

## NEASC STANDARD ONE MISSION AND PURPOSES

### **Introduction**

This section presents an overview of the evolution of Franklin Pierce University's Mission and Purposes since the 1998 self-study. It describes the manner in which the Mission and Purposes are consistent with its charter of operating authority, give direction to its activities, and provide a basis for its ability to evaluate its effectiveness.

### **Description**

Franklin Pierce University is a community that defines itself by three core relationships: between teacher and student, between knowledge and the world, and between ideas and action. Its current Mission Statement and Institutional Vision are designed to highlight those relationships and to ensure that the University's educational goals infuse its educational practice and that its educational practice affirms its intention to produce real-world outcomes for our students.

The Mission Statement describes the University's self-identification as a small, independent, comprehensive university dedicated to the integration of liberal learning and professional preparation. It explains how the mission and purposes inform the University's diverse programs for traditional residential undergraduates, adult learners, and graduate students. It demonstrates that the foundation of the University is its commitment to a set of core values that is intended to create both a diverse and intellectually challenging educational community and to permit all graduates to effect change in the world.

At its core, the Mission Statement and the Institutional Vision display values and expectations consistent with the institutional history and reflect the growth and transformation that Franklin Pierce has undergone in the past ten years. They state the institution's intention to remain "grounded in the liberal arts;" they link that grounding to a distinctive intellectual character expressed in the theme of "Individual and Community" while acknowledging that preparing "active, engaged citizens and leaders of conscience" demands that liberal learning be tied to the practical testing produced by encounters with real-world problems and solutions.

While the fundamental assumptions and commitments of the University's Mission and Purpose remain unaltered, both the University and its surrounding higher-education environment have changed. The transition from college to university status, the addition of doctoral programming, and the adoption of the online format all represent significant internal changes since 1998. This shifting landscape, along with specific developments in the University's academic programs, structure, and admissions profile, prompted two revisions of the Institutional Vision and a major re-evaluation of the University's Mission Statement since 1998. On each occasion, the University reaffirmed its basic Mission and Purpose, while adjusting its Institutional Vision and Mission Statements to reflect and promote new academic program initiatives, structural changes regarding relations between the College at Rindge and the College of Graduate and Professional Studies (CGPS) campuses, and evolving admissions profiles.

President Hagerty initiated a strategic planning retreat in February 1999 “to begin a conversation whereby the College [could begin to] develop the next generation of a strategic plan.” The results of this meeting were presented at the March 1999 Board of Trustees meeting, and a series of resolutions were passed to guide the planning process. A Core Review Committee was created and convened by the Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs in April 1999. A Strategic Priority Facilitators group was created that same month to lead the process of further refining the emerging strategic priorities and to steer the accompanying implementation process. The Board asked the President “to set in writing a Vision for Franklin Pierce College for the next five to seven years” at the October 1999 meeting. In preparation for the development of the new Vision Statement, the President asked that the community take part in a broad survey comprised of seven fundamental questions (November/December 1999):

- What are the traditions of Franklin Pierce which have defined the College in the past and should continue to define it in the future?
- What are the institutional strengths, programmatically, culturally, and otherwise, upon which we can and should build?
- What are the elements in the approved Statement of Institutional Vision which need further amplification for them to be meaningfully integrated into the College's curriculum and co-curricular activities?
- What refinements to the Statement of Institutional Vision might you recommend?
- What are the weaknesses, programmatically, culturally, and otherwise, which the institution must confront to create a superior learning community?
- What elements of a student profile are the most critical for the admission and success of an FPC undergraduate on the Rindge campus?
- How can the relationships between the Graduate and Professional Studies Division and the Rindge campus be strengthened?

The President presented a new “Statement of Vision and Institutional Identity” memorandum to the community in February 2000. The Board of Trustees approved the President’s Institutional Vision in March 2000. (The 2000 Statement of Vision is available in the Exhibit section.) In July 2000, a Presidential Ad Hoc Committee commissioned Dr. Zeddie Bowen to “... conduct an assessment and prepare a report which [would] address the major action items set forth ...” by the President.

