

Marietta College Vision 2020  
Final Report  
Jean A. Scott, President  
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I am pleased to submit for the Board's review and approval a final report on the Vision 2020 project. For the sake of clarity and completeness, this document is divided into three parts: history and process, the background and development of the vision, and the vision statement itself.

***History and Process***

At the beginning of her term as Chair of the Board, Pat Willis stated her desire to focus the attention of the Board on its responsibility to set direction for Marietta College not just for the near term, but for the next decade and beyond. With that goal in mind, she appointed a Task Force which included trustees, faculty members and administrators. During the two and a half years of its existence, the following persons served on the Vision Task Force: Trustees Grant Callery, Frank Christy, George Fenton, Barbara Fitzgerald, Terry Morris, Don Ritter, Bob Showalter, David Smart and Dale Wartluft; Faculty members Dottie Erb, Dave Freeman, Barbara MacHaffie, Mark Miller, Dan Monek, John Tynan, and Suzanne Walker; Cabinet members Dan Bryant, Sue DeWine, Debbie Lazorik, Lori Lewis, David Rhodes, and Lon Vickers. Professor Fraser MacHaffie, Executive Assistant to the President and Provost, and Jan Vaughan-Graham, Executive Secretary to the President, provided able administrative support. Pat Willis and I co-chaired the committee and Dale Wartluft served as a special advisor during the time when he was not an official member of the Board.

The Task Force began its work by reading widely about higher education and the larger environment in which we are working and by talking with experts in the field, including Dr. Arthur Levine, then President of Teacher's College, Columbia and Dr. Gene Rice, Senior Fellow at the American Association of Colleges and Universities. The Board heard a presentation on the challenges facing higher education in America from Dr. Richard Vedder, a member of the Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The Task Force held three face to face meetings, one in February 2005 in Marietta, one in August 2006 in Columbus, and a third in April 2007 in Canton. The full Board participated in the process beginning with the Board Retreat in New York in June 2006 and at subsequent regular Board meetings, where it received reports on demographic trends in the U.S. and in our primary markets, financial indicators and trends, and academic initiatives. Several members of the Board of Trustees, the faculty, and the administration submitted their own vision statements to aid the Task Force in its work. The Board reviewed and discussed a preliminary report at its May 2007 meeting and instructed me to develop a final document incorporating the recommendations made at that time.

Since that meeting, I have published a revised summary report in the *Trailblazer*, inviting input from the greater Marietta College community, presented an overview of the vision to the August faculty/staff convocation, and distributed an outline to the on-campus Planning Committee. Feedback provided by these audiences helped to hone our draft, but did not suggest new directions for the vision. This is the report the Board requested at its May meeting. In order both to capture the substance of our conversations and to make the Vision Statement as concise and forceful as possible, I am dividing this report into the background, which provides the more detailed explanation, and the *Vision Statement itself, which is focused on the educational experience we will offer students*. Both are part of the vision and will be useful to future planning

committees as they develop strategic plans to move the College toward a more distinctive educational program and a more competitive market position.

### ***Background and Development of the Vision***

Several questions guided the deliberations of the Vision Task Force. The most fundamental was the one raised by Dale Wartluft: “Why would I, as a parent, send my child to a small, very expensive school in a rural, remote location in southern Ohio, when I have literally hundreds of more attractive and close-by alternatives?” Stated another way, the question is: “What is Marietta College’s niche, and why is it so attractive that it has gained strength in the highly competitive higher education marketplace?” As we grappled with these questions, it became clear that the primary focus of the vision needed to be on the educational experience Marietta College offers students, and that other very important aspects of the vision support, result from, or describe that experience.

