

CHAPTER **3**

Mission

CHAPTER 3

Mission

*CRITERION 1: Youngstown State University
Has Clear and Publicly Stated Purposes
Consistent with Its Mission and Appropriate to an Institution of Higher Education*

Part I: Establishing a Vision

HISTORY AND PROCESS

YSU 2000: A Vision for a Premier Metropolitan University, published and distributed in December 1994 to faculty, staff, and other members of the University's internal and external constituencies, sets forth the revised mission and purposes of the University and describes their development. The *Youngstown State University Mission and Goals Statement*, printed in *YSU 2000* and other University materials such as the graduate and undergraduate catalogs, emerged out of a statement-review process.

YSU initiated a campus-wide participatory process for developing a functional mission statement during the 1992–93 academic year. Then, in April 1993, the Ohio Board of Regents requested that public colleges and universities submit a formal "Statement of Mission and Goals" by January 1, 1994.

The president delegated operational responsibility for preparing the statement to the Office of the Provost. To initiate the process, departments and colleges prepared draft statements of missions and goals. During summer 1993, a Task Force on Mission and Goals reviewed these and other materials generated in the past at the state and University levels in preparation for developing a draft statement for the University. The Task Force included individuals from throughout the University, involving representatives from the four University divisions as they were then constituted—Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Business and Financial Affairs, and Advancement and Institutional Affairs—as well as faculty members from the Academic Senate and the Academic Planning Committee of the Senate.

The Task Force met regularly during July and August as a group and in subgroups. During September and October, the Task Force drafted the *Youngstown State University Mission and Goals Statement* and presented it to members of the University community for review. YSU is particularly proud of this broad-based process in which even the drafting was done by a cross section of University personnel, with review by all University personnel. On November 10, 1993, the Academic Senate overwhelmingly approved the following mission statement. It received unanimous approval by the Board of Trustees on December 20, 1993, and was formally accepted by the Ohio Board of Regents.

Upon completion of the *Mission and Goals Statement*, the process of establishing mission, goals, and objectives was expanded to units on campus. The University developed a strategic plan to achieve the goals, and progress toward that plan is reviewed annually. The mission statement, which follows, is central to the life of the University. Adherence to that mission is evident throughout the self-study report, and this chapter concludes with examples of the connection between mission and action.

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY MISSION AND GOALS STATEMENT

Mission

Youngstown State University strives to create a teaching and learning environment that promotes academic excellence, fosters intellectual growth and scholarship, focuses on the needs of students and the community, and reflects an awareness of cultural and global perspectives and concerns. The University is dedicated to outstanding teaching; to quality research and scholarly activity, both in the traditional sense and as they relate to classroom instruction and needs of the service region; and to responsible public service—addressing the employment and economic needs of the region as a whole; providing knowledge, resources, and leadership to assist area schools, busi-

nesses, industries, agencies, and governments; and taking measures to enhance the quality of life for the constituencies it serves.

Youngstown State University aspires to provide an environment in which students can enrich their minds, their creativity, and their problem-solving abilities, so that they may become fully developed individuals; informed, conscientious, and productive citizens; and responsible and understanding partners with others in life, family, and work. The University strives to prepare students for the future, that they may play active roles in shaping it. To these ends, the University seeks to integrate the best elements of the long tradition of humanistic, liberal education in the arts and sciences with education in the most significant advancements in technology, health, engineering, education, business, and the applied arts.

The University is committed to fostering an understanding of the connections between and among teaching, scholarship, and service. The University seeks faculty who combine these elements in ways that bring excitement to the classroom, studio, clinic, and laboratory, stimulating enthusiasm and eagerness for learning in students. The University endeavors to enhance the educational experience by providing out-of-class development and support as well as cocurricular opportunities and services. The primary test of the University's effectiveness is the high quality of its graduates, the kinds of lives they lead, their accomplishments, and their service to society. In this sense, teaching and learning, research and scholarship, University and public service are seen not only as interrelated but also as fundamental to endeavors both within and outside the University.

As a state-assisted metropolitan university, Youngstown State University provides a wide range of opportunities in higher education primarily, but not exclusively, to the residents of northeastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. The University espouses the principles of equal opportunity, affirmative action, and broad access to education: academic access through open admission for all Ohio high school graduates to a wide range of programs; economic access through reasonable tuition and a comprehensive program of financial aid; and programmatic access through careful attention to the collective and individual needs of all its various constituencies: degree and nondegree students; transfer students; commuters and noncommuters; traditional and nontraditional students; associate, baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral students; as well as others encompassed by the Youngstown State University mission.

