

**Stewardship Task Force  
Final Recommendations  
May 10, 2009**

**I. *Strategic Initiative 5.1: Support and nurture vocational discernment of all who work at Gustavus.***

To stand apart in today's highly competitive global culture we all must make the necessary investments to reveal the best in others. For Gustavus, that means partnering with employees as they define their lives of service to the College and community.

Much more than an occupation, one's true vocation is the manner in which one's life benefits others. Dr. Darrell Jodock, Drell and Adeline Bernhardson Distinguished Professor of Religion, wrote in *Vocational Discernment – A Comprehensive College Program*, "We understand vocation to be a sense of responsibility encompassing multiple areas of one's life (work, family, citizenship, etc.) so that the person lives life in such a way as to benefit the community.

The Stewardship Task Force envisioned attracting, developing, and retaining great employees by ensuring Gustavus is a great place to work. This would be accomplished by investing in the life and well-being of all employees, using a holistic approach that includes physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness opportunities.

Satisfaction Benchmarks

**Create benchmarks for Gustavus to regularly measure employee satisfaction.**

Building on many current strengths and a history of being a leader in the area of workplace satisfaction, develop the most effective tools using both higher education and private industry benchmarks, such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education* survey and *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal*.

Overall Employee Satisfaction

**Conduct regular surveys to assess workplace satisfaction. This may include conducting an internal survey and participating in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* "Great Colleges to Work For" survey.**

Culture of Participation

**Review, revamp, and create new structures as needed to further develop a culture of participation in decision-making, in which supervisors look to employees for solutions and there is broad ownership in the future of Gustavus.**

One result could be a “good ideas program” to ask for input and provide information that regularly asks, “What do you think would make your job/office better?” The scope of this initiative could range from utilizing a suggestion box with posted responses to print/online resources, large group meetings, and small or one-on-one meetings.

#### Faculty Support

**Provide the funding and staffing needed for the Kendall Center to strengthen its position as a national model for faculty development and support.**

#### Employee Orientation Task Force

**Create a Task Force for the 2009–10 academic year, to develop a proposal for administrators and staff employee orientation including an assessment of current practices and researching best practices for the start-up training of new employees.**

#### Orientation

**Implement an effective and ongoing orientation for administrators and staff.**

Orientation should include job skills, college history, traditions, Gustavus culture, value of liberal arts, faith/church relatedness, ongoing advancement, and personal growth opportunities.

#### Flexible Schedule

**Review, modify, and create policies that provide a flexible schedule for employees within the parameters of meeting an employee’s job requirements and the needs of the department.**

#### Mentoring

**Develop and implement a mentoring program for all new employees to enhance peer development, improve communication, and establish relationships outside departmental boundaries.**

Mentors should be at a peer level and outside the employee’s department.

#### Professional Development for All Employees

**Create a model for employee enrichment based on the principle that each year each employee will participate in a professional development or skill development initiative driven by the interest of the employee.**

This should be presented so it is perceived as a benefit to employees, not a requirement or burden. This may also require improving the communication mechanism of notifying employees

of opportunities and encouraging a supportive approach by supervisors and co-workers in covering release time.

#### Extended Professional Development

**Explore the interest, feasibility, philosophy, and logistics of supporting and encouraging professional development leaves for administrators and staff.**

#### Vocational Reflection

**Create a culture of supervisory support for staff and administrators to participate in identifying and utilizing their strengths to become more fulfilled, better performing employees.**

This may include discussions, book groups, and retreats created and sponsored by the Center for Vocational Reflection.

#### Center for Vocational Reflection

**Secure permanent funding for the Center for Vocational Reflection to ensure it continues to serve as the catalyst to train and support mentoring and reflection within the Gustavus community.**

#### Health and Wellness

**Create a comprehensive employee wellness model (physical, spiritual, emotional, mental), with a goal that 100 percent of employees participate in at least one aspect of the program each year.**

Study private industry for best practices. This could expand current offering of health and wellness education seminars, fitness incentives, and health screenings. This includes providing release time for participation.

