

TESTER
COLLEGE

up

STEPPING

MISSION • OPPORTUNITY • VISION • ACHIEVEMENT

“The intellectual life is not the only road to God, nor the safest, but we find it to be a road, and it may be the appointed road for us.”

- C.S. LEWIS

“In Christian education, nothing matters but the kingdom of Jesus Christ; but because of the kingdom, everything else matters.”

- HENRY ZYLSTRA



CONTENTS

Message from the President	3
Our History	4
Our Mission	6
Core Values	7
Our Vision.....	8
Strategic Priorities for Realizing Our Vision.....	9
Faithfulness to Mission.....	10
Creative Initiatives for Growth.....	11
Enriched Undergraduate Offerings	12
Expanded Graduate Programs.....	13
Broad Community Engagement.....	14
Infrastructure Upgrades	15

“Whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.”

COLOSSIANS 3:17

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Friends of RC,

Christian faith and serious academic inquiry belong together. Institutions such as Rochester College stand at the juncture of faith and learning to serve men and women who will build families, begin or direct businesses, serve professions, educate generations to come, and otherwise lead our world.

Rochester College alumni live in 47 states and 43 nations. They are making a difference because of what was invested in them during their time with us. Now we are looking to the future and asking how to enlarge the footprint of our service to those who will come next year, the year following, and so on. We cannot answer that question without you.

We want you to believe in us and what we are doing at Rochester College on a daily basis. We need your trust, your gifts, and your children. And we must offer them something of surpassing value.

In this booklet, you will find the strategic objectives we are implementing at the college. You will find a clear and definitive statement of our Mission, Vision, and Strategic Priorities. Please read it carefully—and join us in its implementation.

From Rochester College's first class in 1959 to this year's engaged students to those yet to be born, we serve God by serving them. The path ahead is bright and bold. Thank you for partnering with us to turn dreams into realities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Rubel Shelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Rubel Shelly, Ph.D.
Professor of Philosophy & Religion
President

OUR HIS



Rochester College's history is rooted in a dream from the 1950s: A group of Christian leaders formed a board to establish an institution of higher learning in the North Central region of the United States. A junior college named Michigan Christian College was the result. The school's name was changed to Rochester College in 1997.

The goal of the school's founders was to provide a quality liberal arts education in a social-cultural context that would both foster Christian faith and train students in a Christian approach to personal, family, and career lifestyle.

How people "see" their world is determined by the particular "lens" through which it is viewed. As western civilization tends more to scientific reductionism, there must be an intentional priority among believers to see reality through the lens of theistic conviction. Answers to such fundamental questions as "What is a human being?" and "What is the purpose of human life?" are very different from the point of view of Christian theism versus materialism.

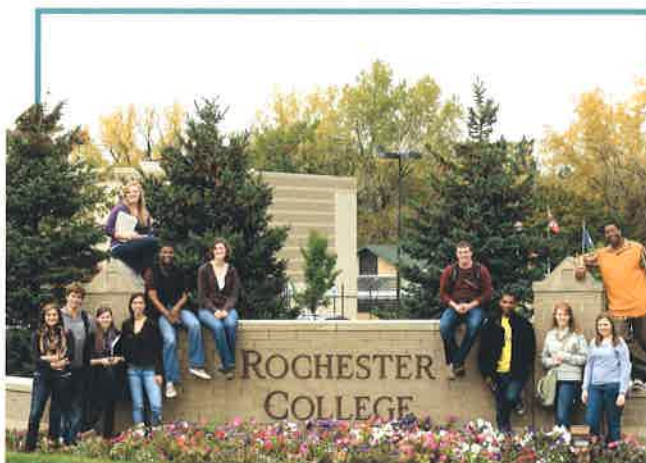
T O R Y

Rochester College remains true to its founders' goal of using a Christian worldview as the organizing principle that interprets and informs all knowledge. We reject the bifurcation of life into spheres of "secular" and "sacred." Instead, we affirm that all of creation is God's world and all truth God's truth. We take seriously the biblical ideal of doing all things—from science and literature to athletic competition and community service—as representatives of Jesus Christ to the world.

