

HARBERT HILLS ACADEMY
STRATEGIC PLAN

“Vision 20/20”

With Action Plans

February 23, 2014

Presented by:
The Strategic Planning Committee

Introduction

A Message from the Board Chair of Rural Life Foundation and President

Harbert Hills Academy is approaching the end of its five-year strategic plan and recognizes the opportunity to launch the next phase of the development process. With many objectives met and the sense that we are moving steadily in the right direction, it is important to continue the process of looking to the future, envisioning where the Lord is leading. In addition, there are areas where there is still much work to do. With this in mind, the Board has authorized a Strategic Planning Committee to look at these opportunities and chart a clear course.

We will continue our founding philosophy of a harmonious Christian education focused on academics, integrated vocational studies, and character development, to empower students for active roles in Christian Service.

This Strategic Plan does not require major shifts in our philosophy or programs. The school's beliefs regarding Christian education are based on the Scriptures and the counsels of Ellen G. White, which provide the school with its distinct philosophy of education. To advance this objective and help implement our mission and core values, we have identified eight key areas of focus. With this framework in place, we will be able to build on our strengths and foster the reputation of Harbert Hills Academy for the next generation. The eight overarching strategic initiatives are:

- Student Life - Creating A Supportive Community
- Academic and Vocational Programs - Making Learning Relevant
- Staffing -Attracting and Retaining High Quality Staff
- Fundraising - Enhancing Institutional Advancement
- Marketing and Enrollment – Strengthening Our Identity and Visibility
- Campus and Facilities - Revitalizing the Physical Plant
- Leadership - Fostering Effective Governance
- Finance – Building a Strong Financial Foundation

Where do we begin? We start with our revitalized mission and vision. We strive to achieve our vision and commit to upholding our guiding core values. For this reason, as you turn the pages and read about where we are going, we will always start with our mission – the purpose of Harbert Hills Academy – and our values – the principles that guide our decision making. We have put these at the beginning of the Plan so that you can have them firmly fixed in your mind as you read through the Plan itself. We are now in the process of implementing our vision by creating action plans for each goal, and we will report our progress to you on a regular basis. In closing, I invite you to partner with us as we follow God's plan in carrying out our goals.

Stephen L. Dickman, President
Rural Life Foundation

Alton Cantarutti, Board Chair

Purpose of Our Plan

As Harbert Hills Academy moves forward, we need to plan our future direction, including improvements to be made.

The Board of Directors has put in place a Strategic Planning Committee to address the long-term view of every aspect of the institution. Accordingly, the Committee has worked to develop plans for the school, the nursing home, the radio station and the farm.

Based on the Committee's work, followed by endorsement by the Administration and Board, a Strategic Plan has been developed for the school to address the:

- Vision
- Mission
- Guiding Core Values
- Educational Philosophy
- Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Our Mission Statement

Our Academy emphasizes personal academic success for each student with a belief that education is most successful when based on the eternal principles of education found in the scriptures and writings of Ellen G. White. Based on solid academic preparation and a passion for service, our students will be trained to help others achieve their best. Our Academy's reputation will be founded on following God's plan for education, personalized to each student's needs, facilitated by a committed staff who have dedicated themselves to understanding and implementing God's plan for education. We will fulfill this through our mission:

We are committed to fully demonstrating God's plan for education: focusing on character development, academic excellence, and applied skills, to enable self-reliance and to know the joy of unselfish service.

Our School will strive to accomplish the mission by committing to:

1. Fully following God's plan for education, challenging young people to pursue their quest for excellence – spiritually, physically, and academically, which will enable them to be of service to man and God.
2. Use spiritual leadership, mission service, practical education, and Christ-centered learning to mold the characters of our students.

Our Vision Statement

The vision we hold for Harbert Hills Academy clearly defines where we are headed and what we aspire to be, and follows God's plan for education. It will help build our community and inspire action, yet keep us grounded. To fulfill this, our inspiring vision is focused on:

Fulfilling God's Plan for Education

Our vision is grounded by the following:

“Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness — godlikeness — is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is opened a path of continual progress. He has an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, and pure, and noble. He will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. But his efforts will be directed to objects as much higher than mere selfish and temporal interests as the heavens are higher than the earth” (Education p. 18).

”Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think...” (Ephesians 3:20).

Our School will strive to accomplish our vision by committing to:

- Continuing to study God’s Plan for education.
- Fostering a desire to follow God’s Plan for education among staff, parents, and students.
- Leading youth to Christ one step at a time.
- Promoting educational excellence and character development today, to prepare leaders to be of service tomorrow.

Our Guiding Core Values

Our Strategic Plan brings together our strengths to provide a Christ-centered preparatory education that applies relevance through integrated vocational programs. HHA’s strategic direction is guided by the basic beliefs and values inherent in the Mission and Vision of the Academy:

1. Nurture – Providing a place to grow closer to Christ
2. Service - Encouraging students to reach beyond themselves
3. Restoration – Demonstrating God’s power to reproduce His image in humanity
4. Discernment – Teaching students to be thinkers not just reflectors
5. Usefulness – Providing opportunities for hands-on experience
6. Teamwork – Working with parents, staff, and students to achieve maximum progress
7. Balance – Strengthening the body, mind, and character in a harmonious way

Our Educational Philosophy

The school’s beliefs regarding Christian education are based on the Scriptures and the counsel written by Ellen G. White. The aim of our Academy is to provide opportunities for students to develop academic, vocational, and social skills, as well as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. “Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this

world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come” (Education p. 13). Students are educated to accept the concept of service as a principle of life, to be sensitive to the needs of people, and to become contributing members in the home, church, and society. Our programs and practices are motivated by the following belief:

Our core curriculum is mastered through applied instruction, work study, and service, to empower students for active roles in Christian service.

The Academy will strive to accomplish the development of the whole student by committing to the following:

Intellectual:

- Develop, through a challenging curriculum, students’ love and motivation for life-long learning.
- Provide a range and depth of opportunities to challenge each student to pursue his or her God-given potential.
- Encourage students to think independently and critically, and to accept responsibility for their academic progress.
- Strive to help each student develop worthwhile knowledge, essential skills, and positive attitudes, as well as the realization of their potential.
- Take advantage of teachable moments, believing that education is not taught, but caught.
- Hold teachers, administrators, students, and parents accountable for student learning.
- Recognize that intellectual development occurs best when students understand and experience the practical application of the knowledge gained.

Spiritual and Character:

- Enhance student’s confidence in the scriptures as the source of all Truth.
- Present Jesus as our ‘Example’ and teach by example.
- Provide opportunities for students to strengthen their personal Christian experience.
- Set aside time each day for students to engage in personal devotions.
- Limit access to distracting influences.
- Develop student-led Bible study and prayer groups.
- Provide opportunities for outreach to promote unselfish service as an integral part of life.
- Encourage Character development in every aspect of the education program.

Physical and Social:

- Provide opportunities for mentoring through companionship.
- Actively foster positive values, integrity, ethics, and Christian principles.
- Empower students to assume active roles in the global community.
- Understand that the behaviors and attitudes of adults and students in the school community have a strong impact on how students learn and develop.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle.

Applied Skills:

- Introduce students to a variety of career opportunities through hands-on experience.
- Show students that their classroom learning has genuine meaning and relevance.
- Demonstrate the value of useful work.
- Instil a positive work ethic.

Our Strategic Priorities

The goals, objectives, and actions that form the core of this Plan are presented in eight strategic initiatives. It is important to note that no single initiative takes priority over the other. Rather, they are inextricably intertwined — success in one is dependent on the success of the others. Therefore, this Plan is not intended to be taken as a series of sequentially ordered steps. We conceive it as being implemented in a holistic manner — moving forward in all areas at once. We did choose the order of the initiatives deliberately, starting with the Academic and Vocational Programs. It is our belief that our students are at the heart of our school. All else radiates from them and is designed to support and maintain the programs we offer. To fulfill our mission and to adhere to our guiding core values, Harbert Hills is committed to achieving the following strategic priorities over the next six years:

Goal #1: Student Life: Creating A Supportive Community

Goal:

Support the character development of each student--intellectually, morally, spiritually, and physically--in a Christ-centered community, through effective mentoring, service opportunities, and co-curricular programs.

