comprehensive model integrating productive work, disciplined learning, career exploration, value choices, financial aid, and personal development" (Wilson, p. 3). Currently, all students are required to work a minimum of 10 hours per week or 140 hours during every regular term of enrollment in one of 140 labor departments, and most College employees supervise student work directly or indirectly.

Late in the spring of 2000, the SPC appointed a subcommittee to conduct a comprehensive review of the Berea College Labor Program. The Labor Review Team (LRT) was charged with educating itself on current higher education thinking about the relationships between work and learning, about Berea College's history and commitments with respect to work-learning, and about the diverse world of work beyond the College. It was also asked to explore the links among students' work, learning, and service; to review balance among various aspects of the Labor Program as it is implemented today; and to recommend changes as needed. The Labor Review Team submitted its report to the SPC in June 2001. Central to the report is a "unifying vision of labor as learning and service." The LRT's "fundamental recommendation" was to "re-vision" student work in the context of learning and service:

⁹⁵ This initiative was #6 in the 2006 version of *Being and Becoming* and now has been assigned to the Labor Program Office for oversight and implementation with an annual report due to the SPC each year that addresses the progress and areas of future work to achieve the stated goals.

To see, anew and again, the Student Labor Program as [an] aspect of an integrated, continuous learning community, governed in its policies, procedures, structures and operations by a unifying vision of labor as learning and service to community and College (“Report of the Labor Review Team,” 2001, p. 2).

The SPC’s consideration of the report (engaged in collaboration with the Labor Program Council, the Academic Program Council, and a series of community discussions with labor supervisors, faculty, and students) concluded in agreement with the LRT’s fundamental recommendation. However, a third positive element—the College’s need for certain work to be done and to be done well—was also held to be equally important. In keeping with Berea’s unique commitments, students are urged to see their work as preparation for a life of community responsibility where all workers share in the completion of necessary, sometimes tedious and repetitive tasks regardless of their relative learning value. Here the focus is primarily on the work to be done rather than upon the worker. Of course, learning can and should be an important part of all work, even that which is menial or tedious. Hence, the SPC chose to lift up this focus on institutional needs for necessary work to be done well as a third element of a unifying vision of the Berea College Student Labor Program. In December 2003, upon motion by the SPC, the Labor Program Council, and the Labor Review Team, the General and College Faculties of Berea College passed the following statement:

Berea College understands student labor as student- and learning-centered, as service to the College and community, and as providing necessary work (i.e., work that needs to be done) being done well. The Student Labor Program will systematically and consistently employ this vision to address tensions that may occasionally emerge between student labor as work that needs to be done, as service to the community and College, as students’ experiential learning, and as contribution to educational costs.

The Faculties also endorsed a set of initiatives to “re-vitalize” the Student Labor Program based upon this unified vision of student labor as learning, serving, and working. These initiatives comprise the action steps to achieve this institutional aim of re-visioning the Berea College Student Labor Program:

1. Apply the unifying vision of work in student advising, labor supervision, the work of the Labor Forum, and related policies and practices;
2. Apply the unifying vision by focusing on workplace goals and expectations for all workers and providing necessary support for creating quality workplaces for both employees and student workers;
3. Reconstitute the Labor Program Council as a Labor Forum functioning within the College’s governance structure to:
 - a. Advise and assist the Vice President for Labor and Student Life and Dean of Labor in interpreting and applying the vision;

- b. Sustain the vision by providing opportunities for the Berea College community to reflect on local and global issues in the world of work; and
 - c. Work with People Services and other campus offices to better link the goals and policies of the Student Labor Program with those of Berea College's workplaces and workers by developing goals for both the learning and workplace performance of students and for the program as a whole;
- 4. Consider specific recommendations from the Labor Review Team, Faculty, Labor Supervisors, and others (e.g., about program goals, current policies, financial aid and student compensation, allocation of positions, labor placements and hours worked, staffing structures for the program, etc.) to bring necessary policies to the General Faculty for consideration and to advise administrative offices or bodies regarding administrative or financial suggestions that are within their purview; and
 - 5. Review and develop goal statements for the Labor Program using various sources of guidance (e.g., the existing "Labor-Learning Progressions," the LRT recommended Learning Goals, Workplace Expectations) and develop measures to assess attainment of these goals.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