Purposes and Goals

The Youngstown State University mission finds focus in six areas of purpose that have characterized the institution in the past and that with renewed attention will continue to guide the University in the future. These purposes, which are interrelated and of equal importance, will lead the University in establishing goals and objectives to support its mission into the twenty-first century.

Purpose 1: Integration of Teaching, Scholarship, and Service

Youngstown State University strives to promote an understanding of teaching, scholarship, and service as inseparable, interactive components of its educational mission. In the context of this purpose, the University defines the following goals:

- *to foster an understanding within and beyond the campus, especially among the public, that teaching, scholarship, and service are fundamentally interrelated and supportive of one another;*
- *to encourage, support, and reward faculty who in their professional activity demonstrate the interaction of teaching, scholarship, and service;*
- *to help students understand the relationships among what they learn in class, in academic and extracurricular activity beyond the classroom, and in their professional, personal, and societal lives after graduation; and*
- *to develop opportunities for students both to apply classroom learning in contexts outside the classroom (e.g. internships, co-operative education, public service activities) and to enrich the classroom through knowledge and experiences they bring from outside.*

Purpose 2: Teaching and Learning

Youngstown State University endeavors to enhance the quality of the educational experience of its students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In the context of this purpose, the University defines the following goals:

- *to review and strengthen existing programs and selectively develop new undergraduate and graduate programs with a view toward enhancing the quality and diversity of educational offerings, serving needs of the metropolitan community, and fostering connections within and beyond the University;*
- *to encourage activities that chart appropriate directions in existing programs through revitalized curricula and innovative approaches to teaching and learning;*
- *to continue to update the campus learning environment through technologies, equipment, resources, and facilities to serve the needs of students, faculty, and staff; and*
- *to offer faculty opportunities for professional development focused on teaching and learning.*

Purpose 3: Access and Diversity

Recognizing its obligations to metropolitan Youngstown and to the world well beyond the region, Youngstown State University aspires to widen the access it provides to people and ideas, striving to create a diverse educational, work,

and community environment. In the context of this purpose, the University defines the following goals:

- *to maintain and improve accessibility to University services and programs by continuing to offer a broad range of courses (developmental to honors; certificate, two-year, four-year, and graduate); keeping tuition costs reasonable; enhancing pre-admission, enrollment, and other support services; and developing two-plus-two programs and articulation agreements with other institutions to enable students to move from two-year to four-year programs with little or no loss of credits;*
- *to increase retention through enhancement of developmental, tutorial, advisement, dependant-care, adult-learner, multicultural, and other services that support the broad educational mission of the University;*
- *to promote ethnic, gender, and academic diversity through the recruitment and nurturing of minority students, faculty, staff, and administrators and underrepresented populations—student and employee—who have not traditionally come to Youngstown State University;*
- *to create and implement international programming to diversify the education of students, attract international students and faculty, and serve the academic, cultural, and economic needs of the metropolitan region; and*
- *to market the University, its programs, and services for purposes of promoting access and diversity, expanding enrollment, and increasing University prominence at all levels: regional, state, national, and global.*

Purpose 4: Research and Scholarly Activity

Believing that the quality of education and public service is grounded in scholarship, Youngstown State University seeks to encourage and support research and scholarly and professional activity that strengthen its educational and service missions. In the context of this purpose, the University defines the following goals:

- *to promote and support an expanded understanding of the nature of scholarship—an understanding both that scholarship is fundamental to the academic enterprise and that its definition is legitimately inclusive, accommodating not only pure and applied research but also scholarship related to teaching and learning and to public service;*
- *to encourage scholarly activity that involves students and the expanding service region, fostering the interaction of the various dimensions of the University mission;*
- *to offer increased support to faculty and others who seek external funding for their scholarship and related professional activity; and*
- *to sustain and enhance internal support for scholarly activity through such measures as internal grants, travel funds, library resources, research assistants, and scholarly/research assignments.*

Purpose 5: Connections with the Community

Youngstown State University desires to strengthen its commitment to the greater Youngstown metropolitan community, adding new dimensions to its public service activities. In the context of this purpose, the University defines the following goals:

- *to provide leadership, knowledge, resources, services, and activities to address the cultural, intellectual, technological, economic, and social needs of the expanding service region;*
- *to clarify, support, and enhance the missions of campus units whose primary function is public service (e.g., Public Service Institute, Technology Development Corporation, University Outreach);*
- *to encourage the integration of public service activity within the educational and scholarly arenas across the University; and*
- *to identify and pursue opportunities within the community for focused public service activity and alliances (e.g., with area schools, with local businesses and industries, with governmental agencies).*

Purpose 6: Institutional Environment

Youngstown State University values collegiality and mutual respect and thus strives to build an environment that fosters productive professional relationships among individuals and groups on campus. In the context of this purpose, the University defines the following goals:

- *to recognize the inherent worth of all individuals in the University community;*
- *to encourage continuing and collegial conversation within and across units and programs;*
- *to refine and develop structures to involve all individuals in the University appropriately and collegially in decision-making processes concerning planning, priorities, and allocation of resources; and*
- *to enhance communication among the Divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Business and Financial Affairs, and Advancement and Institutional Affairs as they work together to facilitate the University mission.*

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

In addition to stating the University's mission and goals, **YSU 2000** set forth a vision of YSU as a premier metropolitan university:

As a premier metropolitan institution, YSU will be oriented toward productive change and focused on academic excellence. The University will be open to the public it serves, responsive to the educational needs of the region, and flexible in its response to both. The University will have a clear focus on quality and service. It will stress quality of service in the formal and informal learning environments and administrative support service areas. The institution will adopt a consumer orientation and be committed to the philosophy of continuous quality improvement. Its focus on quality and service assumes an open, interactive, collegial atmosphere that fosters the interdependence of teaching, scholarship, and service and engenders a cooperative spirit among its instructional and support units. Externally, the University will serve as a catalyst for constructive community change and be dedicated to forming partnerships with business, industry, education, and various agencies throughout the region. Its educational, cultural, and intercollegiate athletic programs will enrich the community and enhance the interaction of the University and the community it serves.

The purposes of a premier metropolitan university are based on a shared commitment to excellence. The University asks broad participation and fosters open communication. It strives to create and nurture a sense of community grounded in mutual trust and respect among students, faculty, and staff members. It facilitates involvement in intellectual and cultural activities, encourages informal interaction among its various constituencies, and provides an open atmosphere that enables an amicable expression of difference. In its activities, the institution promotes the achievement of excellence by all members of the University community.

Part II: Enacting the Vision

Through shared responsibility for developing the mission statement—and through processes that connect mission and actions—members of the Youngstown State University community have developed a shared understanding of its purposes. The remaining chapters of this self-study report examine the University's progress in achieving academic excellence, in translating values and intentions into action, and in forging the types of connections articulated in the *Youngstown State University Mission and Goals Statement*.

The organization of human, physical, and financial resources is driven by the mission. Examples, elaborated upon in Chapter 4, include:

- development of advisory councils to involve more of the University community in decision making;
- increased fund raising and grant seeking to achieve the University's expanded vision;
- new physical facilities, such as the honors residence, consistent with institutional priorities;

- increasing expectations in hiring, promoting, and tenuring faculty; and
- instructional equipment, budget, and position allocation procedures that require departments to address the connection between their requests and mission and goals.

The University has given substance to its vision of becoming a premier metropolitan university. Chapter 5 describes the contributions of each college to the six institutional purposes, as well as institution-wide efforts such as the following:

- integrating teaching, scholarship, and service by involving students in research that serves the community;
- facilitating access and diversity through establishment of the Center for International Studies and Programs;
- connecting with the community through Metropolitan College sites;
- recognizing research and scholarship of students and faculty in the annual Quest celebration; and
- creating a positive institutional environment by bringing faculty, staff, and students together in social, cultural, and athletic events.

The strategic plan articulated in *YSU 2000* emerged from a deliberative process of examining the mission statement. Chapter 6 analyzes the interaction of mission, planning, and assessment, including

- strategies for implementing the vision statement;
- development of mission and goal statements by individual departments and units;
- setting of goals by faculty and administrators to align individual goals with those of the institution; and
- procedures to assess progress toward the strategic plan.

Chapter 7 considers whether the University's stated values of academic freedom, access and diversity, and mutual trust are evident in its practices. The relationship between mission and practice can be seen in activities such as

- development of an institutional statement of ethics;
- allocation of significant financial support for gender equity in athletics; and
- changes in collective bargaining toward less adversarial processes.

Conclusions

Youngstown State University meets Criterion 1.

The Youngstown State University mission is clearly defined; publicly stated in *YSU 2000* and other University materials; and—with its emphasis on strong academic programs—“appropriate to an institution of higher education.” At the same time, the YSU mission is cohesive and distinctive in its focus on fostering connections: connections among teaching, scholarship, and service; connections among units within the University; and connections with the larger metropolitan area.

The collaboratively developed mission represents the values of the University community and focuses the actions of its individual units. One of the institution’s greatest strengths, as evidenced throughout this self-study document, is that its actions are guided by its mission and purposes.

