

FutureGenerations/Graduate School

To Research, To Demonstrate, To Teach – How Communities Change

Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2010

Presented to: The Board of Directors of the Graduate School

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Graduate School's Draft Strategic Plan (2009-2010)

I – Preamble: Since Future Generations first initiated the Master's Degree program in 2003, there have been tremendous accomplishments. The organization has:

- Designed, implemented, and continues to refine exceptional applied education to improve the effectiveness of community-based approaches around the world.
- Graduated two classes of Master's Degree students from 12 countries, with a third class to graduate in 2009.
- Received candidacy for initial accreditation from the North Central Association of the Higher Learning Commission.
- Legally separated the NGO from the Future Generations Graduate School of Research and Applied Studies in Community Change and Conservation (Graduate School), with a separate board and separate accounting

As the Graduate School grows and matures it must refine its priorities and objectives. This Draft Strategic Plan is a basis for discussion and not a detailed work plan, which will follow. This document focuses on why, what, and how:

- Why the Graduate Scholl is in this business (Vision and Mission)
- What it is intending to do (Goals and Objectives)
- How it is going to do it (Tactics)

This document builds on the previous work of the board, administration, faculty and staff, and incorporates evidence derived from the experience of our three classes, research into market niche and funding sources, and the expectations and recommendations of the Higher Learning Commission.

II - Vision: The Graduate School envisions a culturally and biologically diverse world in which just and peaceful self-determination is a reality for all communities and individuals.

III - Values: The Graduate School builds upon the core values of equity, integrity, compassion, service, sustainability, holism, collaboration, health, peace reciprocity, and positive lasting change.

IV - Mission Statement: The Graduate School pioneers and implements community-oriented approaches to international development, conservation and learning. It strengthens leadership, research capacity and education in organizations, governments, and communities worldwide to achieve just and lasting change.

V - Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Tactics:

Strategic Goal #1 – Strengthen the Graduate School Institution.

Criterion One for accreditation is Mission and Integrity and requires that “*the organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.*” This calls on the Graduate School to be a self-sustaining institution with a well-established operational structure.

Objective 1.1: Strengthen understanding and support of the Graduate School’s mission and goals:

Tactic 1.1.1: Ensure the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students understand and support the institution’s mission and goals.

Tactic 1.1.2: Ensure all internal constituencies of the institution articulate the mission and goals in a consistent manner.

Objective 1.2: Strengthen organizational governance and administration to promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the Graduate School to fulfill its mission and goals. Towards this end, the board shall:

Tactic 1.2.1: Enable the Graduate School’s chief administrative personnel to exercise effective leadership.

Tactic 1.2.2: Clearly define governance structures, processes, and activities.

Tactic 1.2.3: Implement these structures, processes, and activities through succinct delegation of authority.

Tactic 1.2.4: Ensure appropriate qualifications of personnel through professional development training for administration, faculty, and staff, and develop a search, vetting, and hiring protocol for future employees.

Tactic 1.2.5: Develop methods and schedules for regular evaluation of organizational structures and processes.

Objective 1.3: Uphold and protect the Graduate School’s integrity.

Tactic 1.3.1: All members of the Graduate School present its mission, goals, and accomplishments accurately and honestly to the public.

Tactic 1.3.2: The Graduate School understands and abides by all laws and regulations in all countries in which it operates.

Tactic 1.3.3: The Graduate School develops and implements protocols and assessment criteria to ensure the safety of its employees and students.

Objective 1.4: Design and implement a job evaluation protocol to assist and support employees in defining and achieving work goals and quality standards.

Tactic 1.4.1: Set schedule for evaluations.

Tactic 1.4.2: Set clear work goals, work plans, and measurable quality standards for each organizational position.

Strategic Goal #2 – Develop and implement a teaching and evaluation model that addresses the multilevel educational needs of our constituents and results in lasting impact at the community level.

Criteria Two, Three and Five of the accreditation process require the following:

Criterion 2: Preparing for the future: The organization’s allocation of resource and its process for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Criterion 3: Student learning and effective teaching: The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Criterion 5: Engagement and service: As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

The NGO started providing workshops and granting certificates. This evolved into the board calling for the creation of the Graduate School. Now, that the Graduate School is established, its success and accreditation must create credible certificates and workshops programs for those who are not best suited for the Master’s Degree program.

The Three-Tiered Teaching Model positions the Graduate School to engage our constituencies at multiple entry points for learning and teaching (criteria #3 and #5). Teaching and curriculum in

the Master's Degree program will be informed by the certificate and workshop programs by keeping us abreast of changing conditions and emerging challenges in the field (criterion #2). Communities where we have conducted workshops and organizations with whom we have partnered in certificate programs provide opportunities for applied, experiential learning during the residencies and are possible resources for practicum projects (criterion #5). Recruitment and development plans for all three tiers address criterion #2, and learning assessment plans for each tier address criterion #3.