The recommendations and goals described in this strategic plan attempt to promote the mission and Great Commitments of Berea College within a 21st-century context (see Figure I, p. 96). Presupposed in this document is that many of the current activities, programs, and positions of the College address most of the learning goals outlined above. There is already an active culture of learning and professional development built into curricular programs, faculty development, and some administrative offices and programs. The concept of an integrated and continuous learning environment extends this fundamental notion of the academy to the whole institution and to all programs and positions. The four pairs of learning goals will offer guidance not simply to academic courses and majors, but to all departments and programs throughout the campus. Therefore, until each activity, department, and position of Berea College is thoughtfully considered in light of the learning goals and strategic recommendations, the integration of learning, labor, and service functions that we all desire cannot be accomplished. Thoughtful consideration of the opportunities for innovation, integration, and evaluation of Berea's learning environment in light of the strategic plan will direct Berea's implementation and assessment plans.

Comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Plan

This section of the document is an outline of the overall implementation and assessment strategy for Berea College as a whole. Documents developed by the Administrative Committee (AC) are intended to provide general instructions for departments, offices, and programs to assist them in developing specific implementation and assessment plans. The process of developing implementation and assessment plans for academic departments differed in both focus and process for non-academic departments (e.g., academic support, student life, or auxiliary activities), and this will remain true for the new academic division structure.⁹⁶ However, in general terms, each of these plans should (a) include a clear statement of the purpose of the department/program; (b) identify goals and objectives central to accomplishing that mission; (c) reflect on the institution-wide goals and recommendations contained in this document and their relationship to the activities of the department or program (including new initiatives or opportunities for growth they provide); (d) determine simple, straightforward, and effective means of evaluation (either at the department level or institution-wide) that can be used to assess a department's or program's goals and initiatives; and (e) describe how the results of these evaluations will be used to improve the effectiveness of the activities measured (see B. in Figure I). *The primary intention of these plans is to keep them simple and meaningful to the departments and personnel who will use them.* These Departmental/Program/Unit Implementation and Assessment Plans serve as the foundational level of Berea's Comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Plan (see C. in Figure I). Unlike some models, Berea College expects integration to occur at the program level, in which case assessment is best accomplished when multiple offices or departments are brought together for this process. Berea's retention (1997), Academic Services (2001-04), and General Education (2002-04) reviews are good examples of this integrated approach to assessment and improvement of core educational processes.

⁹⁶ As previously noted, the new academic division structure was approved by College Faculty and the Board of Trustees in 2011.

The College-Wide Implementation and Assessment Plans build upon the individual or combined department and program plans (see C. in Figure I) and seek an overview of functions, offices, and administrative processes to accomplish the goals and recommendations of this strategic plan. The Strategic Planning Council, in collaboration with the Administrative Committee and other groups, will be responsible for developing integrated College-Wide Implementation and Assessment Plans. Individual administrators may recommend a new program that will require faculty governance action before inclusion in the College-Wide Plan. Alternatively, an administrator may initiate a change (e.g., revamping of the Labor Program) that will invite responses by multiple constituencies. The SPC or AC may themselves recommend a new initiative that would then be brought to the whole campus for discussion. But in the end, it will be the SPC in collaboration with the AC that is responsible for synthesizing the various campus-wide efforts of integration and collaboration into a single document used to determine budgetary and developmental priorities. The College-wide Implementation and Assessment Plans are the second level of Berea's Comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Plan (see C. in Figure I).

