The Simpson Plan for 2019

Vision Statement
Simpson College serves the diverse communities of the Midwest and the Nation by providing academic and co-curricular programs designed to educate students of all ages and backgrounds. The Simpson community therefore aspires to become the exemplar of comprehensive liberal arts colleges\(^1\) in the Midwest.

Mission Statement
Simpson College is an independent, selective, church-related, comprehensive, liberal-arts college dedicated to excellence in higher education.

The Simpson College community is equally committed to:

- Promoting integrative learning that enables students of all ages to develop intellectual and practical skills
- Nurturing values which foster personal worth and individuality within a creative, diverse and just community
- Graduating students who continue to grow as free, responsible and fulfilled individuals in the world of family, work, service and scholarship
- Drawing upon our relationship with the United Methodist Church and our religious traditions that guide us on issues of personal integrity, moral responsibility, social justice and global citizenship

Approved by the Board of Trustees on May 16, 2008

Introduction

Simpson College faces a variety of opportunities and challenges over the next five years. In the last decade, the number of high school graduates has declined by as much as one-fourth across the Midwest, but demand for access to higher education is projected to increase among other demographic groups. Students and families are concerned about their ability to afford higher education, but rightly demand excellent facilities and programs as defining features of their collegiate experience.

Simpson’s success in the midst of this environment depends on its decades-long commitment to fiscal responsibility. Pursuit of this plan is predicated on the College’s continuing alignment of its resources with its expenses. Thus, with that premise as its foundation, The Simpson Plan for 2019 outlines steps to enhance our academic programs; improve our campus facilities; refine our recruiting and retention strategies; and increase our financial, fundraising, and endowment resources. Attainment of these goals will ensure that Simpson College continues to guide students to success in their desire to pursue productive careers and lives filled with purpose.

\(^1\) The “comprehensive liberal arts college” typically refers to institutions whose curricula are based in the arts and sciences, but which also feature programs in business, education, nursing and other pre-professional disciplines. These colleges also often sponsor programs for non-residential students pursuing their baccalaureate degrees through evening, weekend, and online offerings.
I. Establish an institutional research office.

Institutional Research Initiatives

A. Assess and evaluate the efficacy of all College programs against national benchmark data by 2019.
B. Employ verifiable and reliable data to guide the College’s marketing, planning, and cost control activities by 2019.

II. Enhance Simpson College’s academic quality and strength.

Academic Initiatives

B. Organize Simpson’s academic affairs structure to reflect the College’s mission as a comprehensive liberal-arts college.
   i. Create a structure that allows the college to shelter a Phi Beta Kappa chapter within an appropriate division. Prepare for submission to Phi Beta Kappa in 2018 for review and acceptance in 2021.
   ii. Create by Fall 2015 a structure for the Division for Continuing and Graduate Programs to facilitate the design and implementation of high-quality degree programs, Continuing Education options, and customized courses that respond to market demand within central Iowa.
C. Establish Simpson’s co-curricular and experiential programs as distinctive among the region’s comprehensive liberal arts colleges.
   i. Secure funding to ensure the continuation of the Culver Center for Public Policy beyond 2019 and increase participation in Culver Center activities from 12 percent of the student body in 2014 to 25 percent in 2019.
   ii. Engage annually 10% of the traditional student body with Emerge@Simpson by Fall 2017, and 20% of the traditional student body engaged annually by 2019. The participation rate in 2014 is 4.7 percent.
   iii. Expand undergraduate research participation from 15 percent of the undergraduate day student body in 2014 to 25 percent of all undergraduate day students by 2019.
   iv. Secure funding to ensure the continuation of the Iowa History Center and increase participation in Iowa History Center activities from 11.7 percent of the student body in 2014 to 22 percent in 2019.
   v. Increase participation in study abroad programs from 14 percent of the undergraduate day student body in 2014 to 17 percent of all undergraduate day students by 2019.
   vi. Expand the percentages of students involved in the following forms of engaged learning:
      1. Increase curricular and co-curricular internships before graduation to 75% in 2019. Also, implement a tracking system for non-credit bearing internships as current system is not complete.
      2. Volunteer Service (co-curricular) from 50% in 2014 to 55% in 2019.
      3. Students experience of a Service-Learning Course from 40% in 2014 to 50% in 2019.
4. Establish a baseline for student involvement in co-curricular activities.

III. Continue recent improvements to Simpson College’s physical plant to enrich the learning and teaching environment.

Capital Initiatives

Identify and pursue funding for the construction of a facility or facilities that meet the College’s academic program priorities.

IV. Enroll and support students from Iowa, the Midwest, and internationally to maintain the College’s current enrollment profile of 1,350 to 1,400 full-time traditional undergraduates and a student/faculty ratio of approximately 14/1 and 375 to 425 Continuing and Graduate students.

Recruiting and Retention Initiatives

A. Create a marketing and recruiting plan that promotes the College’s value proposition, particularly in Iowa and the Midwest, by clearly documenting the career and graduate outcomes of Simpson alumni over the last twenty years. This plan should be fully developed, funded, and implemented by 2019.

B. Increase by 2019 the College’s retention for first-year students from its recent average of eighty percent to eighty-five percent; four-year graduation rate from 58.8 percent in 2014 to 65 percent; and six-year graduation rate from 66.7 percent in 2014 to 72 percent by enacting the recommendations of the Retention Task Force.

C. Increase by 2019 the proportion of international students from 1.2 percent of undergraduate day enrollment in 2014 to three percent; minority students from 9.5 percent to 15 percent; and out-of-state students from 18 percent to 25 percent of the overall student body by 2019. Appropriate resources will be developed to support these groups of students.

D. Implement the Transfer Task Force’s recommendations concerning articulation agreements with area community colleges, thereby maintaining an average incoming class of sixty to sixty-five transfer students through Fall 2019.

V. Secure the resources necessary to ensure Simpson College’s financial vitality.

Financial, Fundraising, and Endowment Initiatives

A. Explore alternative discounting models and affordability initiatives to ensure students’ ability to enroll at Simpson. Any new initiatives should be in place for the entering class of 2016 with an evaluation of any new models completed by 2019.

B. Increase non tuition revenues through the following strategies:
   i. Creating an Annual Fund endowment with a minimum of $1.5 million in gifts by June 1, 2015;
   ii. Increasing planned giving and endowment gifts from $786,093 in 2014 by one percent per year to $834,454 in 2019;
   iii. Raising Annual Fund gifts by five percent per year from $1,000,000 in FY2014 to $1,250,000 by FY2019; and
   iv. Increasing the number and total available amount of endowed scholarships to assist students with financial need by a minimum of five scholarships of $25,000 each per
year, or twenty-five new scholarships and $625,000 by 2019. The annual average since 2004 is $541,879.

C. Fund fully the faculty compensation plan developed in 2013 and devise and fund a similar plan for staff compensation by 2019.

D. Develop by June 1, 2016 a case statement to guide a five-year comprehensive campaign to build the endowment and to address the College’s academic and physical needs as described in Goals II and III. The second year of the silent phase of this campaign should be complete by May 31, 2019.

Conclusion

Attainment of these goals will secure Simpson College’s status as an exemplar of comprehensive liberal arts colleges in the Midwest by 2019. The College will demonstrate careful stewardship of its financial resources, thereby maintaining its historical commitment to fiscal responsibility. The College will also possess stronger academic programs grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, feature campus facilities that enhance the teaching and learning environment, recruit and retain a talented student body of all ages and backgrounds. These characteristics will ensure that Simpson College’s ability to advance its mission extends far into the future.