Dr. Bowen presented his findings and recommendations to the Board at the October 2000 meeting. The report was accepted and widely shared with the community. Dr. Bowen recommended that the Board clarify the College’s Mission with regard to the students it intends to serve in the future; that the Board of Trustees clarify how CGPS fits into the mission of the College from the point of view of its educational philosophy; that the Board should actively address its role in program assessment; and that the President should encourage the community to continue discussion of the Institutional Vision as a way to articulate and affirm the academic ambitions of the faculty and to define its distinctive intellectual signature. (Exhibit 1.1)

The current Mission Statement and Institutional Vision were composed in 2005 as a component of the University’s work to establish new strategic goals. Beginning with discussions among the Senior Staff, and at the behest of President Hagerty, a revised draft of the then current Mission

Statement was prepared by the Office of the Provost. The President's charge was that the draft document seek to reflect the evolving shape of the College (not yet University) and particularly that it seek to incorporate formally the expanded role and curriculum of CGPS while seeking to explicate and integrate the wealth of educational responsibilities that Franklin Pierce University had assumed. The President also asked that the proposed revisions reflect the increasing complexity of the institution and allow for any discussion of a revised Mission Statement to "fit" with the emerging discussions of moving the institution to university status. A newly drafted Institutional Vision was reviewed in tandem with the Mission Statement.

The revised document was reviewed by the Senior Staff at several meetings and then presented to the Pierce Council (which serves as a campus-wide forum for the examination of institution-defining issues confronting Franklin Pierce), which was asked to undertake the formal process of discussion, review and revision of the document. The Pierce Council undertook a substantive review of the proposed Mission Statement involving stakeholders from all major campus communities. The document was discussed and revised at a Faculty Meeting in spring of 2006, was discussed by the Student Government, and circulated to the various campus and CGPS communities for deliberation. A consensus version of the document emerged from this deliberative process and upon the unanimous recommendation of the Pierce Council was forwarded to the Board of Trustees. There it was independently reviewed by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board and subsequently adopted by the Board of Trustees at their October 2006 meeting. (Exhibits 1.2 and 1.3)

### **Appraisal**

The present version of the Mission Statement and its supplements attempts to address the University's growing awareness that it has sought consciously to enrich its identity, to expand its footprint, and to affirm its connection to the wider world. Since 1998, it has sought to clarify its values and, more importantly, to connect those values directly and concretely to the institution's changing curricula, student bodies, physical geography and wider world. These values, as well as the changes certified in the revised documents, are displayed across a variety of University publications, confirmed by concrete actions, and evidenced in several key initiatives.

These initiatives are discussed in greater detail in other sections of this report, but it is necessary to mention several practices and initiatives that exemplify the continued attention by the University to the relationship between its Mission, the education it offers, and the outcomes it seeks. The University's commitment to prepare its students to become "active engaged citizens and leaders of conscience" is exemplified in student-centered educational programs such as Safe Spaces, A.L.A.NA (African American, Latino/Latina, Asian and Native American), Socrates Café and the Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE), the development of campus programs in Global Citizenship and Women in Leadership, and the efforts of Franklin Pierce Polling, Pierce Media Group, and the Engaging Students First program of the Fitzwater Center.

The University's commitment to "an ethos of academic excellence" is reflected in undergraduate fellowship programs of the Fitzwater Center, the Monadnock Institute and the New England Center, as well as the Presidential and Provost Scholarships provided to incoming first-year

students, the revitalized Honors Program and such continuing efforts as the Northern New England Review.

The University's ability to promote "civic engagement, environmental responsibility, and global awareness" is evidenced in its development of the online M.B.A. program in Luhansk, Ukraine, the Global Citizenship Initiative, the *Pierce Walk Across Europe*, *Pierce in Vienna*, *Pierce in Athens*, and Lyon programs, and the many programs offered by the Academic Institutes, including Tuesday Briefings, the Northern New England Community and Diversity Project, and the Rindge 2020 Project.

