



## Chapter Two

# Criterion One Mission and Integrity

*Integrity pervades every aspect of the management and operations of Future Generations. It is about being what you say you are and doing what you say you will do. It is about being a trustworthy partner in societal development and a responsible steward for “generations yet to come.”*

*“The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the Board, faculty, staff, and students.”*

## Introduction

Future Generations Graduate School is a mission-driven organization that was blessed with flexible start-up funds allowing a specific mission focus and insistence on integrity as mandated by the Board of Trustees. Future Generations was in a privileged position when it created its Graduate School—the greatest privilege was being permitted “to do the right thing” in program design, in hiring faculty, looking around the world for the best students, and connecting the education with the needs of the world at the community level.

The Mission Statement of Future Generations as approved by the Board of Trustees is:

*Future Generations teaches and enables a process for equitable community change that integrates environmental conservation with development. As an international school for communities offering graduate degrees in Applied Community Change and Conservation, we provide training and higher education through on-site and distance learning. Toward this end, we support field-based research, promote successes that provide for rapid expansion, and build partnerships with an evolving network of communities that are working together to improve their lives and the lives of generations yet to come.*

This mission reflects the integrated educational purpose of both the civil society organization (CSO) and the Graduate School. It was developed over a three-year period during which the organization systematically put in place a vision of delivery of results through education, the funding base for the new graduate school, and its innovative pedagogical approach. It was important for Future Generations to create a clear and strong mission statement to guide development of an academic degree-granting program. A series of innovations resulted to develop and apply a creative blended learning approach and to efficiently utilize the institution’s financial, time, and personnel resources. Today, Future Generations Graduate School attracts students, faculty, staff, field workers, and educational partners because they believe in its mission and organizational goals. As the organization evolves in the future, and as the need may arise, the Mission Statement will be re-examined and perhaps updated.

The Vision Statement of Future Generations that evolved during this same Board-led process compliments and supports its Mission Statement. The Vision Statement is:

*Future Generations was established in 1992 with the belief that community-based change was a proven alternative path to international development. Future Generations vision seeks a global shift in practice that promotes more effective partnerships between communities, governments, and organizations to achieve community change and conservation. The organization will promote “100 nodes of change” or demonstrations that are evolving more effective practices that fit local ecology, culture, and economy. It is anticipated*

*that master's degree alumni, partner organizations, and other practitioners will contribute to this learning process and help mobilize local successes into large-scale social transformation in their own countries.*

Integrity pervades every aspect of the management and operations of Future Generations. It is about being what you say you are and doing what you say you will do. It is about being a trustworthy partner in societal development and a responsible steward for “generations yet to come,” as the conclusion of our Mission Statement stipulates. Future Generations serves a constituency that, like its Board of Trustees, knows the organization and also demands integrity. As an organization that relies on donor funding to support its mission, including scholarship support for its student body, Future Generations depends on integrity to guarantee that funding base. Donors not only follow the money flow from gift to execution, they also monitor for leanness and efficiency in administration, making Future Generations an organization that is able to conduct worldwide programs on a modest budget.

Such a focus on integrity shows in institutional products—from an annual report that gives facts, not hype, to a location in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia that shows our commitment to communities in need and people-managed protected areas; to an office building that is at the cutting edge of environmental responsibility; to the work habits of all institutional staff, who find themselves often voluntarily working extra hours on inconvenient time zones to back up students and colleagues all around the planet. It is this visible track record of integrity and efficiency that has led to uncommon cooperative agreements for our sister organization the CSO with the governments of India, Tibet/China, Peru, and Afghanistan. These governments would not have agreed to these special relationships unless this organization was perceived as fully trustworthy and delivering what it promised. Future Generations succeeds because it conceives innovative ideas and reliably delivers on these ideas. Seventeen years of proof is reflected in the successes of our fieldwork and the appreciation of our partners.

