

Developing a Mission Statement

What is a mission statement? A mission statement captures a program's purpose; it is a declaration of values, goals and aspirations that the program agrees upon that defines them as a unique entity

A mission statement has the following key characteristics:

- **Visionary:** Above all else a mission statement offers a vision of what a program aspires to be. A visionary mission statement helps people understand what the program is about and how they can contribute to the achievement of the vision. Mission statements frequently contain wording such as "to be the best", "the highest quality", and "in the world".
- **Broad:** A program cannot be all things to all people, but a mission statement should not limit areas of service or expertise too narrowly. A mission statement should be broad enough to allow the program to change and adapt without constant revision to the mission statement.
- **Realistic:** The broad vision needs to be tempered with realism, to be both practical and workable. Mission statements that include everything or over promise will not give a clear indication of what the program is about. A lofty, unrealistic mission statement will not have great credibility. Instead the best statements are direct and powerful.
- **Motivational:** The statement should be written in such a way that it inspires commitment among employees, customers, partners, and funding agencies towards what this program will do or produce. Some organizations emphasize the inspirational value of their mission statement above all else, using it to express their philosophy and values.
- **Short and concise:** The mission statement should be between 25 and 50 words. Some consultants recommend that the mission statement be short enough that an employee can easily remember it and readily repeat it.
- **Easily understood:** The statement should use plain language that is convincing and easy to understand. For example, a technology company's mission statement should not include jargon or technology concepts that are unfamiliar to people outside the area. Consider using the "grandmother test" on your mission statement -- would your grandmother understand what your company is about if she read your mission statement?

Examples of Mission Statements:

Waubonsee Community College

Waubonsee Community College is a public, comprehensive community college which was organized in 1966 as mandated by the Illinois Community College Act, to provide education and training services for individuals in portions of Kane, Kendall, DeKalb, LaSalle, and Will counties of District 516.

The philosophy of Waubonsee Community College is based on the premise that education is the cornerstone of a literate, democratic society; that learning is a lifelong process; and that the pursuit of knowledge must be supported by institutional policies that demonstrate the values of accessibility, service, value, quality, and innovation.

The Outcomes Program (TOP)

The goal of The Outcomes Program (TOP) is to, in relation to the principles and criteria for a learning-centered college, identify how to enhance and/or improve the process of assessing student outcomes and recommend plans for enhancement and/or improvement to programs, processes, and procedures that impact the assessment of student outcomes.

Student Support Services

In partnership with our students, through academic and counseling intervention, we will assist our participants to embrace personal responsibility, experience success, accomplish educational goals, build practical skills and confidence, recognize the value of life-long learning.

High School/Summer School Program – Community Education

The mission of Community Education's High School Program is to serve high school students from the remedial to the accelerated student. The High School Program strives to be convenient for students by offering a variety of classes at various times and locations during the summer. The High School Program maintains quality by employing certified high school teachers, who are endorsed in their content area and by using current textbooks from district high schools. The program continues to grow and change to meet the needs of the students and schools we serve.