### ***The Student Experience at Marietta College***

Deliberations about the nature of the student experience at Marietta College were central to our vision discussion. The debate began with an understanding of Marietta College’s current strengths and challenges as well as the environment in which higher education currently operates, and ended with conclusions about the nature of the Marietta College education of the future. The Academic Activities and Enrollment Committee and the full Board heard presentations from Sue DeWine and members of the faculty about the current and potential programs of Marietta College. The Student Life and Athletics Committee brainstormed on the future of co-curricular activities at the College. The following directions emerged:

1. The commitment to the liberal arts as the basis of education at Marietta College is fundamental, and any vision we propound will keep the liberal arts at its center. The mission statement says “Marietta College offers students a contemporary liberal arts education. The College’s mission is to provide students with an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to critical analysis, problem solving, and the leadership skills required to translate what is learned into effective action.” **The Vision Task Force sought to define a contemporary liberal arts education in the light of the challenges of the early twenty-first century, emphasizing the expectation that Marietta College will be deliberate in ensuring that students see connections among disciplines, develop problem solving skills, and apply those skills in the community and beyond.**
2. The nine core values of Marietta College identified in 1999 continue to guide us. We believe that some of those, including the liberal arts foundation, connection of the liberal arts to the world of work, internationalization, leadership, the residential college, and service to the region will only increase in relevance to the educational expectations of our students. **After initial discussion of the role of technology and distance education in the educational paradigm of the future, the Task Force concluded that it is important to continue to emphasize the significance of student-faculty relationships at Marietta College and to provide a residential environment in which students will learn.** We see technology as a tool that has already changed the way in which education is offered at Marietta College, and believe that it will continue to do so. We will remain positioned to take advantage of the opportunities for teaching and learning that new technologies offer.

3. It is fortuitous that three niche programs that give Marietta College a distinctive place in the marketplace today: China, petroleum engineering, and leadership-- prepare students to address questions that are central to the success of individuals and economies in the twenty-first century. **We envision the College's building on its strengths in these areas, finding ways to ensure that every student who attends Marietta College, whatever his or her major may be, has some exposure to the issues and problems associated with globalization, the demand for energy and the environmental issues that poses, and the need for leaders in every field of human endeavor.** That is what we mean by integrating our strengths in energy, globalization and leadership into the curriculum and the experience of every student. Our readings, including Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat* emphasized the need for graduates to be prepared for life and work in a global, rapidly changing, and highly competitive environment, and the vision we propound speaks directly to that challenge.
4. The niche programs we have identified for the next decade are consistent with our understanding of Marietta College's strengths and of the needs of society. Because we understand that circumstances change, **we will continue to scan the environment and to build new niche areas if the markets and changes in global conditions demand them. We will begin by exploring the development of a niche in the area of health care** built on the strengths of our programs in sports medicine and physician assistant studies and the documented need for increased health care options.
5. Higher education literature and the experience of Marietta College students indicate that experiential education which takes learning from the classroom into the workplace, the laboratory, the community and the world enhances student success and prepares graduates for their personal, professional and civic responsibilities. **Our vision is that every Marietta College student will have a study abroad experience, and either an internship or a summer research experience to link classroom learning to the larger world.** In problem solving, leadership, and other learning activities, we will connect Marietta College students to the greater Marietta community, giving them a laboratory in which to learn. **The community will benefit directly from the distinctive engagement of Marietta College students.**
6. Marietta College will make good on the idea of the residential college, integrating learning that takes place in the classroom with learning in the residence halls, on the playing fields, in a host of co-curricular experiences, and in students' intentional planning for their lives after college. **Every student will be involved in at least one meaningful co-curricular experience every year and will be able to document what he or she has learned from that experience.**
7. Although Marietta College will remain primarily an undergraduate college, **it will continue to offer and perhaps to add select, high quality graduate programs in areas of the College's special strength or identified local or national need.** It is reasonable to explore the addition of graduate programs that will enhance those niche strengths identified in #3 above, thereby expanding Marietta College's reach and reputation in selected areas. We expect graduate programs to support undergraduate education and to generate revenue.

## *The Size and Shape of Marietta College*

Having defined our educational vision for Marietta College's students, we turned our attention to the question, *whom will we serve?* The Academic Activities and Enrollment Committee and the full board heard presentations from David Rhodes and me, respectively, on the demographics of the marketplace for the next fifteen years as they considered the issue of size and advised the Task Force.

