

Savannah Christian Preparatory School

Savannah, Georgia

Long-Range Plan: 2004-2010

Section One: Overview

This long-range plan has been developed through the direct or indirect participation of more than 100 members of the Savannah Christian Preparatory School community, working over a three-month period to form a consensus on behalf of the school's present and future students. Informed by the school's vision statement, the planning participants have created a picture of the Savannah Christian Preparatory School of the year 2009-10, and developed a series of steps designed to move the school toward that picture. The resulting six-year plan is outlined and explained throughout this document.

The document is not a straight jacket. Annually its details will be examined in the light of what has been accomplished in the previous 12-month period. And, while adjustments will be made as needed, this long-range plan can be expected to drive the school's progress through all the high-priority elements delineated on these pages until the time for the beginning of the next planning cycle.

Section Two: The Setting

Savannah Christian Preparatory School (SCPS), with more than 1500 students on two campuses, serves the dual mission of Christian preparation for life and academic preparation for college and university success. To that end, the school is uniquely situated – *by its vision and curriculum, by its culture, by its pricing structure and by its geographical placement within the area* – to continue to grow in its capacity to address the needs of the Christian community in the Savannah area.

- *By its vision and curriculum: Only SCPS, within the Savannah area, seeks explicitly to “glorify God... through Christ-centered training... with a rock solid foundation of biblical values... [equipping students with] moral strength... spiritual discernment... and... academic integrity....” while, at the same time, preparing students for success in the higher education context that most closely fits each student’s and each family’s religious, ethical and academic niche, whether that turns out to be the major state and private universities, the smaller specialized – including specifically Christian – colleges and universities, or the technical junior and community colleges of the state, region and nation.*
- *By its culture: Only SCPS, within the Savannah area, has, over a full half-century of concentrated, purposeful development of students, their families, their teachers and their administrative and trustee leaders, developed a biblical and academic ethos steeped in servant leadership at all levels and in all of its manifestations to the glory of God.*

- *By its pricing structure: Only SCPS, within the Savannah area, has sought to execute a biblical and college preparatory vision, to establish and promote a biblically based culture, to attract and retain a superb faculty and staff, and yet, despite enormous economic pressure to the contrary, to maintain a pricing (i.e., tuition and fee) structure that remains among the lowest in the area and, among college preparatory schools, among the lowest in the entire two-state region; SCPS does not, in short, charge what the market will bear, but what its Christ-centered mission dictates.*
- *By its geographical placement within the area: Only SCPS, within the Savannah area, has been able to occupy and develop such a large tract of land located along an axis forming one of only two (i.e., to the west or to the southwest of city center) possible growth vectors in the area; among the area's college preparatory schools, only SCPS is situated so ideally both by geographical placement and by total amount of acreage.*

The SCPS Long-Range Plan 2004-10 will seek to protect and to advance the school's demonstrated excellence along all four of these vectors so that, at the time of the next planning cycle, each will have been enhanced still further: *vision and curriculum; biblical and academic ethos; pricing structure; and property and facilities.* The uniqueness and distinctiveness of Savannah Christian Preparatory School will have been highlighted and enhanced at every stage by the school's execution of this planning document.

Section Three: The Planning Process

The process began in late spring of 2004 when the school contracted with ISM of Wilmington, Delaware, to conduct a long-range planning process on the school's behalf. In summer, the administration assembled and sent to ISM a packet of materials listed in detail in the first document prepared on site. That document, termed the "ISM Institutional Assessment," was written by ISM and submitted to the trustees and senior administration in mid-September. Two weeks thereafter, the first retreat was held.

In that retreat, participants generated and prioritized the ingredients for "the ideal SCPS for the school year 2009-10." Those retreat-group-generated lists were then organized (by priority), "costed" (costs estimated and affixed to each item in each list) and sent to all participants in the second retreat.

The second retreat was held in early November, and, in that session, a mostly different mix of participants (parents, teachers, administrators, trustees) worked with the first retreat lists to re-prioritize and re-cast, where appropriate, the elements in the plan. The purpose of the second retreat was to apply cost-benefit standards to the original brainstormed lists, so that, in the end, the plan would be not only creative, exciting and challenging, but cost-effective and affordable, as well.

