

Strategic Directions 2020

Notes from the Sisters of Saint Benedict

October 25, 2014

President Hinton and Jon McGee were invited to a Chapter Meeting of the Sisters of Saint Benedict to discuss the Strategic Directions 2020 planning process. They invited the Sisters to address the following questions:

It is 2020. What makes the College of Saint Benedict distinctive from its competition?

Participants were seated at tables in groups. Each table was asked to take notes summarizing their response to the question. The summary below represents the collective responses of all the tables. The notes have been organized by issue cluster. Rather than repeat ideas discussed at many tables, the notes below indicate how many times the idea appeared in conversation across all tables.

Development of the person-students (31):

- Values (9): Strong emphasis on how you live values; the values will be apparent being integrated in the lives of the students, graduates and communities; the moral values developed go into the future; life goals, development of person; emphasis on dignity and value of each person; emphasize "humanness" of all people, ecumenism and service, we raise of the value of the arts as a spiritual/human dimension of creativity/of being human; all departments/classes emphasize the basic "human" element of respect for person through their teaching of their subject; develop wholeness in each CSB student
- Respectfulness (3): Respect for self and other as a way of life; respectful openness and concern for various cultures and backgrounds; our co-circular will assist the students in addressing their ethical, moral, spiritual, developmental aspects of their lives
- Diversity (3): We are culturally diverse-live together benefitting each other respectfully; acceptance(study gifts of cultures) and understanding of the cultures (ethnic, economic status); we are raising the cultural role of women in all areas of social life/societal levels
- Authentic (2): Being authentic, true to ourselves; the students will be able to reflect on what they do and evaluate it rather than just doing what everyone else does
- Critical Thinking (2): Critical thinking about life issues; critical thinking and creative skills (not only knowledge but integrated wisdom); relational skills, including lived compassion, empathy, service
- Academic (2): Continue to strive for academic excellence that will prepare students for living the common good; competency skills
- Leadership (2): There are a significant number of graduates in leadership positions in society; students leave with a sense of confidence/leadership which enables them to do good well
- A healthy competitive spirit with genuine love for each other
- We are devoted to justice issues and to stewardship and sustainability
- Growth in wisdom toward adulthood
- Pride of belonging

- The schools will have seriously grappled with students' decision making, especially regarding drinking, sex, and degrading treatment of women. Young men and women will begin to stand up to and for each other
- Journey group focus for all students
- Students will be able to bridge their M-F values to sustain them over the weekend
- Willingness to work for the common good

Benedictine and Catholic Values and Identity (29)

- Benedictine identity, connections, and values will set CSB apart
- Learning, applying and integrating Benedictine Values and Spirituality; Benedictine charism - hospitality in welcoming students, faculty, and everyone at the college; Benedictine values are actually taught and encouraged as lived values (faculty models these values); Benedictine values are evident to and known by students; serve by listening; Benedictine values strong through the years
- Benedictine values taught in all disciplines by the faculty; they will lead and inspire the college whether or not the Benedictine sisters are present; Catholic-Benedictine founded on and continues the core values of our Benedictine communities; the college continues to focus on the rootedness, stability, and tradition of Benedictine values in our Midwestern setting; continue to foster the enduring stability of the Benedictine values; curricular integration of Benedictine values; firm grounding in our faith traditions along with deep respect for other faith traditions; intentional immersion in Benedictine values via a learning lab; strong leadership committed to incorporating the Benedictine heritages in all aspects of the educational experience
- Students will have a direct experience of the founder group and experience the Benedictine spirit first hand; the (lay) faculty integrate the core Benedictine values into their curriculum and their interactions with students; the Benedictine values live in the hearts and minds and spirit of the students in the world
- The lived reality of embracing the Benedictine values by students, administration, faculty and staff would make us distinctive from our competition; we are stronger because we are steeped in Benedictine values – which are integrated into life and demonstrate who we are as an institution; we will more broadly and strongly incorporate Benedictine values in the classrooms, administration and residence halls; faculty will be able to articulate our values; we will climb higher on the "value" list; courage of conviction which helps address problems immediately within our values

Monastic Connections (22):

- Legacy (4): stability of the monastery in close proximity; the fact that CSB/SJU campuses are located next to their founding monastic communities; we have a strong relationship between the founding monastery and the college; the legacy of the founders is consistently brought forward
- Can assume that there is prayer support from the resident monastery (i.e. St. Benedict's Monastery)
- Can worship together
- Common ministry action as CSB and Monastery develop a center or a cooperative venture
- Continued (active, caring) support of the college by the Monastery
- Participation in Liturgy of Hours
- Spiritual atmosphere

