THANK YOU

The Values Committee would like to thank the members of the University of Hartford community who participated in the process that led to the development of the Values Statement and the recommendations contained within this report. We are grateful to those who took the time to meet and speak with us, and for the care and thought taken in responding to our questions. Our gratitude extends, as well, to the many individuals and offices that provided assistance to the Committee. We could not have completed this report without the involvement and commitment of all of you, and we thank you.

It is our hope that the continued engagement and involvement by the members of the University community will lead to a greater sense of shared community.
INTRODUCTION

In December 2007, President Harrison appointed the Values Committee. The Committee was charged with establishing a set of shared values that represents the University of Hartford community and with recommending ways to use these values to strengthen our collective sense of community. In announcing the Committee, President Harrison expressed his desire that the set of shared values “will serve as the basis for everything we do as a teaching, learning, and research institution.”

President’s Charge

Create a statement of shared values that represents the University of Hartford community.

The statement should be organic, having been developed through a series of community conversations that involve all segments of the University of Hartford, and should reflect our shared understanding of what it means to be part of the University of Hartford community.

Provide a series of recommendations on how the statement of shared values will be used institution wide to improve our collective sense of community.

Committee Membership

Jane Horvath (Chair); Associate Professor, College of Arts and Sciences and Hillyer College; Associate Dean for Academic Planning and Curriculum, College of Arts and Sciences
Courtney Gomez, student, College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions
Osama Mohamed, Associate Professor, College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture
John Nordyke, Associate Professor, Hartford Art School
Irwin Nussbaum, Associate Vice President for Student Life, and Director, Freshman Success Center
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Rebecca Tyrrell, student, College of Arts and Sciences
Norman Young, Executive Director, Facilities
METHOD OF THE COMMITTEE

The Values Committee began its work in December 2007 and spent the remainder of the fall semester and much of early spring 2008 developing a strategy to engage the University community in conversation about our values. The plan that was developed was designed to involve a wide array of members of the community in conversation about our shared values and consisted of a two-stage process.

In Stage 1, the Committee met with five campus groups that represent major constituents of the University community. The purpose of the meetings was to identify and develop some value statements and themes that would be brought to the entire community for discussion and conversation. In a sense, the Stage 1 group discussions helped frame and focus the community conversations that followed. The five groups the Committee met with included the University officers, executive boards of the Faculty Senate, Staff Association, Student Government Association, and the Council of Deans. The meetings took place in April 2008.

During Stage 1 discussions, the Committee used the following set of open-ended questions to prompt discussion of community values:

- When you think of the University of Hartford, what comes to mind?
- Do you feel part of a community here at the University?
- Describe it. What does it stand for? Does it have shared values? What are they? Are these values shared by all members of the University of Hartford community?
- What words would you use to describe the University of Hartford community?
- Of what characteristics(s) of the University are you most proud? Least proud?
- What shared values do we hold?
- What would you want from a values statement?
- What shared values should we promote?
- Why is this work important?
- Why would a values statement matter? In your work? For the University?
- What questions have we not asked?
- What other groups should we include in community conversations?
Feedback from discussions during the five meetings was used to develop a draft set of 12 values statements. In Stage 2, the Committee used these draft values statements to frame community conversations that involved the entire campus. These conversations were both in-person and electronic, and took place between August and December 2008. The in-person conversations included 18 sessions with identified groups on campus and two Open Sessions (Poster Sessions) to which the entire community was invited. The electronic conversations utilized Survey Monkey to obtain feedback from faculty, staff, and students who may not have participated either in the group conversations or the two open sessions.

The draft values statement utilized in Stage 2 follows:

“Committed to Community”

As a community we are committed to:

• Academic and personal integrity
• Accomplishment in artistic, intellectual, and athletic pursuits
• Communication that is thoughtful and inclusive
• Connection to our traditions and shared experiences
• Creativity in academic and artistic pursuits
• Diversity of pursuits, thought, and culture
• Engagement with internal and external communities
• Intellectual curiosity and academic achievement
• Knowledge that is created, acquired, shared, and applied in a variety of ways
• Meaningful and beneficial collaboration
• Personal and professional development of each of our members
• Respect for place, property, and one another

Participants were asked to react to these statements. They were asked to discuss whether these statements represented values shared by the University of Hartford community and whether they represented values that ought to be shared community values. Participants were also asked to comment on how we could best implement the set of values statements to enhance our shared sense of community.
In-person Conversations

Group Meetings

Between August 19 and December 2, 2008, 18 group meetings were held to discuss the value statements. Sessions were held with the following groups: Council of Deans, 2008-2009 Resident Assistants and Resident Facilities Assistants, Staff Association, University officers, Student Affairs Directors, Student Government Association, Faculty Senate, Parents Association, Student Athletics Council, Brothers and Sisters United, Caribbean American Student Association, Naciones Hispandas Unidas, SPECTRUM, international students, commuter students, student religious organizations, Inter-Fraternity Council, second- and third-shift staff members, and a representative from the Upper Albany neighborhood. Approximately 410 individuals participated in these sessions.

Open Meetings (Poster Sessions)

On October 15, two open meetings were held on campus. The first was held from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. in Gengras Student Union North Cafeteria. The second session was held from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in the Konover Great Room. The timing and location of the sessions were chosen to allow both day and evening students and employees the opportunity to participate. In these sessions, members of the community answered the same questions posed in the group meetings. Approximately 80 individuals participated in the open meetings.

