

**Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists**

**STRENGTHENING IDENTITY AND MISSION
OF COSENDAL ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY**

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Cosendai Adventist University is A SDA Institution of Higher Learning located at the Nanga-Eboko Campus, some 120 miles away from Yaounde, the capital city of Cameroon.

Although Cosendai University is fully accredited by the Accreditation Board of the G.C. of SDA Church, the Cameroon Ministry of Higher Education must recognize its degrees.

This recognition requires the application of the government curriculum. Government inspectors in a regular basis control its application. Cosendai Adventist University runs therefore the risk of just being an extension of government schools on a SDA campus.

It means we have to maintaining our specificity of being a Seventh Day Adventist Institution of Higher Learning in the general promotion of SDA philosophy of Education in a SDA campus, as well as to integrating our faith in the teaching of the government curriculum.

The purpose of this study is therefore to bring out strategies and methods of strengthening the Identity and Mission of the School.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

We will develop this strengthening approach in 2 directions.

First, an evaluation of problems faced by the University, among others the government curriculum and the size of the enrolment.

Second, we will suggest 5 main steps to meet these challenges and strengthen our identity in the following areas: the curriculum, the teaching process, the administrative deontology, the campus style, and the evangelisation.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve that goal the purpose of this study is therefore to bring out and develop the following strategies:

1. To hold integration of faith and learning seminars for all lecturers.
2. To require faith and learning principles for each secular course.
3. To reverse the now SDA versus non-SDA lecturers ratio.
4. To reverse the now SDA versus non-SDA students ratio.

5. To train and equip SDA students for both in reach and outreach evangelistic endeavour.
6. To implement the SDA life style within the Cosendai campus.

GUIDELINES OF THE STUDY

The following steps should be taken:

1. A brief presentation of the challenges
2. Strengthening identity and mission in the curriculum
3. Strengthening identity and mission in the teaching process.
4. Strengthening identity and mission in administration and planification
5. Strengthening identity and mission in the campus life style
6. Strengthening identity and mission through evangelisation
7. Conclusion.

I -THE CHALLENGES

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly present the challenges we face in the campus. We will present two of them: the curriculum and the enrolment.

THE CURRICULUM

The first challenge is that the percentage of religious courses taught in each school is rather low, according to the following statistics:

1. Faculty of Education

OPTIONS	Education	Religion	Gen Educ	TOTAL	% Rel C.
General pedagogy	99	12	17	128	10
Psycho pedagogy	99	12	17	128	10
Administration	99	12	17	128	10
Religious Education	57	54	17	128	40
Didactic of French	99	12	17	128	10
Teacher Education					

2. Faculty of Business and Computer Science

OPTIONS	Business	Religion	Gen Educ	TOTAL	% R.C
Maintenance and Software	104	12	14	130	9.2
Accounting and Finance	104	12	17	133	9.02
Business Administration	105	12	17	134	8.9
Church Administration	61	65	10	136	47
Information Management	111	12	14	137	8.7

3. Faculty of Health Science

OPTION	Health Science	Gen Educ	Religion	TOTAL	% Rel. c.
Nursing	214	15	3	232	1.3

One main consideration is to be made here. We have a limited number of SDA courses in the curriculum. The risk therefore is to be just a government university in a SDA campus.

THE ENROLMENT

The enrolment is still limited. We have a total of 350 students. For the time being, the average percentage of SDA students is good, in harmony with the West African average (52%)¹

Faculty of	SDA	Other	Total	% SDA
Theology	63	0	63	100 %
Business and C.S	78	138	216	36 %
Education	10	1	11	91 %
Health Science	13	7	20	65 %
Total	164	146	350	53 %

¹ Statistics from WAD education department

The main general observation we have to make here is that Cosendai University is basically a "missionary college". It is normal for the faculty of theology department to have 100% SDA students. But the largest school has 36% of SDA students and the entire University 53%. The larger is the faculty, the smaller is the enrolment of SDA students. The size of non-Adventist students gets higher every year and the administration has to adjust accordingly so that our values and principles remain safe. Since every single student is a candidate to heaven, an appropriate evangelistic outreach should be scheduled and implemented on a regular basis.