Since the fall of 2009, the college has embodied an academic model known as a Christian Integrated Learning Community. This approach to higher education integrates classroom experience with life experiences shared in community with others who think, serve, play, and worship together.

The college operates on its main 80-acre campus in Rochester Hills, Michigan, at three satellite locations that serve its accelerated degree programs (Macomb University Center, Mott University Center, and Specs Howard School of Media Arts), and via electronically delivered formats as "RC Online."

Rochester College is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association, and its School of Nursing is professionally accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).



OUR MISSION

The only way to measure achievement and success is to be clear about one's purpose. From a two-year institutional study during calendar years 2010 and 2011, the faculty of Rochester College identified its Mission with this language:

Rochester College cultivates academic excellence, principled character, servant leadership, and global awareness through a rigorous educational experience that integrates liberal arts and professional studies within an inclusive Christian heritage.

Every administrator, faculty member, employee, and student of the college finds his or her role defined and distinguished within this wide-ranging statement. From student recruiter to financial aid advisor to tenured faculty member, each person in the sequence is attempting to make the educational experience appropriate to our students. From maintenance worker to IT specialist to residence hall supervisor, every employee has a role to fill to make our campus an authentically spiritual culture.

A college that is not faith-based can study the facts of physics, history, biology, math, literature, and psychology without any sense of obligation to articulate an overarching philosophy or narrative that integrates its various disciplines. A Christian college, on the other hand, studies the same facts of physics, history, biology, math, literature, and psychology and also seeks to provide an overarching framework that unifies and makes sense of those parts. We place everything into a narrative that unifies everything from business law to athletic competition to chapel.

A Christian college helps its students understand how every course and every major, how every career and every lifestyle can enhance the *imago dei* in all people and make us part of God's redemptive mission. God has created all things; science helps us appreciate the handiwork of the Creator, trace the harm done to our environment, and learn ways by which we may function as redemptive agents in creation. And so with the health of the human body (e.g., nursing), the march of events across millennia (e.g., history), the nurture and protection of children (e.g., education, social work), the dynamics of human personality (e.g., psychology), the nobility of athletic training and competition (e.g., physical education, sports, exercise wellness), the building of a wholesome society (e.g., political science), the way to share goods and services for mutual benefit (e.g., business), and so with every discipline—not just biblical studies.

While welcoming students from all races, religions, and personal backgrounds, we have no hesitation to declare our identity as a Christian college. Our goal is to provide an environment within which men and women will receive a superior education that equips them to pursue their chosen vocations as a means to serve and glorify God.

CORE VALUES

Rochester College is a values-rich, values-driven culture. The undergirding values we embrace are rooted in our identity as a Christian college, and they shape all our personal and institutional activities. Below we identify nine core values that reflect a variety of related principles and serve as our anchors, along with something of the scope and breadth of each one.

1

FAITH

that honors the Holy Trinity, Scripture, the Body of Christ, fellow-believers, non-believers, friends, and critics

2

INTEGRITY

that produces fidelity to Mission, accountability, transparency, honesty, trustworthiness, environmental stewardship, and ethical uprightness

3

EXCELLENCE

that is reflected in quality, effectiveness, value, monitored outcomes, and positive impact

4

DIVERSITY

that affirms heterogeneity, mutual respect, global awareness, cross-cultural interaction, justice, advocacy, and fairness

5

INNOVATION

that exhibits passion, creativity, flexibility, resourcefulness, and transformation

6

COLLABORATION

that generates teamwork, collegiality, stewardship, partnership, and cooperation

7

JOY

that exhibits itself in wonder, curiosity, discovery, reverence, and sharing

8

LEADERSHIP

that generates vision, professionalism, boldness, data-informed decisions, resolution, reputation, and principled character

9

LOVE

that honors God, respects all human beings, honors those with special gifts, provides opportunity for those with special challenges, and pursues the truth in partnership with all persons of goodwill

These are the central and guiding elements of our culture as an institution of higher education. They have informed our Mission and continue to inspire students, employees, faculty, administrators, and board members to give our best. These Core Values represent who and what we have chosen to be at Rochester College.



