

## VALUES COMMITMENT REPORT

2012-2013

### INAUGURAL YEAR'S WORK

Over the last 11 months, the Values Commitment Steering Team (VCST) composed of Bob Sitler, chair; Michael Branton and Rina Tovar (Intellectual Development); Leila Roach and Lynn Schoenberg (Personal Growth); and Tishia Dunham and Josh Rust (Global Engagement) has worked diligently to carry out the charge I outlined for them early last September.

The Charge:

- the development of areas for study by task forces within your core values areas and in the integrative area of personal and social responsibility,
- the naming of members of the task forces expected to not just study, but also recommend action around each study area,
- the leadership to move the task forces' work forward to conclusion on a timely basis,
- the referral of items that do not require study by a task force to a person in leadership who can evaluate the suggestion, question, or policy at hand,
- the growth of our values on our campuses through articulation and demonstration of what the values mean, and the integration of the values into the fabric of the University,
- the recommendation of structural changes in processes and resource support to advance our values and transform our University,
- the support of Values Day on the DeLand campus and whatever similar day is held for the Law campus(es), and
- the championing and steering of the University's overall values commitment.

In the report written by Emily Mieras and Chris Kandus-Fisher and developed through yearlong study and collaboration, Stetson University's values were reconceptualized and approved by our Board of Trustees in May 2012. The VCST was given the critical task of working on the three topics the Mieras/Kandus-Fisher reports suggested as well as deciding if other important items brought to its attention would be studied this year or held for a subsequent year's work. The three items suggested in the May 2012 report were:

- Intellectual Development – Explore the current undergraduate cultural-credit requirement and recommend modifications of this system to enable it to be a University-wide, values-based requirement that integrates commitment to our values with intellectual development and the many ways we learn and grow as a community.
- Personal Growth – Explore the areas of religion and spirituality to deepen our understanding of this topic and how we support further conversation, programming, and facilitation of interfaith initiatives.
- Global Engagement – Review Stetson's diversity and inclusion posture to specifically concentrate on the recruitment of diverse faculty, staff, and students.

In its zeal, the VCST also worked with task forces studying:

- academic excellence,
- nutrition and wellness, and
- linkages between our values and fellowship awards.

Additionally, the VCST provided support for developing directions regarding tobacco-free/smoke-free campuses, concussion prevention and management, and the inauguration of a University social justice lecture series.

It has been an extraordinarily busy year for the Team and a productive one. Members went way beyond what was expected of them, and a huge set of recommendations was put forward. All recommendations were reviewed by my Cabinet this summer, and below are their responses to those recommendations. What follows is the status of and action plan for each of the recommendations from the VCST and its six task forces:

1. Undergraduate Cultural-Credit Requirement – Provost Paul will be asking that these recommendations be considered and reviewed in the Curriculum Review Process, starting Fall 2013.
2. Religion and Spirituality – Recommendation 1 regarding a need for an interfaith space has been noted and will be considered as plans for the CUB remodeling come into focus. This work will not start until we are close to identifying the funding for the entirety of the project. Recommendation 2, regarding welcoming entry signage at Lee Chapel, will be done. We agree with Recommendations 3, 4, 5 and 6, and we are searching for an [Assistant Director for Interfaith Programs and Initiatives](#) to work with our current chaplain. This new person will be expected to present a wide range of interfaith programming and education. During undergraduate FOCUS this fall, we offered an interfaith reception with student volunteers. Allen Hall is available for use by all groups (Recommendation 7). Additionally, we have reorganized the areas of diversity and inclusion as well as religious and spiritual life. The Director of Diversity and Inclusion has been filled via internal promotion. The Director will provide oversight to the integration of intercultural initiatives with spiritual initiatives with the aid of the Assistant Director. This will provide more lift and resources to these areas.
3. Diversity and Inclusion – A national search is underway for an [Associate Provost for Faculty Development](#) whose responsibilities will include new faculty mentoring and faculty development initiatives, and fostering and supporting diversity and inclusion throughout the Stetson learning community. This position reports to the Provost. A more robust training and professional development program is being developed for staff as well with a newly appointed person, our Talent Management Administrator, located in Gulfport. Both professionals, along with every hiring manager at the University, are expected to pay special attention to the

recruitment and retention of candidates from underrepresented groups; diversity and inclusion are everyone's responsibility. The committee tasks, referred to in Recommendation 2, are already assigned to the new faculty mentoring committee. This includes new faculty orientation and mentoring, as well as annual tenure and promotion workshops for those in the tenure and promotion pipeline. Our Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Dean of Students will be asked to review the Diversity Scorecard proposal described in Recommendation 3. We need to measure, articulate, track, and assess the impact of our diversity initiatives. Two accomplishments this past year were the development of a revised EEOC statement for our job postings and the request that applicants include in their cover letters comments about their commitment to inclusive practices and their accomplishments in this area.

4. Academic Excellence – The policy outlined in Recommendation 1 is not an unusual one among our peers, and we agree in spirit with this item and place high value in supporting the success of our new faculty members. It will take significant modeling and expense prioritization to determine if we can do this throughout the academic program. Provost Paul will assemble a committee to get started. We agree that our SURE program would benefit enormously from additional funding as described in Recommendation 2. Funds can come from donor support, enhanced indirect cost recovery, young alumni who have benefitted from their undergraduate research experience, etc. We have included a request for increased funding of SURE in our campaign literature. Provost Paul has also charged the Director of Grants, Sponsored Research, and Strategic Initiatives to identify grant opportunities and to stimulate grant activity that can provide indirect cost recovery to support undergraduate research. Our Registrar and Deans are currently working on Recommendation 3. The Associate Vice President for Boundless Learning and the Summer Task Force have been working on Recommendation 4. Such a program will be piloted in May 2014, though it is not feasible to offer this program for free; faculty who elect to lead these learning experiences will receive appropriate summer compensation.
5. Nutrition and Wellness – Regarding Recommendation 1, our Student Affairs offices will be given the responsibility for finding partners for the refillable water bottles and water stations project. The Associate Vice President for Facilities Management will be asked to program the installation of a number of refill stations on our campuses. One station is already in place. The bookstore will be asked to carry refillable bottles. Over the next year, we will transition to the vending machines described in Recommendation 2. Our new dining contractor, Chartwells, has committed to nutrition education and significant local food sourcing. We will also discuss healthy eating as part of orientation for DeLand and Gulfport. We consider it inappropriate to require this discussion in FSEM courses.
6. Values Fellowship Awards – Starting in Fall 2014, we will be offering values fellowship awards to entering undergraduates who exemplify our values and will commit to taking leadership roles in that value area. There are still many details to be worked out between the Admission and Financial Aid areas to make this process a smooth one. The offering of values fellowships at the

graduate level and the role of faculty mentors will be reviewed by Provost Paul. We have not approved the pilot project of a values fellow in sustainability for the 2013-14 year.

I especially thank members of the various task forces for their focused and timely work and am grateful to the members of the VCST for analyzing the task forces' recommendations and the responses from the campus community and for providing us with the VCST comments. Thank you to all who took the time to read these original recommendations and make your own observations. The entirety of these documents is available at <https://www2.stetson.edu/secure/values-comments/values-working-groups/>.

Please join the Stetson community for a celebration of our values on Values Day, September 18, 2013, on the DeLand campus. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Walter Kimbrough, President of Dillard University.

On September 17, 2013, the Stetson University College of Law will celebrate the shared ideals of the Constitution of the United States and the values of Stetson University through the James Otis Lecture with remarks by the Honorable Charles Wilson of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit and Professors Louis J. Virelli III and Robert Bickel of the Stetson University College of Law.