STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: LIFE AFTER “K”  
Board of Trustees – Executive Summary  
June 2015

Committee Charge
The Life after K Task Force was charged with identifying the skills and experiences students and young alumni need to position themselves for successful lives and careers; identifying ways the existing curriculum and co-curriculum develop these skills and provide these experiences for students; identifying opportunities within the existing curriculum and co-curriculum where such skills may be enhanced; and proposing new opportunities to foster skills and provide additional experiences to students and young alumni so that they may be even better prepared for life and work after K.

Task Force Members
Robert Batsell, PhD (Psychology)  
Elizabeth Hakken Candido ('00; College Chaplain)  
Joan Hawxhurst (Director of CCPD; co-chair)  
Dan Hoevel ('09; Trustee)  
Christy Honsberger (Development)  
Andrea Johnson ('15)  
Justin Pearson ('15)  
Mike Sosulski, PhD (Assoc. Provost; co-chair)

Task Force Priorities Identified
The Task Force began its work by identifying four priorities:

1. **Campus-wide Adoption of a Common Set of Outcome Goals:** The task force identified a discrete set of skills required to support personal and professional success after K, then began research into whether and how these skills are developed by the K-Plan/K experience.

2. **Collection and Use of Data on Graduate Success:** The task force set out to develop and implement an effective feedback loop that measures graduate success and self-understanding of the skills/outcomes at appropriate intervals. To this end, the Task Force solicited self-assessment of success and skills by graduates five and ten years after graduation, along with current employment/graduate school position information, in connection with Alumni Relations’ outreach to the “five year out” and “ten year out” reunion classes before Homecoming.

3. **Access to Relevant Career Experience for All Students:** The Task Force began to define and implement a continuous path of preparing for life after K throughout the K experience – beginning with the first year and continuing through graduation and beyond. This pathway includes elements of workplace experience (mentor shadowing, externships, internships, research, post-grad opportunities) along the way to create a kind of “virtual climbing wall,” where academic departments and others strategically place relevant curricular and co-curricular footholds to help guide and support students’ experiences and to encourage vocational discernment at key moments in their development.

4. **Enhancement of Strategic Professional Networks:** The Task Force deems it essential to place renewed, targeted focus on developing professional networks. We focused on strategies to engage K students and graduates with key networks that expand their access to mentors and opportunities, including K alumni, friends of the College, employers, graduate schools and parents. These networks will
   - Build on existing Guilds structure and culture of participation
   - Involve collaboration with Admissions, Advancement, academic departments, Athletics
• Pay special attention to mentorship opportunities for students who arrive at K without strong networks and mentors

The Task Force met regularly from December through mid-May. Meetings focused on quickly developing actionable strategies for collecting much needed data on graduate success and discovering strategies that will enhance students’ professional development, both within and outside the curriculum.

Key Findings
As a result of its work over the last five months, the Life After K Task Force has affirmed the need for thoroughgoing and campus-wide culture change regarding career preparation for our students. Our highest strategic priority is transforming K College into an environment in which the entire campus is intentionally and actively engaged in the work of preparing students and young alumni for success in their professional lives after K.

The preliminary data from alumni and employer surveys and focus groups appear to affirm that such culture change is necessary for Kalamazoo College to respond decisively and well to a dynamic and global economy that requires the clear outcomes of a rigorous liberal arts education to be augmented by equally rigorous attention to developing and articulating the versatile work skills valued in today’s employment market. In light of this necessity, the Task Force strongly recommends the following strategic goals be adopted, listed in order of priority.

Key Recommendations
High Priority
1. Relocate CCPD to a more central campus location where all students tend to congregate
2. Appoint an External Relations specialist in CCPD
3. Create an Advisory Board to give input and support to campus-wide career development efforts
4. Align K College approved learning outcomes with employers’ desired outcomes in the curriculum and the co-curriculum
5. Regularly survey employers about K graduate preparedness and success, and use data for iterative improvement
6. Regularly survey alumni on how their K experience contributed to their success in life after K, and use data for iterative improvement
7. Devise career development footholds in the Shared Passages Program, including CCPD-led exercises in the first-year, sophomore and senior seminars
8. Professionalize student campus employment through institutional standards and trainings for students and supervisors

Very Desirable
1. Fund summer stipends for all students: Most internships are unpaid, so a fund to support vital career experience for every K student represents a lofty, but highly desirable goal
2. Create mentor-matching systems: Alumni career mentoring for all K students who desire it, with an initial focus on underserved populations
3. Develop library of problem-based learning modules: Assembly of a variety of PBL modules in different academic subjects will foster career learning in a range of students

Other Recommendations
Future Goals
1. Expand “K to the Bay” career trek program to include more students and more locations
2. Develop Sophomore Institute as component of fall Professional Development Institute