## Addressing the 2007 HLC Evaluation Review Report

Before we address systematically the core components of Criterion One, we will comment on one specific issue raised by the prior Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Peer Review Team.. This was an “Assurance” requirement—and it stipulated clear separation between Future Generations the Graduate School and Future Generations the CSO, specifically separation in governance and finances.

The Boards of Trustees and the administration of both the Future Generations Graduate School and Future Generations the CSO recognize the importance of a clear separation between the organizations while also preserving the important synergy between these two organizational entities. The Board acted promptly and decisively in response to the recommendations of the Higher Learning Commission’s evaluation in 2007 to establish and communicate a clear separation between the two entities.. These actions included:

- A separation of membership of the two boards, where at least 51 percent of each Board must sit only on that Board. Joint board membership is given to the President and Board chairs (sitting *ex officio*); in addition, the founder of both

organizations sits as a full member, and possibly an additional member can also sit on both Boards as long as the total number does not exceed 49 percent. In this amendment to the bylaws, the total number of possible trustees on each board was raised to eleven.

- A separation of finances occurred in stepwise process. In FY 2007, the institution continued its prior practice of combined books, but set up the frameworks for separation of budgets and accounts in FY 2008, continuing the practice of a joint audit. In FY 2009, the Graduate School and CSO budgets are separate and there will be separate audits. (The 2009 audit will be available at the time of the peer review site visit in October; the institutional fiscal year ends June 30, and it will take four months before the auditor completes the audit.) In FY 2010 and years following, the practice of separate budgets and separate audits will continue. In FY 2008, the five institutional endowments were also separated with four of them being assigned to the Graduate School.

This Self-Study now responds to the core components mandated for Criterion One. This Self-Study now responds to the core components mandated for Criterion One.

### **Core Component 1.a** The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.

The Mission and Vision for the organization evolved from a diversity of disciplinary approaches to development and conservation, encompassing the environmental, social, political, and economic sciences. The organization's initial statement of purpose (when it was only a CSO) at its founding in 1992 was to:

*Identify and inform others of examples that enhance an enduring earth, and incubate demonstration projects that promote the learning of peoples, regeneration of the environment, and improvement of human welfare.*

The seeds of the present mission and vision can be seen in the recognition that learning was an essential component of the role that Future Generations plays in developing countries as well as a necessary factor contributing to global sustainable development. The country programs in India, China, the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, Afghanistan, and Peru were established to further this purpose through research and demonstration projects. The organization has now evolved to place a more substantial emphasis on teaching and learning. The master's program is the most recent manifestation of its steady evolution.

Formally initiated in 2003 and drawing on earlier discussions, the master's program furthers Future Generations mission by providing an educational opportunity for development practitioners. The school also promotes research, demonstration, and teaching. The Graduate School is a means to achieving Future Generations vision of 100 nodes of change by educating leaders who can and will make a scalable and sustainable difference in their communities and the world. It is not expected that all 100 of these nodes of change will be Future Generations programs, indeed many will be partner organizations such as two of our partners in India (the Comprehensive Rural Health Programme and the Society for Education, Action, Research in Community Health), but

it is expected (and present trends support) that a global web of cooperating organizations pursuing a similar applied social change agenda will result.

By creating substantial numbers of committed partners, Future Generations vision seeks a global shift in practice that promotes more effective interactions between communities, governments, and organizations to achieve community change and conservation. The organization will promote 100 nodes of change or demonstrations that are evolving more effective practices that fit local ecology, culture, and economy. It is anticipated that master's degree alumni, partner organizations, and other practitioners will contribute to this and help mobilize community energy into large-scale social transformation in their own countries.

This vision was approved by the Board, as documented in the Organizational Alignment and Plan of Action 2005–2015, published in the 2005 Annual Report (exhibit 2.1) and is available to the public on the Future Generations Web site, and in the master's program catalog.

To fulfill its Mission through structures and processes, as promised in the Future Generations annual reports, the organization has identified five crosscutting institutional goals that connect the work of all country programs and the master's program.

