

**Vocation, Calling and Stewardship:  
A Working Culture for Augsburg College**

**Report of the Commission on Work Culture  
12 May 1998**

**Stuart Anderson   Andry Andriambololona   Judi Bekke  
Sarah Ginkel   Brian Hackney   Linda Holmen   Conrad Meyer  
Vicki Olson   Diane Pike   Stella Rosenquist**

## **Introduction**

During the fall of 1997, President William Frame created five commissions, each composed of ten members drawn from all constituencies of the College--staff, faculty, students, and alumni. Each commission was charged with the task of answering one question concerning the future of Augsburg College. The efforts of the Work Culture Commission, together with those of the other four, were to produce the material from which the College could accurately state its current and future educational purpose. Clear articulation of this purpose gives the College the ability to better define and communicate its direction to potential students, to their parents, and to donors as well as to current and prospective employees.

President Frame intended that this work would empower Augsburg College with a "solid sense of well-being and the ability to effectively appeal to investors without whose help the college can neither continue to do its work nor meet the new needs of students in the 21st century." The final document created from the work of the five separate commissions should supply the material needed to effectively distinguish Augsburg College in the increasingly competitive market in which it now exists.

The Commission on Work Culture, composed of staff members Judi Bekke, Brian Hackney and Conrad Meyer, faculty members Diane Pike (Chair), Vicki Olson and Stuart Anderson, students Andry Andriambololona and Sarah Ginkel (Recorder), and alumnae Linda Holmen and Stella Rosenquist, was charged with creating a document to address the following question:

**What work culture should be developed at Augsburg College in order to exemplify the concepts of vocation, calling, and stewardship to our students, their prospective employers, and our colleagues?**

Implicit in this question is the belief that we are here to teach our students how to live wholly in the world. This teaching should incorporate key concepts from our Lutheran heritage--vocation, calling, and stewardship--by redirecting the words of Martin Luther to the Augsburg community, including the concepts of cultural inclusivity and order. We need to make the College reflect the world we want populated by our students.

The purpose of the document we were to produce was to help define who we are and who we will be, and in the process to shed light on how we will create a community that reflects the types of students we want to send forth into the world. President Frame summarized it concisely and practically: "Tell me who you are and who you want to be so I can do my job."

### *Assumptions*

Three fundamental assumptions set the boundaries for our efforts. The first of these was that we were not about completely redefining or reinventing Augsburg's work culture. It would not have been possible nor desirable for us to invent a completely novel version of this culture. We needed to identify and focus on characteristics that already distinguish Augsburg from its competitors. We needed to respect the traditions that have developed throughout the College's history and to focus on what already works and should be retained. We needed to create a blueprint outlining the qualities and features of the culture to be strengthened and built upon. Effective leadership would then take these elements and combine them with the new ones we had identified to create the culture we sought to develop.

The second assumption was that we wished to speak with one voice despite the fact that there were different constituent groups represented. For our efforts to succeed across the campus we felt it was critical to relate the concepts of vocation, calling and stewardship to as many members of the college community as possible. It was our task to help create an integrated culture that would be appropriate and desirable across constituencies.

The third assumption was that approaching the task from a student-centered perspective would serve us best. We believed that if we were guided by what was right for the students we would do what was right for the College.

Finally, we note two expectations. First and foremost, we expect that the essential mission of the College, to provide first-class educational opportunities for its students, remains unchanged and should be affirmed by our efforts. Second, we expect that the future behavior of the College will correspond to the principles set down by the five commissions. In other words, we approached this task with the understanding that it would lead to action that guides Augsburg's future.

### **The Context**

In the two sections that follow, we present definitions of terms central to the question posed to the Commission, namely vocation, calling, stewardship, and work culture. We examined these concepts from a variety of perspectives, from the religious to the secular and from within as well as outside the College community. Ultimately we focused our efforts on how these concepts are significant for and apply uniquely to Augsburg College, and how they should be expressed to be effective in an intentionally diverse community of learners.

### ***Vocation, calling and stewardship***

The choice of definitions for these key concepts was guided, in large measure, by our collective understanding of the Lutheran philosophy of higher education as expressed in Richard Hughes's work, "How the Lutheran Worldview Can Sustain the Life of the Mind" (1997). Hughes makes the case that ambiguity, paradox, thoughtfulness and reflection are integral components of the Lutheran worldview, that absolutism is to be avoided, and that one's

"...knowledge is always fragmentary and incomplete." (p.14) As such, Lutheran institutions of higher education welcome questioning minds and diverse perspectives. As part of extending this welcome, these definitions of vocation, calling and stewardship are inclusive of Lutherans and non-Lutherans alike, with the latter interpreted in the broadest sense.

