Agnes Scott Strategic Plan

Engaging a Wider World
The Agnes Scott Strategic Plan for 2014

A liberal Curriculum fully abreast of the best institutions of this country ...

—Agnes Scott Ideal, 1889

Agnes Scott College educates women to think deeply, live honorably and engage the intellectual and social challenges of their times.

—Mission Statement, 2002

Agnes Scott College looks to its 125th anniversary with an abiding commitment to our founding vision of empowering women by providing a liberal education "abreast of the best institutions of the country” in an intellectually challenging and supportive learning environment. We reaffirm the college’s efforts to elevate mind and spirit; to cultivate lives of integrity, purpose and consequence; to welcome diverse people and perspectives; and to promote global awareness. We are grateful for the exceptional beauty of our historic campus and for the unparalleled opportunities provided by the dynamic global city on our doorstep.

Building on these strong foundations, we seek with this strategic plan to enhance the Agnes Scott experience for future generations of students by engaging a wider world, forging new connections with people, institutions and ideas on campus, around our region and across the globe. We will launch signature initiatives that address women’s global challenges and opportunities; become a national model of campus-wide commitment to ethical reflection, deliberation and action; and provide students with a distinctive education that links the liberal arts to vibrant opportunities to learn, serve and lead in Atlanta and around the world.

Through these efforts we will attract new students, institutional partners and resources and strengthen Agnes Scott’s identity as a national liberal arts college for women known for graduates who are capable and committed global citizens.
A Center for Women’s Global Leadership

Elevate Agnes Scott’s reputation as a premier women’s college that educates strong, thoughtful and savvy women prepared to speak to a wider world by launching a signature initiative linking the liberal arts to women’s global leadership. The center will focus on education, research and action that

*Empowers women to address urgent challenges of our time, especially those that disproportionately or distinctively affect women, including poverty, human rights, public health and community development*

*Supports and showcases innovative leadership by women within and across social sectors, from the corporate world to government, philanthropy, education, media, religious institutions and the arts*

*Helps women develop the skills, knowledge and values to be ethical, creative and committed global citizens*

Programs and activities envisioned for the center include:

- Leader and Scholar in Residence programs
- Support for the creation of new courses across the curriculum
- Grants for collaborative research and summer internships
- Local and global partnership projects that engage students and faculty in research, service, social entrepreneurship or advocacy linked to the center’s mission
- Postdoctoral teaching fellowships in collaboration with academic departments and programs
- Public lectures, workshops and symposia organized around annual or multi-year themes
- Global Leadership Summits for high school students from around the world
- Leadership workshops for women executives, emerging leaders and alumnae
A Dynamic Liberal Arts Curriculum

Enhance the vitality of the college’s core liberal arts mission and its commitment to the education and empowerment of women through strategic hires, curricular innovations and infrastructure improvements that

Build strength and depth in traditional areas of inquiry
Generate programs and courses in emerging fields and interdisciplinary areas
Promote women’s success in fields and forms of inquiry in which they are traditionally underrepresented
Ensure the success of all students in an increasingly diverse student body

The college will promote innovative teaching, learning, research and performance within and across the liberal arts by:

- Adding faculty positions in traditional, emerging and interdisciplinary areas through a systematic and inclusive process designed by the faculty, the dean of the college and the president
- Launching or expanding three to five interdisciplinary programs, such as the new programs in human rights and in neuroscience, that build on faculty strength and interest, capitalize on institutional partnerships in Atlanta and link to other strategic goals
- Creating a vibrant space for intellectual community and cross-disciplinary synergy in Campbell Hall
- Transforming creative arts facilities to provide state-of-the-art spaces for teaching, exhibition and performance and to expand opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration
- Strengthening library resources to make Agnes Scott’s collection of materials for research and teaching comparable to peer institutions
- Supporting existing centers focused on enhancing teaching, learning and research: the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Science Center for Women, the Center for Writing and Speaking and the Resource Center for Mathematics and Science
- Creating a Promise Scholars program to support the success of underrepresented students, including first-generation and minority students, in the sciences and mathematics
- Making strategic investments in technology to enhance teaching and learning and to prepare graduates to live in a digital world
- Assessing students’ skills and proficiencies in quantitative reasoning and developing curricular and co-curricular initiatives to enhance these capacities
- Supporting and expanding the college’s dual-degree programs and cooperative arrangements with other institutions of higher learning
Agnes Advantage

Design and implement "Agnes Advantage," an integrated sequence of curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities that will provide a structure for intellectual, ethical and civic development and engage students in their local and global communities. It will help Agnes Scott students