VISION

The *Mission* of Rochester College defines our identity and tells everyone who we are and who we aspire to become. Our *Values* name our guiding principles as an institution of higher education that is committed to a distinctly Christian heritage. But what are the specific things we want to do going forward? What will distinguish Rochester College from other excellent colleges and universities around us? Looking to the future, we have this *Vision* for the institution:

Rochester College will be a quality institution of Christian higher education that undertakes creative initiatives to educate the whole person—body, mind, and spirit—with challenging academic programs in a nonsectarian Christian tradition. Consistent with the six strategic priorities of the college, our desire is to nurture men and women whose values, knowledge, and competence will make the world a better place for all people.

The achievement of so grand and ambitious a Vision requires the best efforts of every person associated with the college. Even so, due to the nature of Rochester College as a Christian school, we confess that our best efforts are nothing apart from the blessing of God. He has smiled upon this school across more than a half century of service, and we believe there is more for us to do within his will for the future.

Blessed to be in Oakland County, Michigan, Rochester College is committed to being a positive presence to all our neighbors—whether they are in our local community, Midwest-Great Lakes Region, nation, or world.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

FOR REALIZING OUR VISION

1 FAITHFULNESS TO MISSION

To hold true to our Mission of pursuing academic excellence within a culture that is authentically Christian and that functions to the benefit of the men and women who come to us from diverse backgrounds and with a broad range of career ambitions

2 CREATIVE INITIATIVES FOR GROWTH

To position Rochester College as a first-choice option for students considering undergraduate, graduate, professional, and certificate education—whether delivered in traditional, online, or hybrid format—in areas of their chosen discipline

3 ENRICHED OFFERINGS FOR UNDERGRADUATES

To build on the quality academic work for which Rochester College is known by empowering our faculty not only to maintain and enhance high standards but also to dream of and implement new programs that capitalize on emerging needs and opportunities

4 EXPANDED GRADUATE PROGRAMS

To expand from a single graduate program (MRE) in religious studies at present to offer graduate degrees in areas where competence and market demand offer opportunities for service (e.g., business, psychology, education)

5 BROADER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To engage the broader state and regional, national and international community in order to make the college a significant partner in addressing community needs in such areas as health care, emerging educational opportunities, Christian missionary enterprises, etc.

6 INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

To put in place the needed infrastructure upgrades that will allow Rochester College to achieve its identified strategic priorities and to be prepared for new opportunities that may present themselves in the ever-changing realities of higher education in the 21st century

FAITHFULNESS TO MISSION

The first, most critical, and most pervasive issue with regard to the strategic priorities of Rochester College is *faithfulness to our Mission*. In its simplest and most direct form, this college exists to serve the Kingdom of God as a place of higher education. There must be clarity about that mission across our physical campus and for anyone connected to us at an off-site location or as a distance learner. Rochester College is an educational entity that pursues academic excellence in Christian community.

Rochester College affirms the Bible to be God's revelation to human beings and the true and public story of the cosmos, how

we came to be in it, and God's will for our lives. With its roots in the Churches of Christ, the college is

a community of truth-seekers in which all persons of goodwill are invited to participate.

We confess the core truths of historic Christian faith and impose no denominational or creedal confession. We call ourselves and our students to the example and teachings of Christ in personal behavior and relationships. It sets us against the tide of today's widespread relativism to affirm that certain behaviors are wrong and even to base a student's right to be part of this community on his or her willingness to live within clear behavioral norms. The policies, statements, and actions of our administrators, faculty, and employees must not only "talk the talk" but also "walk the walk" of our identity as a Christian college.

On the one hand, we celebrate the racial, ethnic, gender, lifestyle, and theological diversity we embrace as an accepting community; on the other, we cannot and will not tolerate behaviors that are subversive to our mission or which undermine the historic Christian faith we confess.

All people—even our most vitriolic critic or someone whose only reason for acknowledging our existence is to deny our right to exist in today's culture of "anything is acceptable except all things that affirm Christian faith"—are to be treated with courtesy and will have their dignity as persons affirmed here. But we have the right to exist only so long as we advocate for and model Christ and Scripture, faith and righteousness, holiness and compassion, accountability and grace.

Thus we pursue academic excellence in Christian community.