#### Internal Temporary Staff

**Develop staff/student positions to be trained to serve as internal rotating or temporary workers being matched with departments to meet short-term/seasonal needs.**

### **Recognition Programs**

#### **1. Formal Recognition**

**Create an ad hoc committee to review the philosophy, selection criteria, selection process, and recognition ceremony for administrator and staff recognition awards to ensure they are aligned with the College's mission, values, and intended purpose.**

#### **2. Informal Recognition Program**

**Explore the purpose, desired outcomes, and implementation methods of an informal or lower-level recognition program focused on celebrating the Gustavus community and enhancing a culture of appreciation.**

**3. Years of Service**

**Create an ad hoc committee to review the years of service and retirement recognition events and awards, using both higher education and private sector best practice examples, to ensure current practices provide meaningful appreciation for the majority of employees.**

**4. Employee Non-work Passion**

**Create a streamlined process to collect and disseminate stories on and off campus (online, in print, and within the physical plant) about staff and administrators living their passion (hobbies or special interests) outside of work.**

When there is interest from the employee, find ways to showcase, display, teach, or celebrate these passions with the Gustavus community.

Office of Human Resource

**Relocate the Office of Human Resources.**

This would move the office out of the basement of Uhler Hall to a disability-accessible space, providing a more convenient location for job applicants and employees, and removing the exception, to an otherwise campus-wide practice, of having all residence halls secure 24 hours per day.

Human Resources Staffing

**Increase Human Resource staffing to one full-time Human Resources staff for every 125 regularly budgeted employees.**

**II. *Strategic Initiative 5.2: Increase engagement with our alumni to enable them to actively advance and engage in the mission of the College.***

The overarching goal is to recognize and celebrate alumni as a core asset to the College— sending them forth with the responsibility to be stewards of the institution and actively involving them as stakeholders in advancing the institution by harnessing their diverse strengths and skills. Gustavus should view alumni relations as a significant, ongoing institutional priority and be intentional about incorporating best practices in alumni relations to provide alumni with the resources and tools to advance the goals of the institution.

### Philosophy for Alumni Engagement

**Devise a Gustavus “Philosophy for Alumni Engagement”—transforming the alumni continuum; imparting a vision for lifelong, symbiotic relationships that commences during the admission process; delineating and instilling the identity of a “Gustie” that details the pre-, during-, and post-college experience; and developing a sense of ownership of the institution that is accompanied by certain defined benefits and responsibilities.**

### Defining Honorary Alumni

**Re-imagine and broaden granting “honorary” alumni status for parents, staff, friends, and former board members/volunteers of Gustavus.**

The Alumni Board should determine criteria, process, and privileges to more effectively “adopt” non-graduates and include these people in programs to intentionally keep them engaged long term.

### Showcase Alumni

**Spotlight and celebrate the achievements (both professional and personal) of alumni more widely throughout campus.**

This may include: creating outdoor/indoor, revolving interactive installations of alumni achievements; filling building walls with the rich history and pictures of alumni; expanding alumni class notes/letters to include information beyond employment (volunteer, service, or special interests) and establishing a policy to purchase every book authored by alumni. The spirit of this recommendation can be encapsulated in a phrase such as “Mark of a Gustie” or “We are Gustavus.”

### Embodiment of Core Values

**Revamp or create methods to highlight individuals, alumni, and others who embody the core values of Gustavus.**

Possibilities could involve utilizing College awards (e.g., Distinguished Alumni Citation), print/electronic communications, selecting a person and/or speaker of the year for each core value (e.g., Gustavus Adolphus College Service Speaker of the Year).

### Merchandise Branding

**Strengthen the Gustavus brand and build alumni pride by creating alumni-focused merchandise and marketing.**

This may include merchandise styles and colors, dynamic online shopping, alumni-focused marketing specials such as free shipping or discounts, and developing an alumni merchandise advisory committee.

