

Providence's institutional mission statement:

Providence is a Christian academic community in the evangelical tradition that teaches people to grow in knowledge and character for leadership and service.

Commentary:

The first part of the mission statement, **an evangelical academic community**, describes our core values, that is, who we are. Providence is a Christian institution in the **evangelical** tradition. Evangelicals believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son, that he died for our sins, that he rose bodily from the grave, and that he is coming again; that Holy Scripture is the Word of God written; that people need an active faith commitment to Jesus Christ; and that the church is God's agency for God's presence in the world today. As an educational institution we value **academics**. We want to study, teach, and learn with an attitude of free and open inquiry. Truth is our main academic pursuit. With Saint Anselm we believe that a Christian education is *fides quarerens intellectum*, "faith seeking understanding." Providence is a **community** of learners exploring the relationship of Christian faith and life. We have the joyful responsibility to function *together* in achieving our mission. Our togetherness implies mutual respect, care, and service. Our interdenominational stance positions students, staff, and faculty to mutually benefit from those that differ from them.

The second part of the statement, **knowledge and character for leadership and service**, defines our goals. We enable people to grow in **knowledge**. When people leave Providence they will know more than when they entered. More than that they should have the desires and the skills to continue to learn after they leave. The library is central to Providence's pursuit of knowledge. But knowledge is not enough. We also enable people to grow in **character**. We believe that virtue is as important as knowledge. We believe that there is no higher virtue than the imitation of Christ, so as Christians we encourage a Christ-like character of love. Christian love is seen in a spiritual life of devotion, faith and hope; in a community life in pursuit of justice and peace; and in a personal life of honesty, generosity, gratitude, and diligence. The ultimate ends of a Providence education are leadership and service. **Leadership** is determinative for the church and society. The best leaders are virtuous and knowledgeable. They are also committed to **service**. They put others ahead of themselves. They do not seek personal greatness. They seek and do the best for the community, organization, or society of which they are a part. Servant leadership and Christian love are exhibited as people give themselves to global humanitarian purposes.

The operative words in the mission statement define our task, to **enable people to grow**. Our task is to provide an environment in which, and instruction by which, people can mature as individuals in community. To do this we weave together theory and practice. Through the curricular and co-curricular processes we facilitate the personal formation of students, faculty, and staff to reflect the image of God in Christ.