Planning our Future in a World of Possibilities

A Strategic Plan for 2012 - 2017
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Executive Summary

It is, indeed, a pleasure for the administration of Hood College to present a strategic vision developed to help chart the future direction and growth of the College during the next five years. The recommended goals contained in this report emanated from a careful analysis of current data and future trends as well as from discussions and meetings involving all divisions of the College, including faculty, staff and students.

In the fall of 2001, a strategic planning process, Visioneering our Future: Hood 2010, was implemented. Facilitated by Carole Lyles Shaw, a planning consultant from Columbia, Maryland, the participative process involved convening eight “cottage meetings” on campus and numerous off-campus meetings with Hood constituents. The nine-month process yielded a plan that was approved by the Board of Trustees in the 2002-2003 academic year. That plan, while revised, identified strategic priorities that continue to influence College decisions.

Phase One of the plan (2002-2006) focused on appointing the senior team; growing the enrollment and transitioning the College to coeducation; branding and marketing the College; selling properties not strategic to the future of the College, including the Bowman Farm; retiring most of the external debt and restructuring various divisions of the College; developing financial plans that assure financial equilibrium; obtaining an unqualified audit opinion from our auditors; receiving reaccreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; and positioning the College for its next comprehensive fund-raising campaign.

Phase two of the plan (2006-2011) is nearing completion and the College has now realized record enrollment; continued strengthening of finances; additional academic programs and faculty; continued upgrading of and improvement to campus facilities; and robust fund-raising and marketing programs that yield exceptional results even in a global economic downturn.

The next five-year plan (2012-2017) focuses on an uncertain economic environment as well as changing and very competitive conditions in higher education; the need for the College to challenge past assumptions, establishing new initiatives; continued investment in human resources, the physical plant and technology; and the ability to remain nimble and flexible during this period.

Of course, as in the past, this strategic vision is determined somewhat by external and internal factors that no doubt may affect the College’s ability to implement all facets of the plan. Such internal factors may include, but are not limited to, appointing and retaining high quality faculty and staff and offering academic programming consistent with the needs of the marketplace and our mission. External factors may include, but are not limited to, the ability of the College to adequately deal with the myriad of compliance and regulatory issues; to continue to receive appropriate state and federal support; to remain distinctive and competitive in a changing marketplace; and to secure appropriate levels of funding from alumni, friends, foundations and benefactors of the College.

Despite the above challenges, we believe this plan will serve as the roadmap to successfully guide the College to even greater heights in the future.

Ronald J. Volpe, Ph.D.
President
July 2011
Planning in the college setting is a responsibility shared by trustees, administrators, faculty, staff and students. Trustees are responsible for defining the mission of the institution, overseeing its direction and enhancing the resources required for its effective operation. Responsibility for academic and administrative leadership in the fulfillment of the teaching, research and service functions of the institution is vested by the Board of Trustees in the President of the College. It is the President’s responsibility to guide the overall planning and management of the institution. The President is assisted in these tasks by the Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans, Chairpersons and Directors to whom he has delegated authority in specific areas. These individuals and their staffs, working with the faculty and students, are responsible for supporting and facilitating the educational program.

“Everything you can imagine is real.”

- Pablo Picasso
our vision
Hood College aspires to be a premier comprehensive liberal arts college by offering its students an excellent and engaging educational experience that prepares graduates for success.

our mission
Hood College prepares students to excel in meeting the personal, professional and global challenges of the future. Hood is committed to the integration of the liberal arts, the professions and technology, to the exploration of values, a sense of community and to the preparation of students for lives of responsibility, leadership and service.

Additionally, Hood is a contemporary liberal arts college that serves as a lifelong learning center where students can examine, evaluate and plan their lives. Uniquely designed programs, dedicated staff and a faculty carefully selected for its teaching excellence and concern for the development of the individual are the hallmarks of a Hood education.

At the heart of the Hood College mission is a century-long commitment to the preparation of students for purposeful lives and careers. Hood believes that the best foundation for employment and further academic training is an education that is balanced between general liberal arts education and specialized career preparation.

Hood College, in summary, offers an education that provides the individual with a sense of identity and purpose, a positive self-image, a concern for others, a responsibility to society and the environment, a respect for freedom of choice and belief, a continuing search for knowledge and understanding and a high regard for academic excellence.