In both retreats and in the early drafts of the plan itself, the "Institutional Assessment" provided in September by ISM served as an "influencer" for retreat participants and for the Steering Committee. Since many of the ISM items were

technical in nature – and, thus, unlikely to be generated in the constituent retreat sessions – some of those items were incorporated into the planning document, with the approval and endorsement of the Steering Committee, whether named in the retreat group outcomes or not.

This document, its first and second drafts written by ISM, comprises the outcome of all these steps, and, thus, represents the combined wisdom and discernment of members of all of the SCPS constituent groups. The plan is not the parents', nor the teachers', nor the administration's, nor the trustees', nor the consulting firm's; it is the school's long-range plan.

Section Four: The Plan

General Themes to be Maintained

- Maintain recent tradition of annual tuition increases of under seven percent. See Section Two (pages 2 and 3), preceding, discussion of “vision and curriculum,” “culture,” “pricing structure” and “geographical placement within the area.”
- Keep salaries in the “mid-level” category. Since salaries (which comprise most of the expense in any private school’s budget) cannot be pushed to “high-level” without (a) dramatic and repeated jumps in tuition levels (see “pricing structure,” page 3) and/or (b) dramatic increases in class sizes (with consequent reduction in instructional quality and in the joy of the teaching experience at SCPS), salaries will remain competitive, as distinct from top-ranked. To ensure that salaries do not deteriorate in their competitive positioning, *the floor gradient for this long-range plan – that is, the annual tuition increase to which plan-specific operations costs will be added – is set at 4.5-5.0% per year and includes funding for strong and reliable increases in salary levels.*
- Keep the range of employee benefits in the “high-level” category. Increases in employee benefits are also included in the just-noted floor gradient for the long-range plan, to ensure that there is no deterioration in the school’s strong position in this area.

- Retain the financial capacity to pay down debt on advantageous schedules. Allocations for debt service are also included in the now twice-previously mentioned floor gradient, also to ensure that no deterioration occurs in the school's ability to handle this critical component in maintaining financial stability.
- Continue to cover 100% of operations expense with hard income. All increases in operations expense shown in this document will be covered by tuition/fees increases to ensure that the school does not fall into the dangerous habit of becoming dependent upon soft income (i.e., on fundraising solicitations) to balance its annual budget. (This distinguishes budget-balancing from "enhancements" and/or "capital costs," these being references to fundraising to purchase "things," such as new computers, or to build new structures, such as a new high school building.)

These "general themes to be maintained" represent fundamental components in the SCPS Long-Range Plan, despite the fact that they will not be explicitly named or discussed in the sections that follow. Readers should keep pages 2 and 3 ("The Setting"), and pages 6 and 7 ("General Themes") firmly in mind as they consider the items listed in the year-to-year array.

Year One: 2004-05

- Continuation of *Generation to Generation/One-Campus Plan* major gifts and capital campaign progress. [Costs: already in budget; revenue source: already in budget; responsible persons/entities: Board/Headmaster/Development Officer]
- Formulation of plan to build the strength and enhance the consistency of the Christian/biblical worldview within the entire community: faculty, staff, students and parent body. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and management team]
- Formulation of plan to enhance the sense of a “one-school mentality,” despite continuing for several years to occupy two campuses. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and management team]
- Reformulation of previously existing plan/practice regarding the coordination of curriculum until new position of curriculum coordinator is created and filled: include task unit to identify gaps and overlaps within and among the Schools; include regular annual meetings between 5th and 6th grade, and between 8th and 9th grade staff; include planned progression toward enhanced inter-faculty teamwork. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: School Principals]
- Creation of a Board-level Committee on Trustees to create a “Board profile,” to cultivate new trustees to the profile, to provide annually a new-