In Fall 1999, the Berea College AC approved "Berea's College-Wide Assessment Strategy: The Role of Offices, Departments, and Programs" as the guiding framework for institutional assessment (see Appendix B). This document identifies five key priority areas for development and evaluation: (1) academic programs, (2) total student learning environment, (3) admissions, (4) financial and facilities resources, and (5) staff/faculty/trustee development. The Departmental Reports section was revised and the full document reconfirmed by the AC in March 2004. In 1998, 1999, and 2000, Institutional Implementation and Assessment Plans were developed by the SPC (in consultation with others). Using the above five key categories as a framework, these plans provided institution-wide evaluations of new or existing offices or programs in terms of their effectiveness in contributing to the achievement of the four pairs of learning goals and new strategic initiatives in *Being and Becoming*. Recommendations for future actions based on these assessments were then made. From 2000-2005 and again in 2010-2011, an extensive revision of *Being and Becoming* represented a holistic assessment, feedback, and new recommendations on the totality of Berea's 1996 strategic plan.

The Institutional Budget represents the fourth level of Berea College's Comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Plan (see D. in Figure I). It is in developing the College's budget that the goals and priorities set forth in the earlier two levels of planning are materially realized. The budget for 1995-96 serves as the base year for all comparisons, and since 1996, the Finance Office produces a budget summary each year according to the five basic areas of assessment noted above. Thus new initiatives like technology, internationalization, new faculty positions, etc. are evaluated in financial terms to decide if strategic priorities are being funded appropriately. The Budget Committee reviews these summary comparisons each year. As new initiatives emerge from the implementation and assessment processes, future College budgets will reflect those priorities. This budget process is assessed periodically to ensure that the planning, assessment, and budgeting loop is completed (see D. in Figure I) and to inform conversations about Berea's mission and strategic questions (see A. in Figure I).

The four activities described in A.–D. of Figure I are interdependent and reciprocal in their relation to each other, which is shown in the arrows pointing in both directions around

the cycle. Although this cycle is continuous, it is somewhat asynchronous. For example, due to the complexity of the issues, the SPC's review and revision of the strategic plan has taken several years, departmental effectiveness reports are collected approximately every other year, and new budgets are developed annually. Nonetheless, planning, evaluation, feedback, and adjustment are ongoing in Berea's Comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Plan process.