“There can be no adequate technical education which is not liberal, and no liberal education which is not technical.”
- Alfred North Whitehead

founding principles

Our Vision
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Our Mission
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- Alfred North Whitehead
Our Commitment

Hood is committed to:

- Meaningful, Well-Rounded Education: Offering high quality undergraduate and graduate curricula that prepare students for meaningful lives, promising careers and responsible global citizenship; and providing innovative and rewarding extra- and co-curricular opportunities, including internships, lecture series, field trips, leadership experiences and athletics;

- Investments in Academic Excellence: Sharpening our focus on academic excellence by supporting faculty and staff enrichment, teaching innovation and meaningful faculty and student research;

- Academic Innovation: Preserving our rich heritage in the liberal arts while pursuing new undergraduate and graduate academic opportunities;

- Building Community: Promoting a vibrant campus environment through student life initiatives that support the academic missions and student success, and celebrate diversity and inclusiveness;

- Investments in People: Attracting, developing and retaining the best student and employee talent;

- Regional Partnerships: Enhancing our intellectual, cultural and social relationships throughout the regional community by developing partnerships with educational institutions, government agencies and corporations in the greater Washington-Baltimore region; and

- Preservation and Enhancement: Acting as responsible stewards to protect, preserve and enhance the College’s finances, physical assets and reputation through the strategic management of institutional resources, institutional advancement and marketing.

Our Core Values

We value:

- Knowledge and Intellectual Freedom: The power of ideas to transform lives, for the past to illuminate the present and for theory to guide practice;

- Honor and Integrity: Living lives that adhere to the highest standards of ethics, honesty, trustworthiness and respect for self and others, as symbolized by our Honor Code;

- Leadership: The art of influencing others by setting an example through our words and deeds, through service and responsible citizenship;

- Diversity and Inclusiveness: Living the dream in which individuals are judged by the content of their character;

- Responsible Stewardship: The responsibility to use our talents, capabilities and resources to the best of our abilities to excel in whatever we do; and

- Hope: Making the world a better place by living our values and pursuing our opportunities to the fullest while being mindful of our obligations to self and society as responsible citizens of a democracy.

The Hood College motto
—Corde et Mente et Manu (with Heart, Mind, and Hand; the heart to conceive, the mind to direct and the hand to execute)— epitomizes our core values.
The four columns of Alumnæ Hall—Hope, Opportunity, Obligation and Democracy—provide a concrete reminder of the endurance of the Hood College values.
Celebrating Our Past, Imagining Our Future

As we embark on a journey to chart a new course in Hood’s history through strategic planning, it is important to reflect on the need to change and on the strong inertial forces that resist change. Oftentimes our ability to manage colleges and universities is constrained not so much by external forces but by traditions and organizational culture. In his book, “The Tyranny of our Traditions,” Mark Emmert suggests that many members of the academic community agree that change will diminish quality and offend academic values. He states that our limited ability to change is predominantly self-imposed and that we constrain ourselves and are stifled by the tyranny of our traditions.

An important step in the strategic planning process is the situational analysis, which includes a careful, systematic evaluation of the internal and external environments of the institution, resulting in the identification of its strengths, limitations, challenges and opportunities. During the planning process at Hood we have been engaged in such an exercise, and the following sections identify our strengths and limitations as well as our challenges and opportunities.

“The major test of a modern U.S. college or university is how wisely and how quickly it is able to adjust to important new possibilities.”

- Clark Kerr, Former Chancellor, University of California, Berkeley
Hood Today:
A Rich and Proud Heritage of Transforming Lives

Hood College traces its treasured history to 1893, when the Potomac Synod of the Reformed Church of the United States—now the United Church of Christ—established the Woman's College of Frederick in downtown Frederick. The College acquired the land on which it now sits in 1897, made possible by a gift from Margaret Scholl Hood, for whom the College was renamed. Throughout its rich history, the College has been committed to offering an exceptional educational experience that transforms lives.

Change, even for the better, is sometimes difficult. One of the reasons for the enduring success of Hood College is its ability to adapt to changing external environmental realities. This is evident from the different milestones in its long and varied history. For nearly 80 years, the College remained a residential institution for women. As the winds of social change in the 1960s challenged Hood to review its mission, it opened its doors to commuter men and established a graduate school for both women and men in the early 1970s. In fall 2003, the College admitted residential male students, transforming itself to a coeducational institution, again necessitated by changing economic and demographic realities.