**Promote Equity and Empowerment.** The work of Future Generations seeks to advance the lives of the most marginalized peoples of the world through a process that promotes equity and empowerment within communities. Embedded in the promotion of equity is the goal to meet the needs of the world's most poor and isolated peoples. Future Generations pursues this goal as it seeks to work especially with the bottom quintile of the world's most marginalized populations. Embedded in the promotion of empowerment is a recognition that these populations can move forward despite the unlikelihood that they will soon receive developmental services; that regardless of their circumstances, these are communities that have energies, expertise, and resourcefulness within themselves to advance their own lives.

**Expand Opportunities for Women.** In communities worldwide, women are among the most vulnerable to poverty, ill health, and social violence. Yet in these communities women are eager for the knowledge to be agents of change. Women seek the opportunities and skills to improve their lives and the lives of their families. Women are eager to build upon their successes and to teach other women in their households, villages, and neighboring communities. Future Generations goal of expanding opportunities for women is achieved through ensuring that women as community leaders are well represented in the master's program, training women as community health workers, promoting women's self-help groups, and supporting government partnerships that seek to address the specific needs of women.

**Conserve the Land, Air, and Water.** Future Generations has a goal to integrate the needs of conservation with the needs of people by including communities as part of the conservation solution. In all of its country programs and the master's curriculum, conservation is a component. The organization works to identify and promote low-cost methods that build the capacity of communities to improve their lives while protecting the earth's life support systems. The goals of conservation are achieved through designing



new approaches to community-based conservation, training partner organizations, and helping communities extend their successes in health and education to address the environmental issues of sanitation, food, and water security.

**Extend Local Successes to Regional Scale.** As called for by its mission, Future Generations promotes “successes that provide for rapid expansion.” This goal points to achieving large-scale change that moves beyond one community to improve lives across an entire region or nation. In each country program, this goal is pursued through a systematic process of establishing regional centers of action, learning, and experimentation. Through these regional training centers, supported through government partnerships, communities become “classrooms without walls” to teach other communities. How to extend local successes to a regional scale is also a component of the master’s curriculum and a key question considered in many of the student’s practicum projects.

**Expand Impact through Education.** The mission, vision, strategies, and values of Future Generations are aligned—as noted, this alignment is reflected in our location, buildings, publications, and actions—to extend the organization’s impact through the process of education (as contrasted to establishing and managing new programs). Even within the sister CSO’s country program operations, emphasis is placed on training and building the capacity of partner communities, organizations, and governments.

In addition to the above five goals, which are shared by the Graduate School and the CSO, Future Generations has established four academic goals to guide the conduct of the Graduate School in support of the organization’s mission and vision. These are the following:

1. To create a borderless community of lifelong learners, committed through a compact of accountability, to lead engaged lives while fostering community change and conservation. Future Generations invites its graduates to join the growing web of development and community change practitioners who make up the 100 nodes of change. It aims to support the extension of that web through both their practical projects and through their contributions to advancing the theory of community change.
2. To offer a rigorous academic program that prepares students to integrate scholarly research with learning from success stories derived from the organization’s community development experiences. By offering a rigorous scholarly academic program to development practitioners, the Future Generations Graduate School enables its students and graduates to appreciate local knowledge while also accessing a world body of literature on best practices in community change and conservation.
3. To offer development practitioners an advanced degree program that allows them to study and learn while remaining connected to their communities and their positions of employment. A key feature of the Future Generations Graduate School is that it does not remove students from their communities and the richness of their home and work lives as the base for learning. Instead, it enables them to pursue advanced studies while enhancing their connections to those communities and teaching them how to learn in and from these settings. This

instructional model not only is a strong form of education but also helps answer the problems common in many higher educational programs of the “brain drain” and over-stayed student visas. In this program, students are exposed to the world, but they do not leave their communities. Rather, they are learning from world skills and knowledge that they can transfer to their communities. They are not faced with the dilemma of questioning if they should, in fact, return home. In fact, up to this point all alumni have remained in their communities as agents of positive change.