Our intent, therefore, was to provide definitions with which a full range of Augsburg employees and students could identify. We struggled with a series of descriptions ranging from the explicitly religious to the fully secular. (Please see Appendix Part I for detail on our deliberations.) In the end, we expanded our view and adopted definitions that emphasize passion, meaningfulness, responsibility and ethics. In so doing, we acknowledge the value of diversity to an institution engaged in encouraging the pursuit of knowledge and truth. At the same time, we welcome and embrace those who specifically see God as directly responsible for their calling.

We also deliberately crafted our definitions to fit the variety of positions and roles that make Augsburg function: volunteer, professional, student worker, manager, support staff. It was important that the definitions allow for a range of people who, in turn, could see themselves as stewards of Augsburg College and understand the importance of modeling lives of vocation, calling and stewardship to our students. Again, our discussions were wide-ranging, extensive, and complex. (Please see Appendix Part II for a more detailed sense of our considerations.)

We believe the following definitions are inclusive of and hospitable to the group of people who encompass the Augsburg community, including the students we are called to serve:

**Vocation is the application of one's gifts to work, both professional and voluntary, for which one is uniquely suited.**

**Calling is the profound sense that one is engaged in meaningful work in a place where one belongs.**

**Stewardship is the responsible and ethical management of resources in service to a community.**

### ***Work culture***

At first glance the culture of an organization is made up of observable symbols. These symbols include such things as ceremonies, stories, dress, slogans and behaviors; they are relatively easy to identify, and often are cherished by those who live and work within the organization. Cultural symbols at Augsburg are rooted in the tradition of the College as a Norwegian Lutheran institution and have been passed down from generation to generation for more than a century. At a deeper level, the culture of an organization reflects the underlying values, assumptions and beliefs of those who work, live, and learn within the organization.

These more fundamental characteristics, which are often more difficult to identify even though they permeate all areas of the institution, are clearly reflected in the following definition taken from the literature of organizational theory (Daft, 1998):

**Culture is defined as the set of values, guiding beliefs, understandings, and ways of thinking that is shared by members of an organization and is taught to new members as correct.**

We adopted this description as a framework for our thinking.

To facilitate our analysis, we elected to employ a widely accepted organizational systems model for discussing and describing the work culture we seek for Augsburg College. The key organizational components of this model include structure, policies and rules, a code of ethics, reward systems, employee selection, and employee training. Each of these components is further defined in what follows.

*Organizational structure* includes the reporting relationships, groupings of people, and systems of an organization. This dimension includes the number of levels in a hierarchy, the span of control of managers and leaders, and the design of systems to ensure effective communication and integration across departments.

*Policies and rules* are the institutionally based norms for determining what people ought to do, when they do it, how they do it, and how well they do it.

*The code of ethics* manifests the moral principles and values that govern the behaviors of groups and individuals with respect to what is right or wrong.

*The reward system* refers to praise, attention, promotion and other mechanisms of distinction in the organization; it is linked to the code of ethics that govern the institution.

*Training and selection systems* regulate the flow of members both into and out of the organization; these systems are vital in sustaining the organization health and culture. (Daft 378)

These organizational systems are linked to the observable dimension of an exemplary culture in that the rituals, ceremonies, language and history are built upon and reflected within those systems. They represent the "tip of the iceberg." In addition, these systems are linked to the personal ethics of members of the organization and are influenced by the interests of the external stakeholders of the College. Thus, personal ethics, external stakeholders, and organizational systems all interconnect in identifying a work culture that exemplifies vocation, calling and stewardship.

Finally, culture is critical in two ways. First, it integrates members in an understanding of how to effectively work with one another and establishes a collective identity. Second, culture helps the organization adapt to the external environment by guiding how we meet our goals and how we interact with those outside the organization (Daft 369). It is our hope that this document will help the College in both of these functions.