CREATIVE INITIATIVES FOR GROWTH

Rochester College is growing. We have experienced three years of record enrollment, and we are more effectively positioned within our surrounding region than ever before. More and more people look at what we offer as a distinctive place of higher education. We are becoming the college of choice for many of those people.



It is not a strategic priority for this school to be big, for much of our strength is in our small, connected community. People know each other and care about each other. It is a strategic priority, however, to grow to a size that can sustain the economic viability of the institution. Several small colleges and universities have failed over the past decade; we must position Rochester College for fiscal strength and viability for generations to come.

There are two principle sources of revenue for Rochester College—student tuition revenue and donor philanthropy.

As to the second of these items, we have been blessed by countless godly and generous people who believe in our Mission. They have donated millions of dollars to make it possible for the school to exist. In an ideal world, those donor gifts should go to fund scholarships, value-added educational experiences for our faculty and students, buildings and infrastructure, and to build endowment for the school's long-term future. So we will never be able to stop pursuing gifts. An effective Office of Development is a necessary part of our life.

The routine operation of Rochester College must be funded principally by tuition revenue from students. Even if you are not

an accountant, the logic here is easy to follow.

Either a small student body pays higher and higher

tuition—until we are priced out of the market—or we grow to and move beyond a “break-even point” for the operation of the school. The former option is intolerable; we are moving closer to the second—and can reach it within the next few years.



In order to grow to that point, we must have increased community visibility and market awareness among the 60,000 undergraduate students who live within a 25-mile radius of our main campus. We must also realize that higher education can no longer be limited to a single geographical site; education is becoming “anytime and anywhere.” This means a strong RC Online, effective delivery of accelerated programs at University Centers available to us, and enhanced access to larger prospect pools not only at area community colleges but also in the form of Early College Programs as a partner of choice with area high schools. We are open to other partnerships and collaborations that fit with our Mission.

ENRICHED UNDERGRADUATE OFFERINGS

Starting with the fall semester of 2009, Rochester College has implemented an institutional commitment to become a Christian Integrated Learning Community.

This approach is holistic in focus, interdisciplinary in delivery, and intentional about learning as a community event. Physical health and activity, improved academic quality, interdisciplinary initiatives, service learning, budgetary integrity, spiritual formation—all these are elements in an integrated approach to learning.

As the college has branded and marketed this program to top-quality students, the results are beginning to be seen in some remarkable ways. For example, the fall of 2012 welcomed 14 Trustee Scholars; these are students with an ACT score of 30 or higher. In years past, we have had three to five Trustee Scholars per year—and occasionally none. Beyond that, we have 17 additional students with ACT scores of 28 or 29.

This is a base on which we must build a stronger and even more attractive set of course offerings, degree programs, and certifications. We will not proliferate programs and offerings, for that has been one of the mistakes of higher education in the past.

The Provost recently announced the reorganization of all academic programs into six schools. The deans and directors of

these six academic divisions have been asked to challenge and monitor what happens in those schools. They will collectively constitute a pared-down and more efficient Academic Cabinet whose task will be to hold the institution accountable to meeting the standards of our accrediting body, reviewing and upgrading our curriculum, and implementing best practices in pedagogy.

Rochester College is a member of the Higher Learning Commission's Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning. We are working with the Academy to develop creative ways to evaluate and improve our academic offerings and programs. The College's participation in the Academy demonstrates our commitment to quality in all our academic programs.

We are working to supply additional funding for faculty enrichment. We are working to bring conference events onto campus that will be funded from external sources but integrated into the educational experience of our students.

Following the lead of Harvard, Stanford, and Baylor, more and more colleges and universities are offering certificate programs—either for academic credit or as free-standing certificates—in areas ranging from bivocational church ministry to strategic management to personal fitness training to computer literacy. We are, for example, in what we see as the final stages of negotiating a partnership with Life Time Fitness to offer a certificate program in exercise wellness.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

EXPANDED GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Rochester College presently has one graduate program. It is a quality Master's of Religious Education (MRE) in "Missional Church Leadership." We are building a faculty, student base, and reputation for the program that will generate kingdom results for years to come. Our DNA as a Christian college makes this degree a natural first graduate program.

Now is the time to explore the addition of other graduate programs that fit with our Mission.