4. To offer short-term, skill-specific, certificate or academic credit programs in community change, community conservation, and in the Seed-Scale methodology or in other products of the Graduate School’s parallel research activities (for example, peace building or community-based primary health care). The Graduate School offers diverse academic and practical training programs, recognizing the diversity of learners with which we associate and taking specific sub-areas of institutional expertise to those who desire to learn.

The student learning objectives are directly aligned with the mission, vision, and core values of the Graduate School. The courses are designed to address these learning objectives and reflect this synergy in the course syllabi. Learning objectives are available to prospective students in the hard copy catalog they receive (exhibit 2.2) and to the public through the online catalogue at [www.future.org](http://www.future.org).

### Evaluation of Core Component 1.a

Five years ago, Future Generations “set sail on a new tack,” and under a Board directive began to change from a CSO running projects in the field to also being an educational institution that offers a master’s program and is developing systematically a larger graduate program of training and research. The organization did this in the belief that education is the best way for it to expand and sustain change. Future Generations updated its Mission Statement and began phasing field activities into its terms. This required a philosophical shift from doing a project or field activity to establishing a demonstration, conducting action research to evaluate that demonstration, and then setting up instructional programs to extend that learning. The President and the Boards of Trustees of the two institutions are committed to this change, and have worked hard to put in place a set of documents that flow from the mission and vision and address that change. This growth in the organization is expected to continue to evolve because of the nature of our educational program within the Future Generations family of organizations in a growing number of countries and to our external constituencies.

#### **Core Component 1.b**

In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

The head of a New York State agency was struck by the diversity of the Future Generations student body. When scheduling a visit for the Adirondack portion of the U.S. residential program, he remarked, “What have you got here, the United Nations?” The Future Generations Graduate School might very well comprise the most diverse student body of any U.S.-based graduate program. Class Two was made up of 18 students, from 14 countries, speaking 8 native languages, practicing 7 religions, and Class Three had 16

students, from 10 countries, speaking 12 native languages, and practicing 6 religions. As of this writing, Class Four applicants include 22 students representing 12 countries and 12 different native languages. (The class begins January 2010, so final student admissions are still growing.) From Class One through the applicants for Class Four, 24 individual countries are represented: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Cambodia, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Uganda, United States, Vietnam, and Zambia.

The Future Generations Vision Statement calls for "... evolving more effective practices that fit local ecology, culture, and economy." The second sentence of the Mission Statement begins, "As an international school for communities..." Both goals speak to the international and diverse nature of the organization, as does the Values Statement, which says of Future Generations, "It recognizes the dignity of every human being."

Its country programs and the Graduate School student body are proof that Future Generations serves a global society. Its institutional goals are universal, addressing issues of empowerment, valuing women, and protecting the environment. With a reach that is worldwide and serving constituencies from villages in Peru to Tibet/China, Future Generations embraces the widest aspects of diversity. Among the values communicated in the Faculty Handbook is this statement of the value of diversity: "We value Future Generations as a learning organization that nurtures and draws benefit from its diversity."

Both the catalog and the Student Handbook include the institution's nondiscrimination policy. "Future Generations admits students of any race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students enrolled in the program. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, and national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid, and other related programs."

Students in the program grow in their knowledge and appreciation for other cultures in the on-site residential programs. They are living with, traveling with, eating with, and becoming lifelong friends and co-learners with classmates from around the world. These residential programs are a powerful form of diversity training, but it is not automatic. It takes time for the students to break out of cultural shells and to begin to embrace others from totally different cultural contexts. Fundamental new ways of learning to work and live together must be internalized. By graduation, students will often list the learning they gained by being with each other as a high point in their educational experience. The Future Generations faculty strive to encourage and facilitate students' ability to benefit from this diversity.

