Introduction and Institutional Overview

Gustavus Adolphus College has prepared secondary educators for most of its existence, and elementary educators since 1952 (five graduates in this first class). The elementary education major was tentatively approved by the Minnesota Department of Education in 1953, with full approval granted in 1959. Gustavus first received NCATE accreditation in 1961. NCATE Accreditation and Minnesota Board of Teaching Approval have been continuous since 1961. Reviews occurred in 1961, 1968, 1978, 1983, 1989, 1995, and 2000. Gustavus Adolphus College is seeking Continuing Accreditation in 2006 by continuing to revise and improve its programs and working to fulfill or exceed NCATE and MNBOT Standards.

Overview of the Institution

The mission of Gustavus Adolphus College reads:

Gustavus Adolphus College is a church-related, residential liberal arts college firmly rooted in its Swedish and Lutheran heritage.

The College offers students of high aspiration and promise a liberal arts education of recognized excellence provided by faculty who embody the highest standards of teaching and scholarship. The Gustavus curriculum is designed to bring students to mastery of a particular area of study within a general framework that is both interdisciplinary and international in perspective.

The College strives to balance educational tradition with innovation and to foster the development of values as an integral part of intellectual growth. It seeks to promote the open exchange of ideas and the independent pursuit of learning.

The College aspires to be a community of persons from diverse backgrounds who respect and affirm the dignity of all people. It is a community where a mature understanding of the Christian faith and lives of service are nurtured and students are encouraged to work toward a just and peaceful world.

The purpose of a Gustavus education is to help students attain their full potential as persons, to develop in them a capacity and passion for lifelong learning, and to prepare them for fulfilling lives of leadership and service in society.

The Gustavus mission statement explicitly identifies a number of institutional goals that we collectively pursue. These goals include:

- Providing a liberal arts education of recognized excellence that is both rigorous and innovative;
- An integration of moral development with intellectual growth;
- Developing a mature understanding of the Christian faith tradition;
- Encouraging respect for others and sensitivity to community;
- Developing a commitment to service and the skills of leadership;
Developing an international perspective;
Nurturing a commitment to work toward a just and peaceful world;
Developing a capacity and passion for life-long learning;
Encouraging independence of thought and cooperative scholarship;
Developing mastery of a field of concentration in the context of an interdisciplinary and broad general education.

Implicit in this statement of institutional purpose and goals are certain institutional values that guide the Gustavus community. These values are rooted in our distinctive heritage and help to define our community. They also help us to focus on appropriate objectives for our college, guide the selection of priorities among those objectives, and help to shape the strategies we will pursue in the face of various challenges and opportunities.

- **Excellence** – First among our shared values is a commitment to excellence in all that we do. In the words of Eric Norelius, founder of the College, “Whatever we do, let us do it well.”

- **Community** – Gustavus prizes a pervasive sense of concern for every member of the College community. Civility, mutual respect, cooperation, shared governance, and caring have long been hallmarks of the College.

- **Justice** – The College strives to be a just community in all of its actions and to educate its students for morally responsible lives. Relations within the College community are guided by high moral principles.

- **Service** – The College places high value on service as an objective of life and of education. We embrace the biblical notion that true leadership expresses itself in service to others.

- **Faith** – The conviction that religious faith enriches and completes learning, that it is the bedrock of community, ethics, and service, and compels one to excellence in a divinely ordered world – informs our whole enterprise.

**History**

Eric Norelius, an immigrant Swedish Lutheran pastor, founded the College in Red Wing, Minnesota in 1862. Originally named the Minnesota Preparatory School, it was renamed St. Ansgar’s Academy the following year and was moved to East Union. In 1876, the school was moved to St. Peter, where it was named Gustavus Adolphus College to honor the Swedish King Gustav Adolf II (1594-1632) who defended Protestantism during the Thirty Years War.

Originally a college of the Swedish Lutheran Church in Minnesota, Gustavus was founded in order to provide pastors and teachers for the Swedish immigrants settling in Minnesota. Today, Gustavus Adolphus College operates under the auspices of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregation.

The Campus and the Community

The Gustavus campus overlooks St. Peter and the beautiful Minnesota River Valley from its position on the west bank. Arranged in an oval around Christ Chapel are 23 other major buildings, including 10 residence halls, classroom and service buildings, recreational and athletic facilities, and field laboratories. At least one specimen of every tree native to Minnesota can be found on the landscaped campus or its adjoining arboretum.

St. Peter is a community of approximately 9,000 located an hour south of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area and ten minutes north of Mankato (population 40,000). Surrounded by rich farmland and wooded areas and bordered by the Minnesota River, St. Peter is a historic city that has produced five state governors—nine, if the former Gustavus students are included. Rich in Native American and settler lore, St. Peter was the site of the 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux.

Accreditation

Gustavus Adolphus College is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association, the American Chemical Society, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, the National Association of Schools of Music, and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission and Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. The College is a member of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the Association of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education, and on the approved list of the American Association of University Women.

4-1-4 Calendar Year

The academic year at Gustavus comprises a four-month fall semester, a one-month interim term, and a four-month spring semester. It is common during a semester to take four courses. During the interim, or January Interim Experience (IEX), students take one course, the content of which is comparable to a full semester. Two January IEX courses are required for graduation. Students have a variety of choices including an on-campus course, a career exploration, a class taken abroad, or a class offered by any approved college also offering January Term coursework. A listing of January IEX courses is available to students online prior to registration. Policies on January Term credit can be found in the section entitled, “Academic Information and Policy.”

Core Requirements
All Gustavus students devote approximately one-third of their coursework to an examination of the liberal arts. Prior to the start of their first year, students select either Curriculum I or Curriculum II.

The two liberal arts tracks are similar in that both require courses from the same academic areas, involve approximately the same number of courses, are compatible with every major, and allow for study overseas or an internship during the junior or senior year. Both programs insure that every Gustavus graduate has a broad-based liberal arts background to complement the more specialized study represented by the student’s major.

In **Curriculum I** students select nine courses from a list of approved courses that represent various academic areas (i.e., the Arts, Natural Science, Social Science), choosing one or more courses each semester. Another course, a First-Term Seminar, is to be selected by all Curriculum I students for the first semester of their first year. Curriculum I can be described as a distributional liberal arts core program.

In **Curriculum II** students select a set of nine courses from various academic areas designed to be taken over a four-year period in a recommended sequence with other Curriculum II students. (Curriculum II students select three additional courses individually.) The Curriculum II courses, focusing on a theme of the relationship between the individual and the community, examine the Western intellectual and cultural tradition, its long continuity and the diversity within it. Through coursework, retreats and special seminars, students are introduced to various facets of the global society in which we live. Curriculum II is designed to enroll approximately 10% of each entering class; selection is based on date of application to the program. Curriculum II is described as an integrated liberal studies core.

**Writing Program**

Put simply, clear writing reflects clear thinking. Both are central to the Gustavus liberal arts experience. Both are skills crucial to life after college as well. Most Gustavus courses require writing. However, Gustavus is committed to teaching writing skills throughout the curriculum. Thus, under the Writing Across the Curriculum program, all Gustavus students are required to take three designated writing courses, including one Writing Intensive (WRITI) course and one Writing in the Disciplines (WRITD) course. These three courses must be taken from at least two different academic departments, and at least one of these must be Level II (#200) or higher.