The past 10 years (2001-2010) have been a defining decade characterized by a period of turnaround (2001-2005) and a period of growth (since 2005). During this time, the College saw many changes: the transformation to a vibrant coeducational institution; the reversal of enrollment decline to unprecedented enrollment growth; and the move from deficit spending to fiscal balance and prudent stewardship. Expanded and improved campus facilities, an enhanced town-and-gown relationship with the Frederick community and a broadened base of support by alumni and donors characterize this decade. Throughout it all, the College maintained its commitment to academic excellence.

It is our people who are responsible for the noteworthy progress that the College has made and continues to make. Hood College has been blessed with exceptionally qualified faculty committed to providing a balanced educational experience that assures a breadth and depth of knowledge that prepares our graduates for lives of responsibility, leadership and service. In this endeavor, they have been invaluably supported by our caring and dedicated staff.

Hood graduates—more than 16,000 strong—are working to make the world a better place. They do it as teachers, counselors, doctors, lawyers, executives, scientists, writers, sociologists, social workers, artists, musicians, historians, legislators, translators, homemakers, archaeologists and more. Hood College has been very fortunate in that it has benefited from acts of uncommon generosity from its alumni and friends. This support has been critical for Hood’s success and growth.
Today, Hood College is a comprehensive liberal arts institution that offers 29 undergraduate majors, 44 minors, 14 graduate programs, five post-baccalaureate certificate programs and certification programs in education. The Hood community has an opportunity to participate in numerous curricular and co-curricular activities each year. The College’s 2,500 undergraduate and graduate students hail from 41 countries, 27 states, the District of Columbia and two territories. While increasing in size, the quality of our student body remains exceptional, as academic distinction, diversity and service leadership continue to characterize our student population. This year, our distinguished Honors Program has enrolled its largest cohort in the history of the College.

As we reflect on Hood today and as we write the next chapter in its hallowed history, we see many bases of distinction and many comparative advantages on which the College can capitalize.

They include the following:

- A reputation for outstanding teaching and academic excellence;
- Caring, committed support staff;
- Stable enrollment;
- Student diversity;
- A solid financial foundation;
- An attractive campus located in a vibrant, historic city; and
- An experienced board and administrative leadership.

In spite of the strengths there are many internal limitations that detract the College from its desired position.

They include the following:

- A small endowment;
- A high tuition discount;
- Resource challenges resulting in understaffing and underfunding of some functions and programs;
- An over-reliance on adjunct faculty;
- Noncompetitive personnel salaries;
- Aging facilities;
- A landlocked campus with little room for growth; and
- A resistance to programmatic change resulting from cultural and resource considerations.

“Education is not the filling of the pale, but the lighting of the fire.”

- William Butler Yeats
The Best of Times and the Worst of Times: Challenges and Opportunities

Numerous changes and challenges have characterized Hood’s history. These inevitable forces are once again at our doorstep. Some are controllable, but most are not. Increased competition, economic uncertainty, changing demographics, globalization, technological advancements and increased accountability have changed the competitive landscape for institutions of higher education. Hood is no exception.

The challenges that the College face include the following:

Changing Competitive Context
- Increased competition from private, public and for-profit colleges and universities;
- The potential establishment of a four-year public institution in Frederick County;
- Aggressive recruitment of Maryland students, given the state’s reputation for quality high schools and wealthy households; and
- Increased competition for qualified faculty and staff.

Changing Economic and Financial Context
- A recessionary economy;
- The escalating costs of higher education;
- Threatening reductions in federal and state grant programs available to students; and
- Eroding external financial bases of support, such as the possible elimination of the Sellinger Grant program and governmental funding.

Changing Socio-cultural Context
- Shifting demographic trends in Maryland, the mid-Atlantic and beyond;
- The demand for more student support services, including academic and nonacademic support such as health care, disabilities and mental health services;
- A greater demand for tangible outcomes and education’s return-on-investment; and
- A demand for more career-based nontraditional academic programming.

Changing Technological Context
- Increased demand for distance education;
- Higher demand for technology-related training; and
- Rising student expectations for education technology.

These challenges are forcing us to rethink our modus operandi. Economic conditions cause us to be even better stewards of our scarce resources and to be more efficient in everything we do. Technological changes give rise to new ways of learning, teaching and communicating with one another. Demographic shifts and cultural changes require Hood to think “outside the box” and establish bold, creative and untested strategies to recruit and retain students in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Thus, the challenges that we face provide us with opportunities to rethink the future direction of the College.

The changing external environment also presents us with a range of exciting opportunities to build on the outstanding record of achievement amassed during the last 118 years. The exponential changes currently taking place in higher education serve as a stimulus to develop new programs, establish new initiatives and generate new energy.

