

BRANDON UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

PREAMBLE

Arguments about the nature and content of a liberal education have been going on for centuries; in an increasingly technological world, questions about the "appropriateness" of a university curriculum are often debated. Brandon University has spanned the changing times for more than a century and continually addresses these important questions. The curriculum is the essence of any university as it comprises what students study at all stages of the educational process. At the speed with which changes are now occurring, a university must search constantly for ways to ensure that both the curriculum and the physical facilities best serve the greater interests of society through our students.

Recognizing its responsibilities, Brandon University has set upon a determined course of program evaluation, facility assessment, and overall planning. The results should help chart its course and define its role not only during the 1990's, but also into the 21st century. One cannot proceed to new horizons, however, without a clear image of what has been, and is, functional. This Mission Statement, therefore, presents both the important historical events and traditions that have shaped Brandon University, and a synopsis of current conditions and forces that are creating changes. It sees its role as one of not only responding to innovation, but also preserving those rich academic traditions which will continue to serve in the future as they have in the past.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Brandon University's historical development may be traced to a small college established in 1880 in Rapid City by a group of Baptist families. They sought to bring post-secondary education to what was then a remote prairie area. Ten years later, as the area developed further and the railroad route was finally determined, the College was moved to Brandon. It was officially taken over by the Northwest Baptist Convention in 1899. Land was secured, buildings were erected, and Brandon College commenced operations on the present site of the University in 1901.

Brandon College enjoyed an affiliation with McMaster University from 1910 to 1938. During this time, it developed experience in providing education for the people in the region. While it maintained its religious affiliation, it gradually moved toward the role of a post-secondary institution offering a more secular program of studies. Its early mission consisted of providing a liberal arts education. In 1938, support was withdrawn by the Baptist Convention because of financial difficulties. The College, however, was able to secure a combination of provincial grants, city grants, and local public contributions that allowed it to continue. At this time, the College became non-denominational and developed further its academic educational offerings. It also gave up its affiliation with McMaster University and became an affiliated college of the University of Manitoba.

Brandon College then embarked upon a program of academic development that included the following steps:

- a Bachelor of Science Degree (1939);
- a separate Social Science Department (1948);
- evening courses (1957);
- a Physical Education Department and a Geography Department (1962);
- a Bachelor of Music Degree (1963);
- a major-minor curriculum (1964); and
- an Education Degree (1967)

Academic development was paralleled by a rapid increase in the number of students and an expansion of the physical facilities. Eight new buildings were constructed between 1961 and 1967. The expanded campus included new study facilities, residence buildings and support buildings.

Brandon College achieved independent status as Brandon University in 1967. Since that time, it has focused on the three traditional roles of a university: teaching, research, and community service. As the University expanded and matured, its reputation as an undergraduate institution grew. Enrolments increased and more buildings were added to meet the needs of the academic program and the students.

Enrolment has increased beyond that anticipated, and societal changes have been reflected in the governance of the institution with the involvement of students and the establishment of campus unions. While the physical facilities have not increased at the pace of the 1960's, the following major buildings have been added: a ten-storey residence, McMaster Hall (1971); the J.R. Brodie Science Centre (1972); and the Queen Elizabeth II Music Building (1985). Distinguished alumni Tommy Douglas and Stanley Knowles were among those participating in the sod-turning ceremony for the Knowles/Douglas Student Union Centre which opened officially in May 1987. The building was funded by the students themselves and brought to reality a dream that began in 1962.

Programs continued to expand with the addition of a Bachelor of General Studies Degree, and Four-Year Specialist Degree programs in many Departments of Arts and Science. In 1980, the Master of Music Degree program was approved with options in Performance and Music Education. Classes began in the Two-Year After Diploma Nursing Degree program for Registered and Psychiatric Nursing in September 1986. Preparing teachers also has long been a role of Brandon University. Over the past two decades the Province has increased the requirements for teacher certification and the Faculty of Education has adapted to these changes.

As a new university, it recognized its unique role as the only institution of higher learning in Manitoba situated outside the City of Winnipeg and quickly reached out to serve its total constituency, including the northern, Native and rural communities of the Province; and because it had something to say to the world, moved into the international education field. As a cultural leader, it takes pride in its undergraduate and graduate music programs, the affiliated Conservatory, and the wealth of programs, concerts, lectures, and exhibits sponsored by many of its departments. Brandon University has an unbroken tradition of providing area citizens access to higher education and its associated benefits. New programs are currently in a variety of stages of development as Brandon University prepares for the 21st century.

GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS

Brandon University takes pride in its long tradition of teaching and scholarly excellence within an intellectual environment, the unique opportunities it offers as a small institution, and its predominantly rural location. Brandon places strong emphasis on its teaching function, so that both full-time and part-time students registered in credit courses, as well as hundreds of registrants in extension courses, can take advantage of the small classes, of the highly competent faculty, and of the opportunity to meet individually with professors.

Brandon University has a continuing commitment to research and encourages and rewards both basic and applied research by faculty and students. Research is also viewed as intrinsic to the development of critical thinking and writing skills in both undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty members are encouraged to pursue their own research and scholarly interests and to seek out funds from external agencies. Evidence of the University's on-going support to the research function has been the establishment of a Research Office and a Rural

Development Institute. The University has also established WESTARC Group, Inc. which, through applied research, provides a vital link with the community, both in terms of new opportunities and technologies, and human needs and services.

Since its beginning in the late 1890's, Brandon College/University has provided service to the residents of Southwestern Manitoba. The University strongly believes in the personal approach to learning and provides incoming students with the initial opportunity to deal with deficiencies which would otherwise serve as an impediment to higher education. In addition, the University continues to offer an extensive program of credit and non-credit courses to citizens of Southwestern Manitoba through its Office of Extension. Envisioning its facilities as a community resource, the University makes available to the public its library, museum, meeting rooms, gymnasium, bookstore, and music building.

Brandon University has a commitment to the non-traditional student and has operated teacher-training programs for special populations such as Native and rural, and those in developing countries, and can point with pride to well-documented successes in these ventures.

Recognizing the advantages of sharing resources, as well as its own limitations, Brandon University has an excellent record of co-operating with other universities particularly through Inter-Universities North, and also with other post-secondary institutions such as Assiniboine Community College, the Brandon General Hospital, and the Brandon Mental Health Centre.

As the sole degree-granting institution situated outside the major metropolis of the Province, Brandon University has for almost a century provided access to higher education and services for the people of Southwestern Manitoba. Brandon University offers a crucial alternative for those Manitobans who wish to continue their education and personal development without uprooting themselves from their communities, and serves as a cultural centre and vehicle for the preservation of the rich heritage of non-urban Canadians.

Brandon University has established the following goals:

1. To promote the advancement of knowledge and learning;
2. To further the intellectual, social and cultural development of those participating in the life of the University;
3. To serve in the betterment of society;
4. To engender in all students a continuing love of learning and a life-long desire to strive for excellence in any endeavour.

Brandon University's small size and rural location provide a unique milieu in which the individual, rather than the group, can be addressed. It is on these strengths that the University provides a base for the intellectual growth of each student.

As an institution, Brandon University is dedicated to the concept that education is an ongoing process. The short time that each student spends at the University must be considered a critical period when attitudes that will prevail throughout life will be formulated.

By expanding individual awareness and promoting self-confidence in the unique and inherent abilities of each student, faculty members attempt to instill a love of truth that will become an integral part of each person's future life.

To achieve these goals, Brandon University has identified the following objectives.

OBJECTIVE 1:

To provide instruction that enables students to become proficient in their areas of study and that qualifies them for degrees, diplomas and certificates in Arts, Education, General Studies, Music, Science and other branches of knowledge.

Through this objective, the University, as a liberal education institution, sets out to provide instruction that enables students to become proficient in all areas of study currently offered. The University also intends to provide adequate resources to foster and to strengthen a vigorous intellectual environment on campus through both the offering of a variety of programs and increasing support of the Library.

On the undergraduate level, Brandon University intends to strengthen and enhance teaching and curriculum excellence in its Three-Year General Degrees in Arts, Science, and General Studies; in its Four-Year General and Four-Year Specialist Degrees in Arts and Science; in its Four-Year B.Ed. Degree and the Two-Year After-Degree (AD) program; in its B.Mus. Degrees; and in its Two-Year Post Diploma B.Sc. Degrees in Nursing and Mental Health. To ensure adequate preparation, the University will attempt to meet departmental staffing levels to match student demand, while at the same time preserving a broad-based liberal arts format.

At the graduate level, Brandon University will continue to promote excellence in its Master of Music and Master of Education programs. The University will continue lobbying for a generic Four-Year Nursing program, and support attempts by Faculties to achieve external funding for special programs.

OBJECTIVE 2:

To provide the facilities and support for research in all fields of knowledge considered by the University.