- The Monastery and the college will be more collaborative and connections will be more intentional and more consistent
- It is a Catholic, gospel-centered environment including social justice that is consistently lived
- Long tradition of social justice
- Opportunity to interface with adult women (OSB) who can witness and dialog about how values influence our lives
- A continued welcome to students of all religious and ethnic backgrounds
- The heartbeat of the monastery will continue 24/7 for the students
- Transparency and collaboration between the monastery and the college with planning and goals
- Spiritual development and growth should be as strong as the other aspects of the liberal arts
- Students (present and past) know that there is always a "presence" here at St. Bens among the Sisters & faculty and that gives a stability
- Show respect for how students live their religious values - space and dialogue on and for all religious beliefs
- Benedictine Friends program among Sisters and students remains very strong

Institutional Missions (20):

- Sustainability (3): Institutional commitment to stewardship and sustainability; commitment to racial justice, critical thinking (e.g. sustainability); sustainability goes on, implementing, learning, developing solutions
- Collaboration between CSB and SJU (2): Continue strong collaboration with SJU; maintain distinctive identity for women in leadership
- Affordability for students (2): we will welcome woman Latinos and we will find a way to make the school affordable; scholarships established to encourage students of color and or disadvantaged in some way
- Capitalize on students abroad, bring their experience here and open our eyes to the needs here
- Every student can identify a mentor within the college
- Managing conflict
- Mission enhancement
- Mission oriented (St. Cloud Hospital is a good role model in this regard)
- Move diversity into the future to a world that has lost respectful and welcoming dialogue
- Proactive and quick responses to incidents which go against the values of the college
- We have created an alternative way of being that is not overly dependent on technology
- We will continue to have students who are first generation from this area, and who don't have the opportunities many Ivy League students might
- Why don't we have a full time mission effectiveness person on staff with training?
- Faculty, staff and student body mutually respect diversity and are appreciative of the diverse groups
- Maintain and strengthen a personal integrity as we address problems
- We stand out as an intergenerational campus-seniors interacting with traditional age students via classes, growing discussion

Community (17):

- Residential community (4): all students living on campuses, community; a place - a common area; CSB is rural and it is small, hence attractive to students; highly residential
- A community spirit with concern for each other

- A strong, accepting community
- Community and individual volunteer service on a consistent basis to underserved (including students, faculty and staff)
- Creation of community
- International students feel accepted and a vital part of the college community
- Sense of community; living experience of "negotiating" in order to develop integrative respect for one another
- Strong historical experience of community
- Students have sense of community, service, respect for and acceptance of a multicultural student body
- We are known for our sense of community in a digital world
- Unique relationship with SJU - live as a community of women. Work, learn, and socialize with women and men.
- Sharing a common effort of hospitality or spirituality as in a center
- St. Bens is trying to capitalize on campus community rather than off campus attractions (fewer online classes, etc.)

Liberal Arts (8):

- A continued emphasis on the liberal arts not only in the classrooms, but in students development and in all student activities
- Alumnae regard themselves as having a responsibility for supporting the colleges in the liberal arts and values
- Liberal arts will be strong
- Liberal arts promoted, which appears to not be true in many similar institutions
- Strong liberal arts college that is known for how its core values shape interpersonal relationships; women's college
- The liberal arts are front and center
- With a president like Mary, values will be stressed with the liberal arts
- Focus on meaning, more than transactional goals

Friendships/Relationships (5):

- On-going relationships with the monastic community
- Lasting friendships among students and alums
- Learning and living in deep friendships within the community among people of diverse views and backgrounds
- Hospitality – alumnae are always welcomed back
- Hospitality to foster the integration of all

What do you think we need to do over the next five years to prepare for that role?

Sisters Involvement in the College (16):

- Continue to invite sisters to events - sports, cultural, academic
- Work with student development on integration of OSB values
- Reinstate required component of in-service for faculty/staff on Benedictine History/Spirituality/Practices

- Let us explain the Oblate program to faculty and students somewhere, somehow.
- Prioress and President meetings
- Library displays and presentations about Sisters past/present in college (invite sisters to speak in class)
- Sisters as residential staff - employment in student development
- Strong leader(s) to get faculty and staff on board with Benedictine values and utilizing our gifts, education, skills, and experience
- Use of oblates in the role of relationships to our students
- Increase possibilities of Sisters working in the college on a volunteer/stipend basis
- Revive the pageant through the theater department
- Sisters in Campus Ministry (a presence as mentors, spiritual direction Monastery and College actively seek out potential Sister employees)
- Personal mentorship with college staff on history of community, OSB values, etc.
- Scholarships/support for faculty/staff to participate in programs at Spirituality Center
- Build an intentional community with Sisters and students. Intergenerational connection to build respect
- Continue to invite students to participate in liturgical "activities"/ministries (readers etc.)