## **A Model of a Working Culture**

An exemplary work culture involves both implicit and explicit considerations. Implicitly, there is a comparison between the current culture and what we as a community hope to see. Some of the characteristics and practices identified below are already present in our community, while others remain at a significant distance. During the journey of the Commission's work, we talked with and listened to others' concerns about the current work culture. While not a systematic and scientifically based analysis, we did hear repeated themes that guided our commission work. These themes included concerns about: discrepancies between what we practice and what we preach; work ethic and consistent standards, employee rewards; and, areas where service to students could be strengthened.<sup>1</sup>

Explicitly, our task is to prescribe those features we believe will enhance the work culture at Augsburg College. We state our claims and explain how these proposals support vocation, calling, and stewardship as we have defined them. We consciously focus our proposals as guides for decision-making across all categories of employees. The precise implementation of these proposals must be determined in kind and in degree by the College leadership. In other words, the Commission has focused on "what and why"; others will determine "how."

### ***Context for the model***

It is critical to articulate how we think about the relationship between the community as a whole and the individual members. The following quotation guided our collective endeavor:

A body is not one single organ, but many. Suppose the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body it does belong to the body nonetheless. Suppose the ear were to say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body;" it does still belong to the body. If the body were all eye, how could it hear? If the body were all ear, how could it smell? But, in fact, God appointed each limb and organ to its own place in the body, as He chose. If the



whole were one single organ, there would not be a body at all; in fact, however, there are many different organs, but one body. They cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you; nor the head to the feet, I do not need you. Quite the contrary: those organs of the body which seem to be more frail than others are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we regard as less honorable are treated with special honor. To our unseemly parts is given a more than ordinary seemliness, whereas our seemly parts need no adorning. But God has combined the various parts of the body, giving special honor to the humbler parts, so that there might be no sense of division in the body, but that all its organs might feel the same concern for one another. If one organ suffers, they all suffer together. If one flourishes, they all rejoice together.

(I Corinthians 12:14-26)

Augsburg College as the whole has a vocation and calling to serve our students *in this place*, to be the good steward. The way the body, as represented in the image in Corinthians, is put together must be understood. Individuals need to realize that, in order to complete our mission, all the components must work together. Thus, all functions should be clearly defined and instructed. If one part suffers, the whole suffers. If one flourishes, we rejoice together.

Within this body, there are individual vocations and callings. Faculty and staff<sup>ii</sup> provide interdependent services and functions in support of producing learned and whole students. Alumni and friends of the College also contribute to this goal. The individual must act as steward of that vocation and calling within the definitions given by the whole. In kind, the whole must support the individual's stewardship. Such reciprocal support requires living our ideals to the extent that we provide a model for students who are themselves developing their own sense of vocation and calling.

It is within this view of mutual support and interdependence that the Commission addressed specific dimensions of the organizational work culture. The Commission was called to model our own stewardship of the institution through this work.

We began by examining the ideals of vocation, calling and stewardship. We then labored to understand how those values could be realized. In the section that follows, we identify the characteristics we believe are essential for our work culture. Using the organizational template, each statement is followed by a specific explanation of the role of vocation, calling and stewardship.

### ***Organizational Structure***

**Augsburg's organizational structure should incorporate:**

- 1. clearly defined decision-making processes that invest authority, responsibility and accountability at the lowest possible levels;**
- 2. clearly designated areas of control and expertise;**
- 3. institution-wide mechanisms that track tasks to timely completion;**
- 4. conscious and conscientious vertical and horizontal communication systems throughout the College;**
- 5. systems that ensure effective integration of efforts across departments;**
- 6. appropriate checks and balances to ensure fair decision-making and just treatment of all students, faculty, and staff.**

Organizational structures that clearly outline decision-making lines, power, expertise, and responsibility are essential for any healthy organization. There is evidence to suggest that the current structures are unclear, sometimes inconsistent, and difficult for members to understand.

For the purposes of administration, the particular hierarchical structures required necessarily will vary. Leaders in different areas are expected to understand what type of structure best serves the particular goals within and among divisions. At the same time, the ideal model of as little hierarchy as practicable, appropriate empowerment at all levels, clarity of

communication, fair decision-making, and just treatment applies across all categories of workers. These features are important in encouraging individual members to make use of their gifts; that is, to engage in their vocation. Organizations characterized by inconsistent decision-making processes, failure to treat workers fairly, and a lack of checks and balances stifle the ability to work -- to succeed in one's vocational efforts. Stewardship on the part of Augsburg employees can be manifested in our willingness to engage fully in timely decision-making processes and to grant that final decisions are made in good faith and need to be implemented with good grace. For the good of the institution and for the students, programs may need to change, to be added or to be subtracted. Thus, there should be some room for experimentation and risk-taking. This requires a responsible and responsive structure that fosters forward-thinking programming and empowers innovation within carefully defined parameters.