- trustee orientation and to monitor the “strategic-ness” of the Board’s month-to-month structure and function. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible person/entity: Board President]
- Inclusion in Board profile of a desired “trustee mix” comprising 2/3 current parents and 1/3 “other.” [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible person/entity: Board President]
 - Implementation of the “annual Board agenda” concept: setting the Board’s annual schedule and committee structure – and deriving explicit committee charges – in response to the Board-level items shown (year-by-year) in the long-range plan. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible person/entity: Board President]
 - Establishment by Headmaster of “annual operations agenda” concept whereby the management team’s annual objectives are rooted in the long-range plan; adoption of management evaluation approach consistent with this approach. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible person/entity: Headmaster]
 - Establishment of planned giving/deferred giving mechanism for creation of a SCPS endowment. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: current budget; responsible person/entity: Board/Finance Committee]
 - Establishment of an annual academic performance data collection system from a sample of recent SCPS graduates. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: current budget; responsible person/entity: High School Principal]

- Preparation of questionnaire for SCPS graduates focusing on the school's success in preparing its students for faith-based living as college students. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: current budget; responsible person/entity: Admissions/Alumni Director]
- Establishment of a system of every-other-year institutional self-scorings on the ISM Stability Markers; establishment of system for using the outcome of these self-scorings for Board and management performance analysis, and, where appropriate, for internal marketing and public relations purposes. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: operations budgets; responsible persons/entities: Board President and Headmaster]
- Establishment of a regular column regarding Board structure and function, to be published in *The Raider*, as part of a parent- and faculty-education (and enhanced communication) system. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Board President and Headmaster]
- Adoption of one-page "strategic financial plan" format to provide a short quantitative expression of the long-range plan for the benefit of Board and management team decision-making and financial tracking. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Business Manager and Finance Committee]
- Unification of the athletic director functions. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: High School/Middle School Principals]

Year Two: 2005-06

- Continue *Generation to Generation/One-Campus Plan* major gifts and capital campaign progress. [Costs: in continuing budget; revenue source: in continuing budget; responsible persons/entities: Board/Headmaster/Development Officer]
- Implementation of plan to build the strength and enhance the consistency of the Christian/biblical worldview within the entire community: faculty, staff, students and parent body. [Costs: 2/10 of one percent tuition increase to support materials/speakers/travel; revenue source: tuition/fees; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- Implementation of plan to enhance sense of a “one-school mentality.” [Costs: none; revenue source; none needed; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- Implementation of reformulated plan to enhance the coordination of curriculum, pending creation of curriculum coordinator position. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: School Principals]

- Implementation of “strategic Board” concepts delineated in Year One of plan. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Board President]
- Continuation/implementation of management/data-collection procedures initiated in Year One. [Costs: incidental; revenue source; continuing budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- Additional 0.5 security personnel for DeRenne campus. [Costs: 4/10 of one percent tuition increase; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Middle School Principal]
- Additional 1.0 person in technology support for both campuses (“computer doctor”). [Costs: 5/10 of one percent tuition increase; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: School Principals]
- Enhancement in financial support for faculty professional development. [Costs: 1/10 of one percent tuition increase; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster]
- Formulation of a comprehensive technology plan. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster/technology coordinators]
- Addition of staff in college placement counseling by 1.0 positions. [Costs: 7/10 of one percent tuition increase, one time only, to provide a funding line for the position; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: High School Principal]

- Creation of EDEN task force to develop the entity's vision for the future.
[Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster]
- Continuation of development of planned giving/deferred giving mechanism for the development of a SCPS endowment. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Board/Finance Committee]

[Total operations budget costs, Year Two, beyond floor gradient of 4.5-5.0% = 1.9% tuition increase]

Year Three: 2006-07

- Continuation of *Generation to Generation/One-Campus Plan* major gifts and capital campaign progress. [Costs: in continuing budget; revenue source: in continuing budget; responsible persons/entities: Board/Headmaster/ Development Officer]
- Continuation of plan to build the strength and enhance the consistency of the Christian/biblical worldview within the entire community: faculty, staff, students and parent body. [Costs: continuation of the 2/10 of one percent tuition increase entered in Year Two of this plan for this item (that is, no additional tuition increase in the Year Three budget); revenue source: continued budget line from previous year; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- Continuation of plan to enhance sense of a “one-school mentality.” [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- Creation of curriculum coordinator/staff development coordinator position. [Costs: tuition increase of 0.8%; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster]

