SPIRITUAL MASTER-PLANNING
A Short Guide

All accredited Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities are expected by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities (AAA) to have a spiritual master plan, a plan that identifies the spiritual goals of the institution and how the institution plans to meet them. To be effective the plan should:

- Relate directly to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the mission of the institution, its strategic initiatives and the nature of the staff and student body
- Have clear objectives/goals
- Be inclusive of all aspects of the educational experience
- Be manageable
- Be known
- Be creative
- Be outcome oriented and measurable where practicable

This outline provides a brief guide to administrators intending to establish a plan.

Establishing the Framework

The first step towards developing a spiritual master plan is to decide who is going to develop and monitor it. A small core committee that asks for broad input will probably be the easiest way to manage the process. If there is already a committee on campus that focuses on spiritual life, this may be the group to take responsibility. Certainly, you will want representation from administration, faculty, students and staff involved in student life on the core committee. A coordinator will need to appointed, ideally one of the main administrative oficers, and this individual will either chair or be executive secretary of the committee. The chaplain should also play an active role in the committee, but not necessarily be its chair.

Terms of reference of the committee should also be established. These should include expectations of:

- Wide consultation
- Development of core goals and/or outcomes
- Development of an action plan
- Development of a process to monitor the plan
- Plans to communicate the plan
- An annual evaluation and reporting process

For the purpose of this document, this committee will be called the Spiritual Planning Committee (SPC)

Setting the Goals

In order to set the spiritual goals of an institution, the SPC will need to gather some information. This will include:

- The demographics of the student body (age, disciplines, residence-hall numbers, marital status, religious backgrounds, cultural/racial backgrounds)
- Surveys of the perception of students and faculty/staff of the strengths and weaknesses of the spiritual life program
- A list of what is presently offered to staff and students in the way of spiritual activities, or spiritual components in academic disciplines

With that information, and keeping the mission of the institution in mind, the SPC can start to identify some goals. For example, these could be:

1. For all students and staff to be actively committed to service (evangelistic or community)
2. For all Seventh-day Adventist students to graduate with a greater commitment to the mission of the church than when they entered the college/university
3. For all staff and faculty to transparently model the Christian worldview to students
4. For all students of other faith traditions to come to an understanding of and/or appreciate the Christian approach to living, and experience how it can enrich their personal lives.
5. For each cultural/racial group to experience inclusiveness in worship and appreciate the worship of other groups

The important factor is to ensure that the spiritual goals relate to the reality of your institution, and are inclusive of the range of needs your campus may have. It is important also not to have many goals. People need to **know** what the goals are, **remember** them, and be **committed** to them.

Once the SPC has defined some goals, these should be discussed widely, in a range of forums, along with the questions:

- Do we need to change, adapt or add to these goals in any way?
- What can we do, and what may we need to change, to make these goals a reality?
- What can you (and your department/area) commit to in order to reach these goals?
- How can we measure our success?

The SPC can then modify and/or confirm their goals and move to the next step in planning.

Deciding on the Actions

Based on the consultations over the goals, the SPC should now have a list of possible actions. They now need to sift though these, order them, decide how much is reasonable and possible, and then tabulate them. There may, for example, be four or five actions, under a goal, and in each case, the person(s) responsible and the timeframe should also be listed. So for example, if you took goal number one you might develop a table that looks like this:

Goal One: For all students and staff to be actively committed to service (evangelistic or community)

Action	Persons Responsible	Timeline
The addition of a compulsory service component to General Education requirements	Academic Committee	End of academic year
One overseas and one local evangelistic campaign to be held annually	Religious Outreach Committee	Annual ongoing
One international project in connection to ADRA to be available each summer	Student Services Committee	Annual ongoing
Faculty and staff report forms to include service component	Staff Development Committee	Piloted in Spring
Academic Departments to identify specific courses where service components can be added	Academic Committee Academic Departments	By end of first semester
Introduction on an honors program that focuses on service to the community to be piloted	Honors Committee	Immediate
Campus to host satellite evangelism program	Administration	Plans for next year
Student-led Week of Prayer to be added to calendar	Religious Outreach Committee	In calendar for March

Responses to questions on graduate surveys relating to attitudes to service
End-of year student survey that asks for level of involvement in service
Faculty and staff report forms
Number of students and staff choosing to be involved in volunteer service projects

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Once the action plan has been drafted, it is time to ask for input once again. Distribute the document widely and revise.

Communication

It is of no value to have a plan that is not being used or that does not provide focus to the spiritual plans of the campus. The SPC therefore needs to make sure all those involved in implementing the plan know what is in it, and what their responsibilities will be. The following means could be used to communicate the plan and get ownership:

- Ask to present the plan in full staff and/or faculty meetings
- Ask department heads to include an item in their staff/faculty meetings on the plan, and invite a member of SPC to speak to the item if they would like more discussion/explanation
- Activate the student association and student spiritual activity groups to be part of the plan
- Develop a feedback sheet and ask key individuals group to give feedback on how they consider the plan is going part way through the year
- Once measures of success are in, collate and feed this information back to the whole community. It is their plan, not just the plan of SPC.
- Give opportunities for groups/individuals to tell you how the plan could be improved for the next year
- Make sure the Board of Trustees knows the plan and is kept informed at least once annually of progress

Evaluation and Updating

Each major goal should include some measurements of success, and there will often be more than one measurement for each goal. These could include:

- End-of year surveys on spiritual life (or questions on spiritual life in a more general campus-wide survey)
- Exit interviews with students asking them to speak of their changing attitudes towards faith and the church over the time they have been students
- Attitude surveys on faith/church/lifestyle issues taken when students enter college and when they leave
- Asking faculty to include a section on service and integration of faith and learning in annual reports, noting how their actions/approach impact students
- Including questions about faith in the classroom in forms for students to evaluate teachers
- Surveying graduates on their attitudes to faith and the church a few years after graduation
- Keeping records of the service involvement of students and faculty/staff

The key issue is to have enough feedback and measurable evaluation to know if the spiritual master plan is working, and how it can be improved.

A plan should only be approved for one to two years. After that time, it will need updating and changing to ensure ongoing vitality in the spiritual life of the campus.

Relationship to Campus Spiritual Planning

Some campuses like to integrate their spiritual planning with other aspects of the strategic planning. That can work well, but administrators must ensure that the spiritual focus is not lost amidst too much paperwork and action plans.

Even if the plan is a stand-alone document, there should always be a good flow of information and ideas between the SPC and other planning groups. For example, if the campus has voted major strategic initiatives, then these will impact the spiritual goals, and the identified spiritual needs of the campus should also be a major influence on the overall strategy. Overall, the plan will work if it:

- Relates directly to the mission of the institution, its strategic initiatives, and the nature of the staff and student body
- Is inclusive of all aspects of the educational experience
- Is manageable
- Is known
- Is creative
- Is outcome oriented and measurable

Further Resources

For further ideas on creating a spiritual master-plan see the Department of Education *A Guidebook for Creating and Implementing a Spiritual Master Plan on Seventh-day Adventist Campuses of Higher Education*

For further ideas on campus wide strategic planning see the Department of Education monograph *Strategic Planning in Higher Education* in the Higher Education Management Series.

Both these documents can be downloaded from the General Conference Education website, education.gc.adventist.org, or requested from the Department of Education at the General Conference Office, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, USA.