A critical feature of such responsiveness is organizational communication. Effective and efficient communication structures that operate across the organization, as well as from top to bottom and bottom to top, are essential. Efforts to strengthen the mechanisms and frequency of communication need to be embraced by all areas of the College. Such a structure will help to create and sustain greater integration across the College. As challenges, goals, and operating conditions become more complex and diverse, integration of efforts across areas becomes essential for serving students and for enhancing the vocational opportunities for employees. Recent institutional changes already suggest movement in the direction of a collaborative structure between faculty and staff in the area of student affairs.

Finally, **checks and balances** should be understood as part of our stewardship. Our structures and systems require accountability to measure effectiveness and the need for change, as well as to ensure that decisions are thoroughly considered. Such features enhance the stewardship of our resources as we strive to achieve our mission.

### ***Rules and Policies***

**The rules and policies that govern Augsburg should:**

- 1. manifest the central value of placing the education of students first;**
- 2. demonstrate concern for the well-being of all employees and provide for their fair treatment;**
- 3. reinforce the dignity of work at all levels of the organization;**
- 4. uphold individual and departmental accountability for good work through clear and accessible written guidelines with appropriate consequences for failure to perform;**
- 5. include expectations for support of and involvement in the whole community.**

Policies and rules should be designed with the good of the students and the health of the organization in mind. Policies and rules need to pass the test of, "Do they serve students well?" That is, if the College is to first educate students, then rules and policies must foster education, not get in the way of it. As a measure of stewardship, faculty and staff ensure the longevity of the institution through service to current students.

As a community, we are thoughtful enough to be able to determine rules and policies that serve both students and the institution and at the same time are humane to faculty and staff. In a work culture concerned for vocation, calling and stewardship, employees require a clear understanding of: what job they are to perform; the expectations for their role in the community; when and how well they have accomplished their role; the rules for time and obligations to the College; and, how they will be evaluated.

Such policies and rules complement the organizational structures and provide opportunity for the sustenance of vocation and reflect sound stewardship of individual workers. Rules should

insist on fairness, dignity for the worker, recognition of the importance of the whole person in life, and opportunities for suggestion and feedback. We must value the work at all levels of the institution for the service provided in attaining our educational mission.

Success in achieving that mission rests in part on what we expect and how we meet those expectations. While the College must hold employees accountable, it is part of our individual stewardship to hold one another accountable as well. If we allow ourselves to tolerate unsatisfactory or harmful behavior in our daily organizational life, we fail to support the vocation of the College. At the same time, reasonable grievance procedures and processes for rethinking rules and policies need to be in place. Workers need to be able to participate in those processes without fear of retribution from the institution. In exchange, workers need to agree to support decisions made through appropriate bodies and structures until such decisions are changed.

The College is responsible for providing clear access to rules and expectations. These should be available in accurate, up-to-date, and complete staff and faculty handbooks, in written job descriptions, and in contracts. Weak and inconsistent rules and expectations make the achievement of vocation difficult and compromise the institution's stewardship of its employees. Policy should encourage training, learning, and advancement of staff and faculty and support the call to educate Augsburg students within the guiding principles of the mission of the College. In addition, policies should support and encourage the participation of members in the organization as a whole; for example, there should be clear expectations of faculty outside of formal classroom hours and of staff beyond the desk.

## **Rewards**

### **The reward system at Augsburg should:**

- 1. at its base, provide adequate and competitive compensation for faculty and staff;**
- 2. beyond its base, provide active and visible rewards for exemplary performance, as well as acknowledgment and support for satisfactory work;**
- 3. celebrate community and individual accomplishments and milestones in ways that are frequent, genuine and appropriate to the occasion and the institution.**

Stewardship of the institution demands that employees do good work. Good work is essential to fulfilling one's vocation and to the obligations to which one and all are called. Most people need unambiguous expectations set forward as guideposts for defining "good work." People who feel well suited to their work (vocation) and well situated at Augsburg (calling) and who share in a sense of stewardship for students and institution will expect themselves, and those around them, to do good work. They will also expect that good work be adequately rewarded through salary, benefits, and camaraderie. This approach is good stewardship for the long-term health of the institution because it demonstrates a commitment to fairness and community among employees. It does not ask the worker to sacrifice as a permanent state of employment.<sup>iii</sup>

An exemplary work culture rewards people with compensation but also with honor and recognition. It rewards sincerely and frequently. Currently there is little recognition for excellence on our campus. Rewards for extraordinary performance are also a part of stewardship and the sustenance of vocation. A manager who is a good steward of the talents of others will be aware of work done above and beyond the defined job. Both good work and extraordinary work need to be recognized in respectful and meaningful ways. Celebrations of success, of student achievements in all areas of college life, and of our community need to be genuine and common.

