A Guiding Vision

In accordance with the motto expressed on the University seal, religio et eruditio, the guiding vision for Union University will emphasize the love of God and the love of learning, faith and inquiry, service and teaching, piety and scholarship (pietas et doctrina). These characterizing marks will be simultaneously affirmed as we continue to build a quality Christian liberal arts university where men and women can be introduced to an understanding and appreciation of God, His creation and grace, and to humanity’s place of privilege and responsibility in God’s world.

Union University does not exist merely to survive. Whether or not Union University prospers is of less importance than our commitment to the guiding vision and mission of this institution. Thus we will work to build a university that is faithful to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, that exemplifies the Great Commandment, that seeks justice, mercy, and love, that demonstrates responsible freedom, that prioritizes worship and service as central to all pursuits in life. As an institution that is Baptist by tradition and evangelical by conviction we will seek to build a grace-filled community, which emphasizes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control as the virtues needed to create a caring Christian context where undergraduate and graduate education, grounded in the conviction that all truth has its source in God, can be offered.

A Formative Heritage

As we move into the 21st Century we will remain faithful to Union’s heritage of academic excellence providing qualitatively distinctive Christian liberal arts based education. These commitments must be extended to every offering of the University by ensuring the best in
support for current faculty and staff, recruitment of the most qualified faculty for superb teaching and scholarship, and attracting the best students possible for study. Faculty, staff, administration, trustees, and students must with willing enthusiasm give of themselves to this ideal. Thus in recruiting faculty, staff, and administrators as well as trustees and students alike we will seek those who can commit themselves to the mission and values of the University.

A vital part of our heritage as the oldest institution in the country with an active relationship with Southern Baptist churches is our distinctive Baptist approach to Christian higher education. The commitment to education among Baptists in America had its beginnings in the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century and began to flourish during the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century with Richard Furman, Francis Wayland, and others. Schools began to grow and multiply during this time and a Baptist vision for higher education began to develop.

Baptists were for the most part rural and less affluent than some of their brothers and sisters in other denominations. Young men and women, though gifted, able, and willing to work, were often less prepared for the college ranks than others. While the demographics have changed considerably, it is still the case that many Baptist young people, especially coming from rural areas, have not had some of the educational privileges of others.

Our heritage in this regard is most informative. Educating both the privileged and the less privileged individual has simultaneously been the hallmark of Baptist higher education. The genius of this idea is that it challenges the brightest minds while never leaving the populist constituency too far behind. This was the vision of 19\textsuperscript{th} Century Baptist leaders and it lies at the heart of the entire Baptist intellectual tradition—and it informs our vision for Union University as we enter the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century.
This vision grows out of a commitment to congregationalism. It may be the case that at times the most intellectually capable feel inhibited by this conviction— but the reality is that as the best and brightest minds link arms with their brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, they move the whole body forward. This never necessitates that the most brilliant ones be less brilliant, but it does make the whole body shine a bit brighter.

Our work at Union University is an extension of the thoroughgoing genius of Baptist congregationalism. Union is decidedly not a local church— but is a partner with the churches, an expression of the churches. Thus, it could be said that we represent the academic division of the Kingdom enterprise. Our commitment to academic excellence and to the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ shapes our understanding of what it means to be an institution that is Baptist by tradition and evangelical by conviction.

Our vision calls for Union to continue to be denominationally loyal without being parochial or triumphalistic in any way. Union is and will remain a Tennessee Baptist institution, but we will continue to expand our outreach to other Christian groups who share our vision and values for this institution.

A Focus on Students

Union’s primary purpose is to educate students. All activities, efforts, and programs must ultimately exist to serve the long-term interests of students in the spirit of Christian servanthood.

The staff, faculty, and administration will seek to model servant leadership with the hope of developing a generation of students who themselves will be servant leaders. We will encourage student concentration in at least one field of learning, which will include the ability to express and articulate thoughts clearly while learning to appreciate, respect, understand, and evaluate the
thoughts of others, resulting in the lifelong habit of learning that will prepare students for careers as well as for graduate studies and professional schools. Ultimately, Union University exists to prepare students for living a Christian life in contemporary society, to enable them to be Kingdom citizens in our 21st Century world.

