

Sacred Heart *Goals and Criteria*

Introduction

The Preamble of the original edition of the *Goals and Criteria* states that “values taken for granted or left unarticulated become inoperative.”¹ This conviction resulted in capturing the essence of Sacred Heart education in the five Goals and their Criteria. The *Goals and Criteria* provide both the uniqueness of a Sacred Heart School and the strong bond of union among the Network of Sacred Heart schools. They continue to challenge all Sacred Heart educators to deepen their understanding of these timeless principles. As the Introduction to the 1990 edition says:

*The challenge, however, continues to live in the five elements that have been the framework of Sacred Heart education since its beginning in 1800. These principles are ageless, but the context for the challenge has changed and this requires of us a fresh response. ... The needs of the world and of the United States again set the agenda for our response.*²

Since that description was written we have crossed the threshold into the third millennium as well as into the third century of Sacred Heart education.

In 2000 the Society of the Sacred Heart held a General Chapter, an international meeting of delegates of its members. Its purpose was to examine the context today for the Society’s mission. Through the eyes and experiences of the delegates, the Chapter

*...welcomed into our hearts and into our deliberations the faces of peoples across the globe. We have had before us the faces of hope and promise, the young in their generosity, those who are restless for God, women and men who create and reverence life. We have seen the suffering of children without education, of young people searching for meaning, of those suffering from HIV/AIDS, of women abused and discriminated against, of refugees displaced by war, violence and poverty. These faces of people reveal the Heart of God.*³

September 11, 2001 forever changed our context. The threat of terrorism in our world, the corporate greed and scandals in our country and a sense of entitlement in its citizens can drain us of hope. At times honesty and integrity in daily life seem to be forgotten virtues. The innovations of technology have connected persons in newer, faster ways, but this instant networking can depersonalize communication. Environmental concerns seem not to get the attention they should be demanding of our governments. Globalization does not always clarify our interdependence; globalization too often brings new burdens for the poor of the world. The Roman Catholic Church finds itself profoundly challenged by internal and external factors. The meaning of faithful membership can sometimes be lost in rhetorical arguments rather than in being firmly rooted in one’s relationship with God. The shortage of ordained ministers endangers sacramental life. We recognize we have much to learn about the spiritualities other faith traditions offer.

During the academic year 2004-2005 the constituencies of the Network Schools

and the Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ) engaged in a spirited consultation. The 2005 *Goals and Criteria* Document, crafted by the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals (SHCOG), is the fruit of this consultation. The “foundational principles” contained in this document are non-negotiable elements for being a Sacred Heart school. It is the expectation that these foundational principles be a part of a school community’s reflection when it evaluates its life during the SHCOG process. As with the Criteria, their order in the list does not signify importance; each foundational principle and each criterion is as important as any other one.

The process of refocusing and rearticulating our values as Sacred Heart educators led to many passionate conversations among us. This process of communal reflection has given us renewed appreciation of and commitment to our educational mission and how to live it in today’s world. Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ reminds us...

*Epochs of transition must keep us on the alert. They ask us to keep our eyes open upon the distant horizons, our minds listening to seize every indication that can enlighten us; reading, reflection, searching, must never stop; the mind must keep flexible in order to lose nothing, to acquire any knowledge that can aid our mission.... Immobility, arrested development bring decadence; a beauty, fully unfolded is ready to perish. So let us not rest on our beautiful past.*⁴

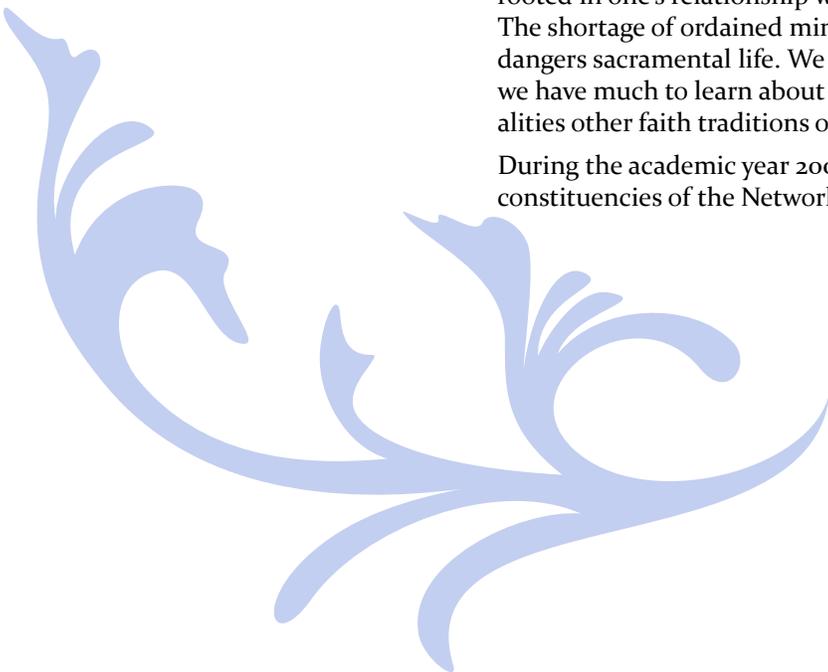
Let us accept the invitation to probe the depths of the *Goals and Criteria* that they might be prophetic orientations leading us to hope, a hope that believes in the goodness of each individual, a hope that believes in the goodness of humanity, a hope that believes in and trusts the love of the Heart of God.