Campus-wide Assessment

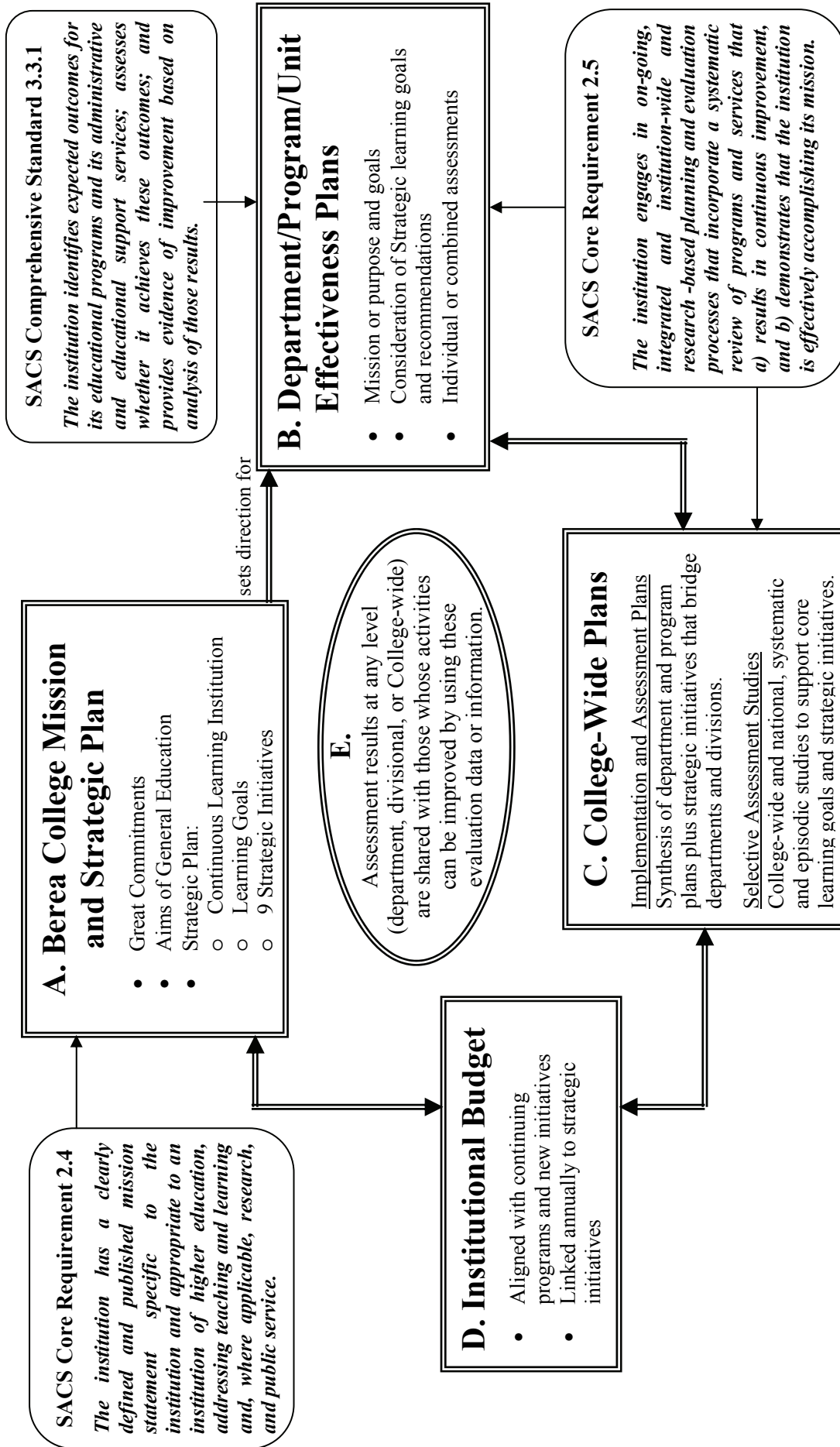
At each of the stages of the Comprehensive Institutional Effectiveness Plan, program-specific assessment measures are used. Most of these evaluation mechanisms are in place, and more are being devised. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) assists departments and programs in completing their evaluation plans as well as developing common comprehensive and comparative performance reports and analyses. In addition, several important campus-wide assessment measures have been completed in recent years. These assessments represent a meaningful part of the continuous, comprehensive system of planning and evaluation at Berea College at both the departmental and institutional levels. One such type of campus-wide assessment includes evaluating the general education curriculum in relation to its goals. The Committee on General Education (COGE) determines how to assess individual courses and the General Studies program as a whole. This is an area of assessment in which Berea has had years of experience with what is working and what can be improved.

Another set of campus-wide assessments includes measures of students' attitudes and satisfaction, self-reported measures of students' engagement and activities; direct measures of students' performance; longitudinal studies of the ways in which students' perceptions and priorities change across their time at Berea; comparisons with numerous national cohorts; and also an extensive study of alumni attitudes and opinions from those who graduated recently as well as those who had graduated five, fifteen, or twenty-five years previously. A representative sampling of studies that show how Berea College has been collecting and using data to increase institutional effectiveness include the following:

- Noel Levitz Survey of Student Satisfaction (1998, 2003, and 2010);
- Western Governors University Beta Test of Communication and Mathematical Competency (2002);
- Cooperative Institutional Research Project Longitudinal Studies of Student Perspectives and Priorities (CIRP, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010);
- Appalachian College Association Funded Study of Alumni Perspectives (2001);
- National Survey of Student Engagement (2003, 2007, and 2010); and
- Mercer Studies of Staff Attitudes and Salaries (2001).