In addition to the rewards that the College offers from within, the work culture should seek opportunities for recognition and reward in the outside community and world. It is valuable to have measures of our work against other institutions and markers. In addition, such recognition can help promote the College in its mission and call. However, resources for core services and internal rewards should not be diverted to this external reward structure.

### *Selection*

**Selection of employees for work at Augsburg should:**

- 1. proceed thoughtfully and consciously balance the needs of the department or program with the needs of the institution as a whole;**
- 2. focus on retention of high quality staff, faculty and administration;**
- 3. incorporate clear discussion of institutional goals and priorities with candidates;**
- 4. be biased in favor of hiring full time faculty and staff, yet allow for selected part-time positions and flex-time options.**

In modeling vocation and calling, we must know who we are as individuals and as an institution. This understanding must be clearly communicated to prospective employees so they have the chance to determine whether or not Augsburg is a suitable choice for them. We must know what we are looking for in the people we hire. Our criteria need to be consistent with our institutional goals and our mission. Thus, staff and faculty need to have frank and clear discussions about mission, the specific position, and the compensation before a search begins. Adequate salaries, solid benefits packages, and good working conditions support the hiring of good workers and model good stewardship of the institution.

A culture that values vocation, calling and stewardship will make every attempt to identify a match for the person who is called to that work. Careful selection can reduce the

number of workers who are institutional mismatches. Careful selection also takes time and resources. The selection process must be open and fair. The selection process should define requirements carefully so that candidates can measure themselves against the requirements.

Specific selection processes for staff and faculty will vary across the College as appropriate for the particular profession and position. Yet, clear communication of our mission and of a candidate's understanding and support of that mission are essential. Common understandings of expectations across departments and programs enhance selection decisions. Part of the condition of employment should be continued learning or appropriate training on a regular basis. It entails career-long assessment of the quality of performance. Candidates must understand the nature of these processes at the time of hire. It can help guide them to determine if, in fact, Augsburg is the place to which they are called.

The expectations with respect to full and part-time hiring are as follows: for most workers full-time employment is a goal, not only for the work itself but also for the benefits. Many colleges are struggling, particularly in faculty hiring, with the pressure to hire more adjuncts in order to save costs; this problem can also be present in staff hires. It is in the interests of the College to be biased in favor of full time hiring for the commitment it brings to the work culture. At the same time, it is recognized that for some employees there is a preference for flex-time and part-time opportunities in order to accommodate the whole person. Both of these preferences must be kept in balance and worked toward as deemed appropriate in given areas.

### ***Training***

**Training of employees who work at Augsburg College should:**

- 1. include ongoing, high quality staff and faculty development in pursuit of making Augsburg College an excellent place for students to learn, as well as an optimally run organization;**



2. **provide conscious care for staff and faculty through formal and informal new hire orientation, and through ongoing assistance for problem-solving on the job.**

Stewardship not only applies to our mission as a college, but also to the persons we hire and include in our community. Training is an important part of that stewardship and reinforces our commitment to seeing work as vocation and calling. Training is also one place where our work culture and its values and practices are overtly passed on to employees; through training our expectations are communicated and the community developed and sustained.

Augsburg wishes to develop in its students the practice of life-long learning as modeled by our staff and faculty. Learning is viewed both as valuable in and of itself and as practicable. The work culture should foster the practical training of both the staff and faculty, as well as their broader intellectual development. In a place where vocation is conscious and valued, this professional development should have broad participation, recognize and acknowledge interconnectedness, provide cross-staff and faculty training and workshops, support career-long review, provide new hire orientation and help with skill development. As we develop our gifts, employee growth and development are necessary not optional. Such development must be in service to increasing the quality of the learning for students, as well as improving the satisfaction of our employees, and the operation of our institution.

