

THE MISSION, VISION AND VALUES PLANNING CONTEXT

What is the purpose of a Mission Statement?

The Mission Statement describes the purpose of the organization and clearly states what the organization seeks to accomplish. It is the College's most explicit statement of identity and character. The Mission Statement focuses on outcomes and results rather than methods. It can be a valuable public information and marketing tool and also has value to accreditation agencies, which use the statement as a benchmark by which to assess the effectiveness of the institution and its management.

Why revise the Lehman College Mission Statement?

The current Mission Statement was last revised in 1994. The environment that helped to define the College's purpose has changed significantly, as have the expectations of policy makers and the general public about the role of higher education. This has taken place in a context of heightened competition among institutions of higher education that is now worldwide.

Six strategic goals emerged from the strategic planning retreat held by Lehman in September 2004, and a seventh goal was added when the strategic plan was refreshed in early 2006. Some strategic initiatives will lead to a shift in priorities and, consequently, a realignment of the Mission Statement to coincide with these changing priorities.

Are there other factors?

Yes. A Mission Statement serves as a basis for institutional planning, major initiatives, and resource allocation. The Mission Statement focuses faculty, staff and students by establishing a common goal for their efforts and energy. If the Mission Statement has remained the same for a long time, it may fail to serve this "inspirational" purpose.

How was the decision made to revise the Mission Statement?

A group of faculty and administrators worked during the summer of 2004 to prepare a series of briefing papers that represented the first step in the strategic planning process. These briefing papers helped to frame the discussions when thirty faculty members and administrators met for a two-day strategic planning retreat in September 2004. The recommendation to review and revise the Mission Statement emerged from this planning process.

Is this the same process being used to revise the Vision and Values Statement?

Lehman does not have a Vision or Values Statement; this will be its first.

What is a Vision Statement?

A vision statement describes what an organization will look like in the future when it is operating at its best—where the organization wants to be, what it wants to become. A Vision Statement answers the question "What will success look like?"

What is a Values Statement?

Core values are the College's essential and enduring tenets—the principles and beliefs that govern its work. These values define how the College will operate both to accomplish its work and to achieve its vision.

What process was used to develop the Mission, Vision and Values Statements?

A Mission, Vision and Values Committee made up of senior and mid-level administrators met several times beginning in spring 2006. The committee reviewed Mission Statements from colleges and universities across the country and considered the many changes that have occurred over the past decade within the City University of New York and in higher education, as well as the changing expectations of academic disciplines, accrediting agencies and the fiscal environment. As the draft statements were developed, they were shared for discussion and comment with a small number of faculty, staff, administrators, students and friends of the College.

What happens next?

The draft statements are being shared with the broader campus community as part of the public comment phase. The viewpoints and ideas sent to the Mission, Vision and Values Committee will inform the Committee's final deliberations.

Please send comments
by April 30, 2007 to:
comments.mission@lehman.cuny.edu.