**Peace Studies**

Peace Studies at Gustavus includes both an interdisciplinary minor and a college-wide Peace Studies Program. For a detailed description of the Peace Studies minor, please see the Majors and Minors section of the catalog. The Peace Studies Program was established in 1970, and it seeks to infuse a concern for peace and justice.
Characteristics, Vision, and Initiatives of the Institution

Over the last three decades, Gustavus has made a variety of changes that have led to a significant improvement of its academic program and its reputation for quality. Most obvious changes have been (a) the improvement in the college’s physical facilities, (b) a clearer affirmation of itself as a true liberal arts college, and (c) an enrichment of its academic programs – including the internationalization of large parts of its curriculum, the refinement of a significant general education program, creation of a variety of interdisciplinary programs and teaching emphases, and stronger preparation of Gustavus students for more selective graduate programs and for competitive professional careers. Such changes were adaptations to major challenges that faced the college and are the foundation for additional changes and innovations in the future. None were quite as dramatic as the response of the college community from the tornadoes that struck the campus in March of 1998, causing approximately 70 million dollars of damage and loss. The alumni, faculty, staff, and students all quickly responded with great pride and vigor. The result was a renewed and rebuilt campus with an even stronger commitment to excellence. Virtually all buildings were remodeled and new building projects were initiated. The strong sense of community has carried us to take additional strides in our faculty development initiatives as well as instructional and technological practices.

The following are indicators of Gustavus institutional quality: student-faculty ratio of 13.4:1, increasing attractiveness of the College to National Merit Scholars and other outstanding students, strong student enrollment and retention, significant increase of student-faculty research, a regularized faculty sabbatical program as well as a variety of other faculty development initiatives (mentoring, programming, grants), enhanced library holdings, rapid advances in technological capabilities, designation as a Phi Beta Kappa college, very high percentage of alumni giving, and a strong reputation as a regional liberal arts college.

Gustavus does not aspire to model itself after any other specific college or group of colleges, but seeks to be obedient to its own calling and to fulfill the potential for excellence that it possesses. The College will continue to develop the abilities and sensibilities of talented men and women called to leadership roles in their chosen professions and their communities. This will be done by challenging them with the ideas, experiences, discoveries and creative expressions that reflect the best that human civilization has achieved. A rigorous and innovative education will be provided in a setting marked by a pervasive concern for the intellectual, moral, social and spiritual maturation of Gustavus students and for their physical well-being. They will be prepared for fulfilling lives of service and leadership in an increasingly complex global society.

The College’s liberal arts nature, even in its several preprofessional programs, will be both affirmed and further strengthened. The College will be increasingly international in its perspective and national in quality, reputation, and appeal to talented students and faculty. It will preserve its distinctive character as the College of the ELCA, as an institution arising out of the Swedish immigrant community in the Midwest, and as reflecting the values and hopes implicit in this heritage.
Gustavus will maintain its current size of 2600-2750 students and will move aggressively to strengthen the financial base necessary for its continued striving for high quality and to ensure that it is accessible to talented students from diverse backgrounds who seek the value-centered and rigorous liberal arts education the College offers.

In the updated institutional strategic plan (FY2000-FY2003), a continuing focus on excellence at Gustavus Adolphus College was sharpened by six broad strategies: strengthening the academic program and enhancing student learning; developing facilities that support the highest quality academic programs and enhance the residential experience of our students; recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding the highest quality faculty and staff; recruiting, retaining, and graduating in a timely manner a talented and increasingly diverse student body; providing a secure financial base by accelerating endowment growth, strengthening Gustavus Fund support, and identifying efficiencies in operating the college; and, through a clear articulation of the College’s mission and the high quality of the programs it offers, gain a wider recognition for Gustavus’ core competencies and a much broader appreciation for the value of a Gustavus education.

In the current working draft of the strategic goals for 2005-2009, Gustavus Adolphus College has reaffirmed many of the goals established in 2000. The following strategic plan goals are under discussion:

1. The institution plans to strengthen the student academic experience by reducing faculty course assignments, initiating new programs consistent with mission and student needs, and improving experiential opportunities for students.
2. The institution plans to enhance diversity by increasing minority members within our college community, incorporating diversity more fully into the fabric of campus programs, and by developing more robust systems of academic and social support for minority students and employees.
3. The institution plans to enhance its technology capabilities by replacing hardware, increasing technology support so that it is specific to faculty and student needs, by offering more enhanced training and professional development, and by enhancing coordination of technology services by improving organizational structure.
4. The institution plans to strengthen the relationship between the Church and the college community by cultivating potential funding and leadership resources, by enhancing the College’s diversity initiative while maintaining a “critical mix” of Lutheran and non-Lutheran students, and by working closely with campus offices to increase faith formation and Christian vocation.
5. The institution plans to maintain and develop facilities by renovating Old Main, building a new residence hall, constructing a new baseball/football stadium and constructing a new Social Science building.
6. The institution plans to strengthen its financial position by increasing charitable revenue sources, increasing auxiliary revenue sources, and by improving the tuition-financial aid ratios.
As is apparent in the mission, goals, and vision, specific initiatives on campus are many and varied. A few initiatives that directly affect teacher education initiatives are listed below:

1. Continued commitment to teacher education – The President, Dean, and faculty have shown commitment and support for the program and for changes necessary to strive for even greater quality (capped and selective admissions, new technology-rich facilities, outreach programs, summer camps, and supporting necessary program costs for program development and accreditation).

2. Expanding international opportunities for faculty and candidates – Through a variety of avenues and with a variety of incentives, the institution is committed to support international travel, study, and exchange. Despite increased expense, international perspectives are seen as vital to a complete and broad education. Department related opportunities include travel to Costa Rica, Ireland, England, and Australia.

3. Strengthening instructional technologies across the campus and the curriculum – The campus networking is complete, allowing the campus to place a high priority on instructional and research technologies. Wireless networks across campus create ready access to technology from most locations. Repair and replacement funds have largely gone to purchase equipment that advances our practices. Basic and advanced training opportunities and technical support exist for individuals within the college community. The Area Coordinator for Technology position supports the department’s technology-rich classrooms and lab.

4. Strengthening student outcome assessment of departments, interdisciplinary programs, as well as student affairs and administrative departments – More than ever before the campus has moved to think about success and improvement in terms of student learning. This has been helpful to the Education Department as it asks its collaborating unit departments to address and assess the Standards of Effective Practice and Content Standards adopted by the State of Minnesota.

5. Review and adoption of new general education requirements – in the fall of 2005 all incoming students will need to meet the new requirements. Education majors are expected to complete the requirements of the liberal arts core in addition to their requirements for the major.

6. Support of faculty quality through improved recruitment, evaluation, and reward processes – The search process has been revised, trained diversity representatives are a part of all search committees. The quality of new hires across campus is very impressive. Explicit review processes exist for first-year through tenure reviews. Funded initiatives (Bush and Lilly Foundations) provide opportunities to create responsive faculty development initiatives. The college is moving from a seven-course load to a six-course load in the near future.
7. Exploration of diversity issues, realities, and priorities in open campus dialogue – The campus continues a variety of formal and informal processes to understand diversity, and plan appropriate responses in the form of trainings, service provision, and focused recruiting of students and faculty. The Education Department is home to the Chicano/Latino Youth Outreach Institute (ChYLI): An outreach effort for area youth funded by a grant from the State of Minnesota, and a National Youth Sports Program (NYSP) for underprivileged school children.

8. Gustavus enjoys a model campus-community relationship. There are a variety of service initiatives (ongoing and many student-led), service-learning initiatives across the curriculum, and a variety of reciprocal partnerships with schools and districts. A recent Lighthouse Grant from the State of Minnesota helps to support an ongoing partnership with the St. Peter Public School District.

9. Faculty and staff leadership have facilitated training in various forms of experiential teaching and learning (including service learning). As part of the Bush Faculty Development initiative, several department faculty members have participated in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) program. Their research on teaching and learning is supported through a summer grant program. Additionally, a number of Education Department faculty members have been or will be participants in a Service Learning and Social Justice program sponsored by the Faculty Development Initiative. Participants travel to such locations as Cuba and Namibia to study social justice issues that can then be examined by their candidates in our classrooms.

10. Following lengthy study, a number of building projects have moved ahead rapidly. In the last year a new facility has been erected to house the Education and Nursing Departments. Additionally, a new dorm has been built and significant remodeling to exiting facilities has been completed.