

Standard One
Mission and Purposes

Description

The mission of Granite State College is to *Expand access to public higher education to adults of all ages throughout the state of New Hampshire*. The college achieves this mission by offering degree, certificate, and contract programs of excellence that serve our communities through learner responsive curricula, innovative teaching methods, and ongoing assessments of learning outcomes. Granite State College fosters partnerships with area businesses, local and state organizations, and other higher education institutions in order to bring quality academic experiences to the residents of New Hampshire in an effective and efficient manner.

The Mission Statement reflects our Core Values* and speaks to the unique nature of Granite State College within the University System of New Hampshire. The Mission Statement distinguishes us from the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University and Keene State College by emphasizing our focus on access, service to adult learners, and our statewide presence.

* Granite State College Core Values <http://www.granite.edu/about/strategicplan.htm>

For thirty-three years, access has been the key component of our mission. Access has been defined as affordability, having a presence in multiple communities throughout the state, and innovative delivery of our courses and programs. This includes, but is not limited to, night and weekend classes, distance learning, contract courses, prior learning assessment, and individual learning contracts.

The Mission Statement also informs our vision for the future. By continuing to offer academic programs that are innovative, flexible, responsive to our constituents, and of high quality, it is our expectation that *Granite State College will be nationally recognized as a leader in meeting the academic needs of adult learners and will be the institution of choice for individuals who wish to be part of a teaching and learning environment that actively promotes academic success, personal development, professional growth, and community involvement.*

The new Mission and Vision Statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on June 23, 2005 (Exhibit 1.1). This action concluded a year-long process that was overseen by the Executive Committee but involved staff throughout the college (Exhibit 1.2). The new mission calls for expanded access so that a college degree can be within the reach of more people throughout the state of New Hampshire.

- Exhibit 1.1 Board of Trustee Minutes Approval of Mission and Vision Statements
- Exhibit 1.2 Executive Committee Minutes Year-long discussion of Mission, Vision and Core Values

The previous Mission Statement is very similar to the current Mission Statement (Exhibit 1.3). However, there are two points that distinguish them. The new Mission Statement calls for *expanded access* while the former referred to *providing access*. Also, the new statement defines our constituency as *adult learners of all ages* replacing *primarily adults, who require alternatives to traditional campus based programs.*

- Exhibit 1.3 Vision and Mission Statements and Core Values-2003-2005

“The availability of courses allows me to continue working in the field while receiving my education.”

—ESC Early Childhood Education student

Appraisal

The new Mission Statement has been effective in providing a foundation for making decisions, allocating resources, and serving as a basis for updating the Strategic Plan* throughout the college. For example, *expanded access* has been interpreted as reaching a larger and more diverse constituency. *Adult learners of all ages* not only includes students who are older, with families, and working full or part time, but recent high school graduates who wish to begin and perhaps even complete their college careers in the communities where they live. Therefore, the Enrollment Management plan calls for hiring part-time recruiters to visit local high schools and connect with guidance counselors, teachers, and potential students (Exhibit 1.4).

* Strategic Plan www.granite.edu/about/strategicplan.htm

Exhibit 1.4 Granite State College Enrollment Management Plan

Expanding educational access has also been the basis for our decision to increase the number of online courses and to offer online degree programs. There are students within the state who are unable to attend classes at our centers or whose work schedules, family responsibilities, or personal learning preferences require the flexibility that distance learning affords. This commitment has led to hiring additional staff members in our Educational Technology and Computing Department to support the increase in online courses (Exhibit 1.5).

Exhibit 1.5 Board of Trustee Minutes Approval of Financial Plan to hire more online support staff

The expanded access and statewide components of the mission have led to a greater emphasis on partnerships between Granite State College and other institutions within the University System. These partnerships are part of a USNH initiative called "Project Access"*. Project Access calls for Granite State College to facilitate the delivery of programs within the University System to other locations in the state where there has been a defined need. To that end, starting in the Fall of 2006, GSC will partner with the University of New Hampshire Nursing Department to offer its RN completion program online to constituents statewide (Exhibit 1.6). Moreover, GSC and Plymouth State University (PSU) have created a *Plus One* program that will enable our graduates to become certified in elementary and special education through PSU with an additional year of study (Exhibit 1.7).

* Project Access www.usnh.unh.edu/trustees_chancellors/projectaccess.html

Exhibit 1.6 RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing Online Program

Exhibit 1.7 MOU between PSU and GSC for Plus One Program

Facility decisions have also been driven by the statewide and access components of the new mission. In January of 2006, Granite State College in Gorham co-located with the New Hampshire Community Technical College in Berlin. This has led to more effective and efficient use of resources in a sparsely populated region of the state. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions calls for NHCTC to offer the first two years and the associate degree while GSC focuses on upper level courses and awards the baccalaureate degree in this area of the state (Exhibit 1.8). This agreement avoids duplication of programs and services but also allows the college to provide a greater range of offerings and options for students.