Through the Office of Student Services we will purpose to guide students in the development of priorities and practices that will contribute to their overall well being and effectiveness physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Faculty will stimulate students to think about issues of truth, values, world and life view, and the bearing of subject matter on people's lives so that they are equipped for their God-called vocation. We will seek to increase enrollment, both qualitatively and quantitatively, through aggressive and strategic recruitment by attracting students not only from West Tennessee, but from the rest of the state, surrounding states, other sections of the country, and from around the world.

In doing so we intend to maintain a student/faculty ratio which reflects high quality. Thus the size of the Union student body is more contingent on engendering quality than merely increased quantity. Increasing balance in enrollment between men and women and an increased emphasis on geographical and ethnic diversity will continue to be a priority. Recognizing that interaction outside of the classroom is an important aspect of socialization, discipleship and maturation, we will continue an emphasis upon the ideal of being primarily a residential campus.

A Community of Christian Scholars

We recognize that Union’s commitment to excellence is best demonstrated by its faculty. Union University will seek to keep the liberal arts central to the mission of Union University. Research will be encouraged in all fields, but classroom teaching will be prioritized and
emphasized. Faculty in all schools and disciplines, as well as all librarians, will be encouraged to integrate the truth of the Christian faith in all disciplines. We will continue to affirm the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39) as the guiding principle of Christian higher education as we seek to love God with our minds.

This means that Union University cannot be content to display its Christian foundations with chapel services and required Bible classes. We must bring students to a mature reflection of what the Christian faith means for every field of study. In doing so we can help develop a grace-filled convictional community of learning.

This commitment provides the beginning framework for the unity in a Christian university. This framework refers to the constitutive belief that the world proceeded from a Creator by intelligent design and in that sense is a unified framework. We recognize that the affirmation of God as creator is as significant for a Christian world and life view as is the tenet of God as redeemer.

Certainly this important premise, similar to the exclusive claim that salvation is found only in Christ, is controversial, even counter cultural in today’s world. Thus part of the mission of Union University must be a quest for unity, a unified understanding of knowledge. Such exploration involves finding ways of seeing and knowing what sometimes, in a mysterious and yet undiscovered sense, is already there.

All faculty members at Union University have the privilege and responsibility to pass on the Christian intellectual tradition as it informs and impacts all the various disciplines. We believe such a responsibility to teach, inform, and communicate these traditions is possible because all human beings, everywhere and at all times, are made in the image of God. We believe
this universality of humankind makes possible both teaching and learning.

Because we can think, relate, and communicate in understandable ways, since we are created in the image of God, we can creatively teach, learn, explore, and carry on research. Teaching must be prized and prioritized at Union, an institution that focuses on traditional, primarily residential undergraduates. Yet, even though we are not primarily a research institution we want to maintain that there is a complementary place for teaching and scholarship at Union.

A Christian university, in common with any other institution of higher learning, must surely subordinate all other endeavors to the improvement of the mind in pursuit of truth. Yet a focus on the mind, the mastery of content, though primary, is not enough. We believe that character and faith development, in addition to guidance in professional competencies, are equally important. Furthermore we think the pursuit of truth is best undertaken within a community of learning that also attends to the moral, spiritual, physical and social development of its students following the pattern of Jesus who himself increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and humankind (Luke 2:52).

The moral and spiritual virtues have vital cognitive significance and hence strengthen both teaching and learning. Bernard of Clairveaux best combines the intellectual with the moral and spiritual with his famous statement:

Some seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge: That is curiosity;
Others seek knowledge so that they themselves may be known: That is vanity;
But there are still others who seek knowledge in order to serve and edify others: And that is charity.

The unity of knowledge, shaped by love, is informing and foundational for all scholarship, teaching and learning. From this foundation comes our commitment to faith and learning, to both knowledge and virtue, throughout the curriculum. These commitments shape our
appreciation for the essential role of the liberal arts in the Christian university. We believe the liberal arts are essential because they are foundational to true learning and quality living, and thus good in themselves and yet good for something else—to serve and edify others.

