

The Rhodes Vision

Rhodes College aspires to graduate students with a life-long passion for learning, a compassion for others, and the ability to translate academic study and personal concern into effective leadership and action in their communities and the world.

The Student Access Imperative: To attract and retain a talented, diverse student body and engage these students in a challenging, inclusive and culturally-broadening college experience.

There are occasions each year when an eagerly recruited prospective student chooses a rival institution over Rhodes. Those losses are difficult, though possible, to sustain. It is much harder to accept the fact that many academically talented students from middle- and low-income families who wish to come to Rhodes are forced to settle for schools with more attractive financial aid packages. The absence of students from a variety of backgrounds is an impediment to the College's achieving its rightful place among the top tier of liberal arts institutions..

The college community is united in its desire to make a Rhodes education available to all worthy students. Increasing the endowment to achieve that goal will have a sweeping impact on every aspect of campus life. Students' cultural and educational experiences will broaden and deepen because tuition dollars currently devoted to financial aid will be reassigned to providing more stimulating educational opportunities, such as study abroad, to all Rhodes students. The College will leap ahead of its competition as it removes the obstacles to student access.

The Student Learning Imperative: to ensure our faculty and staff have the talent, the time and the resources to inspire and involve our students in meaningful study, research and service.

Rhodes alumni constantly affirm that the quality of their college experience and the value they continue to derive from it are rooted in their relationships with faculty outside the classroom. Rhodes Scholar John Churchill '71, for example, reports that he attended only one conventional class in his senior year. He spent the remainder of his studies in faculty-guided research projects and directed inquiries. Rhodes aspires to be a college where such experiences are not exceptional but the norm for its students, and the College intends to support and reward the faculty members who make these mentoring relationships successful.

The College has always taken pride in the fact that its faculty focuses entirely on undergraduate education. As it strives to enhance its standing among the nation's best liberal arts colleges, Rhodes will now seek to diminish the divide between the formal education of the classroom and more informal learning experiences. Students will have the opportunity to absorb information in the ways most suited to their individual learning styles and to reinforce the lessons learned through a variety of experiences. Enhanced mentoring will unquestionably increase student retention, and it will advance the College's ability to graduate students with a passion for learning and the ability to translate academic study into effective leadership and action.

The Student Engagement Imperative: To enhance opportunities for learning in Memphis.

The Rhodes campus provides a sanctuary where students can take risks and learn lessons in a safe, unthreatening environment. At the same time, they are expected to emerge after four years ready for the "real world" and prepared to support themselves. Rhodes expects even more—compassion for others, personal concern about the world around them, leadership and action.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities recently published *Greater Expectations, A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College*, the result of a comprehensive study of higher education as it exists today and where it needs improvement. One of the report's key recommendations is that the liberal arts become more practical:

*Liberal education...has the strongest impact when studies reach beyond the classroom to the larger community, asking students to apply their developing analytical skills and ethical judgment to concrete problems in the world around them, and to connect theory with the insights gained from practice.---*Greater Expectations, p. 27

Every student should have a meaningful Memphis experience, but community service and internship programs must have deep academic roots. Those roots will spring from the Rhodes Center for Academic Research and Education through Service. Rhodes CARES will be an academic program ensuring that students enjoy more opportunities to reinforce classroom learning through research, internships and community service. This approach will prepare students to live fuller, more effective lives of service to their communities and the world, and Rhodes can lead American liberal arts institutions in this pursuit.

The Student Inspiration Imperative: To provide a residential place of learning that inspires integrity and high achievement through its beauty, its emphasis on values, its Presbyterian history, and its heritage as a leader in the liberal arts and sciences.

The people who love Rhodes do so because it adheres to important qualities that are often forgotten in the modern world—individual honor and the timelessness, consistency and beauty of its buildings. A values-based approach to education is the College's quintessential quality, and it is communicated through the curriculum as well as the architecture.

This strategic imperative will assure that all students find the inspiration that leads to excellence in living and learning. The new Paul Barret, Jr. Library will be the vanguard of this effort, and the rest of the College's facilities and programs will be brought up to its standard of excellence.

The curriculum and co-curricular activities will be aligned to ensure that student experiences throughout the college years reflect the core beliefs upon which this institution was founded. The result will be improved student retention and loyal, engaged alumni who will join forces to help Rhodes ascend to the next level of recognized excellence.