1. There is substantial evidence that colleges that enroll approximately 2000 students are both financially more secure than their smaller counterparts and that they can provide a livelier, more varied and more interesting experience to students. National research also shows that students consider colleges with an enrollment of 2,000 to be small. **For those reasons, we set a target enrollment for Marietta College in 2020 of 2000, including 1600-1800 undergraduate students and 200-400 graduate students and we will continue to test that target against market forces and the results of the master plan to be sure that it is, indeed, the right size for Marietta College.**
2. We reviewed demographic data which indicate that the number of high school graduates in our primary markets will not increase significantly, and in some cases will decline, in the first two decades of this century. We also understand that much of the population growth that will occur will take place in the Hispanic population, which Marietta College has not traditionally served and secondarily in the African-American population, where we have experienced limited growth in recent years. On the positive side, growth in applications and in the size of entering classes over the past few years suggests that Marietta College is becoming more competitive. **It is essential to our vision that Marietta College become more attractive to prospective students so that we can overcome the negative demographic forces we face and that we develop recruitment plans that move the College to its desired size.** Marietta College will become more diverse to reflect the society in which its graduates will live and work.
3. The decision to grow is linked to a decision to grow stronger. We expect to enroll students who are well suited to take advantage of the special educational opportunities that Marietta College offers. As we continue to develop the distinctive engagement, the experiential education, and the niche programs we have described, we believe we will attract students with strong academic credentials. We will no longer admit students whose credentials would put them in the bottom 20% of today's admitted classes, specifically those who demonstrate little commitment to their own education. **The student who is distinctly "the Marietta College student" will be characterized by an interest in engaging in his or her own education, curiosity about the world, and a desire to learn. He or she will question the norms of society and be open to others' questioning his or her ideas.**
4. The reach of Marietta College will be national and international, with an understanding that the majority will come from the Midwest.

### *The Marietta College Graduate*

A Marietta College education will demonstrably be a springboard to success. The quality of the Marietta College graduate will be the proof of the value of a Marietta College education. Marietta College graduates will be change agents, confident problem solvers, active contributors to the lives of their communities and the world, and successful in their fields of endeavor. They will compete successfully with graduates from all other colleges and universities.

1. **Through graduate school and job placement we will demonstrate the value added by a Marietta College experience.**
2. **We will develop metrics that demonstrate that our graduates achieve what we say they do and that they perform at higher levels than might have been predicted.**
3. Alumni will be appreciative of the College's impact on them and enthusiastic about the future of Marietta College, and will **demonstrate their loyalty by providing the resources needed for the future success of the College.**

### *The Marietta College Faculty*

The faculty's commitment to their students and to teaching is fundamental to student success. We know that that is true historically, as alumni mention their relationships with individual faculty members most often when describing their best experience at Marietta College. We believe that that will remain true in the future, and have built a vision on the assumption that those relationships will remain central to the education of Marietta College students. In implementing *Higher Ground* we have benchmarked faculty and staff salaries to the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile of their peer groups and have achieved those benchmarks. We know that this is a modest start, and we are striving to reach the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile level. Our vision depends on a dedicated and talented faculty and staff, and we anticipate continuing to invest in our people, both in the addition of new positions in strategic areas and by compensating faculty and staff on a level that is competitive and appropriate.

1. **The faculty will be diverse in age, experience, gender and race/ethnicity, dedicated to their students and experts in their fields.** Because faculty are valued leaders at Marietta College and appropriately compensated for their work, Marietta College will attract and retain outstanding teachers and scholars.
2. **Faculty members will have high expectations of their students,** and will cultivate relations in their disciplines, industry and the community to foster their own learning and that of their students. The faculty will embrace its role and responsibility to continuously improve Marietta College as partners with the administration and the Board.
3. Marietta College will add faculty positions to support the general education needs of students as well as the niche programs and experiential educational that form the basis of this vision.

### *Marietta College's Resources*

The Marietta College we envision will be different in its infrastructure and perhaps its footprint from the Marietta College of today. Our aspiration to grow will require increased faculty and

staff to serve students and physical plant to accommodate them. It will also require more financial resources, and ongoing vigilance in the management of the resources we have. Dan Bryant presented a thought-provoking analysis of the issues to the Finance, Administrative Operations, and Investment Committees, Sue DeWine shared an academic plan with the Academic Activities and Enrollment Committee, and Lori Lewis worked with the Development Committee to consider the resources needed for the future. Ongoing analysis, budget modeling and fundraising will be essential to the realization of our vision, and we have developed some principles that will guide these processes.

1. **Master Planning is essential.** The Board has made it clear that we need to understand if, how and where the College might expand both to accommodate growing enrollment and to make wise decisions as local properties become available for purchase. We have engaged master planners to assist us with this process based on the growth assumptions of the vision.
2. **Faculty and Staff will grow to serve additional students.** We have established a model that would add one faculty member for each additional 13 students and 2-2.25 staff positions for each faculty position. Strategic addition of faculty and staff positions will be essential to the programs described in the vision.
3. **Guided by the recommendations of master planners, the College will renovate facilities and build new ones to accommodate students.** Subject to revision in light of the master plan, our high priority needs appear to be renovation or replacement of Parsons Hall and the Delta Tau Delta House, renovation of freshman residence halls, the addition of residential units and dining space to serve a growing student body, development of modern social space most likely in a student center, and the addition of some new teaching and office space.
4. **Marietta College will measure itself against both a regional peer group and an aspirant peer group.** Those groups have been identified, and we are tracking our performance in comparison to them.
5. **Marietta College must be less dependent on tuition, fees, room and board for its operations.** This requires building the endowment, drawing down 5% or less compared to the current board-approved 5.5%, and continuing to invest strategically.
6. **Careful financial planning will be essential to accomplish the vision without accruing an unacceptable level of debt.** This will be a challenge. While new residence hall units will bring in additional revenue, renovation or replacement of current beds will not. Because fundraising for residence halls is especially difficult, we will need to explore a variety of funding sources for these units.
7. **Fundraising will be essential to the success of Vision 2020.** The current campaign has been designed to support both *Higher Ground* and the emerging vision, with special attention to endowment support for experiential education and for faculty as well as for unrestricted budget relief and growth. While increased enrollment will provide some new resources, the gifts of alumni and friends who share our vision will be essential.

## *Next Steps*

Achieving this vision will require at least two strategic plans and two campaigns following *Higher Ground* and the current \$50 million campaign. For example, to make globalization and the rise of China a truly distinctive niche, we need to develop a curriculum that will attract U.S. students interested in learning about China to come to Marietta. Today they can meet Chinese students and travel to China, but it is important that we add in-depth study of China to our curriculum and that we fully integrate our Chinese students with their United States counterparts. Before we can require that all students study abroad, we must both build our financial resources and develop more programs, ranging from short courses to semesters abroad. We have integrated some of the vision into our current plan and campaign, and there is much more to be done in future years. Work to realize the vision is already under way, and will continue at an accelerated pace.

The brief vision statement presented below focuses on the student experience at Marietta College. With all of the background material as support and elaboration, it forms the basis on which we can make educational decisions and market the College. My thanks go to all of the Task Force, the College community and the Board who participated in this process. I want to acknowledge and thank Professor Bob Chase for proposing edits to the draft presented to the Board in May, many of which are incorporated below.

## **Vision 2020**

**Marietta College transforms intellectually curious students into agents of change for the global society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

**A distinctive integrated liberal arts curriculum prepares all graduates to understand such issues of their time as global competition and the rise of China as a world power, the growing demand for energy and for protection of the environment, and the role of leaders and leadership in every field of endeavor.**

**Every student develops knowledge and problem solving skills in the classroom, through international experience, internships and research or creative activities, and in co-curricular activities that develop individual talents, civic responsibility, teamwork and leadership.**

**Marietta College will offer every student the opportunity to *become more than you imagined* and will prove that the education it provides meets that expectation.**