To say that Union University is a Christian liberal arts institution is not to say that Union ought to offer only a liberal arts education. Throughout its long history Union has offered professional programs in various areas including education, nursing, and business. We certainly do not regard the aim of professional education as inferior to, but only as different from, that of liberal arts education.

Unlike professional education, the liberal arts are not primarily aimed at equipping students to garner some specific occupation. Yet, the liberal arts throughout history have been regarded as prerequisite to engaging in and succeeding in the various professions. The concern of a Christian liberal arts education then is not just for equipping students with particular skills and knowledge necessary for engaging in some specific vocation or profession, but preparing students to think Christianly, preparing them for leadership, and preparing them for life. The liberal arts then do not point just to the life of the artist or the scientist, the scholar or the minister, or even that of the educator or business leader. The liberal arts point toward all of human life.

The Christian liberal arts do not attempt to create a syncretistic understanding between Christian faith and liberal learning. Following Augustine’s approach, credo ut intelligam, faith is recognized as a precondition of genuine knowledge rather than a capstone to a body of knowledge already acquired. We certainly acknowledge that salvific faith is possible without the liberal arts, but the deeper things of the Christian faith cannot be comprehended without such broad learning. Faith, then is both a precondition to genuine knowledge, while also finding its
fulfillment in knowledge.

We must therefore foremost equip students to think and to understand the world through the foundation established by the liberal arts and the Union core curriculum. We are simultaneously challenged to prepare students well for their concurrent callings. Thus education at Union should not be perceived as a set of impossible choices between the study of the classic disciplines or service to society. We must creatively and integratively develop ways to find a balance between the liberal arts and professional preparation while encouraging excellence within all of these fields of endeavor. This balance, like excellence and achievement in any area of life, is possible only by the grace of God.

As we continue to think about our academic structure and the shape of our core curriculum in days to come we do so with a commitment first to building the center with a Christian world and life view, which is nothing less than a framework for understanding all of reality. This framework is cemented by a commitment to the unity of knowledge exemplified in the liberal arts disciplines, and enhanced by preparation for professions consistent with a Christian view of work and calling. It is in the core curriculum that an integrated Christian view of reality will be communicated to Union students.

As we pursue this vision we will interact with the academic community worldwide by the encouragement of publication, involvement in professional societies, ongoing professional development, and church/denominational involvement and leadership. Academic excellence is expected not primarily to please the academy but to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. In all things faculty will be encouraged to live out the implications of the Lordship of Christ. As we focus on implementing these goals we will continue to seek to increase the percentage of faculty holding
terminal degrees as we recruit new faculty. We will constantly evaluate our effectiveness and efficiency as we continue to review teaching loads and salary/compensation packages.

A Commitment to Service

By example all administrators and staff are encouraged to offer the model of servant leadership. While the heart of Union University is the faculty, we believe that the soul of the institution is the staff, who faithfully create the Christ-centered context needed to carry out our mission. The support staff is vital for providing a quality educational experience for our students. Administrators and staff— including facilities and housekeeping personnel, security and grounds, business services and clerical, technology and information services— are all an important part of the educational process at Union University and are to be valued as such. Each employee will be encouraged to use his or her gifts and talents in the various roles throughout our campus to influence students in the pursuit of excellence in their academic achievements as well as faithfulness in Christian discipleship.

We will seek to serve one another by demonstrating the love of God to students, colleagues, and others who relate to Union University. We will show love and respect for those we serve. We will attempt to work for their highest good.

We desire to be student friendly in our educational delivery systems and service oriented in our dealing with faculty, staff, alumni, and other Union constituencies. We will seek to understand our students and understand how our work impacts them.

We will prioritize teamwork. We want to encourage, support, and value teamwork. We will work together to multiply our effectiveness and transfer our best individual gifts and energy into a synergistic effort.
In order to accomplish this vision of being people focused we will work to build an effective leadership team that works together, emphasizing complementary administrative strengths, recognizing the role of leadership to be one that both gives vision to the university and takes responsibility for its decisions. We are committed to carrying out that leadership through enabling servant leadership.