### ***Code of Ethics***

**As measured against a Christian ethic, this code should include:**

1. **respect for each other and for the civil discussion of diverse views in pursuit of sustaining the overall community of the College;**
2. **hospitality;**
3. **pride in the work we do and the accomplishments of our students;**

4. **concern for the larger local and global community of which we are a part;**
5. **recognition and Christian understanding of human frailty;**
6. **concern for the longevity of the College;**
7. **accountability to our mission and our standards.**

Impassioned people often meet life head-on with opinions, assumptions, and expectations. Our ethical code must include respect for each other and for civil discussion. We must balance acknowledgment of individual difference and belief with a requirement that the collective mission be sustained and supported. The Lutheran tradition, according to Hughes, welcomes "the stranger" who brings with him or her divergent opinion, belief, and experience because of the possibility that what the Lutheran tradition has defined as true might be limited or wrong (Hughes 1997). Therefore, our code of ethics should also incorporate the concept of hospitality. All who join in the enterprise with good intent (faculty, staff, students) are made welcome and not set aside because of their differences. Such an ethic supports honest exploration of views, ideas, beliefs, and opinions which stretch beyond the familiar. At the same time, our code must include at its core the simple premise that we will not make collective decisions that hurt students or imperil the longevity of Augsburg College. Hospitality extends to the boundaries of our work culture and ensures that alumni and friends of the College are acknowledged and supported within the community.

In a college where there is a stated relationship to the Lutheran Church, the guiding principle should be the highest standard of ethics as defined by that belief. The ethics should also incorporate the belief in "grace and forgiveness," so that all actions that need to be addressed by that code take into account the fallible nature of the human being. This commitment demands a just and loving response to infractions, yet must not jeopardize the well-being of students or the integrity of the institution. Unethical behaviors and practices (dishonesty, mismanagement of

funds, inadequate job performance) will not be tolerated. Part of vocation and stewardship is learning that we are responsible for our choices and our behaviors. Therefore, if one chooses to act against the code of ethics, he or she must bear the consequences of that decision.

Pride in the institution requires honest acknowledgment of our successes and our weaknesses; it precludes negative and disparaging public statements made in a self-serving way. As part of one's call to Augsburg, we must truly feel we belong and that we can sustain and improve the institution.

Finally, our ethic of respect for each other allows us to hold each other accountable for the quality of our work. Workers have the right to be told where their performance is inadequate and how they need to change. While institutional health and student safety are paramount, employees deserve a reasonable opportunity to be successful. As good stewards we must hold one another to our collective commitments. When we fail to do so, we hurt ourselves and ultimately the students.

## **Conclusions**

### ***The distinctiveness of our work culture***

Many of the practices and values that we propose are appreciated by most of our sister institutions; there is no corner on the market of clarity, fairness, and service to the students. Yet, the context and practice of our work culture can be distinctive: We can know that we are *here* at Augsburg College and not somewhere else.

This distinctiveness is possible when our values and practices are anchored in the Lutheran tradition and in Augsburg's particular mission of providing education for service. Our Commission believes that we can create and sustain a work culture that is distinguished by the following:

1. **our bold and public statement about the importance of vocation, calling and stewardship;**
2. **our use of those values as guiding principles in our daily organizational practice;**
3. **our efforts to demonstrate to students that which we hope they acquire as member of the community.**

We must communicate our understanding of vocation, calling and stewardship to each other and to the outside community. We can begin by talking with one another about these ideas and how they shape our daily practices. We should publicly and without hesitation stand by our commitment to these values, in everything from our marketing materials to our job descriptions to our work in the classroom. Our daily activity must incorporate those ideas as guides for our behavior and how we account for our choices; it matters if faculty meet their office hours as promised; it matters if staff are patient in dealing with frustrated students paying bills; it matters if dorms are well maintained and if students are supported in maintaining a healthy life. All of these practices reflect the degree to which we strive to fulfill our individual vocations for the good of the whole.

Augsburg College is distinctive because of our commitment to the understanding, articulating, and living out of vocation, calling, and stewardship. We make this commitment so that our students can develop a deep sense of their own vocation, calling, and stewardship, both during their time at the College and as they make their way forward into the world.

## References

Daft, Richard. Organization Theory and Design, Sixth Edition, South-Western College Publishing: 1998

Hughes, Richard. How the Lutheran Heritage Can Sustain the Life of the Mind. Lina R. Meyer Lecture. As reprinted in *From Mission to Marketplace: Papers and Proceedings from the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America*, 83rd Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, 1997.

Mission Statement. Augsburg College. Minneapolis, MN. 1995.

## Appendix

### Part I. Discussions of Vocation, Calling, Stewardship

The following collections of unformed, but useful definitions provide insight into the discussions of the Work Culture Commission. They reflect the content of conversations and e-mail messages shared by commission members as we refined our definitions.