These campus-wide assessment tools and many like them are intended to provide useful information on student learning, development, perceptions, and post-college reflections that can be used to improve Berea's teaching and learning environment. The results of these assessment instruments will be distributed to the committees, offices, and persons that can use the results to improve their work (see E. in Figure I).

FIGURE I: BEREA COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PLAN



CONCLUSION

In response to those who questioned the rather substantial changes of policies and programs at Berea College in the mid-1940's, Dean Louis Smith said, "Berea must both be and become." Throughout Berea's history, there have been periods of significant change in programs, policies, facilities, and applications of the College's mission. Berea College has always sought to remain faithful to its founding values and mission even as it embraced new opportunities for action or ended old programs. Berea is at such a critical juncture once again. In the recommendations throughout this document there has been an attempt to hold in balance the traditions and values of the past with the opportunities and challenges of a global 21st-century world in which Berea must carry out its mission. In understanding our time to be one of persistent and rapid change, we have set forth in this document the vision of Berea College as an integrated and continuous learning environment. The four pairs of Common Learning Goals and nine strategic recommendations emerge from the College's Great Commitments and yet respond to the character of our modern age. This notion of an institution grounded in common and traditional values, and yet set in constant motion as it attempts to educate all of its citizens, forms Berea's vision for the next century. Being and becoming are both imperatives for a Berea College steeped in traditional values and yet well positioned to educate students and workers for our 21st-century world.

APPENDIX A:

The Christian Identity of Berea College

Berea College has a particular Christian self-understanding that makes it stand apart from most other schools that call themselves “Christian.” First, Berea College’s founder argued that the Christian gospel could be described best by the phrase “impartial love” that welcomed students and staff from “every clime and every nation” to study and to work together. Second, Berea College was founded prior to the Civil War in the 1850’s as an abolitionist college that welcomed black and white men and women students in a day when such equality was not supported in most Christian communities in Kentucky and much of the United States. Third, from their beginning the Berea schools were never associated with any denomination or sectarian Christian church. Finally, Berea College was rooted in a Christian spirituality that was egalitarian, socially provocative, and focused on serving the black and white students and communities of Appalachia and beyond.

John G. Fee founded Berea College out of convictions about education and about humanity that were rooted deeply in the Gospel of the New Testament. The heart of the Christian gospel for Fee was summed up in the two great commandments enunciated by Jesus: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind.... and you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37-40). Another biblical text that expressed the heart of the gospel for Fee and the Berea College community was the statement of the apostle Paul, “God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth” (Acts 17:26)—a text that has stood as Berea’s motto for more than a 125 years. Together, these and other such inclusive scriptural texts constituted what Fee understood as “the gospel of impartial love” which guided and challenged the earliest Berea community and still does today.

One instance of Berea’s current Christian self-understanding is the preamble to the Great Commitments that says, “Adherence to the College’s scriptural foundation, ‘God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth,’ shapes the College’s culture and programs so that students and staff alike can work toward both personal goals and a vision of a world shaped by Christian values, such as the power of love over hate, human dignity and equality, and peace with justice.” From Berea College’s beginning to the present day, it has welcomed “all peoples of the earth” with a hospitality that is inclusive. Currently, the College is made up of students and staff from many religious traditions and of no religious tradition who accept Berea’s Great Commitments.

As a way of providing an overview of Berea College’s history and Christian self-understanding, the following nine points provide guideposts for prospective students, staff, donors, and friends of the College:⁹⁷

⁹⁷ These points are articulated more fully in a paper, “Berea College’s Christian Vocation and Self-Understanding: A Tradition of Inclusion and Spirited Debate” (2000).

