

TO: The College Community
FROM: [Christopher C. Dahl](#)
Date: January 3, 2000
RE: Strategic Planning, College Mission Statement, and Draft Goals

At College Senate on November 16 and in a recent memo, I have reported on the recommendations of the College Budget Committee and their implementation. As we begin the new year, however, I would like to bring you up to date on changes in the strategic planning process at Geneseo and, in so doing, invite your participation in the development, articulation, and implementation of the College's major goals for the next decade.

As many of you are aware, the College Planning Council was replaced in Fall 1998 by a somewhat smaller committee, the Strategic Planning Advisory Group (SPG), charged with carrying on the College's planning process in a new, more strategic way. In its final year, the College Planning Council had refined and distilled the College's Mission Statement of 1990 into a new mission statement, released in Fall 1998. At that time, I asked the Strategic Planning Group to take the new Mission Statement and define a half-dozen or so overarching goals for the College, which might serve as a "road-map" to guide all departments and divisions in seeking to achieve our mission as an outstanding public liberal arts college.

The Strategic Planning Group worked hard to identify a limited number of goals that would be specific enough to provide guidance to individual units as they consider their role in achieving the College's mission but general enough so that all departments and units would be able to develop their own goals and action plans that would contribute to most, if not all, of the strategic goals. A copy of the College's Mission Statement and a draft of the proposed Overarching Institutional Goals are attached.

As we begin the new year, I have asked Provost Barbara Dixon, in her role as chair of the Strategic Planning Group, to convene discussions of the proposed overarching goals beginning in February. I have also asked her and the members of the SPG to work during the intersession to draft a series of brief value statements that will provide context for the overarching goals. In the vital area of diversity, the SPG will draw upon the work of the

Commission on Diversity and Community, which has prepared a succinct statement on the value of diversity, based on their report. These value statements will inform the February discussions.

This series of discussions of our Mission and Goals represents the next and extremely important phase in the College's strategic planning process. As I have suggested in my past two fall convocation talks, the revised strategic planning process will maintain many of the strengths of our previous planning procedures, most pointedly, widespread consultation in institutional planning, a student-centered emphasis in all areas of our work, and the primacy of the liberal arts tradition. However, the work of the SPG is designed to update our planning efforts in light of Geneseo's established reputation as a leading public liberal arts college and the commensurate elevation of our institutional aspirations.

Our revised planning process draws upon the work of the previous College Planning Council, which drew up the College's last major planning document: *A Quest for Excellence: Geneseo's Plan for a Decade, 1990-2000*. With the guidance of this document and the leadership of the College Planning Council, Geneseo has made enormous strides in the past ten years, especially in strengthening our commitment to faculty and student research, defining the significance of student and residence life, and generating our earliest institutional initiatives in diversity and multiculturalism.

With the beginning of a new decade we have a strong record to build on and some knowledge about how to do it. In the work of the Strategic Planning Group, we seek a planning process that focuses pointedly on a straightforward statement of our mission and a few overarching goals that guide the activities of all units within the institution—a process that seeks to bring together all aspects of our operations as a public liberal arts college. By focusing on a succinct mission and a manageable number of broad institutional goals (that is to say, by being truly strategic in our planning), we can most effectively direct our myriad efforts, allocate our resources, and assess our progress in improving what we do. That is why, for example, our mission and goals are so important to the new strategic budget process. The new Mission Statement and the proposed Overarching Goals build coherently on the progress made under *A Quest for Excellence* even as they define new areas for creativity and growth. Above all they seek to define, articulate, and implement our vital role as a leading public liberal arts college. Drawing from the best in the liberal arts tradition, but doing so in

the context of a public institution, Geneseo has the opportunity to become a model for other excellent institutions and build upon our national rankings and reputation to establish a broader, more diverse constituency of students, alumni, friends, partners, and supporters. As we claim national recognition, moreover, we commit ourselves to systematic institutional assessment and improvement.

This is an exciting process. True strategic planning of the sort we are called upon to do starts with community-wide discussion of our mission and goals:

- * What is our essence as a public liberal arts college?
- * How does the institution most effectively express its aspirations to its own community and external constituents?
- * How does the College expect to realize its aspirations and what roles do individual members and units play along the way?

Your answers to these questions and many others are essential to the new planning process and, ultimately, to the success of the College in fulfilling its mission. I do hope you will join me and your colleagues on the SPG in this new phase of Geneseo's development. I look forward to working with you in the New Year and hearing from you on this vital and challenging task.

For your information, I have listed the current members of the Strategic Planning Group, who were appointed in consultation with the College Senate Executive Committee. Members from 1998-99 who have rotated off the committee are also listed. I am grateful to all these individuals for their excellent work, and I am sure they would be interested in hearing from you about the planning process and the new goals

Provost [Barbara Dixon](#), Chair
[C. Randy Bailey](#), History
[James Boiani](#), Chemistry (1998-99)
[Robert Bonfiglio](#), Student and Campus Life

[Judith Bushnell](#), Milne Library

[William Caren](#), Student and Campus Life (1998-99)

[Kurt Cylke](#), Sociology, Past Chair of College Senate

[Becky Glass](#), Sociology, Chair of College Senate

[Arthur Hatton](#), Advancement

[Kevin Lee](#), '00, Central Council Chair

[Kenneth Levison](#), Administration and Finance

[Michael McGee](#), '00

[Nicholas Schiavetti](#), Communicative Disorders & Sciences

[Susan Spring](#), Scheduling and Events