Rationale:

Harbert Hills is committed to strengthening our residential and co-curricular programs that affirm the Academy's boarding school heritage and identity. Our students come from the local and international community and have a multiplicity of support needs. We will strive to help each student understand their value, promote spiritual and character development, and provide a safe and comfortable living environment to support their balanced development.

Objectives:

In support of the goal the school will:

1. Expand our students' development by providing greater opportunities for community service, mission work, and off-campus programs.
2. Provide spiritual counsel and guidance to assist students in forming a personal relationship with Christ.
3. Strengthen opportunities for student leadership and increase their involvement in the planning of and engagement in student-related activities.
4. Enhance the health and wellness of students through a variety of physical activities and wellness programs.
5. Foster an environment where technology is utilized as needed but not allowed to be a distraction.

Goal #2: Academic and Vocational Programs: Making Learning Relevant

Goal:

Develop an environment that inspires a quest for the knowledge of God through academic, vocational and spiritual learning experiences, which are integrated into useful work opportunities that actively engage service and connected learning.

Rationale:

Through a Christ-centered curriculum and our unique applied skills program, Harbert Hills engages students in challenging academic and vocational experiences that equip them for success. Our program is enhanced by dedicated and qualified teachers, with access to resources to support learning and instruction. Much of what is learned will be reinforced outside the classroom, through a wide range of relevant hands-on activities, allowing students to develop into confident, well-rounded, inquisitive, and useful learners. The school industries will be used to provide relevant hands-on opportunities that help the student to apply what they are learning in the classroom.

Objectives:

In support of the goal the school will:

1. Strengthen our curriculum and instruction to ensure support of the school's mission and vision.
2. Integrate experiential opportunities into the mainstream curriculum in order to reinforce classroom learning and actively connect academics with our vocational programs.
3. Enrich instructional strategies to inspire students with a joy for learning and engage them in a lifelong process of developing habits of a sound mind, body, and spirit.
4. Strengthen our tradition of providing relevant vocational programs and ensure that it remains at the heart of the Harbert Hills experience by expanding certification programs to enable students to be prepared for college and the workforce.
5. Coordinate technology, teaching, and learning into a powerful partnership that will create an enriched learning environment that is engaging, inspiring, and relevant to the world in which our students live.
6. Strengthen our Advisory Program to meet students' developmental and curricular needs.

Goal #3: Staffing: Attract and Retain High Quality Staff

Goal:

Recruit, support, and retain Christian faculty and staff with the personal qualities that complement the mission and values of the school and inspire student success.

Rationale:

The school is defined by the quality of its faculty and staff. Harbert Hills will focus on building a positive working environment and on continuing to attract, retain, and develop teachers and staff who have a sincere love for young people and who are committed to the principles of Christian living, service, and leadership. Harbert Hills will seek to encourage those who are called to help carry out the Mission and Vision of the Academy.

Objectives:

In support of the goal the school will:

1. Develop a staffing training plan to acquaint all teachers with God's plan for education.
2. Refine the school's continuing education plan.
3. Encourage each staff to reach their full potential.
4. Improve the staff evaluation and feedback process to enhance personal development.

Goal #4: Fundraising: Enhancing Institutional Advancement

Goal:

Inspire charitable investment in the Academy by establishing a solid infrastructure to build and nurture relationships, coordinate fundraising activities, and collaborate with our constituents at large.

Rationale:

Harbert Hills Academy recognizes that strong alumni involvement, volunteerism, engagement, and giving are imperative to the financial health of our school and our ability to expand and enhance instructional, residential, and co-curricular programs. It is our desire to insure the sustainable financial operation of the school through the generosity and foresight of our community.