### Alumni Center

**Create an on-campus alumni center to serve as a visible sign of the institution’s commitment to alumni and their role in the ongoing success of Gustavus.**

This is important because alumni are the living exemplars of Gustavus, its core values, and its brand promise. This space should occupy a highly visible location in close connection with the Office of Admission.

Committee on External Constituents

**Convene a new committee from the President’s Office on external constituents to meet on a regular basis to discuss collaboration in communication and programs.**

Members would include a representative from Admission, Advancement, Alumni Relations, Church Relations, Marketing and Communication, Athletics, Dining Service, and Parent Relations.

Reinvent Alumni Leadership Model

**Revamp the alumni leadership model to build and sustain a mutually-supportive, broad-based level of engagement and service with Gustavus.**

Possible activities include: involving more alumni within each class leadership committee and accommodating specialization to cover the many leadership roles (i.e., class letters, annual giving, class reunions); automating class updates and connections (to avoid lengthy manual process for current class letter writing); assigning personnel to engage a specific list of classmates; tapping into volunteers by soliciting interest-specific involvement; diversifying the voices from whom Gustavus seeks participation; and setting term limits to ensure new energy and fresh perspectives.

**ENGAGEMENT**

The goal of engagement is to knit populations together for exchange of information and involvements utilizing a variety of methods to bring to life and integrate the Gustavus brand, mission, and core values.

**Communication Engagement**

Information Gathering

**Actively gather new and different information from alumni and use information to drive alumni engagement—online, at events, face to face, in print (*The Gustavus Quarterly*, class letters, newsletters), virtually, through social networking, and with video programming.**

This involves providing appropriate levels of database support to track, disseminate, secure, and mine the information gathered.

Communication Preferences

**Explore methods to track and use alumni communication preferences for delivery type, messaging, and topic content to make 25 percent of communication to any alumnus permission-based, personalized, and customized.**

This includes policies and procedures to track and support the option for alumni to receive information online vs. print.

#### Assess Communication

**Be recognized within five years as a best-practice college in alumni communication.**

Through a collaboration between the Advancement and Marketing and Communication Divisions, devise the appropriate communications tools (online and print) to systematize the means and messaging for engaging alumni and celebrating their diverse perspectives and achievements.

#### Communication Advisory Group

**Establish a Communication Advisory Group.**

This would consist of alumni, parents, and friends who are professionals in communications who provide counsel about content, design, and functionality of communications tools to increase alumni engagement.

#### Communication Message

**Create guidelines for alumni communication by developing a ratio for contacts containing any reference or request for money compared to non-giving contacts.**

The goal is to increase the number of “touches” with alumni based on industry standards around building loyalty. Meeting this goal would require a systemic approach to track all alumni contacts and target alumni communication and contacts.

#### Web-based Capabilities

**Leverage and build upon current systems to create a more robust and dynamic online alumni communications platform.**

This platform should facilitate permission-based/opt-in marketing, social networking tools, greater ease and timeliness of information dissemination, alumni relationship management, development of alumni-driven affinity groups, and connections of alumni to current students, along with the creation of measurable analytics for usage.

#### Social Networking

- 1. Create or reorganize a staff position to focus on ways Gustavus can maximize the use of emerging technology.**

This would include management of the Gustavus presence on social networking sites like Facebook/Linked In, user-driven content sites like Wikipedia, and the use of video conferencing technology such as Skype. This position would be used by all offices on campus that have primary responsibility for working with external constituents.

- 2. Create an alumni volunteer structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to support the content creation and management of social networking sites.**

#### Class Communication

**Ensure class communication provides needed college messaging while being vibrant, relevant, and volunteer-driven.**

Explore new ways to empower and motivate volunteer class letter writers; new ways to motivate class members to contribute content; new delivery methods; a streamlined process to eliminate re-keying; and expanded use of the Web and social networking sites while maintaining the current expectation of three class letters per year.