Electronic Conversations

The Committee utilized Survey Monkey as an additional and different opportunity for the community to comment on the draft community values. The online survey was made available for a two-week period in November 2008. A total of 987 individuals participated in the electronic survey. Respondents included 123 faculty members, 229 staff, and 635 students.
DATA ANALYSIS

The Committee spent much of spring 2009 analyzing the data collected from the Stage 2 process. The data, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, included feedback on community values as well as comments on how the values might be implemented to improve our shared sense of community.

Comments from both the in-person conversations and the electronic survey were extensive and went well beyond simple reactions to specific words or phrases from the set of 12 draft statements used in the Stage 2 process. Respondents provided in-depth comments on the statements and specific phrases contained within them. In addition, the Committee received feedback on the University generally and how the respondents experienced community here. Respondents described their sense of the University of Hartford community as it now exists and also described and characterized the community to which we might aspire.

The feedback and comments were not only rich and thoughtful but also voluminous. The Committee estimated that at least 1200 members of the University community participated in these conversations. The level of participation impressed the Committee. We believe that the University community’s commitment to this project is reflected not only in the level of participation but also in the thoughtful and considered nature of the responses.

A number of broad themes emerged from the community conversations. The Committee worked to incorporate these themes into the Values Statement and the recommendations for implementation. The themes included:

- A desire to foster a University of Hartford identity that reflects a sense of shared community.

- A desire to maintain an identity related to a particular unit or school or activity remains, but there is a real sense that we need to build and nurture a shared identity in order to strengthen our shared sense of community.

- A desire to work more collaboratively and act in a manner less suggestive of unrelated independent entities.

- A sense that our diversity—personal diversity as well as institutional diversity—is a source of strength that enriches the community.

- A desire to better acknowledge the contributions of all of its members.

- A desire to be proud of this community, to build traditions, and strengthen our shared experiences.

- A desire to place a greater emphasis on the importance of the academic enterprise in order to achieve a sense of purpose and pride and combat a perceived anti-intellectualism on campus.
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the following Values Statement:

**At the University of Hartford we are committed to community. We are an academic community that values integrity, curiosity, creativity, excellence, and accomplishment. Enriched by our diversity and our engagement with one another, we take pride in our shared traditions and experiences. We are dedicated to building a culture that respects and celebrates the contributions of all of its members as we work together to strengthen our community.**

Unlike the draft set of statements used to elicit conversation, the Values Statement that emerged is not in the form of a list. The text includes aspects from the draft statements that resonated with the community and reflects the themes that emerged from the community conversations. Some explanation of the components of the statement is outlined below.

**“Committed to Community”** leads our Values Statement. We recommend its use as a slogan to help capture our commitment to one another and to the University of Hartford community.

Community is at the center of this statement. This is no accident. When we come to the University of Hartford, we do not simply come to a place. We join a community that includes the physical campus and those living and working here and extends beyond to our alumni. We are committed to each other. Our community and the values we share are reflected in our engagement with one another and with our surrounding neighborhoods and towns and, indeed, globally. The values that represent the University of Hartford community inform our interactions with each other on campus and beyond.

We are a community that values integrity, curiosity, creativity, excellence, and accomplishment. They are important to us and we take pride in these values. They inform all of our actions—individually and as an institution.

We are a diverse community. We come from different backgrounds and experiences. We study and work in different schools and entities that have their own cultures. But we are also part of a larger University of Hartford community. Our community is strengthened by our diversity and through our engagement with one another. We build and strengthen community by respecting and celebrating the contributions of our members and by developing shared traditions and experiences. Our sense of community is enhanced when we work together.

The statement ends with our commitment to work together to build a culture that strengthens our sense of shared community.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Committee recommends the following actions in order to use the Values Statement to improve our collective sense of community:

The recommendations are general in nature and are so by design. Our community consists of many talented individuals who care deeply about each other and this community. It is important to recognize and honor that expertise and commitment. Our sense of community, and the value we place on our members, will be enhanced if we engage our members and ask them to bring their considerable talents and expertise to this effort, without over-articulating the nature of that participation.

Rollout

The Values Statement should be introduced to the community using existing institutional structures, beginning with the leadership of the University. It should be broad-based and involve every aspect of the institution. The rollout provides the opportunity to make clear that the Values Statement guides everything we do and every decision we make. It should be reflected in our strategic planning processes, in the implementation of our plans, in the use and stewardship of our facilities, in our daily decision-making, and in our interactions with one another.

Application

We should adopt an expectation that all of our activities reflect and reinforce our community values. All members of the community need to be involved in this effort. We should use existing structures—and perhaps utilize new mechanisms—to ensure that our actions and activities are consistent with our Values Statement and enhance our shared sense of a University of Hartford community.

The Values Statement should be used to build a culture that reinforces our membership in the University of Hartford community, while celebrating our diversity and the contributions made to our community by individual units and entities. The implementation of the Values Statement is, in a very real sense, about changing culture. We anticipate more collaboration among individuals, units, and entities working in concert toward common goals.

Communication

The Values Statement should be embedded in our conversations and literature, both electronic and print. It should be used in our literature and programming both internally and externally. There should be wide exposure to the Values Statement from first contact with prospective students through communications with alumni.

“Committed to Community” should be used as the slogan for this effort.
**Ongoing Community Conversations and Activities**

In launching this initiative, President Harrison stated that the process—engaging the community in conversation about our values—was perhaps as important as the development of the Values Statement itself. The Committee agrees. It is important to keep the community engaged in creating a culture that builds our collective sense of community. To do so, we recommend ongoing conversations and activities, within units and across the campus community, designed to reinforce our values and our sense of shared community. Doing so will keep us mindful that the work of building community is ongoing and will serve to keep our values at the forefront of everything we do as a community.