Mission.
Vision.
Values.

It is impossible to convey in words the human warmth of spirit, love of teaching and dedication to student success that resonates throughout this University, but three words – mission, vision, values – express a great deal about the motivating spirit found in the Benedictine University family.

The mission of Benedictine University has evolved as a result of years of forward-thinking, goal-setting and character-building as an expression of what community members strive to instill in each student. They are in fact “words to live by,” based on a long and rich Benedictine tradition of learning, as well as personal and spiritual growth.

The University is built on vision – from the vision of life long learning that St. Benedict introduced more than 1,500 years ago, to the vision of Fr. Cosmas Vesely, O.S.B. who helped form this University into a leader in the field of science, to our modern-day leaders who seek to improve and move us forward all while keeping the strength of our Benedictine traditions alive. Our vision statement helps to articulate these many years of enlightenment.

Without values our mission and vision would not stand out. A values-based education is an important part of what sets us apart. The essential Benedictine values taught and lived out at this University seek to aid all students and community members in maintaining a life filled with purpose and meaning.

The Mission of Benedictine University

Benedictine University dedicates itself to the education of undergraduate and graduate students from diverse ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds. As an academic community committed to liberal arts and professional education – distinguished and guided by its Roman Catholic tradition and Benedictine heritage – the University prepares its students for a lifetime of active, informed and responsible citizenship and leadership in the world community.

Benedictine University’s mission reflects devotion to assisting students in becoming responsible persons who will make positive contributions to society. The Benedictine University community provides instruction, counsel and life experiences that help students to acquire enduring knowledge and cultivate skills to:

- Communicate effectively, across cultural boundaries
- Reason and make informed judgments
- Identify and solve problems independently and cooperatively
- Develop a sense of intellectual curiosity and a desire for lifelong learning
- Understand the content, methodology and interrelationships of specific areas of study
- Pursue and communicate the truth
- Confront and resolve ethical issues and contribute to the work of social justice
- Benefit from diversity of opinions and cultures
- Value the interdependence of cultures and nations
- Exhibit stewardship toward self and environment
- Strive for a life lived in balance
- Foster appreciation and individual development of creative expression

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The Vision of Benedictine University

Benedictine University is a Catholic University in the Benedictine Tradition that Provides a Values-Centered Liberal Arts Education Enriched by Our Excellence in Science.

Benedictine University's vision statement can be found in the printed word, but also in the hearts of the community members at this Catholic and Benedictine institution. Our primary goal is teaching and learning. But our teaching does not stop with the current trends in pedagogy or technology. It continues to build on our moral and ethical Catholic tradition and our values-driven Benedictine heritage.

The Catholic tradition emphasizes:

- The worth and dignity of each person
- The solidarity of the human race and the social nature of human existence, which is oriented toward God and not limited to this life
- The goodness of creation and its sacramental potential for disclosing the transcendent, as well as the interconnectedness of truth and the compatibility of faith and reason in the search for the truth

We at Benedictine University firmly believe that success requires a body of knowledge founded in social and humanistic values that are common to all people. Those values are inherent in our Catholic and Benedictine traditions. In accord with these values, we believe that any liberal arts curriculum (of which the sciences is a subset) must be highly interdisciplinary so that students and faculty alike may see the many connections among all branches of knowledge. Our initiative to have “science across the curriculum” should enhance students’ abilities to solve complex problems by allowing them to draw on facts and ideas from different, but related, fields of knowledge. This initiative should also make students alert to the ethical issues embedded in all disciplines and allow them to view science issues and problems from a more global perspective. With our more integrated curriculum, students will be able to leave Benedictine University as powerful figures in society ready to assist in many areas in need of social justice.