Objectives:

In support of the goal the school will:

1. Educate Board members concerning their individual fundraising responsibility to ensure a clear understanding of their roles.
2. Manage our donor database to enhance personal connections and fundraising efficiency.
3. Grow the annual fund drive to encourage the tradition of annual giving and to build a culture of giving for future capital campaigns.
4. Continue to work on the capital campaign plan in accordance with the identified needs in the strategic plan for the next six years.
5. Approach corporations and foundations for capital gifts.
6. Develop a plan to encourage will bequests, deferred gifts, and other planned giving.

Goal #5: Marketing and Enrollment: Strengthened Identity and Visibility

Goal:

Strengthen the school's local and international reputation to attract motivated students who are compatible with the school's Mission.

Rationale:

To maintain retention and enrollment, Harbert Hills needs to clearly articulate the strengths of its Christ-centered learning environment to both current and prospective families. An effective marketing and public relations plan will assist the school in attracting and retaining the highest quality students through better relations, marketing, and communication.

Objectives:

In support of the goal the school will:

1. Implement a customer service plan to assure we are effectively meeting the needs of all students and families.
2. Promote the school and its image positively and frequently through an improved media relations and publications program.
3. Maintain the school's website.
4. Enhance our Academy Day program through continued development and retooling.

Goal #6: Campus and Facilities: Revitalized Physical Plant

Goal:

To fully realize the mission and vision and to allow programs and people to thrive, we need to continue to enhance the school's physical plant and grounds to provide a safe, attractive, and functional environment in which to learn and live.

Rationale:

Harbert Hills is blessed with a beautiful setting. As we continue to define our educational philosophy and to shape and support our instructional, residential, and co-curricular programs, we will improve and expand our current facilities to best serve students and educators in the Academy's next 50 years. To this end, the school will provide comfortable accommodations for our students and staff and a safe, functional, and stimulating learning environment, in order to support the delivery of our enriched programs.

Objective:

In support of the goal the school will:

1. Develop a staged twenty-five year master plan for the school's facilities, grounds, and road system that integrates upgrading and construction to adequately accommodate the needs of students and staff.
2. Encourage students, staff, and members of the school community to develop a greater sense of pride and ownership for their buildings and grounds.
3. Create and implement a five-year major maintenance and renovation program for school facilities and grounds to ensure that they are aesthetically acceptable, functional, and safe.

Goal #7: Leadership: Fostering an Effective Governance Structure

Goal:

Further the development of an effective governance model with members committed to sharing of their time, energy, wisdom, and financial resources to ensure the achievement of the school's Mission and Strategic Plan.

Rationale:

The Board will focus on best practices to ensure that the school is operated in accordance with its Mission. The board will be accountable to the constituency to carry out the strategic plan and prepare for the successful transition of institutional leadership.

Objectives:

In support of the goal the school will:

1. Educate the Board concerning their duties and function.
2. Align Board membership, structure, and responsibilities, to harmonize with the Strategic Plan and initiatives.
3. Implement an evaluation process to insure Board members are focused on fulfilling the Mission and Strategic Plan.
4. Utilize a nominating process that recruits diverse and representative members that ensure a healthy succession for the Constituency and Board.

Goal #8: Finance: Financial Foundation

Goal:

Establish a sound financial structure that ensures self-sufficiency and sustainable growth.

Rationale:

The Academy needs to ensure its sustainable operation through balanced budgeting and fiscal integrity. This will allow Harbert Hills to maintain and strengthen the quality of education and to be prepared for future financial challenges. The school will balance the competing needs for increased compensation, financial aid, general operating expenses, fundraising expenses and affordable tuitions. This will include soliciting funds for capital improvement and maintenance endowments, retiring current debt, and working toward a reasonable operating reserve.

Objectives:

In support of the goal the school will:

1. Develop a five-year financial plan that considers the goals of the Strategic Plan, which will be a roadmap for funding operating and capital needs.
2. Continue to operate with balanced annual budgets in order to properly fund the mission and vision of the Academy, giving due consideration to financial constraints.
3. Communicate regularly with the faculty and staff regarding financial issues.
4. Develop a debt reduction plan that will work toward the institution being debt-free.

Action Plans

In order to support and further the goals and objectives, the following actions should be undertaken in the next six years to achieve the Strategic Plan: