

Strategic Plan Priority 1: Inspire student learning and development

The liberal arts are the building blocks upon which learning takes place at Shepherd University. In order to best prepare our students for their professional and personal lives, we believe that the following goals are key:

- Goal 1: Improve the quality of learning across the curriculum.
- Goal 2: Inspire student learning and development through the incorporation of technology in teaching.
- Goal 3: Develop a value-added approach to student advising.
- Goal 4: Ensure a high degree of professional preparation for students.
- Goal 5: Improve Shepherd's diversity and commitment to social justice.
- Goal 6: Enhance continuing education programs for the learning adult.
- Goal 7: Improve academic standards while maintaining an open access policy.

Each of these goals is described in further detail below.

1. Improve the quality of learning across the curriculum

To best prepare our students for their professional and personal lives, student learning must take place through engagement in the liberal arts both inside and outside of the traditional classroom environment. Inside of the classroom, engagement opportunities may include capstone projects, seminars, learning communities, group presentations, or debates. Outside of the classroom, engagement opportunities may include internships or practica, study abroad programs, global experiences, service learning, community service, faculty-student collaborative research efforts, or involvement in student leadership initiatives.

Shepherd must also offer a new vision of the General Studies curriculum that aligns with COPLAC and our institutional mission. This curriculum will promote the kind of learning students need to meet emerging challenges in the workplace, in a diverse democracy, and in an interconnected world. In order for this goal to become operational, we must do the following:

1. Change the name of "General Studies" to "Core Curriculum" to bring us more in line with the goals of "Liberal Education and America's Promise" (LEAP) and lend more clout to program. (2009, no cost)
2. Adopt the learning outcomes of LEAP ("Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World"; "Intellectual and Practical Skills," "Personal and Social Responsibility; "Integrative Learning") for the core curriculum and make

sure that these permeate the academic atmosphere of the campus (through banners, posters, book marks, etc.) The LEAP goals are deemed as “best practices” according to the AAC&U. (2009, no cost)

3. Ensure that LEAP goals are included on all syllabi, but especially Core Curriculum courses. Courses should show how the class meets those goals. (2010, no cost)
4. Make funds available as incentives for instructors to develop courses that meet LEAP goals (above). (2010, \$25,000)
5. Design a Core Curriculum that includes the following (2010, no cost):
 - a. Experiential learning opportunities;
 - b. Intensive writing courses;
 - c. A global component -- whether it is a travel practicum, cultural immersion course, study abroad opportunity or other experience -- that will help provide our students with a great world view;
 - d. A curriculum grouped in a more contemporary manner that solidifies its connection with LEAP goals, rather than being a “one-off” or checklist;
 - e. Greater choice among courses in the Core Curriculum as well as greater integration of the Core Curriculum with the major;
 - f. A diversity course requirement;
 - g. A required culminating or capstone experience;
 - h. A required first year experience course (i.e. interest group, learning community, first-year seminar course, honors course);
 - i. An integration of technology, critical thinking and wellness throughout the curriculum;
 - j. A reduction in average class sizes; and
 - k. An assessment strategy which incorporates the LEAP goals.

2. Inspire student learning and development through the incorporation of technology in teaching

The digital age is part of the lives of all Shepherd students, faculty and staff. One value of learning in this digital age is global understanding, which requires and is facilitated by the use of technology. The appropriate and effective use of technology informs contemporary society; this is particularly true in education. Technology complements classroom learning, engages students both in and out of the classroom, provides access to transformative ideas, and facilitates learning in ways traditional learning cannot achieve.

Shepherd’s core values of learning and engagement are directly affected by the use of technology. Liberal arts education, if it is to excel, must include technology both to enhance the classroom learning environment and to access information outside of the classroom. Technology engages students by making the world their learning environment, and it empowers students to discover and explore the diverse world of ideas beyond Shepherd, West Virginia and the United States. Technology can help to make students global citizens fully capable to compete in the world’s marketplace of ideas. In order for this goal to become operational, we must do the following:

1. Convey to faculty the value of technology and its role in preparing students for the digital world.

- a. Fund a full-time Instructional Technologist through the Center for Teaching and Learning so that faculty training in uses of technology can continue. Our technologist is currently funded through TOC student fees but this will cease in June 2009. (2009, \$45,000 per year plus benefits).
 - b. Development of workshops and training programs designed to bring faculty from different disciplines together.
2. Foster curriculum design that encourages the use of technology.
 - a. Encourage dialogue among faculty about teaching and learning with technology within their specific disciplines and across disciplines. Ongoing at no added cost.
 - b. Encourage the development of interdisciplinary courses that include technology as a major component. Ongoing at no additional cost.
 - c. Increase usage in classes of technology as evidenced by an increase in technology based assignments. Technology needed for assignments would be funded by proposals to the TOC. TOC funds proposals yearly.
 3. Make technology accessible to students, faculty and staff.
 - a. Increase the number of classrooms equipped with a common set of technologies. The initial investment would be \$72,000 with \$20,000 per year ongoing thereafter.
 - b. Provide increased availability of technology in the classrooms by increased funding. The costs associated would be covered by the proposed reallocation of TOC funds from IT salaries to funding technology proposals to the TOC. (Yearly)
 - c. Make technology and resources accessible to students, faculty and staff. The cost would be funded by requests to the TOC. TOC funds proposals yearly.
 - d. Improve the overall network infrastructure across campus to provide increased access regardless of campus location. The campus will be 100% wireless within three years. The cost for wireless service is \$78,000 per year.

3. Develop a value-added approach to student advising

Because we believe Academic Advising to be a developmental process, the mission of the Shepherd University Academic Advising Program is to assist students in the clarification of their educational and professional goals and in the development of educational plans that are compatible with those goals. Academic Advisors will work closely with their students and advisees to improve student learning and to encourage their intellectual growth, their personal fulfillment, and their academic and professional excellence. In order for this goal to become operational, we must do the following:

1. Offer and require advisors to attend at least one advising workshop every semester to help keep faculty members abreast of catalog changes and additions -- especially with respect to the Core Curriculum, graduation, 60 hour rules, and the roles of department chairs and the Admissions and Credits Committee. (2010, no cost)

2. We must expand our use of Banner/RAIL capabilities – such as prerequisites enforcement via computer. (2010, cost unknown)
3. We must insist on accountability for good advising (i.e., annual assessment of individual advisors; include advisement as significant part of the annual report and promotion and tenure portfolio). (2010, no cost)
4. “Intensive Advisement” procedures must be instituted (i.e., flagging academic problems via technology, generating automatic RAIL announcements to advisors when students register). (2010, no cost)
5. We should institute a centralized “Advisement Center” as a part of a Learning Center where students can call for support after-hours or if they are unable to find their faculty advisors. This will also help to take some of the load off of the faculty advisor. (2010, no cost)

4. Ensure a high degree of professional preparation for students

It is of the utmost importance that our students have a solid liberal education that enables them to enter the workforce with the knowledge, flexibility, empathy and problem-solving ability needed to navigate and positively impact a complex world. In order for this goal to become operational, we must do the following:

1. Determine specific employment possibilities for each discipline. (one year: \$1,000)
2. Ensure faculty are knowledgeable of skills, knowledge and abilities required for specific employment possibilities for student employment. (one-three years out: \$1,000 per year)
3. Ensure syllabi include potential employment possibilities within course objectives. (one-three years out)
4. Ensure syllabi include both cognitive based course objectives and affective based course objectives. (one-three years out)
5. Ensure training for faculty and staff on ensuring culture of cognitive and affective based instruction and interactions. (one-four years out)
6. Ensure opportunities for all students to access internships, capstone papers and/or research projects with faculty. (one year out: \$2,000)
7. Ensure opportunities for all students to rotate through employment opportunities in regional businesses, government and service organizations. (one-two years out: \$2,000)

5. Improve Shepherd’s diversity and commitment to social justice

An area that sets Shepherd apart from other institutions is the aspect of student engagement. All students at Shepherd are challenged from their first interaction on campus to become an active part of the community. This is demonstrated by participation in student leadership activities, clubs, organizations, experiential education, community service and service learning and may culminate in a capstone project or faculty research project. The co-curricular education promotes student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic.

With the curriculum and the co-curricular experience, there needs to be a promotion of educational experiences that enhance understanding of each individual student’s identity

and the identity of others. Environments need to be created, nurtured and sustained that value the commonalities and differences of individuals. An appreciation of diversity needs to move into the active engagement of pluralism where students can explore and appreciate each other's cultures. In order for this goal to become operational, we must do the following:

1. Strengthen social justice and diversity programs and services offered across the curriculum. (annually)
2. Strengthen social justice and diversity programs and services offered by all Student Affairs Departments.
3. Design an area in the renovated Student Center that would adequately integrate services for students of color, and international and GLBT students in a student leadership center. (begin 2009 – planning, project total \$20,000,000, 2009 hire graduate student for International Students, \$16,000, \$3,000 office start up cost; 2010 hire grad student for LGBT issues \$16,000, \$3,000 start up office cost)
4. Allocate new resources to MSA Office (in new student center) to be able to provide services that will retain students. (begin planning 2009)
5. Develop a Health Educator position at Shepherd to promote campus wellness and provide information on social norming. (fall 2010, paygrade 18 \$35,000, \$7,500 benefits, \$3,000 one time start up office cost, \$10,000 annual budget)
6. Hire a Coordinator for Disability Services. (fall 2009, paygrade 18, \$35,000 salary, \$7,500 benefits, \$3,000 one time cost for office)
7. Create a health and wellness Student Peer education program. (fall 2011, hire grad student \$16,000 salary \$3,000 for one time office expense)
8. Strengthen programming for new and returning students as a method to educate, engage, and involve students. (\$16,000 graduate student to implement Passport engagement program, \$3,000 one time office expense, \$500.00 annual budget)
9. Expand career services for students – hire additional person. (fall 2009, paygrade 18, \$35,000 salary, \$7,500 benefits, \$3,000 one time office costs, \$5,000 annual budget)
10. Continue Student Affairs department reviews and self-study using Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS). (annually)
11. Addition to Student Center completed (will include Student Leadership Center \$20 million.
12. Addition to Dining Hall completed. (begin planning 2009, \$8 million)

6. Enhance continuing education programs for the life-long learner

The continuing education programs will enhance learning in the community to provide life long opportunities in both the cognitive and affective domains. An internal framework for this is already in place. In order for this goal to become operational, we must do the following:

1. In addition to Graduate Programs, provide CE along with established courses (not in the same course, but at different times, and/or place), Graduate and Undergraduate. (one-two years out: \$30,000 Webinar/Instruction Technologist – CE funds required, not operational)

2. Provide both Professional Graduate Education for Teacher Re-Certification and Continuing Education Units for additional professions. (one-two years out: \$3,000)
3. Provide workshops and conferences at Shepherd University on Friday/Saturday timeframes to increase utilization of facilities. (one year out: \$3,000 extra hours)
4. Provide national and international webinars and off-site workshops and conferences using current faculty members. (one-two years out: \$3,000 development with #1 above)

7. Improve academic standards while maintaining an open access policy as West Virginia institution.

The HEPC mandates that Shepherd must be effectively open access, provided that the applicant has scored 17 or greater on the ACT and has a 3.0 high school GPA in our required core courses. The goal would be for growth to be more in terms of quality rather than numbers; thus in the next five years we would not see much growth beyond the 5,000 student population mark. In order for this goal to become operational, we must do the following:

1. Give greater prominence to the Honors Program by:
 - a. Increasing the number of hours/week for the Honors Administrative Assistant (2010, \$5,600);
 - b. Hiring an Honors-dedicated admissions counselor (\$30,000 plus benefits)
 - c. Increasing the number of tuition waivers/scholarships for Honors students (2010, \$40,000 per year);
 - d. Providing a dedicated line of funding for faculty who teach Honors courses (stipends for additional work) (2010, \$8,000 per year);
 - e. Increasing the budget line for Honors travel and transportation (2010, \$5,000 per year); and
 - f. Allowing priority registration for Honors students and other perks (2010, no cost).
2. Hire a full-time grant writer for Academic Affairs at Shepherd University. The position will be funded and supported by the Shepherd University Research Corporation. (2010, \$70,000 per year plus benefits)
3. Enhance promotion of the CME program. (2010, \$10,000 per year)
4. Highlight the Med-Step, Dent-Step, and Pharm-Step programs. (2010, \$500)
5. Provide higher-ability scholarships such as "Presidential Scholarships." (2010, \$40,000 per year)
6. Improve skills in Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, and Writing. (2010, no cost)
7. Recruit students interested in and prepared for study in STEMN fields. (2010, \$15,000 per year)
8. Develop new programs consistent with student, community and state needs that will attract high ability students. (2011, cost unknown)
9. Develop more faculty-student research initiatives. (2010, no cost)