Objective 2.1: Tier One: The Master's Degree program speaks to a great need in the development community for highly skilled individuals who can direct ongoing projects, develop new programs, function as operational managers, and most importantly, lead the transition to the emerging paradigm of community-based work. These leaders need to have a perspective and training that integrates knowledge and skills in the health sciences, natural sciences, economics, social sciences, and management. The Graduate School utilizes a blended learning approach that combines:

- Applied experiential learning
- Community-based needs assessment and problem solving
- On-line and inter-personal dialog skills and networking capacity.

While the curriculum will continue evolve, it is the priority of the Graduate School to maintain Blended Learning as our independent variable, and to develop a Master's Degree grounded in this pedagogical model to create a strong and highly effective program that meets the needs of our students and the development community.

Tactic 2.1.1: Develop a curriculum that addresses the current needs of emerging leaders and managers in the professional development and conservation of communities.

Tactic 2.1.2: Develop and implement an effective learning assessment plan for the Master's Degree program.

Tactic 2.1.3: Recruit qualified candidates for enrollment in Master's Degree classes that will matriculate in 2009 and 2010.

Tactic 2.1.4: Raise \$5 Million for the Graduate School operations and scholarships by 2010.

Tactic 2.1.5: Build partnerships with institutions of higher learning, NGOs, INGOs and foundations that broaden our educational impact and enrich the curriculum for students.

Tactic 2.1.6: Build human resources capacity through training to increase existing skill sets, and hire personnel to expand the areas of Graduate School institutional expertise.

Objective 2.2: Tier Two: Certificate Programs. To stay abreast of constantly changing needs of organizations working in community development and conservation, NGOs and IOs require strong networks and regular updates of skills and capacity for their professional and staff personnel. The Graduate School will apply its expertise and teaching model to develop and implement training in partnership with NGOs, IOs, governments, and communities to address the specific needs and networking potential of, these partners.

Tactic 2.2.1: Identify and contact potential partner organizations for discussion and assessment of specific needs and networking potential.

Tactic 2.2.2: Assess in-house expertise and determine where additional expertise and technical assistance is needed for design and implementation of programs.

Tactic 2.2.3: Develop program details including baseline and post implementation assessment methodologies.

Tactic 2.2.4: Determine criteria for granting Graduate School credits toward the Masters Program upon completion of a certificate program.

Objective 2.3: Tier Three: Workshops. Small communities, NGOs, and entrepreneurs have often identified clear needs and goals for the improvement of local conditions, but lack skills in program design, grant writing, and implementation. Funding organizations are interested in funding in-country programs and organizations. The Graduate School will partner with these communities, organizations, and individuals to develop proposals, target funders, and implement programs to further the goals of the in-country players and the Graduate School.

Tactic 2.3.1: Identify potential partners for discussion and assessment of specific needs.

Tactic 2.3.2: Assess in-house expertise and determine where additional expertise and technical assistance is needed for design and implementation of programs.

Tactic 2.3.3: Develop workshop details including baseline and post implementation assessment methodologies.

Tactic 2.2.4: Develop and publish “How-To” manuals and teaching materials useful at the grassroots level for both literate and illiterate audiences.

Strategic Goal #3 – Develop a clear research agenda and protocol:

As the Graduate School is being formed, the focus in research must establish a credible pedagogy that honors both scholarly and practicum-oriented learning.

The challenges of community-based development and conservation include questions regarding best practices, effectiveness evaluation, key elements of successes, and sustainability of community programs with potential for scaling up to national and regional levels. To answer these questions and offer replicable solutions, the Graduate School reviews the global literature, documents case evidence, and conducts applied field-based research. The Graduate School will develop a comprehensive research program addressing the needs of our students, the communities and organizations it serves, and the field of development and conservation community studies.

Objective 3.1: Develop an in-house protocol for development and submission of research proposals.

Tactic 3.1.1: Design an internal review process for concept papers, publications, and proposals to be executed prior to submitted or distributed beyond the institution.

Tactic 3.1.2: Design a proposal format to be followed in the absence of formatting instructions from the funding organization.

Objective 3.2: Define the Graduate School's research agenda.

Tactic 3.2.1: Develop research to firm the Graduate School's niche in the academia and the applied field of development and conservation. Areas of focus should include:

3.2.1.1 Blended Learning and action-research to support and enhance our students' work

3.2.1.2 Development, particularly in health, peace building and Leadership

3.2.1.3 Conservation

3.2.1.4 Collaborative research with Country Programs such that the Graduate School residential programming and the Future Generations NGO country programming are synergistically enhanced.

Tactic 3.3.4: Position The Graduate School to identify and take advantage of RFPs in its areas of expertise.