

# 1 HISTORY, MISSION, PURPOSES AND GOALS

## 1.1 HISTORY

Shortly after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two luxuriously-appointed new hotels in Forest City were involved in a "hotel war." After only four months, one of them, the Waldorf Hotel, went bankrupt. The building stood vacant until it was bought by local Lutheran pastor, C.S. Salveson and opened in the fall of 1903 as a coeducational institution to educate lay people in "both the mind and spirit." Thus, the building constructed as a hotel survives today as the main administration building of Waldorf College.

Although named Waldorf College, the school operated as an academy until 1920, when a junior college department was added. Waldorf existed as a six year institution from 1920 to 1936. In 1936, the high school department (academy) was discontinued, but in 1945 Waldorf became a four year institution when the last two years of high school were added to meet the needs of young persons whose education had been interrupted by war. That pattern was altered in 1956 when Waldorf discontinued the high school program and became once again a two year college.

Although it resisted becoming a four year college in the 1960s, Waldorf has continued its pattern of adaptation in recent years. In the late 1980s, the College developed a night school program and a relationship with Wartburg College, enabling non-traditional students to earn A.A. and B.A. degrees. In the 1990s Waldorf began a process of developing a number of innovative programs whereby students could earn B.A. degrees in three years. In 2001, Waldorf became accredited as a four-year baccalaureate college.

## 1.2 MISSION: EDUCATION FOR LIVES OF SERVICE

Waldorf College seeks to be a lively community of learning and faith. The College's mission is "to educate the whole person in the spirit of Jesus Christ for a life of service to the world.

What does this mean for us?

- As a liberal arts college: Waldorf offers a curriculum designed to liberate the way students think and approach life. They develop the ability to question and think in multiple areas of study, learning how people with perspectives that are different from their own find meaning and contribute to life. As a liberal arts college in the Lutheran tradition, Waldorf seeks to instill values of *service, community, critical inquiry, and lifelong learning* in each student. Our graduates leave Waldorf better prepared to understand—and to contribute to—life in our complex and ever-changing world.
- As a residential college: Waldorf offers a carefully designed student life program, as well as extensive co-curricular, cultural and community service activities designed to create a campus atmosphere that gives students a well-rounded educational experience. We value high academic achievement, personal growth, the building of lasting friendships, and a growing awareness of community responsibility.
- As a college of the Lutheran church: Waldorf is committed to the Lutheran belief that all of God's creation is worthy of study because—at its deepest foundation—God's creation is good. Waldorf is a place that values examination of all areas of study, recognizing that open questioning leads to a deeper understanding of the world. Thus, Waldorf is a community of conversation that welcomes people of all religious faiths, races, and backgrounds. We believe diversity is necessary for the educational process.

- As a college engaged with the world: Waldorf College seeks to bring the world to Forest City by having up to 15% of its student body consist of international students and/or persons of color. The Lutheran Leaders program brings outstanding young people to campus from around the world. Waldorf also actively promotes opportunities for study abroad for all of its students who choose this option.
- As a college with vision: Waldorf seeks to be a place: where potential matters; where students are challenged to think critically; where students discern their vocations; where a spirit of service changes the world; where students enter to learn and leave transformed.

Learn.            Live.            Serve.

## 1.3            PHILOSOPHY

Education at Waldorf College is pursued in the context of the Lutheran understanding of the Christian faith, and is distinguished by the conviction that human experience must be understood in light of God's revelation in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Thus, the College's mission and the divine calling of each person is to serve God and the human community.

Human life, by God's own design, is enriched by the full and free use of human intelligence in creative endeavor and the pursuit of truth. This serves the needs of human society and is an essential element of the Church's ministry in and to the world.

Education at Waldorf, then, aims to serve God's purposes in a setting where the gospel is freely proclaimed, reflected upon, related to all that is known, and where the Christian life of love, forgiveness and service is nurtured by precept and example.

Waldorf College affirms that:

- All life and the universe in which we live are the continuing creation of God, and human beings have a special relationship with their creator.
- God has not forsaken creation, despite human sinfulness.
- God gives all of human life a new start daily, recreating in each person the potential of the first creation.
- The Word of God and the Sacraments of the Church proclaim and celebrate God's presence in Jesus the Christ.
- Through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, God acted to reunite all people in renewed common life with their creator and each other. Thus, in grateful response, we commit our lives to the service of others and human communities.
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God enters the struggles and joys of life, giving both comfort and counsel.
- As Christian persons, justice, peace and righteousness are our human responsibility, as are understanding and stewardship of the created world.
- God's gifts of human intelligence, skills and creative abilities are to be fully nurtured, to the glory of God.

Finally, while Waldorf College welcomes students of all faiths and Christian denominations, and seeks to learn from them, the College is in active and unapologetic communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This commitment transcends the commitments of individual members of this academic community, and in every one of its component elements-- Regents, administrators, faculty, staff and students--the College actively seeks a predominance of communicants of the Lutheran church. This standard is not meant to exclude or cause discomfort in those who are members of other churches or faiths, or to limit the pursuit of truth, but rather grows out of a belief that the integrity of the College's mission and the ultimate value of an

education in this academic community depends upon the distinguishing Lutheran Christian character of the College.

## 1.4 PURPOSES AND GOALS

### 1.4.1 Educational Goals

Waldorf College strives to educate the whole person, and sets the following goals for its students:

- Goal 1** Waldorf graduates will be able to think critically.
- Goal 2** Waldorf graduates will be competent in writing, reading, speaking, and listening.
- Goal 3** Waldorf graduates will demonstrate knowledge in the natural sciences by being able to apply the scientific method and recognizing the applications of science to everyday life.
- Goal 4** Waldorf graduates will demonstrate skills in applications of mathematics and computer literacy.
- Goal 5** Waldorf graduates will demonstrate knowledge of the behavioral or social sciences.
- Goal 6** Waldorf graduates will demonstrate knowledge of the performing and fine arts.
- Goal 7** Waldorf graduates will have a basic understanding of their own interests, abilities, and values.
- Goal 8** Waldorf graduates will have a basic understanding of community service and social responsibility.
- Goal 9** Waldorf graduates will demonstrate knowledge of the Bible, Christian beliefs, and Lutheran theology.
- Goal 10** Waldorf graduates will develop the skills for physical and emotional well-being.
- Goal 11** Waldorf graduates will demonstrate a global appreciation of their world.

Appropriate multiple measures of progress/accomplishment for each objective derived from the goals above have been determined and they are presented in the College's Assessment Plan (see Appendix K).

#### 1.4.2 **Goal Attainment**

In order to accomplish its outcome goals, the College has a strategic planning system that is designed to provide information about institutional context and relate it to specific objectives that will be pursued in the short and medium range future. (For more information about the strategic planning system consult section 2.6 of this handbook.)