- Continuation of implementation of “strategic Board” concepts. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Board President]
- Continuation of implementation of management/data-collection procedures. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: continuing budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- With two years of data in hand (pertaining to preparation of graduates to perform well in first college grading period), management team execution of data analysis of strengths and weaknesses (if any) within the academic programs. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: continuing budget; responsible persons/entities: High School Principal and management team]
- With two years of data in hand (pertaining to preparation of graduates for faith-based living in college and university settings), management team execution of data analysis of strengths and weaknesses (if any) within the vision-specific mission of the school. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: continuing budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster, School Principals and Admissions/Alumni Director]
- Execution of every-other-year self-scoring of SCPS against the ISM Stability Markers, together with analysis of progress since Year One analysis. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Board President and Headmaster]

- Development of plan to disseminate data/findings/self-scoring outcomes to the school community. [Costs: none; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster, School Principals]
- Implementation of newly formulated technology plan. [Costs: 4/10 of one percentage point increase in tuition; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster/technology coordinators/School Principals]
- Enhancement in financial support for faculty professional development. [Costs: 1/10 of one percent tuition increase; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster]
- Continuation of additional security personnel for DeRenne campus. [Costs: continued from previous budget (no new operations costs); revenue source: continuing budget; responsible persons/entities: Middle School Principal]
- Continuation of additional technology support person. [Costs: continued from previous budget (no new operations costs); revenue source: continuing budget; responsible persons/entities: School Principals]
- Continuation of development of planned giving/deferred giving mechanism to create and build a SCPS endowment. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Board/Finance Committee]

[Total operations budget costs, Year Three, beyond floor gradient of 4.5-5.0% = 1.3% tuition increase]

Year Four: 2007-08

- Continuation of *Generation to Generation/One-Campus Plan* major gifts and capital campaign progress. [Costs: in continuing budget; revenue source: in continuing budget; responsible persons/entities: Board/Headmaster/Development Office]
- Continuation of plan to build the strength and enhance the consistency of the Christian/biblical worldview within the entire community: faculty, staff, students and parent body. [Costs: continuation of the 2/10 of one percent tuition increase entered in Year Two of this plan for this item (that is, no additional tuition increase in subsequent years); revenue source: continued budget line from previous years; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- Continuation of earlier developed plans to enhance “one-school mentality”; to foster “strategic Board” concepts; and to collect, analyze and publicize alumni-specific data. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: operations]

- budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster, School Principals, Board President]
- Continuation of implementation of technology plan. [Costs: continued from previous year (no new tuition increase to support this item); revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster/technology coordinators/School Principals]
 - Continuation of previously implemented plans and budgetary support for: enhanced financial support for faculty professional development; for additional security personnel at the DeRenne campus; for technology support; and for additional college placement counseling staff. [Costs: continuing from previous budgets (no new tuition increases in support); revenue source: continuing budget lines: responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
 - Continuation of development of planned giving/deferred giving mechanism for creation and development of a SCPS endowment. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: continuing operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Board/Finance Committee]
 - Additional budgetary support for Fine Arts equipment and supplies. [Costs: 4/10 of one percent tuition increase to strengthen relevant expense lines in operations budget; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
 - Additional support for faculty salaries (beyond previously discussed and explained floor gradient). [Costs: 5/10 of one percent tuition increase;

revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities:
Headmaster, Business Manager, Finance Committee]

- Initiation of preparations for next planning cycle (long-range and/or strategic planning). [Costs: 4/10 of one percent tuition increase; revenue source: operations budget: responsible persons/entities: Board and Headmaster]

[Total operations budget costs, Year Four, beyond floor gradient of 4.5-5.0% = 1.3% tuition increase]

Year Five: 2008-09

- Completion of initial phases of *Generation to Generation/One-Campus Plan* major gifts and capital campaigns; launch of subsequent phases of program. [Costs: 1.5% tuition increase to address new costs for debt service to fund completed projects; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Board/Business Manager]
- Continuation of plan to build the strength and enhance the consistency of the Christian/biblical worldview within the entire community: faculty, staff, students and parent body. [Costs: continued from previous year (no new tuition costs); revenue source: continuing budget item; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- Continuation of earlier developed plans to enhance “one-school mentality”; to foster “strategic Board” concepts; and to collect, analyze and publicize alumni-specific data. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster, School Principals, Board President]