For example, we have graduated a number of people with Bachelor's Degrees in Business Administration who have asked us to help them move to the next level with a school they trust. We have asked the Dean of the School of Business to identify one or more areas of special need and opportunity for us. Specifically, we will explore the building of a template for offering graduate programs that are consortial in nature. We don't have the money to hire the number of doctoral and terminally-degreed professors needed for robust graduate programs, but we have sister schools who have offered to partner with us to create a strong graduate program.

We have an unusually strong and well-credentialed faculty in psychology. Additionally, we have a number of our graduates who are teaching in this region by virtue of their undergraduate training in what has now become our School of Education.

We will explore the option of offering graduate degrees in these disciplines.

Consistent with the "anytime and anywhere" theme of 21st-century education, most of these programs are likely to be formatted in a way similar to the MRE; it is a hybrid degree, with the majority of coursework delivered online. Rochester College now has authorization from the Higher Learning Commission to deliver up to 20% of its degree programs online.

The Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics says the market for adult learners—not just for degree completion but for new degrees, graduate programs, and certificates—will be the fastest-growing segment of the educational arena for the foreseeable future. It rose 32.6 percent between 1995 and 2009 and is expected to increase another 18.8 percent between 2009 and 2020.

We are well-positioned to capture a reasonable segment of this population with high-quality programs delivered by well-qualified educators.



BROADER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At least three people I have introduced to Rochester College within the past year have said, “You are the best-kept secret in this part of the country!” I take it to be a personal challenge and duty to the president of any college to make sure a college or university is not a “secret” but a “player” in community affairs.

I am discovering that it is a big part of my task to be visible to local and state politicians and business leaders. Only then can I help position the college as a significant partner in addressing community needs and opportunities. Whether health care, education, or business internships, we need to build more of those relationships. The last thing we want to be is a “secret” to our neighbors. To the degree that we prove ourselves good neighbors to them by finding ways to give back to and help improve the quality of life around us, we become a “player” in what is going on around us.



We need community allies who will help us know and engage the community agenda for betterment. We have no better friend than Mayor Bryan Barnett of Rochester Hills. He has been very helpful to me personally

in meeting the local business community and helping communicate our story to them.



Crittenton Hospital Medical Center and the Crittenton Foundation continue to be major partners with us. We are in the first year of a second three-year grant of \$750,000 to the School of Nursing. Rochester College is an emerging partner of choice for the Early College Program of the public school systems in our area. Also, we are in conversation with yet another university center in our area.

The candle of Rochester College must be put on a stand that will allow it to give light to its community and to the world. Thus we pursue academic excellence in Christian community.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

Rochester College must put in place some much-needed and long-delayed infrastructure upgrades that will help us to achieve the strategic priorities we have identified.

It is no secret that the past few years have been setting-the-ship-aright years. During a time of severe economic stress in the United States and global economies, Rochester College could not escape its effects. We have faced internal challenges as well. That means that the college has had to defer a great many items related to infrastructure improvements and upgrades. Some things did not wait. They broke—and had to be replaced or repaired at significant expense. We have had to make upgrades with items such as IT equipment. Even so, most of those improvements are of items that don't meet the eye.

As the campus population grows, however, there will be a need for more classroom and office space. There is a long-standing need for an athletic center that will serve our student-athletes and welcome spectators

to our campus. We must be prudent and responsible in planning institutional growth, but we must grow to the sustainable numbers discussed earlier in this brochure.

Rochester College both teaches and practices good fiscal stewardship. We are operating responsibly and frugally in order to honor the investment of so many people for the past half century of our existence. We are serving our students by providing a quality education for them. As the economy rebounds, though, we will set about to address the various infrastructure issues that a vibrant and growing college generates.

We believe that our record of responsible management during the difficult times of the past several years will be rewarded with generous support for expanded service as economic conditions improve.

The most important asset at Rochester College is its people—support staff, faculty, and students. People who function as a community to embrace the Mission and Vision of Rochester College have demonstrated deep commitment over its history of faithful service.

God has sustained Rochester College through a time of challenge in order to bless its work going forward.





ROCHESTER COLLEGE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
800 West Avon Road Rochester Hills, MI 48307
www.rc.edu