The opportunities the College could act on to produce a positive, competitive advantage include the following:

- Establishing innovative programs, including possible three-year undergraduate programs, five-year combined undergraduate-master’s degree programs and hybrid (with onsite and online components) graduate programs;
- Expanding international and off-campus study and exchange programs;
- Establishing additional academic partnerships with area institutions, such as Frederick Memorial Hospital and Frederick Community College;
- Expanding partnerships with employers in the Frederick, Baltimore and Washington, D.C., areas for practicums and internships;
- The strategic use of the newly constructed fitness center and gymnasium; and
- The possible acquisition of strategically located property.
As we reflect on taking advantage of environmental opportunities, we must be aware of competing priorities. One of the fundamental challenges of managing an educational institution of higher learning is juggling the different, often competing, priorities. For example, in order to attract the best and brightest students in a competitive environment, awarding higher merit scholarships is a must. Similarly, in recessionary economic times, families’ abilities to save and pay for college decreases, creating increased pressure for greater financial aid. Both of these factors increase the tuition discount rate. However, financial constraints require the College to carefully monitor this rate to help ensure optimum enrollment. Herein lies the inherent contradiction and the need for a delicate balancing act. Contradictions and competing priorities such as this make the strategic management of smaller colleges challenging.

Hood 2020: The New Decade in a World of Possibilities

The 21st century offers many more questions than answers, and far more challenges and problems than solutions for academic institutions, especially for small liberal arts colleges. However, throughout its history Hood and its contrarian nature has used uncertainty and tough times as impetuses to undertake real and meaningful change, to turn challenges into opportunities and to reaffirm its core values and commitment to academic excellence.

At Hood, we know that we cannot accept a business-as-usual mindset but must embrace change as a friend and challenges as new windows of opportunity. We must respond with daring, boldness and confidence. We must chart a new course for Hood’s future, a future replete with change and challenge that includes enrollment growth, campus improvements, reaccreditation of the College, scholarly accomplishments by students and faculty, improved financial health and fund raising and more.

We must embrace the new world of possibilities while maintaining the quality, integrity and traditions of Hood. We must further strengthen the academic environment; revise existing academic programs and develop new ones; decrease the tuition discount rate; grow the College endowment; continue to create a campus that ensures the highest quality of life for its stakeholders; and prepare students for lives of leadership, responsibility and service. Through this document, “Planning our Future in a World of Possibilities,” the College is poised to launch the next chapter in its rich history.

Hood College is unique and special. The next stage of our strategic plan is a call to action, a movement forward to achieve greatness and fulfill Hood’s promise of being a comprehensive liberal arts college of choice. Together we will transform Hood into what we want it to be. Hood’s greatness lies ahead.
ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE:
Enhance academic excellence.

- Develop, implement and evaluate a first-year experience for undergraduate students (in collaboration with Student Affairs);

- Review the undergraduate core curriculum and implement changes that emerge from this process;

- Increase opportunities for faculty and professional staff development;

- Advance global awareness throughout the Hood community;

- Support and advance structural diversity and academic programs that advance the understanding of the full range of the human experience;

- Continue implementation of a program review process and programmatic assessment for continuing improvement of all academic programs utilizing multiple sources of data and information to augment existing programs or develop new academic programs;

- Advance undergraduate, graduate and faculty research by strengthening support systems and increasing funding sources; and

- Review existing academic support programs and address any identified needs.
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO:
Enrich the quality of student life through innovative curricular and co-curricular programming.

• Increase overall student retention and graduation rates among full-time undergraduate students using appropriate assessment tools and data analysis (in collaboration with Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management);

• Review facilities that affect student life and continue to plan for the improvement of existing facilities or construction of new facilities;

• Strengthen an environment that supports all aspects of student wellness, including physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social development; and

• Examine, expand and broaden opportunities to ensure a vibrant, diverse and engaged student life.
ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE:
Consistent with the mission and core values of the College, recruit and enroll high-achieving undergraduate and graduate students.

- Strengthen efforts to recruit high-achieving undergraduate and graduate students;
- Leverage financial aid to achieve optimum enrollment and increase net tuition revenue;
- Support overall undergraduate retention efforts (in collaboration with Academic Affairs and Student Life);
- Enhance graduate student retention and graduation rates; and
- Collaborate with Academic Affairs to identify and develop academic signature programs that will achieve excellence and help maintain student enrollment levels.
FUNDRAISING

STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOUR:
Enhance advancement and alumni relations activities to generate unrestricted and restricted gifts to the College.