Brandon University recognizes the importance of original research to the overall academic program. Efforts to encourage faculty to pursue research increased during the 1970's when the Brandon University Research Committee was formed, money was allotted, and proposals solicited. Original inquiry was broadly defined to include both fundamental and applied research in education, arts and humanities, sciences and the performing arts. Hiring practices place some emphasis on the research potential of candidates. An increase in both the quantity and quality of library materials in support of research was also initiated.

On-going efforts are designed to identify the University's major areas of research, and, when appropriate, to encourage development of institutes and centres which can provide service to the community, training opportunities for students, and revenue for the University. The Rural Development Institute is designed to achieve these goals in the cultural setting of Southwestern Manitoba.

A significant aspect of all efforts to fulfil its mandate is the necessary political bargaining with senior governments not only to recognize the real and potential benefits of Brandon University, but also to increase funding to both individual and institutionalized research. Money is particularly needed for the replacement and repair of equipment, for the organization of research-related workshops and conferences, and for the expansion of faculty exchange programs. The University recognizes its own responsibility to expanding research through the Brandon University Development Campaign. Funds from private sources will be directed to

the Visiting Scholars Program through channels such as the Stanley Knowles Distinguished Visiting Professorship. The Development Campaign also has targeted an additional \$300,000 to augment the University Research Trust Fund.

OBJECTIVE 3:

To provide educational services in general, and specialized knowledge of particular applicability in responding to the needs of people in rural and remote areas of Manitoba as well as those in the City of Brandon.

As an institution of higher learning situated in a rural city in Southwestern Manitoba, Brandon University provides educational services in general, and specialized knowledge of particular applicability. In this way, it responds to needs of persons living in rural, northern and remote areas of Manitoba as well as of those residing in the City of Brandon. To meet rural needs, the University delivers credit courses and such non-credit courses as are appropriately offered by a University, in off-campus centres. The University is anxious to co-operate with other agencies offering courses throughout the Province, and will develop diploma and/or certificate packages in response to identified community needs.

OBJECTIVE 4:

To provide educational opportunities for all students eligible for admission.

Brandon University has long been committed to increasing the accessibility of university education for all eligible students. In recognition of the fact that students enter university with varying levels of readiness, resources have been committed to services designed to enhance the likelihood of success. Counselling services are provided to students for both academic and personal concerns, and there has been an effort to provide this assistance beginning at orientation and continuing until graduation. University personnel are encouraged to identify problems and to work toward constant improvement of student services.

Brandon University serves off-campus students in rural locations by offering courses through its Office of Extension. Both credit and non-credit courses are provided as a service to the people of the surrounding area. The University also recognizes the need to upgrade physical facilities in order to provide access for the physically handicapped students. The campus is gradually becoming more accessible, and the goal is to make the campus completely accessible in the near future.

OBJECTIVE 5:

To serve as a major resource in enriching the quality of life for the people of Brandon and of the rural and remote areas of Manitoba.

Brandon University recognizes its major role as a centre of both educational and cultural enrichment for the citizens of Southwestern Manitoba. The Office of Extension has long served as the focal point for organizing courses, programs, workshops, and conferences. Through these activities the expertise of the faculty becomes available to the public not only in formally-structured courses, but also in the relaxed atmosphere of non-credit offerings that appeal to the general public. The University has recognized the increasing importance of on-going professional development for selected public groups, and will continue to devote its resources to meeting public needs.

At the public level, Brandon University will continue to provide cultural enrichment by means of musical events, dramatic performances, inter-varsity games, and lectures, seminars and conferences of interest to a wide audience. Its Music Conservatory will continue to offer a wide variety of individual and class instruction.

OBJECTIVE 6:

To respond, where feasible, to educational needs that originate from outside the Province.

Brandon University welcomes students from all regions of Canada, as well as from other parts of the world. It is felt that the interaction between students from different parts of the nation and the world is beneficial to all. All students should benefit from an international perspective that leads to international commitment based on an understanding of global interdependence.

In order to strengthen its ability to offer programs relevant to the needs of international students, the University works co-operatively, through its International Liaison Office, with government agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), non-governmental agencies such as the World University Service Committee (WUSC), and sister institutions such as community colleges within the Province. Several such co-operative projects are currently in progress at Brandon University.

THE FUTURE

Brandon University is responsible for the implementation of recommendations in this Mission Statement. Brandon University hopes to involve as many persons as possible not only in the application of new mandates, but also in future on-going planning. All members of the University community - the faculty and staff, student body, and interested citizens - will play a role in future decisions. Brandon University has a responsibility to explain its mission and objectives to the broader community. It welcomes comments and constructive criticism from all its constituencies.

7 August 1990

Approved by Senate March 27, 1990

Approved by Board of Governors June 21, 1990