Finally, the University's commitment to "serving as an educational, intellectual, and cultural resource" for its various constituencies is evidenced by such diverse programming as its thirty year tradition of the Community *Messiah* Sing, its new Film Series, the work of the New England Center in promoting deliberative dialogues on such issues as local planning, health care, and business ethics, and the numerous volunteer and service programs promoted by the Office of Community Service in Student Affairs.

The Mission Statement is displayed in a number of venues, the University catalogue and website being the most notable. The Pierce Council recommended that the Mission Statement be more prominently displayed on the website during its revision discussions, but this was purposely delayed by the change to university status and the necessity of a complete revision of the current web portal. We recognize that the University web site is our primary means of publicizing ourselves and intend to have the Mission more prominently displayed by the time of the NEASC visit.

An online survey focused on the University Mission Statement conducted in October of 2007 by the Chair of the Mission Standard Committee showed that 85.75% of the respondents (n.=162) showed awareness or strong awareness of the institution's Mission Statement. Only 4.25% of the respondents were "completely unaware" of the new Mission Statement. These results are a testimony to the effectiveness of the process undertaken during the transition to University status to more clearly define our identity for ourselves and our constituents.

While the Mission Statement is widely recognized, it is not readily referred to in the institution's daily decision-making. This Standard requires that the University demonstrate how "individual units have developed specific objectives that are reflective of the Institution's 'mission and purposes.'" CGPS displays both the institutional and program Mission Statements at all centers. CGPS begins each academic year with a meeting during which the graduate faculty reconfirms its commitment to the University's Mission and then considers the mission statement of each discipline in the context of the larger Mission of the University. This then leads to programmatic goals for each discipline. Several Rindge departments, the Office of Financial and Administrative Services, the Department of Safety and Transportation, and the New England Center for Civic Life, have posted missions and goals. Many Rindge academic units indirectly demonstrate the connection of their programs to the Mission Statement, but not enough references to the Mission Statement are made in their web or paper publications.

Additionally, there is the general awareness that the changing nature of Franklin Pierce will demand an ongoing review of the connections of the Mission Statement to the emerging nature of the new University. The relationship between the Mission and programmatic operations is reciprocal. Programs are driven by the Mission and in turn, the Mission is adjusted as the environment calls for new programmatic initiatives. The most recent Mission Statement review process should serve as an effective guide as to how such reviews should occur, and it is clear that the full implementation of the University's newly revised Mission Statement should include enhanced prominence, wide-reaching exposure, and more direct linkage to the actual intellectual and educational work of the University.

### **Projection**

The academic and administrative units of the institution will undertake to develop and display the Mission Statements for departments, divisions and programs in appropriate public, internal, and online venues. The Provost will work closely with the Pierce Council to manage the process whereby these Mission Statements can be developed, collected, and published. This process will begin in the fall of 2008 and will be completed by the end of 2008-2009.

The University will need to ensure that all new courses and programs address their relationship to the Mission in a formal manner. The Provost will charge the undergraduate and graduate Curriculum Committees to amend their existing Course Proposal forms to require this evidence of all new petitions. The Curriculum Committees will also include these questions in the new program review proposal scheduled to be discussed by the faculty this fall. This charge should be completed by the end of 2008.

The Office of Marketing and Communications will make the Mission Statement more accessible on the public and internal pages of the revised website. This work will begin this spring as a part of enhancing the new web presence and will be completed by December of 2008.

The University will develop a formal process of periodic review of the Mission Statement, including review of its display and placement on the website and other public venues. The Provost will work closely with the Pierce Council to develop a process for reviewing the relevance and effectiveness of the Mission Statement on a recurring five-year cycle. This process will be incorporated into the Council's policies and procedures document by April 2009. It is expected that the process used in the most recent review will guide the development of this more formal review process.