#### The Gustavus Quarterly

**Establish *The Gustavus Quarterly* editorial advisory group.**

Include in this advisory group both on- and off-campus representatives to provide advice on content and story ideas, set multi-year content themes, and occasionally review the editorial mission. Explore an interactive online version and an opt-out version.

### **ALUMNI-TO-ALUMNI PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT**

#### Engagement Programs

**Activate the existing natural partnerships between the College and the Alumni Association to develop more broad-based and varied alumni engagement opportunities so that within five years Gustavus is considered to be the new standard among peer schools for alumni engagement.**

These partnerships could include on-campus activities, regional programs, shared interest events, study-travel, lifelong learning curricula, and class reunions.

#### Shared Interest Groups

**Create a volunteer support structure to expand shared interest groups maximizing what is already occurring organically among alumni and moving beyond the staff-driven departmental/activity-based or geographic groups (e.g., football alumni, music alumni, regional chapters).**



**Create an application, approval process, and organizational template for alumni-driven shared interest groups; define group roles, purpose, and expectations; provide access to funding, programmatic ideas, and marketing support.**

Use these alumni-driven and primarily alumni-managed shared interest groups as a way to increase communication and activity by engaging alumni in the leadership and management of the group. Alumni could choose to form a group around geographic location (currently called chapters), career/professional interest, life-stage, college involvement, or other special interest.

#### Lifelong Programming

**Create a new focus and philosophy in alumni programming based on a lifelong journey to live the Gustavus core values.**

Programming would systematically and intentionally focus on augmenting the lessons the Gustavus community introduces to students. This may include a standard set of alumni “courses” that mirror life transitions; career networking; further exploration of faith development; ethical leadership; critical thinking and communicating; development of cultural competency; peer-to-peer assistance/mentoring; and methods of self-reflection, thus combining personal and intellectual development.

Delivery methods may include but are not limited to on-campus and off-campus retreats/seminars, webinars, and travel programs.

#### St. Peter Area Alumni

**Actively involve local (St. Peter/Mankato) alumni for on-campus programming.**

#### Leadership Council

**Create a volunteer leadership council to build synergy in collaborations, further leverage planning, create common messaging, and focus volunteer leadership training.**

The volunteer leadership council would consist of a representative from all Gustavus volunteer groups (such as Gustavus Library Associates, Friends of Linnaeus Arboretum, Board of Trustees, Alumni Board, Class Agents, Chapters, shared interest groups).

#### Class Volunteer Structure

**Reinvent the alumni class leadership structure using a model focused on an increased number of alumni volunteers, increased engagement, and ownership in class communication and event planning to ensure a class remains connected with each other and with Gustavus.**

This model will work in collaboration with the effective and relatively new class reunion committee structure.

### **ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT WITH PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS**

#### Alumni/Prospective Student Identification

**Implement a best-practice plan to engage alumni in the identification and generation of new student applicants.**

This could be through meetings based on shared interests and geography and representing the institution at a college fair when an admission representative is not available.

#### Alumni/Prospective Student Yielding

**Establish a system in which all prospective students are connected with an alumna/us.**

The goals would be to solidify, for both alumni and prospective students, the message of lifelong pride in and commitment to the institution, demonstrate appreciation for alumni, and increase the yield of new students. This may also include involving alumni with interviewing for scholarships or admission.

### **ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT WITH CURRENT STUDENTS**

#### Future Alumni

**Celebrate and publicize the “Gustie” brand identity to all students through ongoing programming and activities during the college experience.**

These may include history lessons, involving alumni during orientation, and class-specific engagement (beyond orientation and graduation).