- Continuation of implementation of technology plan. [Costs: continued from previous year (no new tuition costs); revenue source: continuing budget item; responsible persons/entities; Headmaster/technology coordinators/ School Principals]
- Continuation of previously implemented plans and budgetary support for: enhanced financial support for faculty professional development; for additional security personnel at the DeRenne campus; for technology support; and for additional college placement counseling staff. [Costs: continuing from previous budgets (no new tuition increases in support); revenue source: continuing budget lines: responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- Continuation of development of planned giving/deferred giving mechanism for creation and development of a SCPS endowment. [Costs: incidental; revenue source: continuing budget line; responsible persons/entities: Board/Finance Committee]
- Implementation in early fall 2008 of planning process to create long-range and/or strategic plan for years 2008-2014. [Costs: budgeted in previous year; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Board and Headmaster]
- Implementation in winter and spring of 2008-9 of new “Year One” items imbedded in new planning document. [Costs: no new costs in new Year One; revenue source: none needed; responsible persons/entities: Board and Headmaster]

[Total operations budget costs, Year Five, beyond floor gradient of 4.5-5.0%

= 1.5% tuition increase]

Year Six: 2009-10

- Continuation of secondary phases of *Generation to Generation/One-Campus Plan* major gifts and capital campaigns. [Costs: continued from previous year (no new tuition costs); revenue source: continuing budget item; responsible persons/entities: Board/Business Manager]
- Continuation of plan to build the strength and enhance the consistency of the Christian/biblical worldview within the entire community: faculty, staff, students and parent body. [Costs: continued from previous year (no new tuition costs); revenue source: continuing budget item; responsible persons/entities: Headmaster and School Principals]
- Implementation of “Year Two” items from new long-range/strategic plan developed in 2008-9. [Costs: to be determined; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: to be determined]
- Allocation of \$100,000 for accelerated debt retirement, establishment of cash reserves or endowment-building. [Costs: 1.3% tuition increase; revenue source: operations budget; responsible persons/entities: Finance Committee, Business Manager]

**[Total operations budget costs, Year Six, beyond floor gradient of 4.5-5.0%
= 1.3% tuition increase]**

Summary of Tuition Impact, SCPS Long-Range Plan 2004-2010

Year One (2004-05): none

Year Two (2005-06): 6.4-6.9% tuition increase

Year Three (2006-07): 5.8-6.3% tuition increase

Year Four (2007-08): 5.8-6.3% tuition increase

Year Five (2008-09): 6.0-6.5% tuition increase

Year Six (2009-10): 5.8-6.3% tuition increase

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Conclusion

As forecast in Section Two of this document, the Savannah Christian Preparatory School's *Long-Range Plan 2004-10* has been crafted specifically to enhance the school's established uniqueness in the Savannah area along four dimensions:

- The SCPS vision and curriculum. The dual mission of Christian preparation for life and academic preparation for college and university success have been emphasized in every year of the planning document.
- The SCPS culture. A half-century of development of a biblical and academic ethos steeped in servant leadership at all levels has been honored throughout this plan.
- The SCPS pricing structure. The school leadership's determination to charge not what the market will bear, but what the school's Christ-centered mission/vision dictates, has been reflected in projected tuition increases that average 5.9-6.4% per year for the duration of the plan

- despite the overwhelming economic forces – including the overarching goal of a one-campus school – pressing upward on those numbers.
- The SCPS *geographical placement within the area*. The school leadership’s vision of a unified school situated west of downtown, with all that goes hand-in-hand with a single location in an ideal setting, underwrites much of what has been set forth in this document.

Uniqueness *and* excellence comprise a challenging combination. Being “different” from other private schools – in vision, in culture, in pricing and in physical setting – is difficult in itself, since it requires a private institution to swim against the currents both of commonly held societal expectations and, as well, against certain very unforgiving economic realities. To achieve excellence *at the same time* that these differences are being established and maintained simply multiplies the challenge. Some of the plans and programs articulated in this planning document will result in unambiguous documentation of Savannah Christian Preparatory School’s ability to achieve and to sustain exactly this: the uniqueness and excellence characteristic of a truly blessed enterprise.

End of SCPS Long-Range Plan