Benedictine University has a uniqueness and a strength that allows us to offer our students quality majors anchored in a rich, integrated liberal arts base that is further enhanced by our traditional strengths in the natural and social sciences. As evidenced by our vision, we at Benedictine University are dedicated to providing the necessary tools to help our students succeed in their future professions.
The Values of Benedictine University

Benedictine University is grounded in the spirit of the founders who based their lives and work on St. Benedict’s Rule for Monks, written in the early sixth century. Benedictine University continues to build its educational life and efforts on the same values that have aided all Benedictine men and women in living a fulfilled life:

• A search for God by oneself and with others
• A tradition of hospitality
• An appreciation for living and working in community
• A concern for the development of each person
• An emphasis on a life lived in balance
• A dedication to responsible stewardship of all things
• A commitment to academic excellence

Our History

The Benedictine monks of St. Procopius Abbey founded Benedictine University in 1887 as St. Procopius College. The Benedictine Order bears the name of St. Benedict, born in 480, who is acknowledged as the father of western monasticism. In 528, he established the famed monastery of Monte Cassino. Standing in that long tradition of learning, the Benedictines of St. Procopius Abbey founded the College in Chicago, securing its charter from the state of Illinois in 1890.

The first building on the Lisle campus was dedicated in September 1901. It was gradually extended, and new buildings began to be added in the 1920s. The University was originally founded to educate men of Czech and Slovak descent, and in the early years most of the students were from that national group. The University became coeducational in 1968.

Since 1970, the University has changed in many ways. The campus facilities improved with the addition of a residence hall, physical education center, two athletic fields and a student center.

In 2000, the University took a big step into the future in order to accommodate the needs of today’s students by building two new state-of-the-art learning facilities and adding independent apartment living.

Partnerships support the University’s growth in the 21st century. In 2003, Benedictine and Springfield College in Illinois partnered to bring Benedictine programs and services to Springfield, Illinois’ state capital. Benedictine partnered in 2004 with Shenyang University of Technology and Shenyang Jianzhu University in China to bring Master of Business Administration and Master of Science in Management Information Systems programs overseas as demands are high for American business programs. Also in 2004, the University partnered with the Village of Lisle in the construction of The Village of Lisle: Benedictine University Sports Complex, a multi-purpose facility featuring lighted athletic fields with a nine-lane track. Benedictine opened the Margaret and Harold Moser Center in Naperville in 2006 to meet the needs of adult students and area businesses.

Today, undergraduate enrollment has grown to more than 3,200. Total enrollment is nearly 5,300 with 46 bachelor’s degree, 13 master’s degree and two doctoral degree programs. Most Benedictine students are from the Chicago area and Illinois, although 47 states and more than 17 foreign countries are represented.
Our Catholic Heritage

Benedictine University is guided by the Roman Catholic intellectual tradition and the tenets of “Ex Corde Ecclesiae,” the Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities.

The Roman Catholic intellectual tradition – which extends back to the age of the Fathers of the Church, the monasteries of the Middle Ages and the eventual rise of the universities—emphasizes the worth and dignity of each person; the solidarity of the human race and the social nature of human existence, which is oriented toward God and not limited to this life; the goodness of creation; and the interconnectedness of truth and the compatibility of faith and reason in the search for truth.

In fidelity to that tradition, Benedictine University is committed to investigating questions that address the ultimate purpose of life; to the dialogue between religious and secular cultures; and to the promotion of ecumenical, inter-religious and cross-cultural understanding. This type of education is designed to broaden and deepen a person’s vision of reality; to help all understand the dignity and uniqueness of each human person and at the same time to place an emphasis upon the demands of freedom and social responsibility. Benedictine University encourages openness to all reality, acceptance of truth wherever it is found and the personal effort to integrate learning as a basis of wisdom for life.

Benedictine University also adheres to the guidelines set forth for Catholic Universities in “Ex Corde Ecclesiae.” In this declaration, Pope John Paul II identifies four characteristics that distinguish every Catholic university as Catholic: a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community; a continuing reflection in light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge to which the university seeks to contribute by its own research; fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church; and an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to life eternal, the journey which gives meaning to life.
What makes Benedictine University “Benedictine?”

A group of monastics were recently charged by the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities with developing a set of “hallmarks” that distinguish Benedictine colleges and universities from institutions guided by secular groups and other religious orders. These individuals developed a set of 10 “hallmarks,” characteristics that make a Benedictine institution “Benedictine.”

The 10 hallmarks which make a Benedictine institution “Benedictine” are: prayer, obedience, stability, discipline, stewardship, humility, community, hospitality, conversation and love.