In the curriculum, up to two credits may be earned through the Inter-Cultural Communicative Competence (IC3) language and cross-cultural literacy program. (Promotion of IC3 is being done by the graduate school because many language instruction programs are culture dependent.) In traditional educational structures, intercultural learning is less of an issue because the inside-the-walls campus life requires that students adapt to the dominant culture. By contrast, the residential programs of the blended learning pedagogy used by the Future Generations Graduate School places students from many cultures together in a globally shifting culture where at least three



out of the four sites are not their own. Using online IC3 modules, students engage in a dialogue that not only strengthens their English language skills but also builds their cross-cultural skills. (For details on IC3, see <http://www.emu.edu/ic3/>.) Native and accomplished English speakers choose another language to learn.

Recognizing the diversity of educational backgrounds of our students, the graduate program calls for faculty advisors to work individually with each student to design their student-learning plans (exhibit 2.3). Student learning plans are developed during the first residential. They tailor the program to meet the needs of each student and of his or her community.

### Evaluation of Core Component 1.b

The Future Generations program likely embraces as much student diversity in race, ethnic origin, culture, religion, and learning background as any institution of higher education in the United States. As we grow, we intend that our faculty, staff and Board of Trustees mirror that level of student diversity and fully capitalize on the value that such extensive diversity brings to the organization.

#### Core Component 1.c

Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Future Generations Mission and Vision statements are fully available to the Board, staff, faculty, prospective and current students, and members of the public. They are on the institutional Web site at [www.future.org](http://www.future.org), in the master's program catalog, and are in the Future Generations annual reports from 2003 to the present (exhibit 2.4). Both the Graduate School and the CSO post the first key sentence of the mission in their offices and ask staff and faculty to commit it to memory.

The Mission Statement is supported in the graduate program through a statement of core values that the program promotes and which it expects students, faculty, staff, Board, and administration to share. These values are expressed in the Future Generations Code of Ethics, initially presented to the Board in the December 2006 meeting (exhibit 2.5). They are also reflected in the Policy and Procedures Manual that is distributed to all staff (exhibit 2.6).

These values are promoted in the graduate program through respect for all life—human, animal, and plant—and the conditions for their harmonious existence. It recognizes the dignity of every human being. It prioritizes the interests of women, who have a particularly strong interest in the well being of their families, children, and community. This program adopts a holistic and ecological approach to community change and conservation. It emphasizes equity, empowerment, and self-confidence, especially among marginalized members of the community.

Working with the President, the North Mountain based faculty and staff have been intimately involved with drafting and reviewing mission documents before they are presented to the Board of Trustees. Exhibit 2.7 shows notes from staff discussions that illustrate staff input concerning the mission documents. Documents are reviewed by the board and then, as needed, returned to the staff when adjustments are needed, reflecting a

healthy and lively exchange of information and ideas throughout the organization.

Future Generations is an organization with a global reach. The country program offices in Afghanistan, Tibet/China, India, and Peru are staffed with individuals who are strongly committed to the mission and vision of the organization. The mission and vision of the two U.S.-based organizations, however, are not expected to be those of the country-based organizations. Each country needs to focus its statements around what fits its cultural, economic, and environmental priorities. The resulting mission statements, however, fit well with the U.S. statements, creating a synergistic global partnership. The country Mission Statements are as follows:

Future Generations Afghanistan: To strengthen the resourcefulness of communities, ensure community ownership, and promote partnerships with government for a secure, equitable, and sustainable future.

Future Generations Arunachal (India): To mobilize human energy for community development and conservation statewide.

Future Generations Canada: To stimulate and assist rural communities in Afghanistan as they work toward a better standard of living for their people.

Future Generations China: To ensure lasting livelihoods for a sustainable China.

Future Generations India: (Currently under revision)

Future Generations Peru: To strengthen collaborative management between communities and government for equitable and sustainable solutions in health and development.