#### Alumni/Student “Buddy”

**Systematize a formal program to connect every incoming student with an alumna/us (this includes parents, staff, and friends) to serve as a resource and/or sounding board for the college experience.**

#### Alumni/Student Advisor/Mentor

**Create a framework to connect students and alumni in such areas as real estate (housing for graduating seniors) and advising/mentoring connections (within and outside of majors for professional and non-professional purposes).**

#### Reading In Common

**Promote the “Reading in Common” book to alumni to build community among alumni with each other and to connect with current students.**

The Reading in Common book is read by all incoming first-year students and discussed during Orientation. Alumni involvement may include online book forums, a virtual book club, and alumni connecting with New Student Orientation/Gustie Greeter group book discussions.

#### Career Exploration

**Bolster the number of alumni involved in connecting with students on career exploration.**

Through a partnership with the Career Center, this may include creating internship opportunities, job placement support, housing during internships, or graduate school selection support.

#### Alumni/Academic Departments

**Intentionally engage alumni in the life of academic programs by creating the structure, resources, and communication platform (e.g., a database) to support departments engaging with alumni.**

This may be through national committees to capitalize on critical synergies among alumni resources, leveraging industry expertise, mentoring external connections for community-based learning opportunities, departmental fundraising, online discussions, and class lectures.

#### Faculty/Staff Travel

**Establish a clearinghouse for Gustavus faculty/staff that facilitates communication and connects faculty/staff with alumni during other college-related travels.**

### **III. *Strategic Initiative 5.4: Build the College's endowment and other key financial resources.***

As we face remarkable and historic financial vagaries, we are reminded of just how delicate our position is within the global economy. Therefore, it is with some imperative that we work to achieve a more stable and long-lasting financial model that wards against sudden, uncontrollable, or fickle economic conditions. Ensuring that a Gustavus education is accessible to qualified students, including containing student debt and funding academic excellence, can provide the foundation.

Critical to the success of such an ambitious plan is the allocation of adequate resources necessary to accomplish the goal. The College should be certain that the offices of Advancement and Alumni Relations are staffed appropriately to meet this challenge.

#### Culture of Philanthropy

**Foster and promote a culture of philanthropy and gratitude by establishing the Gustavus story of philanthropy that clearly articulates the need statement for annual and endowment gifts.**

The story will be taught to all students and alumni, including how an endowment works; where operating money is allocated; what costs are covered by tuition; how the Gustavus endowment compares to other institutions; and the impact of class giving, including the Senior Class gift. Through regular messaging, it becomes a story that is known among alumni and students. This may eventually lead to a program whereby alumni teach these topics to current students.

#### Donor Process

**Re-examine the donor process to accomplish the following: place priority on connecting donors with the students benefitting from their gift; have alumni call current students and ask them to give; explicitly highlight how alumni giving enhances the national reputation of Gustavus; and foster opportunities to give in ways that more personally reflect an individual's passion.**

#### Scholarships

**Build the financial resources necessary to attract and retain top students.**

Alternatives to a four-year college degree are more numerous now than ever, which means the competition for qualified students is also more challenging. To remain a top academic destination, the College cannot afford to lose qualified students for the simple reason that they could not afford to attend Gustavus or that a better offer is available from a similar institution. Therefore, the College should invest in the financial resources necessary to attract ideal students and to meet or exceed competing offers they may receive.

**Fund endowed scholarships to provide accessibility to a Gustavus education.**

Tuition has risen to such a point that it has begun to erode the competitive edge it once offered to private academic institutions such as Gustavus and their prospective student bodies. What was once an advantage is now a liability. By securing funds that allow families to cap their tuition spending, we open the door to a more diverse student body built upon academic achievement, merit, and service to the community. In addition, the financial relief such an offer provides further improves the College's position as families decide where to invest in their student's college education. Strive to meet 100 percent of identified student need with scholarships and a reasonable level of student employment and loans.

**Explore "graduation scholarships" or loan forgiveness strategies that encourage continued academic achievement, such as graduate school or leadership through service to the community.**

Graduation does not mark the conclusion of a student's relationship with Gustavus but the start of the student's investment in the global community. To ensure that maximum benefit is gained from each undergraduate experience, the College should consider investing in incentives that encourage further achievement, whether academic or through service to the community, with such incentives helping to define the institution as a leader in the lifelong partnership of its graduates.

