

## Quick Summary: Renewal Commission and the Plan for Antioch

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- I. Trustee recognition of past, present, and future.
  - A. For 25 years, chronic low enrollment and financial instability resistant to administrative intervention, fiscal discipline, and budgetary control.
  - B. Faculty plummeted from more than 150 to less than 40; students from more than 2400 to less than 600.
  - C. Specialized programs (Business, Education, Engineering) were abandoned as size of faculty declined; too few faculty left to mount a comprehensive program in liberal arts; No reason to expect improvement without radical change.
  - D. Without improvement, College was headed toward bankruptcy and closure.
  
- II. Trustee commitment to put the College on a secure foundation.
  - A. Develop a plan for the future: Antioch College for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
  - B. Create a commission led by Chancellor and Board Chair, with significant representation of (a) external authorities in U.S. higher education, (b) Antioch College faculty, (c) Antioch College students, and (d) Antioch College staff.
  - C. Over nine months commission held ten meetings of two days each, nine of them in Yellow Springs. As shape of new plan became evident, it was presented to the Board for

confirmation and approval to proceed. Faculty and students at Antioch College kept continuously informed.

- D. As first final draft was completed, it was submitted to an external panel of five distinguished authorities on liberal arts colleges. Commission met individually with each member for 90 minutes of discussion. Each member submitted a written evaluation. After final draft was completed, the five members submitted a joint report of evaluation. Evaluations of individual members of the panel were constructively helpful and uniformly enthusiastic, as was the final joint report.
- E. Report submitted to the Board for approval one year after Commission was established; approved by the Board June 6, 2004.
- F. Commission aimed for 18 months of planning and preparation, with initial implementation scheduled for Fall 2006; Antioch College faculty decided to accelerate schedule and implementation began Fall 2005.

### III. The Plan for Antioch.

- A. Renewal Commission described its report as defining a “strategic direction;” tactics and execution were to be the responsibility of the Antioch College community.
- B. Built on four “foundational commitments” true to the spirit of Horace Mann, Arthur Morgan, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century story of Antioch College.
  - 1. *Liberal education.*
  - 2. *Education for the advancement of the human condition.*

3. *Experiential learning (co-op plan, but also service learning, internships, field studies, community projects, education abroad).*
  4. *Learning in a diverse and inclusive community.*
- C. Added a fifth commitment: *student-centered, problem-focused learning.*
- D. Heart of the plan is the idea of Experiential Learning Communities.
1. Learning communities emerged in higher education in the past 25 years as innovative ways to deliver higher education.
  2. Learning communities have been shown to improve learning of academic subject matter and also sharply raise rates of student retention.
  3. Learning communities are built around a single theme, such as imagination, matter in the universe, or economic justice.
  4. Learning communities are like courses, taught in a single semester by teams of 2-3 faculty from different disciplines who collaborate with each other and with students in teaching and learning about the theme while also teaching and learning fundamental facts and methods of specific academic disciplines; a student might take two learning community courses in one semester.
  5. Learning communities are economically efficient because a team of, for example, 3 faculty could teach as many as 45 students in a single learning community, resulting in a student: faculty ratio of 15:1.

6. Antioch learning communities would seek to include experiential learning, including some element of service learning, community-based project, or field study as part of each community; Antioch learning communities would also extend to co-op job experiences and would exploit internet technologies to bring students who were physically at great distances apart together for on-line study.
7. Most co-op jobs would be concentrated in specific locations where a critical mass of co-op students would be able to get together regularly under the direction of a local Antioch co-op academic coordinator for common study of a topic while they were also independently as individuals working on their jobs.

E. Strong liberal education.

1. Faculty will define challenging standards of knowledge for liberal education in humanities & arts, social science, and natural & physical science; also included will be high competence in written and oral expression and in mathematical skill.
2. Authentic assessment exercises will be designed by the faculty to test each student to see whether these standards have been met; some assessments will likely include external examiners from well-known high-quality institutions of higher learning.
3. This standards-based outcomes-oriented process will ensure that each graduate will have acquired a liberal education.

4. Students can acquire the knowledge needed to pass the liberal education assessments through instruction from Antioch faculty, courses taken at other institutions, or independent study guided by Antioch faculty.

F. Cultural & Intellectual Freedom.

1. A center will be established with the mission to embed cultural and intellectual freedom, diversity, and inclusion into Antioch's core values, principles, and competencies [This provision resulted in a Trustee gift that made possible the establishment of the Coretta Scott King Center].
2. The Center will assist the administration in meeting the goals of the Center and will sponsor a variety of events in keeping with its mission.

G. Physical facilities and technology support will be systematically modernized, through renovation and new capital construction.

IV. Summary: A transformational vision for a college of the future.

- A. Uncompromising commitment to liberal education.
- B. Infused throughout with experiential interdisciplinary problem-focused learning.
- C. Civic virtue in a functional community characterized by responsibility, accountability, and social justice.
- D. Fiscally responsible and oriented toward a progressive future.