## Evaluation of Core Component 1.c

With a close and continuing working relationship with graduates of the master's program, Future Generations has an expanding network of contacts and programs that support the educational focus of its mission. To create a more thorough awareness of the organizational mission, the first sentence of the Mission Statement has been displayed in the North Mountain office, and in the administrative offices of country programs.

**Core Component 1.d** The organization's governance and administrative structures promote leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Future Generations is an international family of organizations that is positioned as a global learning organization of equals—not an American-run global outreach. The governance and administration of this international organization of equals is still evolving. However, as is clear in the Vision Statement, a larger, partnership-based governance context is essential for understanding the U.S.-based Future Generations. The style by which the organization operates is reflected in its organizational core values.

Over the last five years, Future Generations has moved through a major organizational

transition and in the course of that has sought to examine and clarify its mission documents. An April 2005 consultation by the Atlanta based firm Project Resources Group pointed out the “presentational” issues with getting the Future Generations message across to prospective donors. In the review of the Future Generations Program Information Forum (PIF), the HLC eligibility reviewers commented on a number of points that the program did not articulate clearly. In response to this, the Board of Trustees worked on clarifying and making more prominent the organization’s mission documents. There has been an ensuing major focus on restructuring the whole public image, examining “tag lines” and context as well as looking at optimal use of specific communications tools such as the Annual Report and the ever-growing importance of the Internet (where four different platform structures were experimented with over these five years).

The Future Generations Graduate School employs a total of 24 people, including faculty, staff, and administrative staff. Some of these employees also work in support of the operation of the CSO. The two organizations have similar or overlapping administrative structures. As is appropriate in a small institution, Future Generations has a flat administration without encumbering layers of authority, and offering a highly participatory environment for all employees across levels.

### **Administrative Structure**

The President is responsible for the overall administration of both the Future Generations Graduate School and the CSO. The President is also an *ex officio* member of the Boards of both organizations.

The country programs in Peru, Tibet/China, and Afghanistan each have country directors, all hired by Future Generations headquarters and seconded to the respective country offices. In India, there are two autonomous Future Generations organizations. There are two overlapping members on the governing boards of either of these organizations, but there is no overlapping membership with the U.S. organizations, although this may change in the future. There is a high degree of coordination and cooperation between the two India-based organizations.

The executive vice president of the CSO and the comptroller (both of whom report to the President) manage relations and finances with each of these country programs. Country directors have independent authority as long as they support the agreed strategic plans, budgets, and mission of Future Generations.

In addition to the four directly connected country programs, there is Future Generations Canada, which is an affiliated organization, with shared mission and operating principles, which is autonomous under its own Board of Governors, and has currently as its primary mission the support of work in Afghanistan. A Board member of Future Generations Canada is an Emerita Trustee of Future Generations.

The dean of the Graduate School (who is also its chief operating officer) reports directly to the President. The Graduate School also has an admissions director and a registrar. Currently vacant are positions that include the director of academic programs and the research director, both with responsibilities solely dedicated to the master’s program. In

addition, the Carnegie project director is within the Graduate School and reports to the dean. The faculty is currently made up of three endowed professors, two CSO employees with teaching responsibilities, eight adjunct faculty, two country directors with teaching responsibilities, and two special instructors (exhibit 2.8).

Weekly staff meetings are held to discuss matters pertaining to the CSO and the Graduate School (exhibit 2.9). All employees at the North Mountain campus attend these meetings. Meetings are very open and democratic. Issues are brought to the floor and everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the discussions.

The Academic Council handles matters pertaining solely to operations of the Graduate School. The Council is made up of the President, the dean of the Graduate School, comptroller, and the director of academic programs. The registrar is a nonvoting secretary.

There is an international staff meeting held each May at the North Mountain campus. Attending this meeting are country program directors and, sometimes, additional country staff. The international staff meeting is held immediately prior to the May Board of Trustees meeting to maintain a close understanding and relationship between the globally dispersed staff and two Boards.