¹ Preamble to *The Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States*, approved by the Interprovincial Board, 1975.

² Introduction to *The Goals and Criteria*, approved by the Provincial Team, 1990.

³ Society of the Sacred Heart *General Chapter 2000* Introduction, (Amiens, France, August 2000) p. 14.

⁴ Letter to the Society of the Sacred Heart, August 13, 1912, in Margaret Williams, RSCJ, *The Society of the Sacred Heart* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978) 158.



Foundational Principles

1. In the *Goals and Criteria*, the Society of the Sacred Heart defines the mission of the school as part of the Society's educational mission in the Catholic Church.
2. Each school is accountable to the Society through the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals for adherence to the *Goals and Criteria*.
3. Each school's Board of Trustees and Administration establish and uphold policies that are consistent with the *Goals and Criteria*.
4. The school allocates its resources to support each Goal and its Criteria.
5. The school is in compliance with professional standards as stated by accrediting agencies.

Goal I: *Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a personal and active faith in God.*

- Rooted in the love of Jesus Christ, the school promotes a personal relationship with God and fosters the spiritual lives of its members.
- The school seeks to form its students in the attitudes of the heart of Jesus expressed in respect, compassion, forgiveness and generosity.
- The entire school program explores one's relationship to God, to self, to others, and to all creation.
- Opening themselves to the transforming power of the Spirit of God, members of the school community engage in personal and communal prayer, reflection and action.
- The entire school program affirms that there is meaning and value in life and fosters a sense of hope in the individual and in the school community.
- The school fosters inter-religious acceptance and dialogue by educating to an understanding of and deep respect for the religions of the world.
- The school presents itself to the wider community as a Christ-centered institution and as an expression of the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Goal II: *Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a deep respect for intellectual values.*

- The school develops and implements a curriculum based on the Goals and Criteria, educational research and ongoing evaluation.
- The school provides a rigorous education that incorporates all forms

- of critical thinking and inspires a life-long love of learning.
- The school program develops aesthetic values and the creative use of the imagination.
- The faculty utilizes a variety of teaching and learning strategies that recognizes the individual needs of the students.
- The school provides ongoing professional development for faculty and staff.
- Members of the school community model and teach ethical and respectful use of technology.

Goal III: *Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a social awareness which impels to action.*

- The school educates to a critical consciousness that leads its total community to analyze and reflect on the values of society and to act for justice.
- The school offers all its members opportunities for direct service and advocacy and instills a life-long commitment to service.
- The school is linked in a reciprocal manner with ministries among people who are poor, marginalized and suffering from injustice.
- In our multicultural world, the school prepares and inspires students to be active, informed, and responsible citizens locally, nationally, and globally.
- The school teaches respect for creation and prepares students to be stewards of the earth's resources.

Goal IV: *Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to the building of community as a Christian value.*

- The school implements an ongoing plan for educating both adults and students in the heritage and mission of Sacred Heart education.
- The school promotes a safe and welcoming environment in which each person is valued, cared for and respected.
- Adult members of the school model and teach skills needed to build community and practice clear, direct and open communication.
- The school has programs that teach the principles of nonviolence, conflict resolution and peacemaking.
- The school makes a deliberate effort to recruit students and employ faculty and staff of diverse races, ethnicities and backgrounds.
- The financial aid program effectively supports socioeconomic diversity.
- The school participates actively in the national and international networks of Sacred Heart schools.

Goal V: *Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom.*

- All members of the school community show respect, acceptance and concern for themselves and for others.
- School policies and practices promote self-discipline, responsible decision-making, and accountability.
- Students grow in self-knowledge and develop self-confidence as they learn to deal realistically with their gifts and limitations.
- School programs provide for recognizing, nurturing and exercising leadership in its many forms.
- The school provides opportunities for all members of the community to share their knowledge and gifts with others.
- All members of the school community take personal responsibility for balance in their lives and for their health and well-being.

