Standard 1 • Mission and Purposes

The institution’s mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education, consistent with its charter or other operating authority, and implemented in a manner that complies with the Standards of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The institution’s mission gives direction to its activities and provides a basis for the assessment and enhancement of the institution’s effectiveness.

“Both in our central mission as a liberal arts college and in the various forms of specialized study and outreach with which we extend it, Middlebury seeks to promote the values of learning, reflection, leadership, community, civic involvement, local responsibility, and international awareness.” (From Middlebury College’s Strategic Plan, 2006)

Description
Middlebury College’s current mission statement was written as part of the most recent strategic planning process, which began in January 2005. The statement describes the mission of the undergraduate college, but also acknowledges the College’s four graduate programs: the Monterey Institute of International Studies, the Language Schools, the C.V. Starr-Middlebury Schools Abroad, and the Bread Loaf School of English. The mission statement was written, discussed, and revised after feedback from the community, and was formally adopted by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2006. The mission statement is published on the Middlebury College website and in the College’s Handbook.

Although the overall mission statement refers to the graduate programs, each program also has its own mission statement that highlights its distinctive educational mission and reflects the communities served by the program. The mission statement for the Monterey Institute of International Studies was revised as the official merger with Middlebury College approached. The revised mission statement was approved by the Monterey Board of Trustees in the spring of 2010, prior to the merger. The mission statements for the remaining graduate programs were written and/or revised in the last year and were formally approved and reaffirmed by the board in the spring of 2010.

Middlebury College Mission Statement

At Middlebury College we challenge students to participate fully in a vibrant and diverse academic community. The College’s Vermont location offers an inspirational setting for learning and reflection, reinforcing our commitment to integrating environmental stewardship into both our curriculum and our practices on campus. Yet the College also reaches far beyond the Green Mountains, offering a rich array of undergraduate and graduate programs that connect our community to other places, countries, and cultures. We strive to engage students’ capacity for rigorous analysis and independent thought within a wide range of disciplines and endeavors, and to cultivate the intellectual, creative, physical, ethical, and social qualities essential for leadership in a rapidly changing global community. Through the pursuit of knowledge unconstrained by national or disciplinary boundaries, students who come to Middlebury learn to engage the world.
Monterey Institute of International Studies Mission Statement

The Monterey Institute of International Studies, a graduate school of Middlebury College, provides international professional education in areas of critical importance to a rapidly changing global community, including international policy and management, translation and interpretation, language teaching, sustainable development, and non-proliferation. We prepare students from all over the world to make a meaningful impact in their chosen fields through degree programs characterized by immersive and collaborative learning, and opportunities to acquire and apply practical professional skills. Our students are emerging leaders capable of bridging cultural, organizational, and language divides to produce sustainable, equitable solutions to a variety of global challenges.

Language Schools Mission Statement

In a global society, the summer residential programs provided by the Middlebury Language Schools are an important part of the nation’s strategic language reserve. We educate undergraduate and graduate students from many disciplines and institutions all over the United States (and the world) who seek to improve their world languages and intercultural skills. We provide these students with consistent and dependable access to languages in an interactive, intensive-immersion environment. We also serve government employees and individuals from professional backgrounds. The Language Schools integrate excellent and innovative instruction in language with a curriculum that incorporates linguistics, literature, culture, and area studies, offering students opportunities to use the target language with native and near-native language professionals and with each other. The curriculum is supported by an extensive co-curricular program designed to reinforce classroom learning through a task-based approach. We are dedicated to the premise that without real competency in language there can be no true cultural understanding, and, that to be truly effective, language speaking must provide meaningful access to other cultures.

C.V. Starr-Middlebury Schools Abroad Mission Statement

The C.V. Starr-Middlebury Schools Abroad offer overseas academic programs for undergraduates from many institutions, as well as graduate-level programs for students from Middlebury College’s Language Schools and the Monterey Institute of International Studies. All students at the Schools Abroad are expected to demonstrate a high level of language proficiency and a commitment to language and cultural immersion. The Schools Abroad engage students in a challenging and dynamic learning environment and facilitate an integrated experience abroad, offering rigorous academic opportunities in many disciplines. They also make use of the academic and extra-curricular offerings at our partner institutions abroad and take advantage of established resources in the host locales. Through guided independence, our students engage with their host society on a number of different levels, advance their academic and personal interests, and attain enhanced language proficiency, a solid grasp of the cultural, social, political and historical conditions of their host country, and a deeper understanding of themselves and the world.
Bread Loaf School of English Mission Statement

The Bread Loaf School of English (BLSE) is a summer residential graduate program of Middlebury College, providing education in British, American, and world literature and the allied fields of creative writing, the teaching of writing, and theater arts to a student population comprised primarily of K-12 English and language arts teachers. The program offers Master of Arts and Master of Letters degrees in English as well as opportunities for continuing education and sustained, technology-rich professional development. BLSE draws its faculty from leading institutions in the U.S. and U.K. and maintains four campuses, three domestic, one in England, with a curriculum tailored to each site. The School aims to create a diverse and dynamic learning community that fosters innovative, culturally responsive thinking, teaching, and professional development both during the summer and throughout the year.

Appraisal
The Middlebury College mission statement has been revised twice over the last twelve years, and the revised statement reflects the continued prominence of the undergraduate college and yet also acknowledges the expanding scope of the educational mission through the graduate programs. The most recent revision involved significant consultation with the community, including discussions with and an ultimate endorsement from the faculty. There is variability in the familiarity of members of the community with both the overarching mission and those of the individual programs. In cases where the mission statement was recently created or revised, the mission has been communicated and discussed within the appropriate communities. At the Monterey Institute, for example, the mission statement was revised in consultation with the Faculty Senate, the Student Council, and the President’s Staff. All the mission statements are now prominently featured on the websites of their respective programs.

The current mission is a reflection of our developing institutional identity. For example, it recognizes the place of the graduate programs within the institution, whereas our previous mission statement did not. Unlike the prior mission statement, it explicitly emphasizes both curricular and geographical internationality. Moreover, the development and/or refinement of the mission statements of the graduate programs has helped us to better articulate their distinctive qualities and relate them to the greater Middlebury College mission.

The mission has been influential in guiding significant decisions in recent years and in our planning for the future. The merger with the Monterey Institute, the addition of 13 new Schools Abroad locations in the last five years, the expansion of the Language Schools to a second location at Mills College in California, and the addition of minors at the undergraduate college in Hebrew, Linguistics, and Global Health, as well as a new major in Arabic, all serve as examples of the ways in which the mission – in this case, the emphasis on internationality – is being used to guide our involvement in significant new programs, ventures, and initiatives. The Bread Loaf School of English emphasizes the College’s commitment to excellence in teaching and leadership in the global community through the professional education and development of leaders in K-12 education, across the U.S. and abroad.
Projection

- The mission statements above were collectively reaffirmed/approved by the College’s Board of Trustees in February 2011. The current mission statements are posted on the College’s website, both collectively and on the websites of each respective program. These mission statements will be re-evaluated, both individually and collectively, by the Board of Trustees every five to six years.

Institutional Effectiveness

The essential mission and values of Middlebury College have not changed, despite the significant changes we have undergone since the last reaccreditation review in 1999. The 2006 Strategic Plan and the merger with the Monterey Institute have, however, prompted us to articulate that mission more clearly and to delineate the specific aspects of the mission served by each of our programs. The regular re-evaluation of both the general and the specific program missions will ensure that we continue to orient our planning in pursuit of those important and defining goals.