

## **How to Develop a Mission Statement**

A useful *mission* statement should not consist of only platitudes and expressions of good intentions. It should be operational, simple, and clear so that each person in the unit can judge his/her contributions to the unit's reason for existence. It is formed from an examination of the unit's strengths and performance, from a review of needs and opportunities, and from a conviction that the unit has an important role to serve in the University's fulfilling its mission.

The mission statement represents a current statement of what the unit is really trying to do; it keeps each unit focused and on track, and it mobilizes the persons in each unit to get the right things done.

The purpose of a unit mission statement is to convey to others, both internal and external to the university, an understanding of why a unit exists and what it does.

### **What is the difference between a Vision Statement and Mission Statement?**

A vision statement is future-oriented and describes the idealistic view of the planning group. A mission statement is operational and focuses on the purpose of the unit, including its current activities.

### **The major points that should be addressed in a Mission Statement are:**

1. The fundamental purpose for which a unit exists; its reason for being
2. The philosophy or values or point of view espoused by a unit with respect to its purpose
3. The constituency or clientele of a unit, those whom it serves and with whom it works
4. The organizational setting in which a unit operates, the major area in which it is located organizationally and to whom it reports
5. The major activities in which a unit engages or the services it provides in order to carry out its mission. Wherever possible, there should be an indication of relative emphases and priorities among the various activities.
6. A sufficient description of the unit's uniqueness—what separates the mission of the unit from others?

### **Mission Statements answer these questions:**

- Why does your organization exist? What is the ultimate result of your work?
- What activities are you going to do to accomplish your purpose?
- What are the basic shared beliefs in your organization?

- What is the problem or need your organization is trying to address?
- What makes your organization unique?
- Who are the beneficiaries of your work?

### **How long should the mission statement be?**

Brief (no longer than 1 page)

### **Developing a Mission Statement:**

There is no formula for finding the wording that best expresses the collective intention of your organization. It can be drafted by one person alone or after input gathered at leadership retreat. The most important issue is that there is consensus on the answers to the questions used in developing the mission statement.

One approach is to use time at a retreat or staff meeting to discuss these questions and find out where the areas of consensus are and where there are differences.

Groups are good at many things, but writing is not one of them. Have group discussions about big ideas and concepts and then let one or two individuals draft and redraft the wording before submitting a reworked version for group responses. It is important to circulate the draft mission a few times.

### **Units that already have a mission statement can review it by examining each element in the statement and asking:**

- Is each relevant as when the statement was written?
- Are there items that ought to be added?
- Does the statement address the six points suggested for inclusion in a mission statement?
- Does the statement effectively describe the unit to those who work within it as well as to those external to it?

### **Example Mission Statements**

The Department of Communication is a student-centered comprehensive program dedicated to excellence in instruction, service and scholarship/creative activity. The Department encourages students to participate in hands-on, professional development activities. The Department also encourages faculty to expand their academic and instructional knowledge through planned programs of service and scholarly/creative activities.

The mission of the Equal Opportunity Office is to promote a learning and working environment that provides equal opportunity, that is fair and responsible, and that is free of discrimination and harassment for all members of the University community.

**Where does my Mission Statement go in TracDat?**

*Access the TracDat Manual Online:*

[www.oie.eku.edu](http://www.oie.eku.edu)