Engage: Stimulate active learning and critical and analytical thinking
Express: Develop expertise in writing, speaking and visual communication
Connect: Promote vibrant campus learning communities both inside and outside the classroom
Explore: Link the liberal arts curriculum with opportunities to learn, serve and investigate career options in Atlanta and the wider world
Integrate: Encourage research and reflection to synthesize intellectual, ethical, personal and professional development

Beginning with the class of 2014, all undergraduates will be expected to participate in:

ASC 101, including a first-year retreat and introduction to e-portfolio
First-Year Seminar
Sophomore Retreat focused on drafting an Academic Statement of Purpose
Career and life planning workshops and mentorship experiences
Experiential learning, including internships and service-learning courses
Study abroad
Capstone courses or mentored research projects

Students will also be encouraged to:

- Enhance their academic skills by using the resources of the Center for Writing and Speaking and the Resource Center for Mathematics and Science
- Present or publish their work at the Spring Annual Research Conference or other venues
- Complete a four-year e-portfolio that documents, organizes and creatively presents evidence of their intellectual and personal development, academic achievements and leadership activities
Living Honorably

Become a living laboratory of campus-wide commitment to justice, courage, integrity, respect and responsibility through policies and practices designed to model these values and to provide the campus community with ongoing opportunities for ethical reflection, deliberation and action. The college will

Provide fair compensation for all college employees
Become an environmentally sustainable community
Develop a more inclusive campus community that provides all members with avenues for participation and voice
Promote academic and personal integrity through opportunities for ethical reflection and periodic efforts to evaluate and strengthen the Honor System
Promote opportunities for a vibrant spiritual life
Continue to diversify the campus community and cultivate knowledge of and respect for diversity as key ingredients for educational excellence
Foster a culture of courtesy, civility and respect for all

Some of the ways the college will promote these ideals are:

- Implementing a living wage policy based on a clear formula with processes for periodic assessment and adjustment
- Refining benchmarks for faculty and staff compensation and developing a new performance management system
- Becoming a charter member of the Presidents Climate Commitment, completing a greenhouse gas inventory, reducing energy use, supporting green construction, expanding the recycling program and implementing a plan to become climate-neutral
- Creating a staff senate to provide employees with opportunities to suggest and pursue improvements in workplace climate
- Introducing initiatives such as evening classes and new housing and meal options to enhance the Agnes Scott experience for Woodruff Scholars, post-baccalaureate and graduate students
- Developing a plan to create a more family-friendly campus culture
- Conducting periodic assessments of the Honor Code and creating structured opportunities for student ethical reflection through the Sophomore Retreat and e-portfolios
- Using the new Julia Thompson Smith Chapel to honor the college’s Reformed heritage and all faith traditions through enhanced religious life activities and interfaith dialogue
- Making the Agnes Scott Commitment to Community more visible as a statement of core values for all members of the college community
- Conducting a diversity inventory and developing initiatives to further diversify student enrollment and college leadership, including faculty, staff, trustees and alumnae leaders
- Initiating training programs and practices designed to create a campus culture where courtesy, respect and empathetic communication are the norm
- Assessing and revising business practices and office locations to promote communication, collaboration and excellence in service to students
Scottie Spirit

Enliven social, cultural and athletic offerings and support community traditions in order to build pride in and attachment to Agnes Scott and to create a more vibrant campus culture. The college will

* Improve environments on campus for students to study and socialize
* Encourage a healthy lifestyle by improving athletic, fitness and recreational options
* Strengthen community among students, staff, faculty and alumnae through social, cultural and community service activities
* Facilitate access to information regarding campus events and transportation to Atlanta’s educational, social and cultural offerings
* Become a magnet for Atlanta-area college students and the general public by bringing high-profile speakers and performers as well as bands and artists popular with the college-age population

Efforts to enhance student life on and off campus will include:

- Updating Mollie’s to provide healthy menu options and a more inviting atmosphere
- Creating a Winship Down Coffee House for socializing and informal performances
- Providing each student with card access to all residence halls
- Providing a 24-hour venue for exercise and fitness in Alston Campus Center and creating a fitness center in the old Steam Plant
- Continuing to strengthen ASC athletics with new varsity sports options, including lacrosse and golf, as well as enhanced intramural sports and fitness classes
- Organizing more events where students, faculty, staff and alumnae can gather to socialize, including monthly community hours, TGIF afternoon celebrations, Scottie Supper Club and community service projects
- Enhancing relationships between students and alumnae through increased joint programming in conjunction with Agnes Scott traditions
- Making information sharing easier by developing Web and physical resources, such as Web portals, kiosks and “walls and stalls” listing upcoming campus and Atlanta-area events
- Partnering with the city of Decatur to become a wireless campus
- Implementing new transportation options including Flexcar, a CLIFF bus stop on campus and a Purple Bike program
- Routing an Agnes Scott van to popular Atlanta locations on the weekends
- Scheduling live music on campus throughout the year, advertising to the Atlanta/Decatur community and area colleges and universities
Smart Growth