### Endowment

#### **Increase the Gustavus endowment by \$150 million.**

Commit to a rigorous financial growth plan that places primary significance on dramatically increasing the endowment by \$150 million, representing two-and-a-half times the operating budget, as a means of supporting a greater number of institutional programs, stabilizing the College's budget during times of economic upheaval, and improving the College's debt ratio, (and therefore its credit rating) by increasing investment income. Endowment designations should not just focus on new programs, positions, or initiatives, but on securing funding for activities currently happening. Long-term, the goal is to be within the top quartile of endowment size of defined peer institutions.

### Endowment Campaign

#### **Commit no less than 50 percent of future fundraising campaign goals to endowment growth.**

Establishing a simple and efficient fundraising protocol is critical to the consistent growth of endowment funds and the programs they support. Gustavus should establish the practice of raising endowment funds as 50 percent of every significant fundraising initiative in the future.

### Endowing Department Chairs

#### **Secure long-term financial support of academic leadership by endowing at least ten additional department and program chairs.**

The benefits of endowed chairs are numerous. For alumni and other funders there is the prestige that comes from such an association. For attracting and retaining faculty, there is the status that such a title bestows, along with the potential for higher earnings. In addition, the opportunity allows for extending the reach of scholarship by endowing positions for visiting scholars that, in turn, increase the prestige factor. For Gustavus, endowed chairs naturally strengthen the relationship among each of the stakeholders, which improves the potential for leveraging new or additional support.

### Endowing Building Maintenance

#### **Secure long-term support of major campus assets by endowing funds for the maintenance of building projects.**

Maintaining a high caliber, state-of-the-art physical campus requires constant funding to keep pace with the increasing demands of the environment, the accelerating rate of technological innovation as it relates to building materials, and the evolution of new energy sources. Endowing maintenance funds in tandem with each building project offers substantial relief for the general operating budget of Gustavus.

### Endow Environmental Initiatives

#### **Create an endowment for environmental initiatives.**

As an institution dedicated to the advancement of generations, it is critical that the College take a leadership role in environmental sustainability by supporting scholarship and engaging initiatives that reduce the impact of operations today while improving the conditions of tomorrow. From scholarship to innovation to expertise, Gustavus has the potential for tremendous gain as a leader in the field for both study and practice.

#### Endow Signature Programs

**Secure the ongoing success of signature College events, including the Nobel Conference, Christmas in Christ Chapel, and the MAYDAY! Peace Conference, by fully endowing their production.**

These gateway events offer multiple benefits to Gustavus and should be invested in over the long term to ensure the College continues to receive maximum benefit from the effort and experience. Because these events serve as points of entry for new audiences, touchstones for those with existing relationships, and public displays of talent and academic acumen, their funding should be protected through endowed support to guarantee their longevity and endurance.

#### “Friends” Organizations

**Create a staffing, financial, and volunteer management model to sustain mutually beneficial Gustavus “Friends of the ...” groups (e.g., Gustavus Library Associate, Friends of the Arboretum, Friends of Music).**

#### Matching Gifts

**Research the potential for increasing revenue from matching gift opportunities.**

Traditional philanthropic models are no longer the only reliable formula for fundraising success. With each passing generation, the reasons for giving and expectations of donors shift. Gustavus can substantially improve its fundraising potential by exploring those opportunities that leverage gifts which return the greatest impact for both the provider and recipient.

#### Partnerships

**Research and actively develop mutually beneficial partnerships with corporations and other funders.**

#### Giving Case

**Clearly define the basic facts about, and the case for giving to, Gustavus, which every alumnus/a and student should know.**

#### Volunteer Fundraisers

**Create a new volunteer structure to support the soliciting of philanthropic gifts.**

#### Alumni Giving Percentage

**Develop a ten-year strategy to increase alumni participation in giving to Gustavus to at least 50 percent.**