- “Prayer” can be manifested participation in worship with others or through meditation and mindfulness. However, “prayer” is not limited by religious affiliation. Prayer can also include the Jewish use of a formal prayer book and the Islamic practices of “salah” or reading of the Qur’an.

- The Latin root of the word “obedience” comes from “audire,” which means “to listen.” It is essential that all members of the Benedictine community find time to listen to God, to listen to oneself, to listen to others and especially to listen to those in need.

- “Stability” is the commitment to the daily life of the place in which we live.

- Learning and freedom are not possible without “discipline,” which is respect for others and the structure of community which make learning and freedom possible.

- “Stewardship” is the respect for the beauty and goodness of creation.

- Appreciation of living and working in community stresses the need for accountability for one’s actions. That appreciation and accountability require “humility,” through which honest interaction between people is possible.

- Living in “community” includes the search for the common good and respect for the individual.

- By welcoming the stranger we open our arms and our hearts to God. Through “hospitality,” we become closer to God and ultimately to truth.

- Through the process of “conversation,” we are formed and transformed.

- Christ said, “Love God above all and love thy neighbor as thyself.” The Catholic tradition emphasizes the worth and dignity of each person. Only by recognizing the solidarity of the human race and the social nature of human existence, the goodness of creation and its potential for explaining the transcendent, and through “love” for ourselves and others can we understand the connectedness of faith and reason in the search for truth.

We see these 10 hallmarks expressed and included in our own articulation of values as described above.
Our Spirit of Community

Central to the Benedictine tradition is the celebration of community as a gathering of people who share a commitment to a common mission. Benedictine University strives to develop an academic community that supports each person in the pursuit of knowledge and personal development. This undertaking will be achieved through a life enriched by the collegiate community in which the individual’s interest is tempered by concern for the common good.

Benedictine University also attempts to bring students and faculty into harmony with their communities and the contemporary world, hoping to inspire students to recognize their responsibilities as members of the community and to become involved in its everyday life. Benedictine graduates see themselves not merely as residents, but as citizens of their communities and know that the lives of all people, regardless of social position, education or age, are entwined. Individual and collective contributions to the community are decisive in integrating the spiritual, intellectual and economic components of daily life.

Our Tradition of Academic Excellence

Benedictine University’s commitment to academic excellence traces its roots to St. Benedict, a young hermit monk who wrote an insightful rule in the early sixth century that would serve as a guide for monastic living. Intended primarily for the men who followed him to his foundation at Monte Cassino in Italy, the life included the education of youth, some of whom would join the monastery while others would influence the world outside the cloister. During the centuries following St. Benedict until the rise of the universities in the 13th century, Benedictine educational activities expanded as monasteries grew and made new foundations.

The involvement of the Benedictines in education expanded to the new horizons of college and university education in addition to work at the secondary school level. Today there are numerous Benedictine colleges and universities in the United States and Canada, as well as a large number of Benedictine high schools. Naturally, the curricula in these institutions focuses on contemporary educational needs. The challenge always demanded that the Benedictine men and women blend the 1,500 years of Benedictine values with the demands of an ever-changing pluralistic society.

The Benedictine approach to teaching has not changed dramatically since its beginning. We continue to recognize the need to improve where necessary and to reevaluate and implement strategies ensuring that the orientation and spirit of Benedictine education will remain synonymous with scholarship, community involvement and good citizenship.

Benedictine University fulfills its commitment to liberal arts, science, business, education, health services, and adult and professional studies through excellence in teaching and interaction between students and faculty members. A liberal arts core prepares all undergraduate students to participate fully in a diverse and dynamic society – balancing their rights and duties as individuals with the demands of the common good. Professional education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, built on the liberal arts background of students, is multidisciplinary in nature and prepares graduates for roles of leadership and social responsibility.
A Life Lived in Balance

Members of the Benedictine University community are encouraged to achieve a balance in their social and professional lives. They come to understand the self as an integrated physical, intellectual and spiritual being. While the University values the dignity of work, it recognizes that balance with leisure and prayer is equally important. Living a life in balance helps to enrich one’s personal life while fostering friendships and relationships that can span a lifetime. The Rule of St. Benedict reflects that people should strive to be content with living simply and finding balance in work, prayer, study and leisure. All things are to be done with moderation.