The Importance of Oversight

An effective institution is dependent upon an effective Board of Trustees. The oversight of the University is entrusted to this group of individuals elected by the Tennessee Baptist Convention, who are committed to Christ and who recognize the vital role that Christian higher education can have in the work of the Kingdom of God. Thus their primary task is to attend to the Christian character of the institution and to ensure that the policies of the institution are being implemented according to the decisions of the full Board of Trustees.

These dedicated men and women give of their time, their guiding wisdom, their resources, their encouraging support, and their prayers to help advance the mission of Union University. The oversight of this Board cannot be too passive nor too active, but must work in concert with administration and faculty to lead by shared governance.

The Board of Trustees has the responsibility to see the big picture and to assume the primary role of keeping Union faithful to its mission and vitally related to its constituencies. We believe that the selection and service of trustees is of the utmost importance to the future and viability of Union University. Thus it is imperative for all trustees to embrace the University’s mission and to model integrity in all decisions regarding the present operation and future plans of the University. Trustees certainly have responsibility for all financial aspects of this university.
but their fiduciary responsibility equally includes concern for the overall mission of the university. They must include in their oversight matters of Christian truth and financial responsibility. They must encourage faithful stewardship in annual budget matters while simultaneously charting a vision for the future. They will do this primarily, but not exclusively, by appointing to the major leadership positions of this institution persons who are actively committed to the ideal of a Christian university. With this continued vision and commitment from the Board of Trustees Union can and will become an embodying Christian university and national leader in the world of Christian higher education.

A Circle of Friends

Alumni, parents, churches, businesses, foundations, friends, and advisory groups are important links in carrying forth the work of Union University. Through this circle of friends Union is blessed with immeasurable service that comes through the recruitment of students, counsel and advice, giving of financial resources, and voluntary labors of love. We acknowledge the critical involvement of these groups and will seek to explore opportunities for their expanded role for the greater good of Union University. Union includes numerous and various groups—on campus and off—working together for the glory of God and the advancement of the University mission. We will all covenant to work together to implement our common vision for Union University expressed in this strategic plan, including the $60 million “Building the Future” campaign, as together we “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” and trust that “all these things will be added” to us in God’s way and in God’s time (Matthew 6:33).
**Toward 2001 and Beyond**

Today we hear that the latest computer fad is the “legacy free” computer. In computer terminology, “legacy” is not a proud term; it points to anything out of date. “Legacy Code” is the ancient stuff that Y2K consultants worked hard to make right. And now the leading computer techies and marketers proclaim that the “legacy free” day has arrived.

What might be the latest fad in the computer world is dubious at best when we think of the heritage that is ours at Union University. In 2000 we will unveil the most significant telling of the Union history ever produced. Retired Dean James Baggett’s account of Union’s “Great Cloud of Witnesses” will serve to expand our appreciation of the Union legacy on which we all stand and on which we will continue to build.

Yet we recognize that Union University is called to serve a different world in the 21st Century than the one admirably served by Savage, Penick, Watters, Hurt, Prince and others. It is a different society in which we live and a changing denominational constituency we serve, even different from the one in which many of us were nurtured. The changes around us at times make our head spin.

In the fall of 1996 we unveiled the initial steps of a five-year plan called Vision & Values 2001. The plan identified and described four core values (which are described in the following section, “Shaping Values”), which called for Union to be Excellence-Driven, Christ-Centered, People-Focused, and Future-Directed.

These core values have shaped and formed the vision and the framework for carrying out the university’s mission. Our mission calls for Union University to be distinctively Christ-centered as a liberal arts based institution faithful to its heritage, while strengthening our
commitment to academic excellence. We are mindful that in carrying out this mission we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, grateful for the legacy that is ours.

The 1996 Vision & Values document called for a new campus master plan (approved in December 1997), a new organizational structure, a purpose-driven approach to leadership, a staff committed to Christ-like service, and a faculty committed to the best in teaching and Christian scholarship. It called for Union to be grounded in a Christian worldview focused on the integration of faith and learning and faith and living. The progress in each of these areas has been measurably obvious.