1. Berea College was chartered in 1859 by an independent, non-sectarian Christian community founded in 1853. John Fee and the Berea community were explicitly anti-sectarian.
2. Berea College is and always has been a college, not a church. While founded in the nineteenth century as a college “distinctly Christian” (Fee), it has never conceived its Christian identity in any ecclesiastical or sectarian sense, such as a “church-related college” or as a “Bible college” or as many of the contemporary “Christian colleges” might define themselves.
3. Berea College’s Christian identity is rooted in the founders’ “gospel of impartial love,” an expression of the biblical commandments to love God and to love neighbor as self, and in their commitment to live out this “gospel” in a practical way through lives of service to others. Throughout its history the Berea College community has sought to put these ideals into practice.
4. The “gospel of impartial love” and the motive of service to others that grows out of it have always been understood as a work in progress, an ongoing challenge, an aspiration with notable achievements and unfinished business. Each generation of Bereans has struggled to understand for itself what it means to be “Christian” in the context of this gospel and motive of service. This is true for our Berea College community today.
5. We understand Berea’s Christianity to be inclusive. In this we are following the example of John Fee who, in the spirit of hospitality, welcomed persons “from every nation and clime” (Fee). Extending this historical tradition, Berea College welcomes all who accept Berea College’s core values of impartial love and service to others, whatever their culture, faith, or philosophy.
6. Out of this Christian self-understanding and a deep commitment to the liberal arts, Berea College has pledged in its Great Commitments to educate its students about the many literary, historical, and contemporary expressions of Christian faith, ethic, and motive of service through its curriculum, convocation programs, worship services, and other means.
7. Out of this same Christian and liberal arts identity and by like means, Berea College has committed itself to fostering social justice and equality for all men and women, especially for those in the African American and Appalachian communities.
8. The Preamble to Berea’s Great Commitments begins, “Berea College, founded by ardent abolitionists and radical reformers, continues today as an educational institution still firmly rooted in its historic purpose ‘to promote the cause of Christ.’ ” The question arises, “Does one have to be a Christian to promote the cause of Christ?” Berea’s historical record says no (W.J. Hutchins, 1929; F.S. Hutchins, 1943). Throughout its history, Bereans have encouraged and challenged one another, whatever their personal faith or philosophy, to commit themselves to a cause that is consonant with Berea’s core values now expressed in its Great Commitments, and which its Christian members might express as the cause of Christ.

9. To be Christian and welcoming to all is Berea College's tradition. We must acknowledge that, while Berea College is a diverse community, many if not most of those who learn and work at Berea College identify themselves as Christians. Yet even Christians here do not share a common understanding of what that designation means. Berea College strives to be a place where people with various Christian interpretations, different religious traditions, and no religious tradition work together in support of Berea's Great Commitments.

Over the past century, various leaders of the College have applied the College's inclusive scriptural foundation and spirit to their expanding world and welcomed those whose beliefs were consistent with the Christian gospel of impartial love. Therefore, Berea College today affirms its inclusive Christian tradition even as it respects the traditions of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus as well as other world faiths. Bereans have always struggled to express this inclusive Christian tradition in the midst of divergent views. We will not ignore our differences, but rather seek to understand each other honestly and respectfully, and together create a climate where anyone can openly discuss what they believe without fear of sanction. To that end, all persons who are willing to share in the spirit and the work of the Great Commitments as shaped by its preamble are welcome to study, to teach, and to work at Berea College.

Adopted by the General Faculty on March 14, 2002

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on May 11, 2002

APPENDIX B:

Berea's College-Wide Assessment Strategy: The Role of Offices, Departments, and Programs⁹⁸

Introduction

This document is designed to communicate Berea's overall planning and assessment strategy, and to introduce a new role for individual offices, departments, and programs.