### **Governance Structure**

In January 2006, the Graduate School was incorporated as a separate legal entity with its own eleven-member Board of Trustees. On July 1, 2006, the Graduate School began its legal operations. The first autonomous meeting of its new Board of Trustees was in December 2, 2006. As noted above, 51 percent of the Boards are separate but at the minority level have interlocking memberships. Details on the separation of these two Boards have been provided.

Faculty meetings are called and presided over by the dean of the Graduate School. Quarterly faculty meetings are held that include North Mountain resident faculty, full-time faculty not resident at North Mountain (by teleconference), and selected adjunct faculty. Adjuncts invited to join would be those relevant to the issues being discussed. Graduate School issues are discussed at the weekly staff meetings.

Faculty members who are involved in a residential program meet toward the end of that program to discuss and evaluate the residential. These “end of residential” meetings are used to debrief on the residential program and bring program development, curricular, and policy issues to the forefront.

The annual Faculty College is held each May in conjunction with the international staff meeting and meeting of the Board of Trustees (or at some other appropriate time). The Faculty College includes a faculty meeting and a faculty development workshop. The college is attended by endowed professors, full-time faculty, and concerned part-time faculty. Major curricular and Graduate School policy changes are discussed. Policy changes are passed as recommendations to the President, and actions requiring Board approval are forwarded to whichever Board is appropriate depending upon whether it is Graduate School or CSO action.

The consecutively held international staff meeting, Faculty College, and Board of Trustees

meetings provide an opportunity to bring representatives of the full Future Generations family together. Faculty, staff, and trustees attend different parts of all three meetings and have the opportunity to provide direct input into those discussions. In formal meetings and informal social events, issues are brought up, opinions heard, and relationships developed.

### Evaluation of Core Component 1.d

Future Generations has a “flat” organizational structure, and it is run in a democratic fashion. Decisions often are made by consensus: everyone around the table at staff meetings, for example, from President to secretary. Other decisions, such as those about personnel or budget, are made by the person responsible after consultation among appropriate colleagues. Future Generations encourages leadership and values innovation. If someone has an idea and consensus is reached, then leadership is passed to the originator or appropriate person for implementation. A second operating tenet is that “no one is fired for taking action when operational conditions call for a decision.” This promotes appropriate risk-taking and initiative by staff.

### Core Component 1.e The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Future Generations is an organization that holds itself to the highest standard of integrity in its relationships with its external constituencies as well as its students. Proof of this integrity to constituents is shown in the special positions of its country programs. Future Generations was one of the first conservation and development organizations granted permission to operate in Tibet/China, developing a relationship with government and local leaders that allowed it to lead in the establishment of the Quomolangma (Mt. Everest) National Nature Preserve. Arunachal Pradesh is beyond the “inner line” that was established by the British, and which has been preserved in modern India, to protect the tribal groups that reside in the state. Outsiders cannot go to Arunachal Pradesh—they have to be invited. Future Generations was the first international organization to receive that invitation and remains the only one seven years later.

Institutional integrity rested initially on the reputations of the early associates. As the organization has grown and expanded to include the Graduate School, taking on new faculty and students, its standards of institutional integrity have been codified through the Future Generations Code of Ethics. A similar Code of Conduct has been formulated to guide acceptable student behavior. The Code of Ethics is found in the Faculty Handbook (exhibit 2.10) and the Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook (exhibit 2.11). The Faculty Handbook is explicit regarding the organization’s emphasis on integrity and ethical conduct, and it states: *“The successful professional operation and reputation of Future Generations is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of employees. The institution’s reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity. . . . At all levels of the organization we promote integrity, competence, and transparency in support of our strategies. All members of the organization will conduct themselves in a fair, respectful and trustworthy manner.”*

An external audit of Future Generations is conducted annually by the firm of Martin, Beachy and Arehart, Certified Public Accountants, of Harrisonburg, Virginia. This audit



ensures external constituencies that Future Generations is conducting its business in a transparent and ethical manner. It also ensures government agencies, foundations and private philanthropies that their funds are being responsibly managed and properly spent. In addition, the treasurer of the Board of Trustees regularly meets with the comptroller (independent of the President) to review financial status in detail.