The 1996 plan called for increased enrollment, expansion of our constituency base, and growth in our resources. Reversing previous trends in the middle of this decade Union, with God’s blessings and enablement, has experienced three straight years of strategic growth in each of these areas so that now Union is recognized as one of the South’s leading institutions in Christian higher education. Assets have steadily increased from $35 million to $50 million and the annual budget has grown from about $19 million to over $30 million. New undergraduate and graduate programs have spawned enrollment growth in many areas. The first phase of the Campus Master Plan has been initiated causing the Union family as a whole to sense a new excitement for the future look of the Jackson campus. More importantly, intentional Christian thinking is now evident in every discipline across the campus.

We stand on the verge of seeing the fulfillment of the many dreams envisioned in the Vision & Values 2001 plan. Indeed, even as we have prayed, we can all say that God has “blessed the work of our hands” and showered His “favor upon us” (Psalm 90:17).
In recent years Union University has made incredible progress in many areas across the university and experienced much change. It is our prayer that vision-driven progress with necessary changes will continue over the next five years. This planning document provides an overview of the road we plan to travel as we seek God’s guidance and blessings for each step of the way.

As Union moves “Toward 2001 and Beyond” a time is needed to consolidate these recent activities and achievements. Moreover, a period of reflection is in order to evaluate carefully all we are doing and to prioritize our directions for the future. This needful pause does not signal a change in our direction, only a time to focus on our priorities, our effectiveness, and our stewardship in carrying out Union’s multi-faceted goals for the future.

We will continue to embrace a commitment to continuous quality improvement. If we fail to do so we will run the risk of drifting into satisfaction with the status quo, which ultimately will bring about decline. The work of the entire Union family—students, staff, faculty, administration, and trustees—has in recent days created a synergy and unity beyond our highest expectations. The reality is that more has been accomplished in almost every area in four years than we dreamed could be accomplished in five. Thus the need to pause—first to give thanks to God for His blessings, and also to applaud those who have taken responsibility for the major steps forward that have been taken, and to reissue a challenge that will prepare us to move with purpose in intentionally defined and prioritized directions in the years to come. We do so with renewed excitement about the future of Union University.

During both 2000 and 2001 we will reflect on the timing of launching new programs, the possible expansion of undergraduate and graduate work, partnerships with other institutions, a
new campus for the Germantown programs, the expansion of our resource and constituency base, new alignments and associations for our athletic department, the construction of new projects and buildings as we move forward with the next steps in the Campus Master Plan, the bold advancement of the “Building a Future” Campaign, and the vitally important academic and technology plans. For Union to reach its potential we must provide enablement for traditional undergraduate programs and newer graduate programs as our changing world presents multiple opportunities and channels of service in the future. All academic departments and operational areas must seek to work together in cooperation. There is no place for isolated, individualistic agendas. We must become accountable partners focused on a common future, committed to Union’s common good.

Our strategy must be mission-driven, yet flexible. Our mindset must move toward one of greater cooperation and collaboration. To fail to do so will result in an out of touch institution that will not be prepared to serve a new generation of students. While we must be visionary and innovative, we must not become revolutionaries. We will move forward by making incremental changes when and as needed, doing so in ways that are faithful to our heritage, mindful of current trends, and aware of challenges we will encounter in the future.

Union University has providentially been blessed with a unique opportunity at this moment in history to help influence and shape Christian higher education for years to come. With God’s help we will accept the responsibility that has been given to us. Following the discussion of our Shaping Values are the objectives established by the various areas of the institution needed to unfold this vision, to prioritize our planning, to carry forth our mission, and to identify the personnel and resources needed to build a great future for Union University.
Shaping Values

Union University will seek to communicate and carry out this vision to the greatest possible degree, given the finite limitations with which we work. We will do so guided by our four core values:

1. Excellence-Driven. We believe that excellence, not mere compliance, is the goal of our teaching, our research, and our service. We are not motivated to excellence out of pride but out of a desire to do all things for God’s glory because He cares about our work and wants to be involved in everything we do. We will not be satisfied with mediocrity, but will pursue excellence in all things. This means our truth claims carry with them the challenge of living out that truth in the minutes and hours of our daily life. Thus we will pursue excellence, without arrogance.

Excellence calls for a life of authenticity and humility. We recognize that when we are most needy and willing to admit it, God is most able to work with and through us. A commitment to excellence means we will act with faithfulness. Excellence means that we will keep and surpass all accreditation standards.

We will seek to strengthen current retention patterns, evaluate current tuition and fee structures, as well as room and board charges. A commitment to excellence calls for us to strengthen continuing education programs in every aspect of the university’s life, but especially those that impact churches of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Excellence also impacts our appearance and our image in addition to the facilities and the function of our work. We must continue to build, expand, refurbish, and update campus facilities, focusing on faculty offices, classroom space, library facilities and holdings, and athletic
facilities. It is important for us, with the resources available to us, to build in a way that will provide quality classrooms and learning opportunities for our current and future students and create a context that will stimulate scholarship and service. A commitment to excellence underscores all that we are and all that we do as our guiding vision.

2. Christ-Centered. A cohering core value of our guiding vision is a call to faith, a call to be Christ centered in all that we are and in all that we do. As stated elsewhere we will seek to build a Christian liberal arts based community where men and women can be introduced to an understanding and appreciation of God, His creation and grace, and to humanity’s place of privilege and responsibility in this world. We will seek to establish all aspects of life and learning on the Word of God, leading to a firm commitment to Christ and His Kingdom. To be a Christ-centered institution calls for us to establish the priority of worship and service in the Christian life while seeking to develop a generation of students who can be agents of reconciliation to a factious church in a hurting and broken world. This commitment calls for all faculty and staff to integrate Christian faith in all learning and doing, based on the supposition that all truth is God’s truth and that there is no contradiction between God’s truth made known to us in Holy Scripture and that which is revealed to us through creation and natural revelation.

We will seek to magnify our Christian commitment, to be faithful to our Baptist heritage, and to articulate clearly our evangelical convictions. We will seek to find areas of agreement and to work with others within the essentials of the historic orthodox Christian faith, valuing and building on our diverse strengths in the body of Christ, while having an attitude of service and graciousness to all people.
Our common vision and commitment to a Christ-centered institution gives us a unified direction. It serves as a foundation for our goals, attitudes, values, priorities, and relationships. Even as we are thankful for and proud of our Baptist heritage we will seek to work with a broad range of Christians from various traditions and backgrounds throughout the world, centering our unity on the person of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work. Therefore our vision will transcend social and political differences so as to embrace one of the historic tenets of the Christian faith: “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.” We will aim to refrain from using the Union platform to express personal agendas that may fall outside of our mission and educational philosophy.

We will strive to be openhearted, while affirming our evangelical convictions. We will seek to be faithful to the truthfulness of Holy Scripture, living under its authority, while seeking to avoid divisiveness, legalism, and judgmentalism. Likewise we will seek to avoid both unanchored exploration on the one hand and encrusted dogmatism on the other. We will encourage teaching, learning, inquiry, wonder, and curiosity within the framework of a Christian worldview. To the extent we succeed in guiding students in these matters, we will see development in both intellectual, moral and character formation.

At the heart of our Christ-centered approach to education is the belief that God has revealed Himself to us in creation, in history, in our conscience, and ultimately in Christ, and that this revelation is now primarily available to us in Holy Scripture. It is here we find the words of Jesus claiming that He alone is the way to God, that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. This revealed truth is the foundation of all we believe, teach, and do. We believe that this God-revealed truth is the framework through which we understand and interpret our world, the events
of human history, as well as our responsibilities toward God and one another in this world.

3. **People-Focused.** A third pillar on which we will build our common commitments is the core value of being people focused. At the heart of our commitment to being people focused is the visible demonstration of valuing one another. We will give honor to one another through our words and actions, and by committing to each person’s success. We therefore jointly commit ourselves to the success of Union University. We will seek God’s guidance in selecting those persons who serve with us at Union University to be sure their gifts and abilities complement the goals, mission, and vision of this institution. We then will commit ourselves to carrying out our vocation, our calling, to fulfill more effectively our mission.