Berea College has had a long history of carefully analyzing itself in practically every aspect of its operations. True to that history, assessment and evaluation are important components of our strategic planning process, as they enable us to determine whether we are meeting the primary goals we identified in our strategic plan. A key part of Berea's assessment process is a college-wide assessment plan, which "speak[s] to the development of the institution *as a whole*" (*Being and Becoming: College-Wide Implementation and Assessment Plan 1998 - 2002*, pp. 2-3). Because of its broader focus, the Plan "does not contain specific guidance for meeting every department-, program-, or unit-specific aim and need" (p. 2). Consequently, separate departmental assessment is needed, and the annual Departmental Effectiveness (DE) Reports help fill this need (the term "department" is used inclusively to indicate all departments, offices, and programs). The broader context into which these departmental assessments fit is outlined below:

- I. General Education Program
 - A. *COGE evaluation* of individual courses and the overall program as currently done.
 - B. *Periodic College-wide assessment* of the role of general education in the wider curriculum (e.g., appropriate size of General Education curriculum, need for new or different aims, etc.). Such assessment cannot be done only within the General Education Program but also requires institution-wide comparisons and economic trade-offs. Such occasional reviews may involve a study by outside reviewers.
- II. Academic and other departments, programs, and offices
 - A. *Annual Departmental Effectiveness Reports* [See Appendix B-1 and B-2]
 - B. *Periodic Self-Studies for most departments*. Participating departments would continue the existing schedule for Self-Studies (e.g., every 10 years for academic departments, every five years for some academic support

⁹⁸ Guidelines and expectations for college-wide assessment will need to be updated at some point in order to reflect the new academic division structure that was approved in 2011.

areas etc.). Included in the Self-Study Report, along with the usual material, would be a tentative schedule for examining the central goals or issues of the departmental program in a sequence of annual Departmental Effectiveness Reports over the period leading up to the next Self-Study. The idea would be to select one or more goals or issues to lift up for special focus during each of the one-year periods between Self-Studies. The annual reports would convey outcomes and reflections from the last year's effort along with plans for the next year.

III. College-wide initiatives

- A. *Global evaluation of the five priority areas* in which initiatives have been undertaken as a result of strategic planning: (1) academic programs, (2) total student learning environment, (3) admissions, (4) financial and facilities resources, and (5) staff/faculty/trustee development.
- B. *Periodic College-wide evaluation of specific strategic initiatives* within the five major areas (e.g., within the academic area, Internationalization, the campus technology plan, the diversity "change model," integration of Appalachian themes, the single parents initiative, guided learning in the residence halls, African American admissions initiatives, staff development, etc.). The responsibility for these assessments will be located in logical places such as the International Center, CIRC committee, etc. See the *Implementation and Assessment Plan: 1998-2002* for an outline of suggested assessments for such major initiatives.

IV. Special Assessments

In addition to the above regular assessments, many of which will occur annually, other occasional, *cross-departmental evaluations* (e.g., the effectiveness of computer training across all user groups—student, faculty, and staff) will be structured as the need arises. This is a list that cannot be fully anticipated but will have "regular" candidates to be determined by the Administrative Committee and/or other appropriate governance bodies.

Approved by the Administrative Committee: October 26, 1999

Reaffirmed by the Administrative Committee: March 2004

Berea's College-Wide Assessment Strategy

Appendix B-1

February 27, 2004

Dear Colleagues,

I write to remind you that the 2003-04 Departmental Effectiveness (DE) Reports will be due May 10, 2004, as we discussed at our meetings this week, and that I would be happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns that arise and to arrange a different due date if necessary.

The purpose of the DE Report is twofold:

- (1) The Report asks academic departments to reflect regularly on goals and programs, to review evidence of effectiveness, and to use assessment to reshape programs and goals, as appropriate;
- (2) The Report documents and thus makes available to others, including the Dean of Faculty and the Provost, program goals, programs, and effectiveness.

The DE Report is not a Self-Study, which is a thorough ten-year review of the entire department. Rather, the DE Report should:

- (1) identify one or two learning goals from the department statement of goals,
- (2) if appropriate, identify one program or part of a program that aims at that goal,
- (3) gather and review relevant information for assessing progress towards the goal,
- (4) identify future action as a result of the review.

