



**ROOTED &
GROWING**

Cultivating Excellence for GBSC

SPRING 2024 UPDATE

For May 2024, the Strategic Planning Committee reports on progress in the following focus areas.

- Evaluate strategic planning activities
- Cultivate a culture of teaching and learning excellence
- Increase educational opportunities at the graduate level
- Modernize the campus user experience
- Enhance employee care

Evaluate strategic planning activities

Develop branding for the current plan

Branding for the plan, *Rooted & Growing*, was developed in December 2023. It is now in use on the website and in public-facing reports.

Convene campus conversations about planning processes, GBSC's mission and the current plan

First, constituents were invited in Spring 2024 to respond to a survey about current planning processes. The following are key findings.

1. 72% of respondents believe the current planning cycle is about right for GBSC; 21% felt they did not know about its appropriateness, while a few thought cycles should be more frequent (1.4%) or less frequent (5.6%)
2. Before information about the planning process was presented, most respondents agreed (33%) or strongly agreed (22%) that the planning process includes many viewpoints and lots of input opportunities, while 43% were unsure and 2% disagreed. After the *Rooted & Growing* development process was presented, 35% strongly agreed that the process was inclusive, joined by 49% who agreed; only 15% were still unsure and 1.4% disagreed.
3. Based on the information provided in the survey about planning processes, 45% of respondents reported that they are more likely to participate in future input opportunities, while 54% indicated there is no change in their participation likelihood.

Two planning-related forums were held in Spring 2024, open to employees and students. Forums reviewed survey results, concluding that planning processes remain effective. It

was noted that there could be increased/better communication about the process and the value of participation, as well as where to find planning information.

The forums also discussed an idea raised in the 2022 HLC team report, that the institution could be seen as having “multiple missions” based on different student populations/goals. Forum participants strongly disagreed, believing that GBSC’s mission of “providing higher education... thus preparing faithful servants to proclaim Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness around the world” applies to all students the institution serves.

It was noted that some components of the mission statement might be helpfully moved to Values statements, allowing the mission statement to be more concise. This should be explored as part of the next planning process (the 2024-2025 academic year).

Cultivate a culture of teaching and learning excellence

Promote teaching excellence on campus and online

Three peer-review worksheets were identified/developed in Spring 2024 and piloted. At the time of this report, data is still being collected, with a report due in Assessment Week in May. It is anticipated that one (or possibly two) worksheets will be selected for ongoing use, with annual peer review implemented.

Performance review forms for use with faculty have been modified to include more explicit discussion of teaching strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Additionally, two faculty book groups were held. An on-campus faculty group read and discussed *Servant Teaching* by a Christian professor, while an online faculty group read and discussed *Small Teaching Online*. Assessment Week in May includes a presentation by participating faculty members about their experience and takeaways.

This initiative remains ongoing.

Initiate work on increasing coverage of practical skills/dispositions

Faculty and staff members compose a new steering committee formed to address effective development of skills in GBSC programs. This committee met four times during the spring semester. Their initial work included the development of a draft skill-development philosophy statement (currently being reviewed by core faculty) to

guide future institutional efforts in this area. Identifying specific skills and dispositions vital to GBSC's educational programs is a focus of the committee's upcoming work.

Additionally, a Media Ministry Internship has been proposed. The philosophy statement will guide future work in skills development, so this initiative remains ongoing.

Continue online course redesign

Work has been done to divide online courses into priority levels based on percentage of enrollments they include; this way, improvements can be targeted especially at courses that will benefit the most students.

A tentative review/redesign schedule has been developed.

1. Priority 1 courses: 25 courses accounting for about 40% of enrollments; review/redesign on a 4-year cycle
2. Priority 2 courses: about 50 courses accounting for about 40% of enrollments; review/redesign on a 9-year cycle
3. Priority 3 courses: about 60 courses accounting for about 20% of enrollments; review/redesign on a case-by-case basis, informed in part by student course survey data

Additionally, work on General Education Core course alignment nears completion. This project will ensure consistency across teachers, modalities and terms in critical content within courses in the General Education Core. While this project covers all modalities, it will help ensure that redesign of online courses maintains essential content, outcomes and assessments.

Spring 2024 work included a reading group of online faculty. The selected book, *Small Teaching Online*, focuses on small changes aligned with learning science to produce improved learning. Discussion sessions demonstrated strong interest in ongoing improvement of courses, including from online adjunct faculty.

Work on this initiative will be ongoing.

Increase educational opportunities at the graduate level

Currently a proposal for an additional MA program is under development. Work completed to date includes delineation of curricular structure, identification of potential faculty beyond existing personnel and development of a program calendar.

Two other future graduate programs are at earlier stages of development. One is being developed, with a significant amount of curricular work completed. Both require additional faculty.

Modernize the campus user experience

Continue access upgrades

The ACA front door replacement has been awaiting funding. As of this report, it appears funding has been obtained. The initiative will be kept in progress until a new door is installed.

Enhance library services

As the first step in implementing the strategic plan for GBSC Libraries, a survey was developed and sent to various patron groups in the Spring 2024 semester. The survey, which addresses library usage, satisfaction, and suggestions, provides a valuable data source to guide ongoing planning for improvements. Some themes highlighted by library users include accessibility, resources/technology and environment. Work on this initiative is ongoing. We will identify actionable items to pursue based on survey input.

Additionally, during the Spring 2024 semester a small group of faculty have piloted Student Hours in the Flexon Library on Tuesday afternoons. They have documented a number of fruitful interactions with students, as well as good collaborative work among themselves. On one occasion, Media staff members joined them. We plan to expand this program in the future.

Enhance employee care

Develop Working Group & Identify Action Items/Timeline

In Spring 2024 a working group of three employees was formed. The group is in the process of identifying action items, reporting on their progress, and creating timelines.

Onboarding for New Employees

During the 2023-24 academic year, Academic Affairs implemented an informal process for onboarding new hires. This included holding a brief informational session in addition to institutional new-employee orientation and assigning a person(s) who would act as a main

contact for any questions or issues that arose in day-to-day operations. Additionally, the Division of Professional Studies has produced a packet of information that will assist faculty advisors in the registration process for students. We hope to continue developing more materials and training opportunities that will serve as a benefit for new employees.

Review Employee Benefits

In terms of overall benefits, the working group assessed both the official GBSC Employee Benefits webpage and the GBSC Community website for accurate and thorough reporting of employee benefits. Work on this is ongoing with updates planned for the Fall 2024 semester.

Results from the Best Christian Workplaces Survey (administered Fall 2022) were consulted by the working group. The lowest satisfaction score on the survey was on the item "I am satisfied with my retirement plan." In Spring 2024, the president's office initiated a survey of campus employees to assess what retirement benefits would be helpful to them. Results were analyzed and reported, and work is ongoing.

Review Hiring Process

The HR office is collecting job descriptions for each employee position and placing them in each employee file. Outdated job descriptions are also kept on file for reference purposes.

Additionally, Academic Affairs has drafted additional hiring processes for faculty positions. This draft process includes multiple interviews by different groups, as well as background checks and review of academic records.