- Complete a comprehensive fund-raising campaign that supports the development and construction of a new gymnasium and fitness center, expanded scholarship opportunities, faculty enrichment and the Hood Fund;
- Identify and secure additional endowed faculty chairs;
- Strengthen alumni connections with the College through regional and national events, Reunion Weekend, targeted publications and other media;
- Grow the Hood Fund through increased participation, with particular focus on more recent alumni using current social media networks;
- Expand and further develop volunteer constituency groups;
- Increase the solicitation of corporations and foundations for both unrestricted and restricted gifts;
- Develop outreach efforts for Graduate School alumni resulting in increased involvement and giving;
- Increase membership in the Pergola Society; and
- Maintain outstanding town-and-gown relations by supporting campus activities open to the Frederick community, developing business partnerships with local firms and being a good neighbor to residents near the Hood College campus.
Finance and Administration

Strategic Priority Five:
Allocate the College’s financial, human, physical and technology resources to assure academic excellence.

• Improve key financial ratios and ensure compliance with all debt covenants through the use of sound financial and fiscal policies and practices;

• Continue to review and improve the planning and budgeting process;

• Provide support to a vibrant learning community by improving facilities, technology and support services;

• Attract and retain a diverse and highly qualified faculty and staff who are committed to the mission of Hood College through the use of sound, contemporary human resources principles and practices;

• Provide a competitive compensation program for faculty and staff; and

• Enhance current programs and policies, and develop new ones that encourage environmental sustainability.
Marketing and Communications

Strategic Priority Six:
Continue to aggressively market and promote the College.

• Increase traditional media advertising in support of undergraduate and graduate recruiting;

• Increase online and interactive marketing and advertising activities in support of undergraduate and graduate recruiting and institutional advancement;

• Expand efforts to promote the College—with an emphasis on faculty, student and alumni achievement—using social media and other electronic media and marketing tools;

• Implement new marketing strategies, initiatives and efficiencies that leverage new techniques and technologies to enhance marketing and communications in support of the College; and

• Continue to maintain and improve the Hood College website content and functionality, including utilizing software and hardware upgrades and enhancements.
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APPENDIX 2

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
2010-2011

Cheryl Brown Dreiling ’69, Chair
Philip A. Berkheimer, Vice Chair
M. Richard Adams
Janet Hobbs Cotton ’59
Margery Lesser Elfin, Ph.D.
Joan Esselen Foot ’69
J. Brian Gaeng

Gail L. Gamble, M.D., ’69, Sc.D. ’93
Eva Teig Hardy ’65
Robert G. Hooper
Kevin C. Jackson
George E. Lewis Jr., D.V.M., Ph.D., COL
Judith Messina ’66
Laura Lee Miller ’73

Janet Spaulding Nunn ’61
Jacob “Ray” Ramsburg ’83
Malinda B. Small ’81
Earlene H. Thornton, Ph.D.
Neal J. Wilson

APPENDIX 3

PLANNING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE
2010-2011

Ronald Volpe, Ph.D.
President

Kathleen Bands, Ph.D.
Vice President for Undergraduate and Graduate Enrollment Management

Kate Conway-Turner, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dave Diehl, M.B.A.
Executive Director of Marketing and Communications

Cindy Emory
Director of Institutional Research

Allen Flora Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Nancy Gillece, M.B.A.
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Anita Jose, Ph.D.
Professor of Management and Director of the MBA Program

Craig Laufer, Ph.D.
Professor of Biology

Charles Mann, B.B.A.
Vice President for Finance, Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

Elizabeth Morningstar, CPA
Director of Budget Development, Planning and Reporting

Mark Sandona, Ph.D.
Professor of English, Chair of the Department of English

Darian Schulze, CPA
Controller and Assistant Treasurer

Olivia White, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students

Carol Wuenschel, M.S.
Executive Director of Human Resources
APPENDIX 4
Undergraduate and Graduate Enrollment

APPENDIX 5
Retention and Graduation Rates
APPENDIX 6
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS STUDYING ABROAD

APPENDIX 7
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APPENDIX 9
TUITION RATE INCREASES
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Appendix 11
Freshman Class Tuition Revenue
**Appendix 12**

Endowment Values

1. In 2002, it was necessary for the College to use endowment funds to fund operations.
3. The 2011 figures is as of March 31, 2011.

**Appendix 13**

Fund Raising Gifts

* Does not include grants from Federal or State Government
“Progress is the activity of today and the assurance of tomorrow.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson