

# CARROLL COLLEGE

Helena, Montana



Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

## Year One Report

September 15, 2011

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# Introduction

As Carroll College enters a new accreditation seven-year cycle, we have found that a fresh beginning and knowledge gained from the recently completed accelerated accreditation process as a pilot institution of the revised standards have ultimately served to improve our ability to focus on the activities that are central to the mission of our institution. Led by President Thomas Trebon, the Strategic Planning Committee worked this past year to align the goals from the Strategic Plan to the core themes and then identified objectives that enable these themes to be fulfilled. Representatives from the Strategic Planning Committee and Accreditation Steering Committee identified indicators of achievement and measurements that enable us to monitor our progress toward the fulfillment of the core themes.

Carroll College's Year One Report focuses on our three core themes—Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness; Faith, Meaning, and Values; and Student Engagement. For each core theme, we briefly describe the essential elements and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives. As further described in Chapter One, Carroll College's core theme, Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness includes indicators such as achievement of student learning outcomes, graduation rates, retention rates, student satisfaction, and employment rates. Our second core theme, Faith, Meaning, and Values, relies on data related to participation, opportunity, and student learning as a way to demonstrate the extent to which this aspect of our mission is dynamic and visible on campus. Similarly, the third core theme, Student Engagement, includes indicators related to satisfaction, participation, and student learning; these measures track, for example, levels of student engagement in activities and satisfaction with various aspects of student life, perceptions about co-curricular experiences and connected learning, and learning outcomes related to leadership and service.

The college has, in the short time since the final follow-up report from last year's full-scale accreditation team visit (submitted September 2010), moved to support the self evaluation process by formalizing the Accreditation Steering Committee as part of the faculty governance committee structure. This formalization of the Accreditation Steering Committee ensures a broadly representative committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students. The Accreditation Steering Committee will meet regularly and often as we carry out our new seven-year cycle. In the meantime an interim group of faculty and staff stepped forward to prepare this Year One Report. Co-chairs, Dr. Jim Hardwick, Vice President for Student Life, Dr. Paula McNutt, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Dawn Gallinger, Director of Research, Planning, and Assessment facilitate the meetings. A full listing of the interim committee membership is available in Appendix A.

## NWCCU Eligibility Requirements

Carroll College is authorized to operate under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Helena, Montana and the provisions of the Act of the Legislative Assembly of Montana approved March 14, 1913, as well as under the provisions of Chapter 1, title VI, of the Civil

Code of the State of Montana, Sections 4221, 4222, and 4223. The mission and core themes have been approved by the Board of Trustees.

## Institutional Context

Carroll College, located in Helena, Montana, is a Catholic, Diocesan, liberal arts and pre-professional 4-year baccalaureate institution. The College offers over 40 Bachelors of Arts Degrees, a Bachelors of Science in Nursing, and several Associate Degrees and Certificates.

Carroll's Fall 2010 student headcount was 1,477 students, with an FTE count of 1,310 students. Over the last decade, the institution has increased the number of full-time students and seen decreasing enrollments of part-time students. Currently, part-time student enrollment represents only 8% of the total headcount whereas in 2000 part time enrollment was 15% of total headcount. The college has seen moderate growth in transfer student enrollment, with 60 transfer students in 2010 compared to 49 in 2009. The college plans to continue strategic growth of full-time students until it achieves an enrollment level that will support and sustain a rich and diverse curriculum, well-compensated faculty and staff, and excellent learning resources. In support of this effort, the student demographic is expanding beyond Carroll's traditional Montana recruiting grounds. Overall, 43% of Carroll students are from out of state, as opposed to 53% of the 2010 first-time, first-year cohort. Carroll's student body currently represents 34 states and 16 countries. As the college grows, overall student quality is maintained. The average incoming GPA is 3.46, the average ACT score is 25, and the average Carroll GPA is 3.19. Carroll is approximately 60% female and 40% male and remains predominantly comprised of students between the ages of 18 and 21, with over 800 students living in campus housing. The first-to second-year cohort retention rate was 83% in 2010. The six-year graduation rates typically fall between 61 and 65 percent.

Tuition and fees for 2011-2012 are \$25,198, which ranks near the bottom of comparable private institutions in the Northwest. Room and board for 2011-2012 is \$7,750. The average financial aid award for 2010-2011 was \$20,418; 95% of Carroll students receive institutional scholarships and grants.

Carroll employs 81 full time instructional faculty and 70 part time instructional faculty for a Fall 2010 student-to-faculty ratio of 13:1. Class sections typically average between 10-19 students. Faculty at Carroll are leaders in their fields, winning prestigious Fulbright Scholarships and awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Our college motto "Non Scholae Sed Vitae," "*Not for School but for Life*," speaks to Carroll's central goal—to foster education that goes beyond just the time one spends at college, instead enriching each student's entire life. Eighty percent of students participate in one or more community service activities over their time at Carroll. For their volunteer service work, Carroll students have won national and international recognition from organizations including St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Engineers Without Borders, Rotary International and the American Society of Civil Engineers. In extracurricular competitions, the college's Talking

Saints forensics team is highly ranked in the nation year after year and has reigned as Northwest Champions for 20 straight years.

## **PREFACE**

### **UPDATE ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

Over the past couple of years, Carroll has focused in a disciplined way upon strengthening the academic and residential experience of the campus and expanding its regional reputation as a comprehensive college of the first rank. The success of these endeavors has been enhanced by building upon the college's strengths in interdisciplinary study in the context of the traditional liberal arts curriculum. The college has invested in improving campus living and learning environments by continuing to add technology to classrooms and residential spaces, updating laboratories and equipment, and making aesthetic and safety improvements to the campus grounds.

In February of 2011, the college announced the completion of the planned 4-year, \$30 million Centennial Campaign. This campaign finished nine months ahead of schedule and surpassed the \$30 million goal by over \$4 million. The Office of Institutional Advancement now sets in motion plans for a Second Century comprehensive campaign tentatively scheduled to launch in June of 2013. The initiatives and goals of this campaign will be defined by the priorities indentified from the campus strategic planning process in concert with the campus master plan and program prioritization efforts. The monetary goals for this campaign will be established at the completion of the feasibility study scheduled to be finished by May of 2012.

In April 2011, the Vice President for Finance and Administration left the college for an exciting leadership position in our community. Ms. Lynn Etchart served the college for 17 years and during her tenure put in place several critical steps that have helped the college move closer to a truly integrated planning and budgeting process. Ms. Lori Peterson is currently serving as the Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration. Ms. Peterson has served as the Controller at Carroll for the last 7 years. Ms. Lori Ladas was hired as the Interim Controller.

On August 1, 2011, Dr. Richard Ortega, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, announced that he accepted the position of Vice President for University Advancement at Holy Names University in Oakland, California. Dr. Ortega provided five years of leadership to our institutional advancement efforts, especially those associated with the successful Centennial Campaign. Mr. Tom McCarvel, former Vice President of Community Relations has moved to the position of Interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Community Relations, effective September 1, 2011. In this position Mr. McCarvel will oversee all of the Institutional Advancement efforts and will continue to provide leadership to the areas of Facilities and Grounds (including Campus Master Planning) and Conferencing.

Also in spring of 2011, Dr. Thomas Trebon, Carroll's President for the past ten years announced his retirement. A search firm has since been hired and a committee comprised of Board of Trustees members and faculty and staff is in place. The Board of Trustees anticipates announcing a new President sometime in the early spring of 2012.

The college is embracing these senior administrative changes but remains steadfast in moving forward with its planning efforts while acknowledging the importance of providing plenty of flexibility and opportunity for new leadership to offer input. The remainder of this section provides an overview of these planning processes and major changes and challenges from 2008 to the present in the five major strategic areas of the college. These five areas figured, throughout most of these past few years, as the pillars of our strategic planning efforts. With the exception of two areas, Stewardship and Capacity Building, which are better addressed by Standard Two, they have become our core themes. Each section highlights accomplishments and challenges that the college has experienced in the last few years.

## **UPDATE ON STRATEGIC GOALS**

### **Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness**

A number of significant changes have taken place in Academic Affairs over the past couple of years. We hired a new Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and implemented a program review cycle to enhance the oversight and accountability of our academic programs. We have added new majors in Anthrozoology and Finance and a Project Management Certificate targeted toward local business professionals. For Fall 2011 we've added nine new or replacement faculty in marketing, economics, math, biology, chemistry, health science, philosophy, political science, and theology.

In Spring 2009, through a national search, we hired Dr. Paula McNutt as the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. McNutt is actively promoting our commitment to academic programs that are both rigorous and relevant. Under her leadership, the college completed a thorough review of all administrative and academic programs during the 2010-2011 academic year. The review process, based on the text of Dr. Robert Dickeson, "Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services," was initiated by the Strategic Planning Committee and administered by the newly formed Program Prioritization Committee. The program prioritization process resulted in 180 program-level recommendations and commendations and 30 institutional-level recommendations. The Senior Leadership Team and faculty governance committees are now reviewing and implementing some of these recommendations. The program prioritization process also established the framework for a five-year cycle of administrative and academic program review. The first set of programs is scheduled to be reviewed by the Program Review and Assessment Committee beginning November 1, 2011.

Dr. McNutt has also revised several academic policies, addressed the use of adjunct instructors, faculty overloads, and stipends and better monitored course enrollments for under-enrolled courses. She has also made some significant changes to summer school and most recently hired an Associate Dean to help with some of the strategic objectives including on-line course delivery and graduate education. Dr. Mark Parker, Associate Professor of Mathematics began his role as Associate Academic Dean on August 1, 2011.

Faculty compensation has also been a contentious issue in the last few years. Over the past three years, the college has been wrestling with how to achieve equity between faculty and staff salaries and how to build a sustainable compensation system. In April 2010, faculty voted to

suspend the current compensation policies in the handbook in order to implement a one-year pilot of the new salary system. Staff also passed a resolution to implement the salary system on a one-year trial basis. In May 2010, the Board of Trustees affirmed the faculty and staff pilot salary system. They voted to suspend the faculty handbook compensation policy for one year moving all employees to at least 85% of target market. Although the revised salary system does not appease all faculty, the faculty once again voted to implement the revised system for the 2011-2012 academic year. The system maintains the salary schedule, keeps employees at a minimum of 85% of target market, and provides a 1% cost of living increase for those faculty and staff currently salaried above the 85% of target market. Various groups on campus will continue to work on policies involving health insurance and other benefits, application of merit performance, discipline pay differentials, and financially sustaining the system. While the compensation issue is not yet fully resolved, there has been a diligent attempt to create open dialogue, to use data for a systematic analysis of compensation, and to make faculty compensation a priority in this past year's budget, even in the face of difficult budget times.

In 2009-2010, the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee completed work on a direct evaluation of Core "diversity" learning outcomes. In 2010-2011, the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee began translating the remaining core curriculum learning objectives into measurable student learning outcomes. Over the summer of 2011, the Strategic Planning Committee recognized the importance and timeliness of this work and subsequently initiated an Essential Learning Outcomes Task Group charged with defining a revised set of learning outcomes that are measurable and inclusive of the knowledge and skills gained through co-curricular experiences. The newly-formed Essential Learning Outcomes Task Group will begin by using a rubric to measure the "communication" outcomes of the Core Curriculum. As Carroll aligns its assessment processes with the new accreditation model, it is developing thresholds for "good enough" performance on Core Curriculum student learning outcomes.

### **Faith, Meaning, and Values**

During this past decade, Carroll has experienced an ongoing exploration of our identity as a Catholic, diocesan college. This aspect of our mission is becoming an increasingly visible and vital presence at Carroll, through a range of curricular, co-curricular, and professional development activities as well as through the work of campus groups and new programs. Admittedly, the dialogue has also been sparked by several controversies. But the overall effect has been to make us think and talk more about what it means to be a Catholic college. Each year, the college sponsors lectures that address Catholic tradition and beliefs. Every Alpha Seminar discusses Carroll's mission with its students and explores what "higher education in a Catholic context" might mean, for Catholic and non-Catholic students alike.

Two new centers directly related to our Catholic identity were recently established — the Sr. Annette Moran Center (2007) and the Hunthausen Center for Peace and Social Justice (2008). The Hunthausen Professor for Peace and Justice oversees the operation of the Center. It is now staffed by a part-time grant coordinator, a work-study student, and a community service intern. Most recently, the Hunthausen director has been in conversation with the directors from Campus Ministry and Student Activities and Leadership to create a clearinghouse for community service and volunteer opportunities. This year also marks the beginning of the Fr. Gene Peoples

Learning Community in Borromeo Hall, a pilot residential learning community of five students committed to faith, community, and service.

These centers, still in their infancy, are offering additional programs and services related to our Catholic identity. These initiatives have also contributed to a growing emphasis on service and Catholic Social Teaching, which is likewise reflected in our more recent discussions of strategic goals for the institution as a whole. The Spiritual Vitality Task Group, which emerged during the 2008 strategic planning work, now meets directly with those who develop programs and services related to Catholic mission—e.g. the directors of the two centers mentioned above, Campus Ministry, and at-large representatives of students, staff, and faculty. This new group, jointly sponsored by Academic Affairs and Student Life, ensures that those who develop and provide programming have direct input into strategic goal setting and defining objectives for this core theme area. The group also assists in selecting indicators and analyzing data to determine how effectively the college has met the objectives of this core theme. As these developments suggest, the college's on-going strategic and institutional planning shows continued attention to this core theme.

The Spiritual Vitality Task Group has authored a number of important documents over the last year and a half. The Statement of Catholic Character (see Appendix B) and the affirmation of the 1909 Cornerstone Statement (see Appendix C) are the products of conversations and debates amongst the members of the Task Group. The Catholic Character statement came out of the Task Group's discussions of Catholic mission at Carroll. The Strategic Planning Committee will use the document to guide its review of the mission, vision, and values statements of the college. The Cornerstone Statement informed the Task Group's ideas of what a "space" for mission-focused activities should look like. It also informed a proposed Coordinator for Mission position. The role of the Coordinator for Mission is to stimulate and facilitate mission-related work across campus. The Coordinator will work with the advisory board to develop outcomes and measures for the Faith, Meaning, and Values core theme, manage the Cornerstone space, improve web communications, and provide representation and serve as a link between the Spiritual Vitality Task Group and the administration. The request for the Coordinator for Mission position is currently under consideration by the President. The Task Group, in dialogue with the broader Carroll community, has been diligent in their attempt over the past couple of years to improve the college's support of the Faith, Meaning, and Values strategic goal. Further detail regarding the Task Group's recent accomplishments is available in the full response to the evaluators' recommendations (see p. 13).

### **Student Engagement**

Over the past two years, Carroll College has undertaken significant initiatives related to the Student Engagement strategic goal of strengthening the student residential experience. Both the campus housing and dining programs have benefitted from the investment of new personnel, innovative programs, and facility enhancements. In campus housing, new personnel have been hired to replace existing positions in the freshmen residence, Our Lady of Guadalupe Hall, and the upperclassmen residence, Trinity Hall. Investments were made in furniture, carpeting, showers, and security systems to enhance student living in our freshmen and sophomore residences. Each of the campus housing assistant director/hall director positions were assigned

collateral responsibilities in Student Activities and Leadership — in intramurals, program board, or community service — to better connect campus housing with campus life. In our dining program, new management has introduced menu rotations with fresher ingredients, vegan and vegetarian choices at each meal, creative special events and major initiatives to promote sustainability. Campus dining has gone “trayless”—which addresses both energy savings and food waste—and introduced “lightless” dining in our summer conference program utilizing natural lighting rather than turning on artificial lights.

Carroll College has recently worked on five areas of student interest—athletics, campus ministry, service to others, internships, and outdoor leadership—to enhance Student Engagement. The addition of Men’s and Women’s Cross Country and Men’s and Women’s Track and Field as enrollment initiatives have increased the percentage of students who are involved as student-athletes. Athletic offices were also renovated during this period of time to allow related coaches to be located together. Campus Ministry added two post-graduate intern positions funded by donor interest to assist with retreats, fellowship, and formation work. One of those intern positions has evolved into a full-time, 10 month, campus minister position which is funded by donors. Improvements to both campus grottos have also been supported by donors.

To facilitate the expansion of student internship opportunities, the Career Services and Testing office has hired an internship coordinator. Not only has the college been able to increase the number of internship sites available to Carroll students but this initiative has also been able to engage faculty in discussions on student learning in internship experiences. Outdoor leadership has been another area that the college has focused on to enhance Student Engagement. The college now offers Wilderness First Response emergency rescue training to a core group of student leaders who plan outdoor backpack, camping and mountain climbing trips for students through the Carroll Adventure and Mountaineering Program.

### **Stewardship**

Our strategic goal of Stewardship refers to careful use and sustainability of our precious resources: our people, programs, facilities, technology, and our funding. In the past two years, annual budgeting, long term planning, compensation, and technology have been the focus of our efforts.

Our annual budget process, involving faculty, staff, and student representatives, along with members of the senior leadership team, has been strengthened by better data and improved financial and enrollment projections. As part of the budget process we have consistently created three-year financial plans which incorporate different enrollment scenarios and corresponding levels of available net revenue. The Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration has been working on integrating annual budget requests with the TracDat Assessment Management system to create efficiencies between budgeting and assessment. With careful budget monitoring and prudent spending the college has ended the last three fiscal years with a positive budget surplus. In fiscal year 2011, the college was able to set aside a reserve fund from the operating surplus with the intent of restoring some of the unrestricted general endowment draws taken in prior years. These surpluses contribute to the overall financial health of the college which will improve our financial ratios. The college also paid off some long-term bonds in fiscal year 2011.

These payments were made ahead of schedule which reduced the long-term debt by approximately \$273k.

Changes in our facilities over the past couple of years include significant renovations to the auditorium and laboratories in Simperman Hall, our primary academic building; new roofs on four buildings, and renovations to classroom and office spaces. During the summer of 2011 we are renovating an existing sandwich shop, constructing a new coffee shop and replacing kitchen equipment in the Campus Center. In addition, the college's Centennial Campaign initiatives contributed to enhancements of the residential experience with new exterior campus signage for buildings, renovation work on the Corette Library to introduce soft furniture and a "sandbox" digital classroom for professors and students to test new software programs, new furniture in the Admissions reception room and O'Connell Hall lobby, and a master plan that outlines campus needs for upperclassmen apartments, intramural and athletics facilities and campus chapel.

Strategic planning has become a regular and inclusive practice at the college over the last few years. In addition to major strategic planning sessions in the summers of 2009, 2010, and 2011, frequent discussions have created a broad base of interest and input while engaging many campus constituents in implementing aspects of the plans. Discussion of the college's financial realities is always an integral part of our strategic planning work. We regularly review our indicators, acceptable thresholds, and the potential financial outlook for the next three years based on our planning work to date. We recognize that our ability to address compensation, workload, program, and facility needs depends on the availability and strategic allocation of resources. Our strategic planning efforts are now even better coordinated through the use of the TracDat Assessment Management System which ensures the alignment of strategic goals, strategic and core theme objectives, indicators, and resources over the next seven years.

Care and attention to the stewardship of our resources reached a pronounced high in the summer of 2010 when the Strategic Planning Committee decided to institute a program prioritization process. The process outlined on page 7 resulted in a number of recommendations that are presently informing both short term and long term priorities in budgeting and planning. The overall result of the prioritization process will be a more informed, focused, and efficient institution.

### **Capacity Building**

The Capacity Building strategic goal focuses primarily on fundraising, enrollment, investments, and community engagement initiatives. The Centennial Campaign commenced in October of 2007 with a goal to raise \$30 million in four years. In February of 2011 the college announced the completion of the Centennial Campaign. Centennial Campaign gifts have established 11 new endowed academic positions, funded over \$6 million in new endowed student scholarships, all of the natural science labs have been updated and remodeled, and several endowments and projects have been funded to enhance Carroll's Catholic and spiritual vitality. In addition, funding was received to create a campus master plan (which will serve as a blueprint for capital projects for the next 15 to 20 years); the establishment of a teaching and learning technology center in the library; a major grant to sustain initiatives in planning, assessment, and faculty and staff training; and upgrading O'Connell Hall, a building that primarily houses administrative offices.

In addition to campaign work, the Office of Alumni Relations has coordinated three successful trips (Ireland, Italy, and Napa Valley) for alumni and friends in the past two years, planned a 2012 Alaska cruise trip and continued to engage with alumni throughout the Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain, West, and Southwest regions. The Annual Fund Department launched its inaugural student philanthropy education program activity in spring 2011 to further educate current students about campus resources, thank donors, and encourage future giving. By restructuring one position, the Public Relations Department has undertaken a process to integrate the college's marketing and communications efforts. A search is currently underway to hire a Director of Integrated Marketing.

## Response to Recommendations

The following is the response to the Commission's request for an addendum to the Fall 2011 Year One Report. The Commission requests that Carroll College address Recommendation 3 of the Fall 2010 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report.

**Recommendation 3: In full appreciation of the Catholic Identity Core Theme to Carroll College, the committee did not find evidence that the objectives of this Core Theme are well-defined or well-understood throughout the Carroll College community. The committee recommends that Carroll College make a concerted effort to clarify and to reach a common understanding of its Catholic Identity Core Theme and its objectives, and to use that understanding to develop a systematic assessment process, to establish benchmarks for acceptable measurable outcomes, and to communicate results to all constituencies in a reasonable timeframe. (Standard 3.B, 4.A, and 4.B).**

The NWCCU Peer Evaluation Committee commended Carroll College for the “significant work” accomplished in the Catholic Identity (Faith, Meaning, and Values) core theme over the past decade, from 2000 to 2010. That work included, among other initiatives, the following:

- The college engaged in ongoing collective discussions about what it means for Carroll to be Catholic.
- The college created more opportunities in both the curriculum and co-curriculum for students to learn about and practice Catholic traditions, beliefs, and values (including social justice, service, personal responsibility, and ethics).
- The Moran Forum, Hunthausen Center for Peace and Justice, and Schneller Professorship have been established in the last several years to promote dialogue, education, and service explicitly related to Catholic mission.
- The Spiritual Vitality Task Group has been created to coordinate and advocate for the myriad of activities and initiatives through which the college explicitly teaches, practices, reflects upon, and dialogues about Catholic identity.

The Evaluation Committee also offered a recommendation for how the college could enhance its performance in this core theme area. We need to create a more “systematic assessment process” and “communicate” results for the Catholic Identity core theme. We need to identify more outcome-based objectives and align them with indicators that will yield evaluative data, which will then more usefully guide our efforts to improve. We also need to improve the methods by which we share the assessment results with the community. The Peer Evaluation Report also indicated that the college should provide more resources—human and financial—to this core theme, in keeping with its centrality to our mission. The Peer Evaluation Report suggests that the college consider hiring an administrator to oversee and advocate for the activities that comprise this core theme, to ensure that it is allotted its “essential share of resources.” The resources would enable the college to expand and enhance the activities across campus that manifests our Catholic mission.

### **Response to Recommendation 3:**

In our 2010 Year Seven Report, Carroll recognized the need to improve our assessment process for this core theme by developing outcomes-based objectives and assessment tools that would help us evaluate not only students' activities and perceptions through descriptive and indirect assessments, but also students' learning and growth in those specified outcomes. Our assessments had, we acknowledged, focused too much on inputs as well as descriptive and indirect assessments, such as student participation and perspectives. This indicated our fledgling attempt to start assessing a diverse set of activities spread across both the curriculum and co-curriculum; we began by identifying existing opportunities, promoting new opportunities, and tracking participation. Now that we have better identified *where* to collect data, the Spiritual Vitality Task Group has developed, over the past several months, a new assessment framework for this core theme—one that aligns outcome-based objectives with a more useful mixture of direct and indirect assessments that will yield both evaluative and descriptive data.

The Evaluation Report acknowledges that “the kind of outcomes that are reasonable for a value-laden core theme such as this are unquestionably complicated to specify and difficult to assess.” We heartily concur with this statement; in fact, we believe that some highly desirable outcomes simply do not accommodate direct assessment. Outcomes such as the extent of collaboration with the Diocese of Helena, spiritual growth of students, and opportunities to dialogue about spirituality are important but difficult to assess. Still, we certainly intend, as we go forward, to measure a number of key outcomes through a few well-placed and varied tools. We direct you to our discussion of our Faith, Meaning, and Values core theme in Chapter One (pages 36-41), where we have replaced our previous objectives based on inputs and indicators asking for descriptive data with a set of new objectives based on outcomes and indicators that will yield a combination of description and evaluative data. These changes definitely move us towards the more systematic assessment process recommended in the Evaluation Report. This will, however, remain a work in progress, as we explore different ways to gather critical information about our students' learning and growth in this critical aspect of our Mission.

In our Year Seven Report, Carroll acknowledged the need to commit additional resources, including adding staff, to support this core theme in response to growing participation among students, especially in Campus Ministry activities, and commensurate with its centrality to our mission. In sum, “We must fund our philosophy” —a quote attributed to a Carroll faculty member in the Evaluation Report. More specifically, the Report suggested that the college seriously consider hiring a person to take responsibility for this core theme, as is the case for the other core themes.

Oversight of the work that comprises our Faith, Meaning, and Values core theme has been largely decentralized throughout the past decade. For the past several years, the Spiritual Vitality Task Group has helped to coordinate activities among the Hunthausen Center for Peace and Justice, the Sr. Annette Moran Forum, and Campus Ministry, to promote campus-wide discussions about how we understand being Catholic at Carroll, and to develop initiatives to strengthen our Catholic mission. Drawing together members from across the campus, this Task Group reflects our belief that many people and programs throughout the college play an integral role in our Catholic mission (rather than assigning that responsibility to one department or

person). However, the Spiritual Vitality Task Group has identified a number of tasks that, in accordance with the evaluators' recommendation, will require a new staff position because they involve time and expertise that the current volunteer members cannot supply. A formal proposal for this position has been submitted to the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees; the Task Group also discussed it with several Vice Presidents and the Board Chair. As of the submission of this Year One Report, the proposal is awaiting the President's approval.

Some of the primary tasks assigned to this position are described below.

- Making Carroll's history, heritage, and mission more accessible to the Carroll community, to prospective students, faculty, and staff, and to the public (e.g. through more effective web and print communications);
- Promoting understanding of Carroll's Catholic mission within and across departments and programs, among faculty, staff, and students by providing education, formation, and discussion (e.g. working with admissions on how we represent our Catholic mission to prospective students and parents; working with faculty to relate social justice and service to Catholic teachings);
- Representing the Spiritual Vitality Task Group in administrative, budget, and campus-wide planning meetings;
- Helping to formulate and maintain an assessment process that will provide us with a concrete means of knowing the extent to which we have or have not been successful in meeting our Faith, Meaning, and Values core theme objectives.

We list these tasks here because several of them address other questions or concerns raised in the Evaluation Report. One such concern is whether college constituents share, to a satisfactory extent, an understanding of "what it means for Carroll to be Catholic." Another question that was raised is how we might connect learning related to certain values, such as ethics or service, more clearly to our Catholic mission. The final task relates direction to carrying forward the assessment work described in our response to Recommendation 3 above.

Despite a quick turnaround in these reports, we've made a solid attempt to clarify our objectives and indicators for our Faith, Meaning, and Values core theme. Prior indicators were too focused on inputs and indirect in nature. The current set of indicators is more direct and focused on shared, measurable outcomes. The Spiritual Vitality Task Group is guiding these efforts and will greatly benefit from the leadership provided through the proposed Mission Coordinator position. We have made solid strides in addressing this recommendation and have set forward a strong plan for evaluating our Faith, Meaning, and Values core theme in this Year One Report.

## Date of Most Recent Review

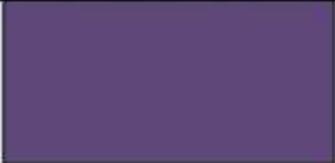
### **DATE OF MOST RECENT REVIEW OF MISSION AND CORE THEMES**

The Carroll College 2000 Self-Study concludes, “The Mission Statement has served the college well through the last 24 years of the transitional period after the Second Vatican Council, when many Catholic colleges either became secularized or reverted to an almost pre-Vatican conservatism. Carroll, however, has retained its academic excellence and its Catholic identity, and is fully in compliance with the church’s *Ex Corde Ecclesia* goals” (16). In 2000 and again in 2002, a committee of faculty and staff reviewed the language and length of the Mission Statement; they recommended no changes. While the 1978 Mission Statement was retained, the 2009 Strategic Planning Committee developed a statement of Core Values and Vision that highlighted key elements of the Mission Statement and linked them more explicitly to the contemporary context. In August of 2011, the Strategic Planning Committee once again examined the mission, values, and vision statements in light of the proposed Strategic Plan. No significant changes were recommended but a working group was proposed to look at the context, meaning, and significant activities behind the phrase “diverse learning community” in our Values Statement.

The core themes are revisited monthly by both the Self Evaluation Steering Committee and the Senior Leadership Team. Conversations over the last academic year have focused specifically on the objectives and indicators. Specific committees like the Spiritual Vitality Task Group also regularly evaluate the core theme activities, objectives, and indicators. Typically, twice a year, the core themes are the subject of an all employee community forum. At these forums, faculty and staff have the opportunity to provide input on the themes themselves, the objectives, and the indicators of achievement.



# Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations



## Introduction

The first chapter of our report reviews our mission and institutional goals. It also describes Carroll College's model of mission fulfillment, based on our three core themes—Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness; Faith, Meaning, and Values; and Student Engagement. We describe and explain the college's selected institutional dashboard indicators; we also describe and explain our core theme objectives, indicators, and thresholds, which enable us to monitor and evaluate mission fulfillment at Carroll. The chapter concludes with a review of the strengths and areas that need improvement in the college's model of mission fulfillment.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Carroll College's Mission Statement, developed by a faculty committee in 1976 and officially approved by the Board of Trustees in 1978, articulates the college's commitment to liberal learning and values education within the context of the traditions and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Mission Statement's first sentence names the main aspects of the college's identity: "Carroll College is a Catholic, diocesan, liberal arts college in the ecumenical tradition of the Second Vatican Council." As a Catholic college, it presents a curriculum in line with "the magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church" and acknowledges its "special obligation to provide for the spiritual needs of the college community." The Mission Statement also reflects the college's diocesan identity, in dedicating its "spiritual, academic, and social resources" to serving the diocesan community as well as the "citizens of Montana, its home, and the worldwide human family." As a liberal arts college, Carroll provides for students "the means for their full realization of a dual goal of vocation and enlightenment." More distinctively, the Mission Statement is deeply informed by Father Bernard Lonergan's understanding of intellectual development and the Second Vatican Council's program of *aggiornamento*. Thus, it affirms "freedom of inquiry in the process of investigating, understanding, critically reflecting upon, and finally judging reality and truth in all fields of human knowledge." It likewise asserts its "policy of open participation by members of all religious faiths and all persons of good will in the total academic and spiritual experience of the college community." The Carroll College Mission statement is available on the web at: <http://www.carroll.edu/about/mission.cc>.

### The Carroll College Mission Statement

Carroll College is a Catholic, diocesan, liberal arts college in the ecumenical tradition of the Second Vatican Council. As a liberal arts school, Carroll College acknowledges the practical role of preparing its students for a career, but it also affirms the traditional role of providing for the expansion of the intellectual, imaginative, and social awareness of its students. It is dedicated to providing for its students the means for their full realization of a dual goal of vocation and enlightenment. Thus, while providing substantial professional and pre-professional programs, the College encourages and expects all students to participate in a broad spectrum of academic disciplines.

As an academic community, Carroll College affirms its commitment to the principle of freedom of inquiry in the process of investigating, understanding, critically reflecting upon, and finally judging reality and truth in all fields of human knowledge. As value-oriented, Carroll College is committed to and deeply involved in the further dimension of free deliberation and decision making regarding values and personal commitment. Each student at Carroll, through personal and institutional means, is exposed to value systems with which one can readily identify, including secular values such as the worth of work and the use of the intellect, humanistic values centering on the uniqueness and dignity of the person, and religious and moral values concerned with one's relationship to God, self, and others.

As a Catholic college, Carroll is obligated to treat judgments concerning ultimate reality and decisions concerning ultimate value at both an academic and a pastoral level. This obligation involves the College's relationship to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, defined as "the perennial, authentic, and infallible teaching office committed to the Apostles by Christ and now possessed and exercised by their legitimate successors, the college of bishops in union with the pope." Carroll College is committed to present faithfully within its curriculum the magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church. At the same time, it acknowledges the special role of the theologian, who-although not a part of the authoritative teaching body of the Church-makes available to the Magisterium his or her scientific competence, while acting as a mediator between religion and culture by carrying on an academic dialogue with philosophy, science, the liberal arts, the believing community, and secular society.

As a college founded by and related to the Diocese of Helena, Carroll has a special obligation to provide for the spiritual needs of the college community. At the same time, the resources of the College's Theology Department, and campus ministry organization are available for the special religious needs of the diocesan community as a whole. Moreover, Carroll College rededicates its spiritual, academic, and social resources to the service of the citizens of Montana, its home, and to the worldwide human family through continuing efforts to guarantee to individuals, to groups, and especially to minorities the right to life, to personal and social dignity, and to equality of opportunity in all aspects of human activity.

In the ecumenical tradition of the Second Vatican Council, Carroll College is committed to a policy of open participation by members of all religious faiths and all persons of good will in the total academic and spiritual experience of the college community. While standing fast by the teaching of the Catholic Church, and avoiding a false conciliatory approach foreign to the true spirit of ecumenism, Carroll College welcomes in love and respect the full participation of other Christians and non-Christians in an ecumenical dialogue and in a truly humble and charitable joint venture in the common search for the Ultimate Truth and the Ultimate Good which is the final goal of all education.

Officially adopted by the Carroll College Board of Trustees May 26, 1978

#### Core Values

**LEARNING** - we are committed to promoting lifelong learning through intellectual, professional, ethical, and spiritual development.

**COMMUNITY** - we are committed to investing in and nurturing all with caring and compassion.

**SERVICE** - we are committed to pursuing justice and dignity through collaborative and individual efforts.

**INTEGRITY** - we are committed to truth excellence, courage, and honor.

**FAITH** - we are committed to honoring Catholic principles, embracing diverse expressions of spirituality, and acting in the world through the lens of faith.

#### Vision Statement

As a Catholic college that purposefully integrates liberal arts, professional studies and civic engagement, Carroll College will excel as a diverse learning community with dynamic and distinguished programs nurturing leaders who are inspired by faith and engaged in service.

## **Six Goals for Carroll Graduates**

The Six Goals for Carroll Graduates and their supporting objectives were approved by the Faculty Assembly in 1996 as the basis for assessing student learning. The Mission Statement and *Ex Corde Ecclesia* served as the basis for these goals:

The Graduate

- recognizes that the search for and sharing of the Ultimate Truths and the Ultimate Good is the primary goal of the Catholic liberal arts education.
- possesses the aesthetic, scientific, and religious insights required to solve normative and factual problems.
- demonstrates the full range of skills necessary for effective communication.
- appreciates the interrelationships among branches of knowledge.
- embraces a strong sense of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health.
- possesses the skills and attitudes necessary to pursue a vocation that is self-fulfilling and community enhancing.

These goals name the kinds of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would show a student's success in achieving the Catholic, liberal arts education described in the Mission Statement. Each aspect of the college—academic programs, residential life and co-curricular programs, Campus Ministry, etc.—plays a significant role in facilitating all six goals for Carroll students as learning happens both in and out of the classroom.

## **Statement of Institutional Goals**

The college has recently undergone a number of planning processes culminating in a significant update to the 2002 Strategic Plan and a number of new and exciting initiatives. To examine how and where the college has changed its strategic priorities over the last ten years, a copy of the 2002 Strategic Plan and a copy of the revised strategic plan, *Vision 2017* are available on the web at: <http://www.carroll.edu/forms/about/strategicplan.pdf>. A single page of strategic highlights is available in Appendix D.

The revised plan, *Vision 2017* sets in motion the strategic goals, objectives, and tasks for the next seven years. It articulates five major goals for the college, each of which makes a vital contribution to the achievement of our mission as a Catholic, diocesan, liberal arts college.

### **Goal One: *Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness*: Provide an increasingly high quality and distinctive educational experience for all students**

Academic excellence and distinctiveness throughout our curriculum is essential to the dual goal of educating students for vocation and enlightenment as well as for service. As careers and the world at large become more complex and interconnected, rigor, relevance, and innovation in our academic programs is more critical than ever. Examples of objectives under this goal include the creation of a Writing Center, revisions to the Core Curriculum that focus on essential student learning outcomes, construction of a teaching and learning center in the existing library, and development of on-line or hybrid courses.

**Goal Two: *Faith, Meaning, and Values*: Communicate and strengthen the college’s Catholic Identity**

Catholic identity emerges through manifold aspects of the Carroll experience—through our curriculum, campus ministry events and peer ministers, religious ritual and celebration, speakers and programs, our clerical and lay faculty and staff, and outreach and service activities. Each of these contributes to our mission by presenting Catholic teaching, fostering inquiry and ethical deliberation, providing opportunities for spiritual formation, and promoting service within the diocese and beyond. Examples of objectives include a funding and hiring a Coordinator of Mission and construction of a college chapel.

**Goal 3: *Student Engagement*: Increase intentional out of class learning opportunities for students to enhance their education**

Co-curricular learning and living experiences enrich and reinforce academic learning as well as foster social, physical, and spiritual development. Living and learning in community and interacting with people holding diverse perspectives also teach the values of work, respect, and service, which are clearly central to Carroll’s mission. Examples of objectives under this goal include the construction of a Student Success Center, the development of a leadership certificate program, and the design of an experiential learning model which establishes the expectation that students enhance their learning through activities such as research, internship, and education abroad opportunities.

**Goal 4: *Stewardship*: Develop a financial profile that enables the college to secure a resource base adequate to meet the ongoing operational and capital needs of the institution and meet institutional strategic objectives**

Each aspect of the mission—curricular, co-curricular, outreach—depends upon human, financial, technical, and physical resources. The word “stewardship” in this goal directs the college to attain and use these resources through careful planning and budgeting, in keeping with the college’s commitment to high quality programs and the well being of all members of the community. Objectives under this goal include curricular and co-curricular programs and services designed to raise environmental awareness and practice and the construction of a fitness/recreation center.

**Goal 5: *Capacity Building*: Increase resources necessary to strengthen the future of the college through enrollment, investment, and a comprehensive campaign**

In order to achieve the mission of the college as manifested through some of the new initiatives and growth strategies that are a part of *Vision 2017*, the college seeks enrollment growth through the matriculation of new students and improved retention of current students, accountability for the quality of our graduates as confirmed by graduate outcomes and alumni giving, and a larger endowment to support new initiatives. Examples of enhancements under this goal include an integrated marketing plan, an enrollment between 1,600 and 1,800 students, and significantly improved retention rates. Specific comprehensive campaign goals are currently under development.

The *Vision 2017* plan, including the objectives, tasks, timelines, and indicators of achievement is available in Appendix D. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees during their October 2011 meeting. Official Board approval of *Vision 2017* is deferred until the new President has an opportunity to review, contribute, and endorse the document. In summary, the goals of *Vision 2017* materialized through a two-year collaborative strategic planning process. This new seven year plan has the potential to be quite transformational. The following is a summary of the major initiatives that best reflect and describe the work of the college in implementing the strategic plan.

- Assuming a new level of accountability for the quality of our graduates
- Adopting state-of-the-art teaching and learning designs
- Building an environment that streamlines learning support services
- Refocusing co-curricular programs to support essential student learning outcomes
- Adding and investing in existing mission-driven and market-savvy programs

The Strategic Planning Committee will continue to work throughout 2011-2012 to refine the objectives, identify indicators and thresholds of acceptable performance, establish seven-year budget projections, and implement assessment processes to evaluate performance.

### **Interpretation of Mission Fulfillment**

Carroll College's faculty, staff, and administration are committed to educating men and women who will, upon graduation, value the contributions of reason and faith to the search for truth, demonstrate the full range of effective communication skills, appreciate the interrelationships among branches of knowledge, and possess the insights, skills, and attitudes necessary to pursue a vocation that is self-fulfilling and community enhancing. What constitutes fulfillment of the college's mission? How can the college effectively demonstrate and communicate the extent to which we fulfill various aspects of our mission to students and all our other constituencies? These questions are at the forefront of recent discussions and activities at the college.

The college's definition of mission fulfillment is based upon our demonstrating acceptable levels of performance on a group of key indicators; these are derived from the strategic goals: Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness; Faith, Meaning and Values; and Student Engagement (see Table 1 below). Carroll Strategic Goal Four—Stewardship—and Goal Five—Capacity Building—both play important supporting roles in achieving mission fulfillment but for the purposes of this self-evaluation they are more appropriately addressed in Standard Two. Our indicators reflect our more general role in higher education as well as our distinctive mission as a Catholic diocesan college.

Our definition of mission fulfillment and the selection of key indicators emerged through discussions involving the Self Evaluation Steering Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the Senior Leadership Team. Drawing from a longer list of indicators for each of our core themes, we promoted a select group of indicators to create a “dashboard” for tracking, evaluating, and discussing overall institutional performance. We have highlighted these particular indicators on the basis of their wide significance for the institution, available data, and best practices. (The indicators selected for this role do not diminish the importance of the other core theme indicators). Some of these indicators have informed decisions at Carroll for many

years while others are in the early stages of development; for some of the latter, we are in the process of establishing a data collection process and determining a threshold for acceptable performance. The process for selecting indicators and thresholds has been collaborative with input from key constituents. The monitoring and assessment of our dashboard indicators is documented in reviews for academic programs and administrative units, enrollment plans, and the campus master plan.

*Table 1 Strategic Goals/Core Themes and Indicators of Achievement*

STRATEGIC GOALS/ CORE THEMES	INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT
Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness	Student graduation and retention rates
	Rates of student satisfaction with major academic areas, academic support services, and institutional resources (NSSE, FSSE, SSI, ASQ)
	Alumni satisfaction
	Achievement of student learning outcomes
Faith, Meaning, and Values	Participation rates in Catholic and faith-based activities
	Achievement of Catholic and faith-based student learning outcomes
Student Engagement	Rates of student engagement in co-curricular activities(NSSE, FSSE)
	Health and wellness decisions
	Achievement of student leadership and service learning outcomes

The first of the strategic goals—Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness—is at the foundation of Carroll College’s mission. This aspect of Carroll’s mission is sufficiently fulfilled if the college meets its thresholds for the following key indicators: retention/graduation rates, student engagement/satisfaction, alumni engagement/satisfaction, and student learning outcomes.

- Student graduation and retention rates are common indicators used by colleges and universities to show the extent to which programs enable students to persist and to graduate. Graduation rates are important indicators for Carroll because the college provides students with four-year graduation plans to facilitate their graduation in four years. Carroll uses our IPEDS comparison group to set its threshold of acceptable performance for these two indicators. Carroll’s 2009 (2005 cohort) 4-year graduate rate is 38% compared to the IPEDS comparison group of 61%; the 6-year rate is 58% compared to 72% (2003 cohort). Carroll’s threshold for this indicator is to be within five percentage points of the comparison group for each year. At Carroll, student retention is a critical tool for assessing the level to which the college fosters and supports students’ learning; it reflects how much the campus provides what students expect, need, and want, how valued students feel on campus, how much they are learning from their experiences. Retention itself is not the primary goal, but it is one important indicator that the college is meeting its goal of student satisfaction and success. When these conditions are met, students find a way to stay in school, despite external financial and personal pressures. Carroll’s first-year fall-to-fall cohort retention rate of 81% is within an acceptable comparison range of 82%. However, sophomore to

junior retention is a concern at just under 57%, which is significantly lower than the IPEDS comparison average of 73%. Carroll's threshold for retention is to be within five percentage points of the IPEDS comparison group.

- Rates of student satisfaction with major academic areas, academic support services, and institutional resources are collected, compared, and benchmarked through nationally normed surveys such as NSSE, FSSE, SSI, and ASQ. The college also uses in-house surveys of satisfaction. Carroll's acceptable threshold for performance on this indicator is to score above the Carnegie Classification comparison group for all five NSSE/FSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment.

- Alumni satisfaction and giving are also important indicators of Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness. When alumni and friends give to Carroll, they help the college fulfill its commitments to academic excellence, research, community service, and keeping a Carroll College education affordable. An *Advancing Small College Benchmarking Survey* reports that on-average 21 percent of alumni make annual gifts. Carroll's percentage is 28 percent. In addition to alumni giving rates we are interested in general alumni satisfaction, graduate school, and job placement rates. In 2010 we piloted an alumni survey using a third party vendor, Harris Connect. The data we collected from the pilot survey and the improved alumni contact information will serve as the basis for the next alumni survey. We intend to survey alumni 1-year, 5-years, and 10-years after graduation. In addition to the alumni surveys, over the past ten years, the Office of Institutional Advancement has asked graduating seniors about their overall Carroll experience; 82% said that their expectations had been met, surpassed, or more. Our threshold for acceptable performance on this indicator is for 85% of students to report that their expectations were met or exceeded.

- Student learning outcomes are tracked and assessed in both academic and co-curricular programs, through a variety of class-specific and program-based direct and indirect assessment tools. In regular academic and administrative program reviews, Carroll faculty and staff document processes and inputs as well as student learning results, which are gathered and assessed through direct and indirect, quantitative and qualitative measures. At this point, the college has no single aggregated threshold of acceptable performance for this indicator; rather, this indicator is comprised of a variety of assessments whose adequacy is determined at the department or program level. Academic Affairs asks Program Directors and Department Chairs to use professional, historical, and best practice data to set thresholds for each of their program-level student learning outcomes. Departments are asked to reflect on their students' performance in their regular program reviews. All departments are asked to align their programs and assessments with the Six Goals for the Carroll Graduates, but the college has yet to develop more comprehensive, direct assessments of these overarching student learning outcomes. One non-negotiable threshold relating to this broad indicator concerns our assessment processes: the college defines acceptable performance as 100% of academic and administrative programs systematically collecting and using assessment data to make program and service improvements.

The second of the strategic goals—Faith, Meaning, and Values—is at the foundation of Carroll College’s mission. This aspect of Carroll’s mission is sufficiently fulfilled if we meet our thresholds for the following key indicators: achievement of Catholic and faith-based student learning outcomes and participation rates in Catholic and faith-based activities.

- Regarding the achievement of Catholic and faith-based curricular and co-curricular student learning outcomes, the Theology and Philosophy programs assess student learning outcomes within the four courses required as part of the Core Curriculum. Academic departments address Catholic and faith-based learning outcomes in program review and Student Life departments are currently folding the assessment of these outcomes into their activities. At present, these have not been drawn together into any aggregate assessment for this indicator. The threshold of acceptable performance regarding the achievement of Catholic and faith-based learning outcomes is the establishment and institutional adoption of clearly articulated learning outcomes and assessment measures and procedures in place as defined in the curriculum and co-curriculum.

- We recognize that participation rates in Catholic and faith-based activities rely primarily on tracking inputs and indirect measures of student learning. This is the indicator for which we have data; this is an indicator that we also believe, after debate, demonstrates fulfillment within this aspect of our mission—that is, to ensure that Catholic and faith-based traditions have a visible and vital presence on this campus; that all—Catholic and non-Catholic alike—are invited to participate, dialogue, explore and spend time together partaking in Catholic and other faith-based activities. While the tracking of opportunities and participation provides a useful starting point, the indicators for this area of mission should include more direct and qualitative data that answers questions such as the following: What did students learn about faith from the experience? Do we make a difference in the faith life of students? Carroll’s threshold of acceptable performance is based on our past yearly numbers for participation in activities such as Mass, Search, and Retreats; we seek a modest but steady increase in opportunities and participation that include the non-Catholic as well as Catholic members of our community.

The third of the strategic goals—Student Engagement—is also at the foundation of achieving our dual mission of vocation and enlightenment. Student Life plays a major role in the overall experience of students at Carroll College by supporting activities that actively engage students outside of the classroom, by creating an environment that promotes health and wellness, and by offering student leadership and service opportunities. Mission fulfillment is determined by benchmarking the performance of Carroll to either national or local benchmarks in each of these key areas—student engagement, health and wellness, and leadership and service.

- Student engagement data is collected, compared, and benchmarked through NSSE, which provides regular and nationally normed data regarding how students perceive the quality of their college experience. Carroll’s threshold for acceptable performance on this indicator is to score at or above the Carnegie Classification comparison group for all five Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice. Notably, the 2009 NSSE scores placed Carroll in the top 10% nationally on offering Enriching Educational Experiences. We are planning to administer the NSSE and FSSE in the spring of 2012, offering an additional trend line for peer comparison.

- Health and wellness decisions are the focus of data collected annually from first-year students on the AlcoholEdu for College on-line alcohol awareness course. Further, the college administers the Core Alcohol and Other Drug Survey in alternating years to a cross-section of students who are seniors, juniors, sophomores and first-year students. Both instruments are benchmarked against national data norms and provide the college with comparison data for Carroll students on student use of alcohol and other drugs, risky behaviors, decisions regarding health and wellness, and knowledge about Blood Alcohol Content levels. Carroll’s threshold for acceptable performance on these indicators is for students’ scores to show that fewer participate in two-thirds of the risky behaviors measured by the survey.
- Student learning outcomes data that assesses student leadership and service learning experiences is collected, compared, and benchmarked through NSSE and through student written assessments of their curricular and co-curricular leadership and service projects and experiences. Some of these outcomes are in place, others are still under development. Student Life is currently designing the student learning outcomes assessments that will be an integral part of the leadership curriculum. The college’s threshold for acceptable performance on these indicators is to show acceptable student performance on the prescribed leadership and service student learning outcomes.

### **CORE THEMES**

Carroll College identified three core themes—Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness; Faith Meaning, and Values; and Student Engagement—based on the college’s mission statement and *Vision 2017*, the proposed Strategic Plan of Carroll. These three themes represent the major, interdependent areas through which we realize our mission as a Catholic, Liberal Arts College. Each theme overlaps and integrates with the other themes. Two of the three core themes have a Vice President who has primary oversight of the area.

In the following section, we describe our core themes and their objectives, explain the indicators that we have selected to assess achievement, and identify a threshold indicating what level of achievement is “good enough.” Satisfactory achievement of each core theme depends upon meeting the threshold of acceptable performance for each of the objectives.



# Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness

## Core Theme



Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness at Carroll College is manifested in the development and enhancement of academic programs and services that support a high quality, unique, and engaged learning community. Discipline-specific and liberal arts core (general education) learning outcomes are fundamental to the attainment of the core theme and integral in helping Carroll graduates realize “the dual goal of vocation and enlightenment.” Knowledge and skills gained through students’ opportunities to apply learning outside of the classroom also support a high quality, engaged learning community. Graduating and graduated students who seek and obtain meaningful employment or who successfully continue their formal education characterize academic excellence at Carroll. Faculty and staff who are engaged in their disciplines, remain active in their scholarship and service further characterize what it takes for the college to achieve academic excellence and distinctiveness.

### **Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness Objectives**

The objectives of this core theme are to demonstrate the achievement of student learning outcomes that foster the dual goal of vocation and enlightenment as stated in the Carroll mission. Making the Core learning objectives such an integral part of the Carroll experiences promises at least three important results. First, it distinguishes the college, as well as our students from the quality of the class they admit rather than the quality of the students they graduate. Second, it shifts the focus from teaching to student learning. And third, it provides evidence that validates our value proposition and allows us to respond to the increasing demand that higher education be accountable for and measured by the results it achieves. The objectives also reflect the college’s desire to support experiential learning opportunities for students, to support faculty and staff who are actively engaged in teaching, scholarship, and learning, and to ensure that students achieve their vocational or post-baccalaureate aspirations whether service, career, or graduate education. Achievement of the Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness core theme focuses on the need for Carroll College to achieve the following five objectives:

1. Students will demonstrate depth of learning through being proficient in the content and methods of his/her discipline.
2. Students will demonstrate breadth of learning in the liberal arts.
3. Students will enhance knowledge and skills through experiential learning.
4. Graduates will attain satisfying vocations.
5. Faculty and staff will be actively engaged in teaching, scholarship, and service.

### **Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness Indicators of Achievement (AE&D)**

#### Objective AE&D- 1

- Students will demonstrate depth of learning through being proficient in the content and methods of his/her discipline.

#### Indicators for AE&D-1

- Percentage of academic programs achieving stated program-level student learning outcomes
- Completion of capstone projects/portfolios
- Praxis and other discipline-specific pass rates and scores, field test scores, or similar summative measures of learning

- Student persistence/retention rates
- Student graduation rates
- Aggregate scores on Student Evaluations of Teaching
- Employer feedback and alumni perceptions of knowledge and skills as measured on employer and alumni surveys
- Surveys (NSSE, SSI)

Rationale for Indicators: AE&D-1

Achievement of this objective requires particular attention to outcomes assessment. There are currently five methods for gathering information about learning outcomes: students surveys, using nationally tested questionnaires that include items related to academic challenge, interaction with faculty, and enhancement of intellectual and practical skills; assessment reports by academic programs regarding discipline specific outcomes; summative statistics of learning outcomes gathered through capstone courses; data from end of program tests and exams including the NCLEX and ETS Psychology Exam; and alumni and employer surveys that include items about the benefits and relevance of a Carroll education five and ten years beyond graduation. The other indicators such as retention and graduation rates are indirect measures of the objective.

- The percentage of academic programs achieving stated program-level student learning outcomes is the most important evidence of the achievement of this objective. The college has made student assessment of learning at the program-level an institutional priority. We formed the Program Review and Assessment Committee to assist academic and non-academic programs with the development of direct, measurable indicators of college-wide and program-specific learning outcomes. Programs are required to submit, as part of their program review, reports on the assessment of student learning which includes curriculum maps, articulated learning outcomes, samples of student work, and responses to a set of institutional metrics used for program development. The college has also implemented a universal assessment management system called TracDat. The software program provides a more comprehensive institutional and systematic approach to track student achievement of program-level learning outcomes. Further rationale regarding the selection of student learning outcomes as an indicator of academic excellence and distinctiveness is available on p. 24. The threshold for acceptable performance on this indicator is to show acceptable student performance on the prescribed student learning outcomes.
- Nearly all academic majors include a course or project taken in the final year that constitutes a capstone experience through which students are expected to draw on skills and knowledge acquired from different areas within the discipline and apply them to a new question or problem. Programs often use evaluations of capstone projects in their assessments of student learning outcomes. Student achievement of the stated capstone learning outcomes within all academic majors is the threshold for acceptable performance on this indicator.
- Specific licensures and certification examinations are tracked and analyzed at the department level. For example, 97% of Carroll nursing students pass the NCLEX the first time; Psychology students' average scores 2.5 percentage points above the national average on the Major Field Test for the past four years. Individual academic departments set an acceptable level of performance for all such exams. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness intends to build a

licensure and certification examination repository to improve the institution's ability to report and analyze the data.

- The selection of graduation and retention rates is another assessable and meaningful indirect indicator of achievement. Our determination of what constitutes "good enough" performance is explained in the previous Mission Fulfillment section (see p. 22). Retention and enrollment numbers and trends constitute a critical indicator for the college because of the dominant role they play in our financial resources picture.
- Student Evaluations of Teaching, while providing only indirect assessments of educational effectiveness, are meaningful indicators because they provide timely, course-specific perceptions of academic quality. Course evaluations at Carroll indicate that 85% of students are satisfied with their courses in any given semester. An acceptable threshold would be to maintain a minimum satisfaction rate of 80%.
- A re-design of the alumni survey and improved opportunities to collect data regarding the relationship between students' career knowledge and skills is important to do before establishing a threshold for either alumni or employer perceptions of knowledge and skills as measured on employer and alumni surveys indicator. Some departments, such as Nursing, regularly collect feedback from employers regarding graduates job performance. Using advisory boards, we are currently looking at ways of formalizing this process using on-line employer and internship supervisor feedback templates.
- Nationally-normed surveys like the NSSE, FSSE, and SSI are important indirect indicators of because they allow us to compare data concerning our academic excellence and distinctiveness objectives with peer institutions. We provided our rationale and acceptable performance thresholds for national Student Satisfaction and Engagement data in the previous Mission Fulfillment section (see p. 24). For example, our 2009 NSSE report shows 94% of first year students are satisfied with their overall educational experience at Carroll; 82% of seniors would choose this school again if they could start their college career over. The peer comparison averages are 95% and 84%. Carroll's threshold for acceptable performance is to exceed peer comparisons in all five Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice.

#### Objective AE&D-2

- Students will demonstrate breadth of learning in the liberal arts.

#### Indicators for AE&D-2

- Mean scores on assignments identified as emphasizing the Core Curriculum student learning objectives as evaluated using rubrics: Demonstrate understanding of the diversity of the contemporary world; Demonstrate aesthetic, scientific, quantitative, ethical, and religious insights; Demonstrate a full range of communication skills; Demonstrate understanding of the interrelationships among branches of knowledge
- Achievement of stated student learning outcomes and exit competencies in the Foundations courses which include LAS 101 (Alpha Seminar), TH 101 (Theological Foundations), ENWR 102 (College Composition), and CO 101 (Basic Communication)

#### Rationale for Indicator: AE&D-2

The Carroll community is committed to our identity as a liberal arts college. The Carroll College Core Curriculum (the Core) is the cornerstone of our liberal education. The Core Curriculum outcomes were developed in 2003 through a lengthy process that involved broad faculty

participation. The Core reflects the academic objectives for all students that are articulated in the Six Goals for Carroll Graduate and the Carroll Mission Statement: preparing students to understand the diversity of the contemporary world; helping them to acquire aesthetic, scientific, quantitative, ethical and religious insights; aiding them in developing a full range of communication skills; and helping them to appreciate the interrelationships amongst the branches of knowledge. The two indicators selected for this objective are both direct measures of student learning.

- The achievement of Core Curriculum student learning outcomes whether at the institutional level or the course level are evidence of the achievement of this objective. At a broad institution-level, faculty members across a range of disciplines use common rubrics to assess student work samples. In order to determine how well the Core learning outcomes are met, a volunteer group of faculty score the student work samples using common rubrics. Results of the assessments will be discussed amongst faculty and will result in curricular improvements. A minimum threshold is the completion of a full assessment cycle using the rubrics for each of the Core learning outcomes. The Core objectives and their related outcomes are now undergoing a thorough review by the Essential Learning Outcomes Task Group, a subcommittee of the Strategic Planning Committee. The task group intends to submit a revised, reinvigorated set of essential Core learning outcomes to the community for consideration by 2013.
- At the course-level, instructors of Foundations classes submit the results of their assessments annually into the TracDat Assessment Management System. All students are required to take these Foundations courses thus they serve an important role in assessing students' baseline knowledge and skills of the liberal arts. Student achievement of the Foundations course-level learning outcomes is the threshold necessary for acceptable performance on this indicator.

#### Objective AE&D- 3

- Student will enhance knowledge and skills through experiential learning.

#### Indicators for AE&D-3

- Percentage of students who participate in co-curricular activities involving “direct” learning experiences. This includes but is not limited to internships, student teaching, clinical experiences, service learning, research, creative performance, and education abroad
- Student achievement of the stated learning outcomes for their particular experiential learning experience
- Number of service learning courses and curricular/co-curricular service trips

#### Rationale for Indicator: AE&D-3

Beyond the walls of the physical classroom, the curriculum is replete with opportunities for students to engage in education abroad, internship, practicum, service learning, and performance opportunities that benefit themselves and the larger community. At Carroll, we define experiential learning as experiences that integrate the curricular with the co-curricular. In order to assess achievement of this objective, we will use student participation levels in various courses and activities that involve “direct” learning experiences and data gathered through pre-post tests, evaluations, and written assignments that address the quality, effectiveness, and gains

in knowledge and skills from these experiences. The indicators selected for this objective are direct and indirect.

- Student participation in scholarship and creative activities, education abroad, undergraduate research, and other experiential learning opportunities are important to achieving this objective. All of these examples of creative and diverse learning experiences have positive effects on recruitment and retention, create a sense of college identity and pride (for students, faculty and alumni), foster life-long learning, and provide opportunities to interact with new groups and cultures. Percentage of student participants is a significant indicator of this objective. According to the 2009 NSSE results, Carroll currently underperforms compared to peers on the percentage of students completing internships, education abroad, and independent research. An acceptable level of performance on this indicator is performance at or above the comparison mean. More information also needs to be gathered about these student experiences in order to monitor and evaluate them effectively.
- Growth in the number of these experiential learning offerings and growth in the percentage of students participating are both significant, but they are not direct measures of students learning. Directors of these areas are currently designing better evaluations of these programs which include opportunities for students to demonstrate learning. Once evaluations with measurable outcomes are in place, accomplishment of these outcomes for each experiential opportunity will represent achievement of the indicator.
- Regarding participation in service activities, Carroll's threshold of acceptable performance is based on the number of service-learning courses and curricular/co-curricular service trips. At present, we are several points below our NSSE comparison institutions on percentage of students participating in service learning and community service opportunities; the threshold of acceptable performance is to increase our participation rates so that they are above those of our Carnegie Classification comparison group.

#### Objective AE&D- 4

- Graduates will attain satisfying vocations

#### Indicators for AE&D-4

- Percentage of students who have obtained jobs, created employment by opening their own businesses, pursued graduate programs, or other continuing education opportunities as indicated on senior and alumni surveys
- Responses on senior and alumni surveys addressing professional success and preparedness
- Percentage of students who pursue service experiences like the Peace Corps, Teach for America, and AmeriCorps as indicated on senior and alumni surveys

#### Rationale for Indicator: AE&D-4

This objective aims to capture the preparedness, satisfaction, and success of Carroll students in the professional world and in continuing education. Given that we must capture the whereabouts of alumni to determine success in achieving the objective, we rely primarily on self-report career data gathered from alumni surveys. Using the senior exit survey, we collect the rates of application to, admittance to, and attendance in graduate programs to determine our alumni success in continuing education programs. In some instances we're able to verify student career

or graduate school status either through the National Clearinghouse or through employer surveys of graduates.

- Data supporting that students have achieved their career or continuing education aspirations is important to the realization of this objective. The Office of Institutional Advancement administers an annual senior survey to assess, in part, the college's success in meeting students' needs and to improve institutional services. This survey has been given with slight modifications for the past ten years. The Senior Survey of 2010 measured students' satisfaction with various aspects of their college experience as well as employment interests. Of 177 respondents, 30% had secured employment or were accepted into a graduate program beginning fall 2010. Of these graduates who already secured employment, 90% reported that they were working in the field in which they majored. Over 50% of the respondents reported that they were still actively searching for a position. An acceptable level of performance is to have 80% of graduates attending graduate school or employed as of the following fall; implementing a more thorough alumni survey is a prerequisite to getting more complete and reliable data on our graduates' placements.
- Senior and alumni survey questions about career success and preparedness, while indirect, are important in helping us evaluate the effectiveness of our career and graduate school preparedness efforts. The Offices of Advancement, Career Services, and Institutional Effectiveness are working on survey questions that better address this objective. The commencement of a redesigned alumni survey is the first step to achieving the objective. Step two is the systematic review of the data and the establishment of appropriate benchmarks.
- Just as we value students' perceptions of career success and preparedness, we also value their participation in post-graduation service experiences. This is another indicator that is under development. To date, we have no complete repository of student service experiences after graduation. Most of our current data is anecdotal. Like the indicator of career success and preparedness, the re-design of the alumni survey instrument is the first step to helping us achieve this objective.

#### Objective AE&D-5

- Faculty and staff will be actively engaged in teaching, scholarship, and service.

#### Indicators for AE&D-5

- Faculty and staff qualifications (including percentage of faculty with terminal degrees and professional experience)
- Completion of annual staff performance appraisals
- Percentage of faculty engaged in scholarship and service including student-faculty research (NSSE and Faculty Accomplishments Brochure)
- Aggregate scores on Student Evaluations of Teaching
- Percentage of faculty and staff participating in professional development each year (training, workshops, conferences, teaching groups)

#### Rationale for Indicators: AE&D-5

An engaged faculty and staff is critical to the achievement of this objective. Terminal degrees demonstrate faculty qualifications, engagement in professional development and research demonstrate learning, and student evaluations and staff appraisals of performance demonstrate

effectiveness, signifying what works well and what needs improvement. The indicators for this objective are mostly inputs and processes.

- Carroll College employs appropriately qualified faculty and staff to achieve its educational objectives. Most tenured faculty members (80%) have terminal degrees in their academic discipline. Maintaining this percentage of terminal degrees is the minimal threshold to achieve this indicator.
- All staff positions have job descriptions that state criteria and minimum qualifications. Administrators and staff are evaluated annually through a performance appraisal process. Annual completion of staff evaluations is the minimum threshold. As administrator and staff evaluations are standardized, there will be more opportunities to summarize staff performance data in aggregate form.
- Carroll values faculty accomplishments in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. While assisting their students and offering a broad array of classes, Carroll's faculty also publish in a wide variety of disciplines, present at academic conferences and seminars, consult in the private sector, and provide training and expertise to a number of different external organizations. Faculty not only contribute to their respective academic fields, but they also further the college's mission by working to uphold their commitment to "the principle of freedom of inquiry in the process of investigating, understanding, critically reflecting upon, and finally judging reality and truth in all fields of human knowledge . . ." as defined by our Mission Statement. The annual Faculty Accomplishments brochure provides evidence of the percentage of faculty who focus on publications, grants, awards, and presentations within a calendar year. Increasing the percentage of faculty whose work is profiled in the brochure is important to achieving this objective. Another fundamental component of scholarship and service is student-faculty research, which allows students to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply their knowledge to real-life experiences via applied research projects. According to the 2009 NSSE, Carroll ranks below its peers on student-faculty research opportunities. The minimum threshold is 25% of NSSE respondents participate in faculty-staff research at some point during their time at Carroll.
- Student Evaluations of Teaching, while providing only indirect assessments of educational effectiveness, are meaningful indicators because they provide timely, course-specific perceptions of academic quality. Course evaluations at Carroll indicate that 85% of students are satisfied with their courses in any given semester. An acceptable threshold is to maintain a minimum satisfaction rate of 80%.
- The quality and quantity of faculty and staff professional development opportunities support effective teaching, scholarship, and career growth. The availability of faculty and staff development and training funds affirms the college's belief that academic excellence and distinctiveness depends on ongoing faculty and staff scholarship and training; in addition, faculty development provides a model for students' development. The number of faculty and staff participating and the amount of funding available for professional development activities are indicators of intellectual vitality and ongoing scholarship. A challenged and engaged community of faculty, staff, and students both demonstrate and foster higher levels of academic activity and higher satisfaction. College support for professional development for faculty and staff vacillated between \$29,600 and \$40,000 over the past ten years. Faculty and staff requests have exceeded the allotted amount in the last three years. An acceptable threshold of professional development funds is an increase in the amount of funds available to fund over 50 requests annually.

## **Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness Summary**

The objectives of our Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness core theme ask that students demonstrate depth of learning in their discipline, breadth of learning in the liberal arts, and knowledge and skills through experiential learning. Academic excellence is also achieved if graduates attain satisfying vocations and if faculty and staff remain actively engaged in teaching, scholarship, and service. Examples of the indicators we use to monitor the objectives include graduation rates, annual retention rates, placement and graduate school acceptance rates, and licensure and certification pass rates. Student perceptions of the quality of instruction and academic program (surveys, evaluation forms, NSSE, SSI) are additional indicators. Student achievements of course-level, Core Curriculum, and program-level student learning outcomes are the most important direct indicators of the quality and distinctiveness of our academic program.



# Faith, Meaning, and Values

**Core Theme**



Pope John Paul II's documents *Ex Corde Ecclesia* (1990) and *Fides et Ratio* (1998) called upon all Catholic colleges and universities to reflect on how they manifested their Catholic identity. In response to this directive and in keeping with its mission, Carroll has made a consistent effort to more fully and faithfully embody its Catholic identity, by integrating spirituality into the social and academic life of the college and nurturing the formation of men and women who are God-centered and willing to act upon their responsibilities to the world. The Faith, Meaning, and Values core theme poses a qualitatively different challenge than the other two core themes, since it establishes the framework of purpose in which each of the other core themes finds orientation. That is, Catholic faith testifies to the metaphysical vision and values upon which the college is founded and purposed. A "religious atmosphere that is Catholic and ecumenical" (Cornerstone Statement) is meant to shape and permeate all that we do at Carroll, including the objectives and indicators that constitute the other core themes.

### **Faith, Meaning, and Values Objectives**

The objectives for this core theme are to ensure and promote understanding of the Catholic teachings and traditions, to create opportunities to engage in conversations around Faith, Meaning, and Values, to offer opportunities for the community to enrich and share their spiritual lives, and to develop mutually beneficial relationships with community partners. Achievement of the Faith, Meaning, and Values core theme focuses on the need for Carroll College to achieve the following four objectives:

1. Students, faculty, and staff will demonstrate an understanding of the Catholic teachings and traditions at the heart of Carroll's mission.
2. Students, faculty, and staff will engage in debate about the significant issues of our time as they relate to Carroll's mission.
3. Students, faculty, and staff will enrich and share their spiritual lives through prayer, liturgy, sacraments, spiritual direction, retreats, fellowship, and common action.
4. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni will participate in mutually beneficial relationships with community partners.

### **Faith, Meaning, and Values Indicators of Achievement (FM&V)**

#### Objective FM&V-1

- Students, faculty, and staff will demonstrate an understanding of the Catholic teachings and traditions at the heart of Carroll's mission.

#### Indicators for FM&V-1

- Achievement of stated student learning outcomes in Theology, Philosophy, Alpha Seminar, and other applicable courses
- Student, faculty, and staff knowledge and commitment to Carroll's mission as obtained through survey research
- Academic program responses to question asking where and how do students learn about Catholic teachings obtained through Program Review

### Rationale for Indicators for FM&V-1

These processes and learning outcomes reflect an attempt to better understand what, how, and where students' learn about Catholic teachings and traditions. The achievement of stated learning outcomes in courses within our curriculum, such as Alpha Seminar, Theology 101 and Philosophy 101, that explicitly address Catholic theology and other religious traditions, provide indicators for this objective. These courses, considered Foundations of the Core Curriculum, are required courses for all students. Survey research such as the Campus Climate Surveys is also used to ascertain whether students, faculty, and staff find that the college has contributed to their understanding and appreciation of Catholic thought and tradition. Although indirect, this indicator is important because it attends to perceptions of faculty and staff whereas most of the other indicators in this core theme address student learning. Further, a systematic review of academic and administrative programs, documented in Program Review, enables Carroll to gather data on where and how students encounter Catholic teaching, traditions, and values, to assess students' achievement of learning outcomes, and to develop improvement plans. The quality of these programs and their contribution to student learning is evaluated by the Program Review and Assessment Committee and shared with the Spiritual Vitality Task Group.

- The achievement of stated course-level student learning outcomes is the most important evidence of the realization of this objective. Faculty members in Theology and Philosophy courses have worked diligently over the last few years creating common rubrics and assessments for their Foundations courses. As part of their program review, faculty members submit reports on their shared assessments of student learning which include curriculum maps, articulated learning outcomes, and samples of student work. The threshold for acceptable performance on this indicator is to show acceptable student performance on the prescribed student learning outcomes.
- Assessing faculty, staff, and student knowledge and commitment to Carroll's mission is collected through program evaluations and surveys. Every five years the Office of Institutional Effectiveness administers a Campus Climate survey which in part assesses faculty and staff knowledge and commitment to the mission. The next Campus Climate survey is scheduled to launch in the fall of 2012. Additionally, all faculty and staff address Carroll's mission in their application materials. New faculty and staff attend Mission Dinners as part of their first semester orientation to the college. Faculty and staff are asked to submit an evaluation of the dinners at the end of the semester. The threshold for acceptable performance for this particular indicator remains under development. To better understand what an acceptable level of mission fulfillment should be we first need to create a process to review the Campus Climate Survey data, mission application responses, and dinner evaluations.
- As part of the Program Review template, academic programs are required to indicate how their particular program addresses Catholic teachings within the curriculum. Some programs point to specific outcomes within their courses and programs whereas others point to a particular project within a class. Finding growing numbers of curricular examples of student knowledge and achievement of the Catholic teaching-related learning outcomes throughout the curriculum meets the threshold for acceptable performance on this indicator.

### Objective FM&V-2

- Students, faculty, and staff will engage in debate about the significant issues of our time as they relate to Carroll's mission.

### Indicators for FM&V-2

- Student, faculty, and staff attendance at Catholic, ecumenical, and interfaith speakers, presentations, and programs
- Survey responses to questions on the topic of quality and quantity of dialogue and debate a propos Catholic and faith-based issues (Student Life Annual Survey, NSSE, FSSE)

### Rationale for Indicators FM&V-2

This objective is addressed using indirect indicators. The first indicator attempts to capture participation rates and attendance at Catholic and other faith-based programs and services. The second of the indicators is a bit more useful and looks at student, faculty, and staff perceived participation in conversations regarding Catholic and faith-based subject matters. Questions on the Student Life Annual Survey, NSSE, and FSSE attempt to capture student perceptions of the quantity and quality of their interactions regarding Catholic and faith-based issues with other students and faculty.

- Opportunities and indicators that track what the college offers and how many students participate are appropriate measures for assessing the extent to which the college provides frequent, diverse, and high-interest opportunities, integrated throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum, for explicit learning and dialogue about significant issues as they relate to our mission. Opportunity and participation numbers show the extent to which this objective is a visible, vital, and inclusive aspect of the Carroll learning experience. An annual increase in numbers of participating faculty, staff, and students at Catholic, ecumenical, and interfaith speakers, presentations, and programs is necessary to meet the minimum threshold of achievement for this objective.
- Student and faculty opinions regarding the availability and quality of opportunities to learn and dialogue about significant issues as they relate to Carroll's mission are gathered through several survey tools. NSSE's questions about the students' perceptions of the institution's contribution to spiritual growth provide indicators that can be compared with other colleges. Increases in understanding, frequency, and quality of mission-focused conversations, and higher means over peer institutions are critical to meeting this objective. The Campus Climate Survey, distributed every five years, also captures faculty and staff opinions about Catholic and faith-based issues. Greater participation rates and aggregate Campus Climate Survey responses indicating sufficient opportunities for dialogue and debate are also needed in order to achieve the objective.

### Objective FM&V-3

- Student, faculty, and staff will enrich and share their spiritual lives through prayer, liturgy, sacraments, spiritual direction, retreats, fellowship, and common action.

### Indicators for FM&V-3

- Percentage of students, faculty, and staff who participate in events such as daily and Sunday night Mass, Search retreats, Formation activities, class retreats, and events sponsored by the Hunthausen Center, Moran Forum, and Campus Ministry
- Scores on evaluations of these events

### Rationale for FM&V-3

Campus Ministry, Hunthausen Center and Moran Forum calendars of events as well as participation numbers for Mass, Search, class retreats, and religious education are indicators for this objective. End of program evaluations of these events provide evidence of the quality of the experiences.

- Carroll is committed to providing more opportunities for spiritual formation, in response to increasing student, faculty, and staff interest in these programs, to uphold its “special obligation to provide for the spiritual needs of the college community” (Mission Statement). Trends in participation numbers and program quality show whether the college is enabling and encouraging faculty, staff, and student spiritual growth. On all NSSE and FSSE items that ask students and faculty about their spiritual growth, Carroll ranks in the top 50 percentile nationally. Carroll also has statistically significant scores (.05) over Carnegie Classification comparison group scores. To meet an acceptable threshold, Carroll strives to offer more spiritual and Catholic activities and consequently, increase the number of students and faculty that “often” participate in spiritual and Catholic activities.
- The evaluation of campus events whether by participants or organizers is not yet systematic. The distribution of an evaluation template which is inclusive of learning outcomes and campus consensus of an evaluation process will help with the collection and analysis of evaluation forms. The development of the program evaluation and process is the first step to establishing a threshold of achievement for this particular indicator.

### Objective FM&V-4

- Students, faculty, staff, and alumni will participate in mutually beneficial relationships with community partners.

### Indicators for FM&V-4

- Number of events and programs with community co-sponsorship
- Job, internship, and service learning student placements within the community
- Student, faculty, and staff participation in community arts and service organizations, advisory boards, and other leadership positions within the greater community

### Rationale for FM&V-4

Collaboration, considered here a process, is not as “measurable” as other indicators. An inventory of mutually beneficial activities and events shows the kind, extent, and development of the college’s work with community organizations. These collaborations fall into several categories: some include shared resources and facilities; some relate to the role of the diocese and other faith-based organizations; some include opportunities for professional growth for students; some represent faculty, staff, and student leadership contributions in the community. Engagement with the broader community occurs through relationship building. Academic and non-academic programs have established working relationships with advisory groups, academic centers of interest to the larger community (such as Carroll’s Gifted Institute for youth), and forums and workshops that reach out to the community and support work beyond our walls. Events such as athletics, plays, and guest lecturers seek to address current topics and provide our community with educational and enrichment opportunities.

- Each year a number of events and programs co-sponsored with the community and the diocese occur on campus. Examples include art shows, political debates, performing arts, and health and wellness events. The collaboration and cooperation with community agencies and businesses provides us with new contacts, sources of funding, and new audiences and campus visitors. At present, we do not systematically collect statistics on these co-sponsored events. Events are sponsored by the campus, by student groups, and by academic programs. Before setting a threshold for acceptable performance, we need to improve our tracking of these co-sponsored events and programs.
- Recent efforts have increased job and internship opportunities for all disciplines, with a special focus on Business Administration. The Internship Coordinator has developed relationships with local organizations for internship placement sites, such as the Montana Supreme Court, Montana Business Assistance Connection, Department of Criminal Investigation, Lewis and Clark County Health Department, St. Peter's Hospital, Montana Office of Public Instruction, Department of Commerce, the ACLU, American Lung Association, Secretary of State Civic Engagement Office, and the Montana Nonprofit Association. Our community values our Carroll graduates, interns, and volunteers. Achievement of this indicator is realized by increasing the number of career, service, and internship placement statistics by 10 percent.
- Carroll faculty, staff, and students have important leadership roles in the community. A number of faculty and staff sit on bank and corporate boards of trustees, community arts boards, and boards and leadership teams of non-profit organizations like Susan G. Komen and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Students too are important leaders within the community. Carroll students started a student recycling and environmental education project at Carroll in 2004. Today, S.A.V.E programs serve the greater Helena community and the state of Montana. Like other indicators for this objective, we first need to systematically track these relationships. Once we have identified appropriate means to collect data we will be able to establish benchmarks marking the achievement of each of the indicators.

### **Faith, Meaning, and Values Summary**

The objectives of our Faith, Meaning, and Values core theme ask that students, faculty, and staff demonstrate an understanding of the Catholic teachings and traditions at the heart of Carroll's mission, engage in debate about the significant issues of our time as they relate to the mission, participate in faith based activities, and engage in mutually beneficial relationships with community partners. Examples of the indicators we use to monitor the objectives include the achievement of course learning outcomes and records of students' service activities sponsored by Student Life and Campus Ministry. National surveys like NSSE pose questions about faith development and local surveys like the Campus Climate capture data about mission knowledge and acceptance. We are more concerned with the quality of these experiences and their contributions to student learning than we are about the numbers of opportunities.

# Student Engagement

## Core Theme



The third core theme, Student Engagement, is manifested at Carroll College through co-curricular learning and living experiences that enrich and reinforce academic learning as well as foster social, physical, and spiritual development. The college's core theme is achieved as our students demonstrate leadership and service skills, practice healthy decision making, and participate in activities that develop skills to achieve career goals. Student participation numbers and achievement of co-curricular learning outcomes are important indicators for the objectives of this core theme. The selected indicators reflect levels of student engagement and gains in particular knowledge and skills within a healthy and safe living and learning environment.

### **Student Engagement Objectives**

The objectives of this core theme promote student participation and learning throughout the co-curricular experience, by connecting learning in and out of the classroom, helping students develop an appreciation for health and wellness, and encouraging participation in activities that develop skills to achieve career goals. These objectives reflect the latest research on student interest, learning, and retention in higher education. Achievement of the Student Engagement core theme focuses on the need for students to achieve the following three objectives:

1. Students will demonstrate leadership and service skills.
2. Students living in community will practice healthy decision making.
3. Students will participate in co-curricular activities that develop skills to achieve career goals.

### **Student Engagement Indicators of Achievement (SE)**

#### Objective SE- 1

- Students will demonstrate leadership and service skills.

#### Indicators for SE-1

- Percentage of students who participate in service learning, leadership, or volunteerism activities (NSSE, Student Life Annual Survey, Senior Survey, Campus Ministry and Hunthausen Center statistics)
- Completion of student leadership curriculum outcomes
- Responses on alumni surveys that indicate that graduates have extended their leadership and service experiences to new settings within their communities and careers

#### Rationale for Indicators SE-1

The indicators of this core theme objective emphasize the measurement and tracking of current activities and programs and emerging areas of importance within the co-curriculum. For this objective we use both direct and indirect indicators. The direct measures of student leadership and service skills, attitudes, and knowledge have some obvious points of assessment right now. Outdoor Leadership activities, Student Government officers, Community Advisor, and volunteer projects are opportunities to evaluate and observe leadership and service skills. Student Life also has plans, documented in *Vision 2017*, to offer a more formal leadership certificate program built on measurable learning outcomes and intended to complement students' curricular outcomes. Data that supports the indirect indicators like participation rates in activities identified as having a service learning, volunteer, or leadership component are more accessible than the direct

indicators. For alumni, we rely on self-report survey data about graduates' participation in service and leadership roles within their communities and careers.

- The percentage of students who participate in service learning, leadership, and volunteer activities is collected through self-designed and nationally-normed surveys. The Student Life Annual Survey asks students about their participation in community service and leadership programs. In 2010, 65% of respondents intended to participate in service activities and 25% intended to participate in a leadership activity. The Student Life Survey also asks students which out-of-class activity has had the most impact on their leadership development. Internships, student governance, athletics, and community service are common responses. Student input from the nationally-normed NSSE indicates the need for greater support for connected student learning experiences such as leadership. The college will continue to use NSSE and FSSE to monitor student satisfaction and engagement. An acceptable threshold of core theme fulfillment is progress toward meeting the Carnegie comparison group median percentages and higher student participation rates in service and leadership activities as ascertained by the Student Life Annual Survey.
- The creation of a leadership certificate program built on measurable student learning outcomes is also important to achieving this core theme objective. The goals of the program are to provide practical knowledge of leadership; tools for effective decision making and communication; to help students discover their strengths and how to leverage their personal leadership talents to be effective and influential; and to enhance students capacity to lead ethically and effectively all while being in the service of others. An acceptable threshold of core theme fulfillment is the achievement of the program's learning outcomes.
- Carroll graduates are asked on Alumni Surveys about their leadership roles within their careers, communities, and churches. They are also asked about their participation in community service and volunteer organizations and activities. Alumni who demonstrate life-long service and leadership skills indicates achievement of this core theme objective.

#### Objective SE-2

- Students living in community will practice healthy decision making.

#### Indicators for SE-2

- Mean scores on AlcoholEdu and Core Alcohol and Other Drug Surveys
- Percentage of students who indicate involvement in healthy relationships and regular healthy eating, sleeping, and exercise habits (Student Life Annual Survey, NSSE)
- Percentage of students who indicate excellent and/or very good health (Student Life Annual Survey)
- Percentage of students who utilize and are satisfied with support services such as advising, career services, health and counseling services, and fitness center (Student Life Annual Survey, NSSE)

#### Rationale for SE-2

This objective emphasizes the practice of healthy decision making. Research indicates that increasing students' health and wellness will improve student retention and graduation rates. The indicators for this core theme objective rely primarily on indirect, self-report measures of health and wellness. Healthy living includes physical and mental health; proper nutrition, sufficient

sleep, positive relationships, and exercise are essential to both. Collecting data on students' health and wellness behaviors—through local and national surveys like the Student Life Annual Survey, AlcoholEdu for College, and the Core Alcohol and Other Drug Survey—provides the college with tools to educate both individuals and the community and to develop additional programming to promote health and wellness.

- First-year students are asked to participate in AlcoholEdu for College, an on-line nationally normed alcohol awareness program. The instrument measures student behaviors (use of alcohol and other drugs as well as other risky behaviors) within the past year, the past 30 days, and the past 14 days. In addition, Carroll participates in the Core Survey on Alcohol and Other-Drug Use in alternating years with a random sample from seniors, juniors, sophomores and first-year students. The thresholds for acceptable performance are to have a 75% participation rate in AlcoholEdu for College and to report lower percentages than national norms on two-thirds of the risky behaviors on the Core Alcohol and Other Drug Survey.
- Each academic year, students complete the Student Life Annual Survey. Students indicate the frequency and quality of their decisions like eating, sleeping, and exercising, and also rank their overall health. The thresholds for acceptable performance are to have increased numbers of “frequent” responses to all of the categories and 40% of respondents indicating “excellent” health.
- Data indicating the frequency of use and satisfaction of student support services is collected through the Student Life Annual Survey and NSSE. Counseling Services, Health Services, Career Services, and the Fitness Center report monthly numbers indicating student use. Each of these areas is currently designing more direct measures of student learning and satisfaction. Student support services would like to improve on their outreach by connecting with 100% of the students through orientation, office visits, and other preventative efforts. Full student awareness of the availability of services and increased levels of satisfaction are our thresholds for this indicator.

### Objective SE-3

- Students will participate in co-curricular activities that develop skills to achieve career goals.

### Indicators for SE-3

- Percentage of students who participate in co-curricular activities as obtained through the Student Life Annual Survey and NSSE
- Evaluations of co-curricular assignments/projects/surveys that require students to demonstrate teamwork, communication, problem solving, interpersonal, and other skills important to the achievement of career goals
- Responses to alumni survey questions that ask graduates how participation in co-curricular activities while at Carroll helped them achieve their current career goals

### Rationale for Objective SE-3

The indicators of this core theme objective assess participation rates, student learning outcomes, and measures of alumni opinions of their skills. The indicators for this objective are both direct and indirect. Student participation rates in co-curricular activities are important to student engagement. However, to more directly assess student preparedness to achieve career goals we measure skills gained through co-curricular activities like students' abilities to communicate

clearly, act as a team player, and work under pressure. This will give us direct assessment data about student skills in critical areas and is a strong measure of our success in preparing students for professional lives. This does not negate the importance of disciplinary knowledge and skills that we know are also critical to career success. Discipline-specific outcomes are measured in AE&D-1 (see p. 29) and liberal education outcomes are measured in AE&D-2 (see p. 30). Our current alumni surveys do not adequately address the relationship between co-curricular participation, career skills, and career achievement. The alumni surveys of the future will be re-designed to better address this item. Taken together these participation data and student learning outcomes from different sources all contribute to our overall understanding of performance on this indicator.

- Student participation in co-curricular activities is measured through the Student Life Annual Survey and through program evaluations administered by Student Activities and Leadership staff and student leaders. Carroll College has intentionally increased institutional support for student activities through generating additional student fees and providing responsibilities for Community Living staff in Student Activities and Leadership. Student involvement is positively related to persistence and subsequent success in college; the degree to which students are engaged at Carroll directly impacts the quality of student learning and their overall educational experience. According to the 2010 Student Life Annual Survey, over 60% of all responding students attend athletic events, use Carroll's athletic facilities, participate in Campus Ministry programs, attend Mass or a religious service, and participate in a Community Living activities and/or student leadership positions such as student housing staff or peer ministers. Over 50% of students responding to this survey indicated that they participate in volunteer activities. Overall, less than 11% of respondents were "highly unlikely" to attend campus activities. Increasing the number of student participants in campus activities to a consistent 75% participation rate is important to obtain an acceptable threshold of student involvement. Additionally, Carroll should increase from present the quality and number of campus events and generate new ways to increase the number of participants.

- The identification and assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes is currently in process. Programs within Student Life have identified measurable outcomes and assessment points. Individual programs are reviewing their assessment data but the results of the assessments are not yet fully disseminated. Improved assessment processes and collection methods for direct evaluation of student work are important to the achievement of this core theme objective.

- A re-design of the alumni survey and improved opportunities to collect data regarding the relationship between co-curricular participation, career skills, and career attainment is important to do before establishing a threshold for this indicator.

## **Student Engagement Summary**

The objectives of our Student Engagement core theme ask that students, faculty, and staff demonstrate leadership, service, and healthy decision making skills. The core theme also asks that students participate in co-curricular activities that help them to develop skills to achieve their desired vocations. Examples of the indicators we use to monitor the objectives include the achievement of leadership and service outcomes, records of students' service and leadership activities sponsored by Student Life and Campus Ministry, and surveys like AlcoholEdu and NSSE. We are more concerned with the quality of these experiences and their contributions to student learning than we are about the numbers of opportunities.

## CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

Carroll College aspires to provide an undergraduate student experience characterized by excellence, distinctiveness, faith, and engagement. The college is committed to graduating individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to pursue a vocation that is self-fulfilling and community enhancing. The college's 2011 proposed Strategic Plan, *Vision 2017* articulates five major goals for the college; these have become the basis for our three core themes, for each makes a vital contribution to our mission as a Catholic, diocesan, liberal arts college. Each core theme—Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness, Faith, Meaning, and Values, and Student Engagement—defines an area in which the college will invest its energies and resources in order to more fully achieve its mission.

The last year has been in many ways about continuing to establish frameworks and processes to build a shared definition and understanding of mission fulfillment at Carroll College. The new NWCCU standards have guided us in our efforts to align goals at the program and service levels with core theme objectives and indicators of mission fulfillment. We have documented this on-going work in our Program Review documents, where academic program and administrative assessment plans provide diverse and detailed evidence for our fulfillment of Carroll's mission. It is also documented in our TracDat strategic planning template.

The College's model of mission fulfillment calls for us to demonstrate satisfactory performance on a group of key indicators; these are derived from each of our three core themes (see Table 1). This model of mission fulfillment and the key indicators were developed through discussions involving the NWCCU Self-Evaluation Steering Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, the Senior Leadership Team, and the larger community. They were selected on the basis of their significance for the institution, available data, and best practices. Some of these indicators have informed decisions at Carroll for many years while others are in the early stages of development; for the latter, we are in the early stages of establishing a data collection process and determining a threshold for acceptable performance.

The model of mission fulfillment that we have presented in Chapter One—which articulates the relationship between mission, core themes, core theme objectives, indicators and their thresholds of acceptable performance—creates the framework for the rest of the seven year accreditation cycle.

## APPENDIX A

Carroll College NWCCU Self-Evaluation Steering Committee 2011

Loretta Andrews, Director of Campus Computing and Information Technology

Ms. Cathy Day, Registrar

Dr. Dawn Gallinger, Director of Research, Planning, and Assessment

Dr. Alan Hansen, Associate Professor of Communications Studies

Dr. Jim Hardwick, Vice President for Student Life

Ms. Michelle Lewis, Director of International Programs

Dr. Paula McNutt, Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

Dr. Mark Parker, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Associate Academic Dean

Ms. Lori Peterson, Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration

Ms. Mary Catherine Racicot, Human Resources Assistant

Dr. Kay Satre, Assistant Professor of Languages and Literature

Dr. Mark Smillie, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Dr. Holly Zullo, Associate Professor of Mathematics

## APPENDIX B

### Statement of Catholic Character

#### Courage

- to seek truth in all intellectual pursuits without fear or prejudice
- to engage with many voices, even those outside one's own perspective, with empathy and generosity
- to act with hope on what is right no matter how overpowering

#### Honor

- the freedom of inquiry that shapes the whole person in the Catholic and liberal arts traditions
- the sacramental value of all creation with special reverence for the dignity of the human person
- the contributions by members of all religious faiths and all persons of good will to the Carroll community

#### Service

- for the common good and formed by intellectual inquiry
- in solidarity with the citizens of Helena, the State of Montana, the United States, and the world
- of self, time, and talents freely and generously in charity and justice

## APPENDIX C

### Cornerstone Statement

President Taft lent special importance to the laying of the cornerstone for the college because he represented American political values reaching out to Catholicism. It is President Taft who underlined the religious dimension of the college on this Founding Day, not Bishop Carroll: *“The college you are building here will be a blessing to Helena and to the whole state of Montana. The only trouble is we have not institutions enough of this kind in the United States. Though not of your faith, I cannot but appreciate the good work your church is doing in this country.”*

Bishop Carroll’s remarks focused on the college’s aim to provide leaders through intellectual excellence:

The aim of Capitol Hill College will be to give the young men of Montana a thorough, liberal education which will fit them for leadership in any vocation they may choose and at the same time, so surround them with a religious atmosphere that they will ever follow conscience as their king. Knowledge and virtue are the armor with which Capitol Hill College shall strive to equip students. And these, says Washington, are the chiefest support, firmest props of both state and nation. It is with singular pleasure, Mr. President, I welcome you to this height and to this ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone of our college.”

Bishop Carroll’s cornerstone speech has become our cornerstone statement for his vision of Carroll’s excellence. For Bishop Carroll, the characteristics that identify the school as a Catholic College are the importance of the Liberal Arts, the Catholic religious atmosphere of the college, its ecumenical openness, classes in Christian Doctrine, and its focus on personal conscience as guide.

### Cornerstone Statement

#### Liberal Arts

- Leadership in any vocation
- Realization of the whole person

#### Religious Atmosphere

- Catholic/Diocesan
- Ecumenical

#### Moral Atmosphere

- Knowledge and virtue
- Conscience as guide

Courage: *To do what is right no matter how overpowering the odds*

Honor: *To show faithfulness to God and respect for all*

Service: *To give of self, time, talents freely and generously*

## APPENDIX D

### *Vision 2017 Highlights*

#### Goal #1

##### *Academic Excellence and Distinctiveness*

Provide an increasingly high-quality and distinctive educational experience for all students

#### Objectives

- Courses and programs with new modes/pedagogy of student learning
- A Learning Commons/Library
- Centers of Excellence created through program enhancements
- A curriculum built on essential student learning outcomes
- A Writing Center

#### Goal #2

##### *Faith Meaning and Values*

Communicate and strengthen the College's Catholic Identity (Mission)

#### Objectives

- The Cornerstone (Hunthausen, Moran, Theme Floors, Programs)
- A Coordinator of Mission
- College Chapel

#### Goal #3

##### *Student Engagement*

Increase intentional out of class learning opportunities for students to enhance their education

#### Objectives

- Enhanced career exploration opportunities
- A Student Success Center
- A Leadership Certificate Program
- A clearinghouse for service
- Campus apartments
- An experiential learning model

#### Goal #4

##### *Stewardship*

Develop a financial profile that secures a resource base adequate to meet the ongoing human, operational, and capital needs of the college and to meet the institutional strategic objectives

#### Objectives

- Curricular and co-curricular programs to raise environmental awareness and practice
- State of the art technology for teaching, learning, and operations
- Safe and secure campus

## Goal #5

### *Capacity Building*

Increase resources necessary to strengthen the future of the college through enrollment, investment, and a comprehensive campaign

### Objectives

- An integrated marketing plan to increase the visibility of the college
- 1,600-1,800 degree seeking students (headcount)
- Improved retention, graduation rates, and net tuition revenue
- Sustained commitment to institutional effectiveness