Over the years, DE Reports have focused on such topics as the research paper, technology in the classroom, field experiences, the language lab, and service courses. Regardless of the focus, departments should be clear that the final question is: are we improving, enhancing, or achieving effectively student learning?

I encourage you to use the DE Report to take up a topic of interest to your department and to make it a department-wide effort. It should be about 4 pages, and I ask that you submit it electronically. As you identify a focus, you may want to reread the College-wide learning goals articulated in *Being and Becoming* and you may want to reflect on College-wide initiatives that are integral to your departmental goals.

Finally, in addition to serving the department, the DE Report is one way to nurture good communication with others. The DE Report informs the Dean and the Provost, enriches the annual conversation the Dean has with each Chair or Director, and allows departmental goals, programs, initiatives, and regular assessment to be part of other conversations, including those about strategic planning and the budget.

Thank you for your work,
Stephanie P. Browner
Dean of the Faculty

Berea's College-Wide Assessment Strategy Appendix B-2

Annual Department Effectiveness Reports (1999)

This section presents a new plan for department-level involvement in the overall assessment effort at Berea College. Under this plan each department will develop a brief and selective annual Department Effectiveness (DE) Report. The primary aim of this planning and evaluation process is the *improvement of Berea's programs*.

We believe improvement is most likely to occur when purposeful planning is followed by thoughtful and documented reflection and assessment, which is then applied to make reasonable adjustments in the plan. This *plan-assess-adjust cycle* is at the heart of the "continuous learning environment" concept, and it was with this cycle in mind that the questions identified in Appendix A ["Questions for the 1999-2000 Departmental Effectiveness Report" (this appendix has been omitted from *Being and Becoming* and should not be confused with *Being and Becoming's* Appendix A, "The Christian Identity of Berea College")] were designed. The questions focus on identification and assessment of selected program aspects during 1999-2000, recommendations for improvement based on those assessment activities, and, lastly, identification of the department's planned evaluation focus for 2000-2001.

To maximize meaningful reflection and purposeful planning, the effectiveness reports should be limited both in scope (focus) and length. To be useful and manageable, this new process for annual reporting must be simple, not overly time-consuming, and designed to draw on existing activities and the ongoing work of participants. We anticipate annual reports in the neighborhood of two to four pages in length. With respect to scope, departments themselves will identify the issue or issues on which the DE Reports will focus.

Communication and feedback are critical aspects of the annual DE Reports. The evaluation results learned through this annual process will be part of open communication between pertinent parties (e.g., the department members and their divisional Vice President and/or the Dean) about goals, assessments, results of assessments, needs, challenges, and the like. The DE Reports will provide the springboard for dialogue and feedback. To the extent that institutional assessments can be shared across departments or program areas, they will be more useful and more effective (e.g., writing samples or analytical work from students in a senior seminar or capstone course might prove useful not only to the department but to members of COGE as well).

The first DE Reports will be due in early June 2000. Exceptions must be approved by your divisional vice president or dean. Also, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment as well as your divisional vice president or dean can be important resources as you develop your DE Reports. Please contact any of these or staff and colleagues in other departments as questions and needs arise.

Although the annual DE Reports are aimed primarily at program improvement, they are also designed to help accomplish some additional goals:

- provide a structure that will assist the College internally for planning and budgetary purposes;
- help determine our success in attaining the goals identified in *Being and Becoming*;
- provide a mechanism for soliciting input from departments to be used in future strategic planning;
- document for accreditation purposes the systematic, College-wide use of planning and evaluation tools aimed at improvement.

Part of the accreditation process involves the development and implementation of measures designed to evaluate the extent to which our goals are being achieved, and the use of those evaluation results to improve educational programs, services, and operations. We believe that the DE Reports, along with the other assessment strategies outlined in the Introduction, will meet our own internal needs while also ensuring that we have a record of evaluation and assessment activities that the accreditation process requires.

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