A formal and publicized grievance procedure is necessary to assure the fair resolution of student-related problems. This was formalized and presented to Class Two during their Peru residential and the practice was then made available to Class Three beginning on its first day. After receiving student input, the grievance procedure was revised and incorporated into the Student Handbook (exhibit 2.12).

Separate from student grievance is the need for clear policies to consider student requests for exemptions from existing policies. All student requests for policy exemptions are directed to the Academic Council. Although Future Generations policies should be applicable to most situations, there are times when exceptions need to be made. By offering this channel through the Academic Council, Future Generations guarantees the integrity of its programs and policies, replacing subjective decision making with a transparent process to assure fairness in dealing with all student matters, but also accommodates special circumstances. This process has been used to address grievances and policy exemptions beginning with the U.S. and Peru residentials for Class Two (exhibit 2.13).

Student comments and concerns are also heard in open debriefing sessions at the end of each residential program. Given the nature of travel and living conditions in the parts of the world utilized by the program, these concerns often can take on a wide range and magnitude of issues. Whereas students at a U.S.-based college might complain that the bed was not comfortable, those participating on a trip to some areas of Arunachal Pradesh might complain that there was no bed. As outlined in Criterion 5, the Graduate School staff is responsive to critiques heard during these debriefing sessions, making changes where appropriate. Graduate school trustees have also been able to meet with students during the residentials, allowing for informal interaction and appraisal.

### Evaluation of Core Component 1.e.

Future Generations employees are committed to act in an ethical manner and to uphold the integrity of the organization. As part of its growth, Future Generations recognized the need to codify many of its informal policies and procedures. It has done this through the creation of its Policies and Procedures Manual, Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and an institutional Code of Ethics. This codification of policies assures full disclosure and understanding, and equity in the organization's relations with faculty, staff, and students. With the development of the Graduate School research programs, the institution recognized the need for and created an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to assure adherence to the highest of ethical standards in our faculty and student research. A member of the Board sits on the IRB.

### Conclusions

Future Generations is a mission-centered organization that has systematically codified policies and aligned its mission documents. Given the new academic territory the

organization has entered, this process has necessitated experimentation and revision utilizing a blended learning pedagogy, shaping a global classroom, enrolling a diverse international student body, and focusing on applied education. Ultimately communities are taught through the students enrolled in the Future Generations Graduate School programs—this is a new audience for higher education and represents exciting potential for extending graduate education in an applied manner.

The purpose of forming the Graduate School was to support Future Generations mission and move toward achieving a collaborative international vision of promoting ongoing learning by 100 international nodes of change. Those associated with Future Generations are strongly committed to a model of community change that integrates environmental sustainability with economic and social development. They believe that this approach will direct the energy of people in a positive way, without creating dependencies, and thus lead to more effective development of communities.

Future Generations has a strong institutional mission and has taken positive steps to assure adherence to the mission, including guiding the development of presentation materials, the formatting and content of the Annual Report, and the presentation offered on the Future Generations Web site.

Additionally, the organization has codified its policies and procedures. These are set forth in the Policies and Procedures Manual, the Faculty Handbook, and the Student Handbook. All these documents are subjected to Board and faculty review and also have been adjusted based on student input. These policies will be continually assessed and revised over time.

Future Generations is developing a comprehensive institutional system of assessment, which will document adherence to the Mission Statement and progress toward the goals of the Vision Statement. Part of this assessment process is focused on developing more useful measurement indicators, as the metrics in current use do not comprehensively assess many of Future Generations activities. To better focus on assessment, a priority will be to hire a new director of research, to fill a position that recently became vacant.

Future Generations recognizes the need to enhance the diversity in its faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees. Future hires and appointments will place importance on diversity as a criterion.