Development of the Sisters (13):

- Positions-programs (5): Prepare a Sister(s) to fulfill the role of Mission Effectiveness at CSB; a mission enhancement person; a Sister Chaplain is such a wonderful asset-> can we have that as a priority?; new "program" connections can be explored, be creative - ask the students
- Technology (4): Beef up technology/computer availability and how to use for common/regular contact between Sisters and the college; learn to use social media well
- Increase our vocation efforts
- Newer members are connected and have an experience of the college atmosphere/vitality/purpose
- Stress collaborative efforts, activities
- Stress spiritual roots of Sisters - beginning of the college and hopefully our life on CSB campus
- The college provide scholarships to Sisters (future members?)

Benedictine Friends/Companions on a Journey (10):

- Continue Benedictine Friends, rethinking how to do this with fewer sisters. Same with Companions on a Journey - include oblates and volunteers closely connected with us
- Continuing Companions on a Journey
- Creatively find ways to continue the Benedictine Friends Connection!
- Strengthen Benedictine Friends program and Companions on a Journey
- Benedictine friends enhanced with new aims
- Create a Benedictine Advisory group of Sisters and former Benedictine friends
- Keep Benedictine Friends program
- Continue and support the Benedictine friends program
- Continue Journey Program and Benedictine Friends-financial support would help to raise status of the program
- Build up and support Companions on a Journey

Sister's involvement in teaching (8):

- Have sisters as guest speakers to classes
- Professors need to know Sisters are available to share their way of life
- FYS= a sister would go into the class to teach something on the Benedictine Heritage
- Develop ways of teaching our history
- Invite us to classes to share who we are
- We need to be invited to speak in classes in areas of our expertise
- Sisters might be involved in orientation of (new) faculty, staff, and students to convey the Benedictine spirit and mission, heritage, and legacy.
- Invite sisters into a great variety of classrooms as part of panel discussion

Sister's prayers (8):

- Let students know Sisters pray three times a day, etc. Monastic way of life is a Christian way of life
- Keep in mind that there will be sisters who hope for a direct and ongoing contact with students
- Pray for our students that they learn to hear God's call
- Emphasis in prayers, etc.
- Start BAC program later - recognize prayer hour of sisters. State in BAC material-BAC built by the sisters
- Having prayer partners
- Prayer opportunities
- Develop a prayer service for each class similar to the opening event of first year students welcome in chapel, hosted by the Sisters

Other (6):

- Having small group discussions about values, history: integrating it all
- If more young people enter our monastic community some could be encouraged to live-in; or be a monastic presence at CSB
- Videos could be made now to be used in orientation, as fewer sisters are available
- We could use some coaching in how to interact with students - have the communication start where they are at
- We have to walk our talk: we don't compromise our values; our political and economic values are consistent

What role can, and should, the Sisters play in the college in 2020?

- Teaching or staffing (8): Teaching on faculty by those qualified and younger, as well as staff; continue to serve on the Board of Trustees; intentional participation in the classrooms: we need to be very visible-ex.to be RDs n the residence halls as many as possible; have a role in orienting students, faculty, and staff; sisters prepared to work within the College through employment within the college; sisters help to hire, train, and provide ongoing support for faculty and staff in the acceptance and promotion of Benedictine values; sister coordinating mission integration of all the campus; continue tradition of including monastic community in orientation

- Mentoring (7): Define mentoring roles for Sisters; enhance our mentoring of students; involve Sisters in informal ways; Benedictine friends; sisters mentoring students; become innovative with our relationship with students: Benedictine friends-too many students, fewer sisters
- Other (11): Integrate Sister Emeritus into planning process/classes/advisory etc.; we need to prepare/invite the Oblate to also share our values; continue to pass the torch (candle) at President's Dinner; we need to have a presence on campus even when our number is few, it is important; have a concrete, personal presence around the campus; helping to make the Benedictine values more concrete and real in a person's life through conversation and activity; Journey group model; continue being a presence for prayer, worship, mentoring, friendship-to encourage, their spiritual lives and development as individuals; a strong presence of hospitality and of imbedding the Benedictine values; prayer partners - communicate one on one