To achieve the goals of this strategic plan, the college will develop and pursue targeted strategies to:

- Increase enrollment and retention of undergraduate, post-baccalaureate and non-degree-seeking students
- Enhance fundraising, marketing and grant-seeking capacity
- Develop long-term financial and information technology plans
- Launch a comprehensive campaign

Specific targets by 2014 include:

- A sustained enrollment of 1,000 degree-seeking undergraduates through recruitment and retention strategies designed to maintain student academic quality and enhance geographic, racial and cultural diversity
- An average annual headcount of 200 students enrolled in new and existing post-baccalaureate degree and certificate programs that enhance the college’s mission, generate revenue and are highly entrepreneurial in responding to non-traditional student needs and market trends
- One or more non-degree educational programs that promote the college’s visibility, enhance the use of campus facilities and generate revenue
- Initiatives that improve the college’s ability to attract students from across the socio-economic spectrum, making an Agnes Scott education more affordable for talented students of limited financial means while also increasing the number of students able and willing to pay a greater share of the cost of attendance
- A Research Team to coordinate institutional research and assessment and build a culture of evidence-based institutional planning and policy-making
- A multi-constituency Retention Team to study reasons why students persist or withdraw and develop strategies that improve student retention
- A new vice president for communications and marketing to lead an effort to build Agnes Scott’s national and regional reputation and market the college’s programs to target audiences
- An Office of Faculty Grants to increase grant-seeking and support excellence and innovation in research and teaching
- An improved long-term budgeting process that:
  - employs a five-year financial model for revenues and expenditures with targets for balance among funding sources of tuition, endowment, annual fund and grants
  - incorporates multi-year plans for investing in technology and library resources and for addressing deferred maintenance across campus, especially residence halls
  - identifies and meets increased staffing needs that accompany program growth and incorporates financial sustainability into project planning
- A strategic plan for off-campus properties that provides decision principles for selling/acquiring property, sets standards for property maintenance and explores options for supporting faculty and staff homeownership in Decatur
- A comprehensive campaign to raise both operating funds and endowment to help achieve the goals of this strategic plan

1 Implementation of Agnes Advantage will require the creation of processes to track student completion of both curricular and co-curricular components. A detailed implementation plan will be incorporated into the Timetable for Engaging a Wider World.

Key steps toward implementing the curricular components of Agnes Advantage include:
1. Creating a more coherent and compelling introduction to college thinking, writing and study through a comprehensive review of First-Year Seminars, especially as they relate to ENG 110 and ASC 101;
2 Developing a reflective writing process (linked to the Sophomore Retreat) to help sophomores craft an Academic Statement of Purpose that explains their choice of major and charts their academic course;
3 Enriching the senior year by encouraging the development of capstone courses and creating the opportunity for departmental honors through carefully screened independent study;
4 Creating a more integrated approach to experiential education through greater coordination, unified marketing and possible co-location of experiential programs;
5 Developing definitions and policies for academic service-learning and other experiential opportunities that will satisfy the requirements of Agnes Advantage;
6 Expanding opportunities for study abroad, including semester and year-long programs, Global Connections/Global Awareness and summer study abroad;
7 Building the infrastructure to support campus-wide use of e-portfolios.

Key steps in the development of the **co-curricular** aspects of Agnes Advantage include:
1 Redesigning ASC 101 to introduce all incoming students to support services, campus traditions, study skills, the e-portfolio, and Decatur/Atlanta opportunities;
2 Designing and piloting first-year and sophomore Retreats;
3 Expanding career/life planning and mentorship opportunities developed, in part, through greater collaboration between career planning and alumnae relations

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2 Agnes Scott is one of 400 colleges and universities in the country to become a charter member of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. See [http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org](http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org).

3 The Commitment to Community reads: “I commit to cultivating and enhancing a positive campus climate through respectful engagement with the diverse cultures, ideas and perspectives embodied by all members of the Agnes Scott College community.” Currently, student leaders and incoming first-year students have the opportunity to sign the Commitment to Community each fall as part of a program conducted by the offices of multicultural affairs and residence life. The signed statement is displayed in each of the first-year residence halls and in the student life office.