Exhibit 1.8 MOU Co-location of GSC Gorham and Littleton Centers with NHCTC Berlin

Faculty and curricula related activities have also been mission driven. In order to maintain a quality academic experience in light of a more diverse student body, we have hired more "Resource Faculty". Resource Faculty members provide the college with disciplinary expertise as it relates to the development, implementation, and evaluation of academic courses and programs. They also serve as mentors to other faculty. While the age of our students may change with time, we expect all of our learners to be mature, engaged, and proactive in their education. The *gatekeepers* will continue to be the faculty who will maintain the integrity of the academic experience while providing students of all ages access to the support services they need to be successful. We have created a new position titled the Associate Dean of Faculty (Exhibit 1.9). The person who holds this position oversees the professional development of our faculty especially in the areas of teaching and learning in an adult environment and in outcomes assessment. The Dean of Academic Affairs and the Management faculty have added a component to our academic review process that also speaks to our mission. Prior to the completion of the program review, the proposed revision of the Management curriculum was sent to business leaders in the state. In five locations throughout the state, round table discussions with these leaders were held. As a result of the conversations, modifications were made to the minors that were proposed and the group supported the addition of two new courses, Business Statistics and Legal Issues in Business and Management (Exhibit 1.10). This measure helps to ensure that our curriculum is responsive to work force needs as stated in our mission and vision.

Exhibit 1.9 Associate Dean of Faculty Job Description

Exhibit 1.10 Community Conversation Notes with Business Leaders

Before external grants and contracts are submitted, the Deans Council must evaluate each proposal relative to the goals of the college and its consistency with the mission. The Deans Council collectively reviews and rates each proposal prior to submission. A log is retained that demonstrates that the mission has been incorporated into the decision making before a proposal is approved (Exhibit 1.11). The development of our annual operating budget requires a similar process (Exhibit 1.12).

Exhibit 1.11 Evaluation log for Grants and Contracts

Exhibit 1.12 Evaluation of new budgetary initiatives

Recent publications by the Communications and Marketing Department reflect the mission of the college and its emphasis on expanded access. The View Book published in 2005 makes a number of references that are tied directly to our mission (Exhibit 1.13). The central theme is that college is *within your reach*. The View Book not only speaks to the state as being our campus with location being an access point, but also references affordability, online learning, creative scheduling, self-designed programs, and independent learning.

Exhibit 1.13 GSC Viewbook

While the staff and the Board of Trustees are knowledgeable about our mission, more needs to be done to educate faculty, current and potential students, alumni, legislators and community members about our unique role and purpose. We must start by communicating our new mission internally to faculty and students more effectively. Although the Mission Statement is on our website, it must become a greater part of our interactions with these groups that are so vital to the college. Externally, it is important for more people who live and work in this state to have a greater awareness of Granite State College and its mission within public higher education.

Projections

- Integrate the mission more fully into our strategic planning, allocation of resources, ongoing assessments, and evaluations. *(President, Executive Committee and Deans Council FY 07-FY 10)*
- More effectively convey our mission and purposes to all stakeholders. Our goal is to make Granite State College synonymous with statewide access to public higher education. *(President, Director of Communications and Marketing FY 07-FY 10)*

Institutional Effectiveness

Each of the four institutions of the University System of New Hampshire has a distinct and important mission* that collectively, "Serve the higher educational needs of the people of New Hampshire*." The unique but complimentary missions of the University of New Hampshire, Keene State College, Plymouth State University, and Granite State College are included in the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees and any changes in institutional mission must be approved by the Board. When the Trustees or the Chancellor's office review proposed changes in programs, services, and financial affairs, the mission of the college defines the parameters in which the proposals are reviewed.

* USNH Mission Statements <http://usnholpm.unh.edu/BOT/II.Acad/H.htm>

* BOT and Chancellor's Mission Statement http://www.usnh.unh.edu/trustees_chancellors/index.html

As the Chief Executive Officer of Granite State College, the President has been given the authority and responsibility by the Board to properly and effectively manage the institution*. By implication, this requires the President to lead the college in a direction that is consistent with its mission, vision and core values. In addition, the President must assume responsibility for assessing the progress made in realizing the mission. When it becomes necessary and appropriate to formally review and perhaps revise the mission, vision, and core values of the institution, it is the responsibility of the President to initiate the process.

* Bylaws for the Presidents <http://usnholpm.unh.edu/Bylaws/Article.4.htm>

Of equal importance is the integration of the mission into the activities of the college. Institutional effectiveness for Granite State College has been a process that begins with the Statement of Mission which provides the context for the Strategic Plan. Once the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan have been identified, resources are allocated and programs and activities are implemented. This is followed by evaluation or assessment of the activity or program. Depending on the outcomes of the evaluation, resources may be adjusted or the implementation of the activity may be altered. The entire process provides the framework for review of the efficacy of the mission statement and initiating a new phase of planning, resource allocation, implementation, and evaluation.