We believe that people are our greatest resource. We believe that God has gifted each person who serves Union University to make a positive contribution to the life and work of this institution. We recognize that Holy Scripture teaches that we are all made in the image of God. Therefore it matters how we treat each other, how we honor, respect, and love one another. It matters how God’s purposes are carried out in our lives, if there is vitality in our living and significance in our work. It matters if there is a sense of balance between our work, our family, our local church involvement, and our various personal relationships. We recognize that it takes a people-focused commitment to create an environment in which each person will experience the joy of making significant contributions in the tasks to which he or she has been called in service at Union University.

We want to model the love and forgiveness of Christ in the workplace. Thus we will be quick to offer forgiveness when we have been wronged and claim responsibility and seek forgiveness when we have wronged others.
We want to recognize achievement, reward faithfulness and applaud success, while learning from our failures. We will strive to work together in harmony, clearly understanding our goals and mutual expectations. We will search for ways to enhance community and the sense of family, which is one of Union’s great strengths. We will work to build community, collegiality, and a shared vision for a people-focused university that is future directed.

4. **Future-Directed**. We will seek to maximize the windows of opportunity the Lord has presented to us to the greatest degree that resources allow. All of our resources and efforts must, by God’s grace, be maximized to fulfil our common mission.

A commitment to being future directed means we want to have a short-term focus and a long term view. We want to involve ourselves in efforts that prepare us effectively to impact the world of the 21st Century. Union University must be prepared to face changes and challenges around us, which will include:

1) A recognition of the oncoming shift in delivery systems and accompanying pedagogical challenges. We must somehow respond to the growing high tech movement while simultaneously finding a way to remain high touch in all that means with our commitment to Christian education.

2) We must recognize the information explosion and rise of specializations and appropriately respond to these, maintaining a Christian commitment to the coherence of knowledge.

3) We must recognize challenges to family structures and values.

4) We must recognize changes in the economy and its impact on philanthropic and development efforts.

5) We must recognize changes in the global scene toward globalization.
6) We must recognize generational and demographic shifts, and the impact of these shifts on our student body.

7) We must recognize the problem of social fragmentation and the challenge of religious pluralization in a postmodern world.

8) We must recognize challenges to truth and values throughout our culture.

9) We must recognize changes in the Southern Baptist Convention and the current disarray in the mainline denominations, which underscores the contention of one of the leading Anglican scholars of our day, Alister McGrath, that the future of Christianity is indeed evangelical Christianity.

These challenges and many more call for a thoughtful and decisive leadership as we move toward the 21st Century. Higher education will continue to see tremendous increases in costs alongside diminishing resources from traditional sources, yet our constituencies will call for better service. In order to move forward during these challenging days, educational leadership will require wisdom, courage, and vision. This is a time for reflection, but not retreat. Union University must become a future-directed witness to our denomination and a beacon of truth in all areas of learning and practice.

We will take informed risks but learn from our failures. We will seek to communicate clearly so that people will understand the direction in which we are moving. We must learn from the past while living in the present and planning for the future. In sum, the leadership of a future directed institution must seek to define vision, set priorities, and accept responsibility. We will seek to make decisions based on both qualitative information (insights regarding the thoughts and actions of people, the intensity of feelings, the breadth of understanding, and the depth of
importance), and quantitative information (numbers/statistics/data for careful planning). We will seek to lead with foresight and insight based on hindsight so as to provide an informed bridge from the present to the future. In all of this we will seek to be faithful stewards of the Lord’s resources that He has provided for Union University as we look toward the challenges of the 21st Century.

The implementation of this vision and these values will be possible only by the grace and faithfulness of God, for we believe that unless the Lord builds the house those who build it labor in vain (Ps. 127:1). On a human level the vision can be actualized only by the commitment of every aspect of the Union community, whether represented on campus by students, faculty, staff, and administrators or off campus by trustees, parents, alumni, and friends. Everything we do must be done in a way that is consistent with these core values to help advance the mission of this University.