**VOCATION:** your light and ability; the core of who you are; the employment of your self-confident talent for a purpose which vindicates your existence; work or occupation that is fulfilling; applying one's gifts; work, both professional and voluntary, for which one is uniquely well suited; work for which we are well-fitted, satisfied by, and probably passionate about; meaningful work (paid and unpaid) for which one has special gifts and/or from which one receives deep satisfaction; work in the world done to serve the Lord; work in the world done to serve the communal good; the work that I do that is tailored to my special gifts - not all work is vocation but all vocation is work; a regular occupation, especially one for which a person is particularly qualified or suited; the work of the Lord done in the world as well as within the walls of the monastery; work which serves the overall goals of the college.

**CALLING:** knowing, defining, and refining one's gifts; being fully employed with every piece of your ability; where one does meaningful work; where and when you practice a vocation; why we exercise our vocation at Augsburg rather than elsewhere; the motivation to apply one's gifts in a particular place, context, framework; a place, as opposed to a vocation, about which one is passionate and, as a result, remains; knowing, defining, and refining one's gifts; defining oneself; defining the meaning behind one's vocation - a purpose beyond task completion; a strong impulse

to do or be a part of; the situation or site where a person engages in their vocation; focuses on element of service not on task performed.

**STEWARDSHIP:** applying one's gifts in an ethical way to responsibilities and resources; it entails service and responsibility and implies ethics and morals; it is evidenced in the ethical management of the educational enterprise for current students and for the longevity of the institution; it asks for responsible and ethical management of one's own affairs as well as those of another; all who work at Augsburg are stewards of the future - of Augsburg as an institution and of the students who come to it. This implies responsibility for the short and long-term care and ethical management of Augsburg as an educational resource to the community; the responsible and communal use of both calling and vocation; momentary watch over resources and the need to manage them well for future generations; the ethical management of a set of resources to which one is profoundly connected or bonded.

## Part II. Discussions of Work Culture

Included in the definition of work culture are several concepts, some of which are concrete and easy to observe and some of which are not. These concepts can be collectively visualized as an iceberg with the observable characteristics occurring above the surface. Examples of observable characteristics of a work culture are its symbols, ceremonies, stories, slogans, behaviors, dress, and physical setting. Again, as with an iceberg, what occurs beneath the surface in a work culture is often more substantial than is first assumed and cannot be easily seen. These underlying characteristics include history, values, beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, and feelings.

Once our commission had a definition of work culture, we set about analyzing observable characteristics of the work culture at Augsburg from our various perspectives as students, staff, alumni, and faculty. While our analysis was far from exhaustive or scientific, it did bring to the forefront some interesting descriptions of Augsburg. They are summarized in the collections that follow. To the extent these visible manifestations reflect our current work culture, future changes in support of vocation, calling and stewardship should be visible in these same manifestations.

SYMBOLS: Student leisure is symbolized by entertainment and drinking; the Lindell Library is the "tuxedo in the closet" and the dorms are the "holes in the underwear"; the new buildings on campus signal forward movement and show we aren't stuck in the past; the mace carried in faculty processions symbolizes the tie to faculty history; blue jeans and baseball caps symbolize our casual and informal attitudes; books, backpacks, and computers symbolize the tools of learning; our city location symbolizes excitement to some and lack of safety to others.



CEREMONIES: examples of ceremonies are new student orientation and summer registration, faculty meetings and devotions, convocations, Christmas dinner for families, graduation, distinguished alumni presentations and luncheons, Advent Vespers, Velkommen Yule, sports 'winners' celebrations.

STORIES: (true/false/otherwise) Students know a lot about each other because Augsburg is a small campus and "word gets around"; Augsburg is an unknown place; Augsburg is for undergraduate education, only; Augsburg isn't welcoming to alumni, parking is difficult, it isn't safe around campus, there is no comfortable gathering spot, all this place wants is my money, Augsburg has changed and isn't the place I remember; Augsburg is a place where brilliant minds are used in humble and liberal social services, a place where eccentric professors are dedicated to their subject matter; Augsburg seldom rises to the top: when we do, it is a surprise and something to be modest about; budgets are always being cut. Money is used to fund financial aid rather than programs or salary; there are many different "campfires" at Augsburg and most are friendly; Augsburg staff and faculty are underappreciated, underpaid, and overworked; Augsburg almost "went under" and the future remains precarious; at Augsburg decisions are made "at the top and without a broad understanding of reality - therefore, one wisely questions decisions and regards administrative intention with skepticism; At Augsburg there are faculty who teach their classes and leave - there are others who carry more than their share and nothing is done about it; Augsburg takes students who aren't qualified because we need the enrollment; WEC saved Augsburg.

SLOGANS: You should be glad you have a job; 'no' is a word we seldom use; Augsburg family; management by committee; I don't know - I just work here; what did you expect - it's Augsburg;

they should give me/you a break - I'/you're a student; we need to do something about grade inflation; college in the city; education for service; through truth to freedom.

BEHAVIORS: attending or skipping class; involvement in campus programming and extra-curricular activities; "hands-off" expectations for work and presence on campus; some people work hard and are visible on campus - some don't and aren't; "dresses up well" and puts best foot forward for alumni on special occasions; largely informal interactions with first name basis between faculty, staff, and students; often difficult to identify staff versus faculty by surface level indicators like appearance, language, and general manner on campus; public behaviors are conflicting because they include the hate mail of Elroy Stock and the fact that we kept his money as well as the sexual assault charges brought against an athlete and the perception that he received a "hand slap" punishment.

DRESS: casual and informal for the most part, except for administrators, development and alumni employees; i.e., those who meet with people outside campus; students who live on campus often seem to be underdressed in winter because skyways and tunnels keep them inside on cold days; very little 'extreme dress'.

PHYSICAL SETTING: Old Main classrooms are conducive to learning, other classroom spaces are not so much so because they lack windows and/or seem shabby and/or are drab and/or have clanging pipes, too much or too little heat and/or don't fit the way the teacher teaches; Lindell Library is a tremendously useful addition to general population of college; Murphy's Park and the Quad provide attractive green space in warm weather; offices vary in terms of size, condition, airflow, heat, and general desirability - those in new buildings and/or those who deal with the public tend to have nicer offices - poor conditions are tolerated because lack of funds to do better

and because of institutional aversion to ostentation, opulence, overreaching; dorms, except for Anderson, are in deplorable condition; "public" building (Foss, gym, bubble, Christensen, Lindell) appear to be in decent shape because they are most often used by alumni and outsiders; Augsburg is struggling to maintain a technological presence with significant investments in computers and other equipment - nevertheless many faculty and staff have old computers and the computer lab equipment is wearing out; physical setting is modest, functional, frugal with luxury defined as self-centered and immodest.

### **Addendum**

A number of people carefully read our document and made comments and suggestions. The Commission is grateful for their work in helping to clarify the writing and in addressing substantive issues. What we heard in the second forum for feedback included: concerns about the actual implementation of the recommendations and expressed hope that there would be real change; interest in work on compensation time versus overtime and consistency in policy; more emphasis on the code of ethics; suggestions for ways to address concerns about morale and identifying strategies to determine what and where the real work culture problems are; raising expectations and discontinuing our tolerance of mediocrity.

We also discussed the relationship between our definition of vocation and that of the Commission on Faith and Reason. The definitions of vocation are different, but not incompatible. As we understand the definition of vocation linking faith and reason, vocation must be seen as directed by God. The explanation appears focused on "why" we approach faith and reason in a particular way. The Faith and Reason definition connects most closely with the Work Culture definition of calling. The definition of vocation put forth by the Commission on Work Culture is less limited, more pragmatic, and more broadly applicable; it enables us to better find a match between one's gifts, one's work and the institution.. We believe the broader definition is essential in order to sustain Augsburg's role as an employer who welcomes diversity.

## Notes

---

<sup>i</sup> These concerns were brought forward in the open hearings and in e-mail exchanges.

<sup>ii</sup> Throughout this document we use the phrase "staff and faculty". It is important that the reader understand that the broader "staff" is inclusive of "administration." Furthermore, the Commission made the decision not to identify student workers as a separate group. Student workers should receive the same support as other employees; but more importantly, they should be integrated into a work culture that models vocation, calling and stewardship.

<sup>iii</sup> This statement refers to the notion that one interpretation within our tradition is a sense that "service" means working for less than comparable compensation or sacrificing hours or resources for the greater good.

1910

The first of the year was a very dry one, and the crops were much injured. The second of the year was a very wet one, and the crops were much injured. The third of the year was a very dry one, and the crops were much injured. The fourth of the year was a very wet one, and the crops were much injured. The fifth of the year was a very dry one, and the crops were much injured. The sixth of the year was a very wet one, and the crops were much injured. The seventh of the year was a very dry one, and the crops were much injured. The eighth of the year was a very wet one, and the crops were much injured. The ninth of the year was a very dry one, and the crops were much injured. The tenth of the year was a very wet one, and the crops were much injured.