II - STRENGTHENING IDENTITY AND MISSION IN THE CURRICULUM

THE NEUTRAL ASPECT OF A CURRICULUM

Every college bulletin has course descriptions in which the course to be taught has not only the code and the title, but also a content. This content is essential to briefly orient the teacher in the basic philosophy that should underline his teaching. Of course, the government curriculum does not take into account our religious commitment, but the curriculum is basically an academic requirement, which is neutral in itself. Taught by a secular minded lecturer, even by dualist Christians who make a distinction between academic and faith, there will be no difference between Cosendai Adventist University and Government institutions of higher learning. It is therefore our duty to take care of the matter, by lining up with existing SDA college curricula within the worldwide SDA university system, by adapting particular local government oriented course descriptions, and by bringing into the curriculum specific SDA courses in harmony with our philosophy of education. If we do not bring up our specificity as Seventh Day Adventists in our institutions, then we lose our *raison d'être* as a Church and as a worldwide movement.

LINING UP WITH SDA WORLDWIDE SYSTEM

The very young CAU will benefit by borrowing from other well-established sister SDA universities. The Faculty of Health Sciences at Babcock University for instance presents the following program:

Example of Credits Distribution²

Level	GEDS	Depart. Courses	Total
100	13	24	37
200	12	30	42
300	3	34	37
400	-	38	38
500	-	30	30
Sub-Total	28 credits	156 credits	184 credits

Example of a course description

NRS 2004 CONCEPTUAL BASIS
OF NURSING SCIENCE 2 Credits

“This course will focus on the scientific basis of nursing practice by discussing nursing conceptual models and theories, and their implications for clinical care. Such conceptual models as the nursing process, Oreni’s self care nursing model, and other theories such as Marlow’s hierarchy of needs, Erickson’s developmental theory, and Ray’s adaptation theory.”³

These two examples from the Babcock Faculty of Nursing Sciences are significant enough for the CAU academic administration to adjust to existing SDA curricula. The CAU Health Sciences Department needs to make the appropriate adjustment. The same way, the CAU School of Education should build his

² Babcock University 2002-2005 Bulletin p 195

³ Ibid, p 198

curriculum from the government curriculum by adjusting with the Andrews University bulletin. Specific SDA courses in Education should be implemented.

Of course the specificity of SDA philosophy of education does not appear in the above Babcock nursing course description since we admitted that an academic curriculum is basically neutral.

Moreover, borrowing from Babcock, from Andrews or from Loma Linda does not mean that these sister universities have reached the perfect stage in curriculum development. But they have had enough time to give to their curriculum a better shape. We would then be secured to know that around the world all SDA institutions of higher learning at each level carry the very same academic requirements.

B - ADAPTING GOVERNMENT REQUIRED COURSES

The National Minister of Higher Education took the following action:
“...The degrees offered by Cosendai Adventist University are officially recognized in the Republic of Cameroon and are homologated to those at the same academic level delivered by the public universities in the same specialities...”⁴

Government inspectors are regularly sent to make sure that government academic standards are kept as far as courses descriptions, courses content, and teacher’s qualifications are concerned. This is normal and welcomed. We must keep quite high academic standards. We must aim towards academic excellence.

However we will not teach a course entitled “Evolution” the very same way public lecturers do. Our course descriptions as far as the curriculum is concerned should include our worldview and guidelines. Some courses descriptions from the government bulletin should be carefully rewritten so that, without compromising the required academic level of the course, our worldview is clearly stated.

⁴ Arrêté ministériel n° 05/0107/MINESUP/DDES du 07/11/2005

As example, the government curriculum, for the B.A. in Education includes a 3 credits course entitled "Philosophy of Education". Our course description should suggest a critical approach of humanistic philosophies of education and recommend a brief presentation of our position, even though a complete 3 credits course on SDA Philosophy of Education is normally scheduled.

C – SPECIFIC SDA COURSES

There is a need to increase the exposure of students to SDA Heritage and Philosophy by bringing in the curriculum specific courses dealing with eternity. The religious courses ratio is very low in secular oriented faculties such as Health Sciences (1.3%), Business and Computer Sciences (8.7%), and Education (10%)⁵.

As Dr Korniejczuk suggested from her Montemorelos University experience, the 25% of the curriculum set aside for the General Education requirements could be committed to our SDA specificity while the other 75% are exclusively the domain of academic major courses⁶.

Of course, the fact of applying the integration of faith and learning principles in our entire government curriculum does not mean that specific biblical classes are no longer valid.

We agree that students registering to attend Cosendai Adventist University are candidates to Heaven. It means they have to attend religious meetings such as Sabbath morning worship, vespers and chapels. It means they have to adjust to SDA campus life style. It means also, as far as the curriculum is concerned, that they have to study religious courses dealing with our fundamental beliefs such as SDA Philosophy of Education, Life of Christ, and Doctrines of the Church...etc so that the ratio religious versus secular courses could reach an appropriate level.

⁵ Confer Credit distribution charts p 4-5

⁶ 2006 IFL Seminar, Valley view University Ghana

III STRENGTHENING IDENTITY AND MISSION IN THE TEACHING PROCESS

Many distinguished authors have dealt with the issue. The SDA Journal of Education has published articles on how to integrate faith and learning in teaching mathematics, sciences, languages, and other liberal arts and secular topics.⁷ Arthur F Holmes⁸ and Harry Lee Poe⁹ have made the same approach.

Let us suggest that this material should be made available to teachers and that appropriate seminars ought to be held.

We believe that two main points could be raised here. First, the appraisal of what integrating faith and learning is all about and second, the necessary training of trainers.

A - Integrating Faith and Learning.

1-Definition

Different religious scholars the same way do not always understand the phrase "Integrating Faith and Learning". Our purpose here is not to review these different viewpoints. The one that fits the best our philosophy of education is the following:

"The integration of faith and learning is a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise-both curricular and co-curricular-from a Christian perspective. In a Seventh-day Adventist setting, its aim is to ensure that students, by the time they leave school, will have freely internalised biblical values and a view of knowledge, life and destiny that is Bible-based, Christ-centred, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed"¹⁰

2 – Approaches

Scholars such as Arthur F Holmes rightly assert that Integration of Faith and Learning is an ideal never fully accomplished by anyone but God himself. It is

⁷ Journal of adventist educator 2005 issues

⁸ The Idea of a Christian College {1987}

⁹ Christianity in the Academy {1990}

¹⁰ Umberto Rasi The integration of faith and learning . A working Definition IFL Seminar 2006

therefore a long life deliberate process. Holmes suggests that the Integration of Faith and Learning implies four main approaches¹¹:

First, the attitudinal approach in which Christian values such as integrity, discipline, justice, beauty, creativity and truth could be looked at since God is ultimately the source of all truth. A positive atmosphere and attitude towards learning are essential here.

Second, an ethical approach since there is no value-neutral education. It is not enough to label things "right" or "wrong", "just" or "false". An intrinsic relationship between facts and value implies the identification of facts, the appraisal of God's purposes involved, and the needed actions to implement them in one's life.

Third, a foundational approach in relation to history, philosophy, and theology for each one of these has foundations rooted in a solid tradition. The said tradition indicates somehow a common ground between philosophy and theology.

Fourth, a worldviewish approach since an integrating worldview emerges with the increase of knowledge. A worldview, which is holistic, exploratory, pluralistic and perspectival.

3-The subject areas

The process of Integrating Faith and Learning should take place in the teaching of each subject matter whether we teach religion or liberal courses.

Of course subjects areas like theology and mathematics do not offer the same opportunities to the Integration of Faith and Learning process. But each one of them is related to it.

4 -The key role of the teacher.

As far as the Integration of Faith and Learning in the teaching process is concerned, the role of the teacher is fundamental.

"Teachers interested in faith/learning integration approach their subjects from a biblical-Christian worldview perspective, discovering in the subject matter the themes and issues that naturally allow for an explicit connection between the curricular content, on the one hand, and the Christian faith, beliefs and values in the other. Teachers highlight these connections in their course plans, lectures, students assignments, class discussions, thought questions in examinations, and other learning experiences, with the goal of leading their students to develop their own Bible based view of knowledge, values, life's purpose and destiny"¹²

The process of integrating faith and learning should therefore take place in the teaching of every subject matter at AUC whether we teach religious or

¹¹ Holmes, op cit p

¹² Umberto Rasi, ibid

secular courses – mathematics, sciences, computer, anatomy, economics, psychology...etc.

B – The hiring and the training of trainers

The charts n° 4, 5, and 6 reveal that the Faculty at Cosendai Adventist University has quite a little exposure to SDA Heritage¹³. Many visiting faculty members are not Adventists (26% for the Faculty of Business and Computer Sciences and 50% for the Faculty of Education) and too many did not attend SDA institutions of high learning (20% for the Faculty of Theology and 87% for the secular oriented faculties: Education, Health Sciences, Business and Computer Sciences. How can they carry out the Integration of Faith and Learning principles if some have never heard about it?

Round table exchanges, mini seminars ought to be held, especially for visiting faculty members to improve their teaching in the line of SDA philosophy of Education, as well as to expose them to other fields of knowledge. Local and permanent teachers could also benefit from them. As Arthur F Holmes says:

“Time must first be found for interdisciplinary dialog among faculty”¹⁴

Moreover, a systematic plan of hiring and training SDA faculty members should be effective to reverse the ratio permanent versus visiting teachers and the ratio SDA versus non-SDA teachers. The cooperation with sister Universities in Africa and abroad should take place.

At Cosendai Adventist University, the priority is two sided: the academic excellence of the disciplines taught and the necessary dialog on the Integration of Faith and Learning principles and techniques

IV-STRENGTHENING IDENTITY AND MISSION IN ADMINISTRATION AND PLANIFICATION

The Integration of Faith and Learning process cannot effectively take place in a campus if the administration is not fully supportive:

“Educational administrators interested in fostering faith/learning integration set in motion an on-going, campus-wide plan that involves both faculty and staff in selecting the beliefs and values that the institution wishes to convey to the students - based on the institution statement of mission and vision – assigning responsibilities, providing the necessary resources, engaging all curricular and

¹³ See Chapter I : Facts finding, p. 6

¹⁴ A.F. Homes, op cit p. 50

co-curricular activities, assessing the effectiveness of the plan, and making the necessary adjustments. This unified plan helps administrators to support initiatives and programs that foster the transmission of those beliefs and values and also to de-emphasize or discard those activities that are counter-productive¹⁵.

1- The involvement of the administration:

If this working definition is to be effectively implemented at Cosendai Adventist University, more opportunities should be given to the administration to get exposed to the Integration of Faith and Learning principles.

For the time being, it would be advisable for the welfare of the school, to give to the CAU administration the opportunity to actively participate in SDA seminars in integration of faith and learning and in SDA leadership seminars as far as SDA policies, regulations and deontology are concerned.

2-The involvement of the staff:

Co-curricular activities are to be concerned with the Integration of Faith and Learning process. As Dr Becerra pointed out¹⁶, implementing the Integration of Faith and Learning in a SDA campus is a team endeavour in which administration, faculty and staff are deliberate parts of the process.

Staffs involved in the students affairs department have a central role to play since they deal with student from the gate to the bedroom.

Staffs involved in the registrar office to record the student's enrolment should display positive relationships with the newcomer

Staffs involved in the food service and cafeteria should have in mind that food is a good excuse for students to justify they misbehaviour and that what we teach in biblical diet has here the best practical area of application.

¹⁵ Umbeto Rasi, *ibid*.

¹⁶ 2006 Integration of Faith and Learning Seminar lecture, Valley View University, Ghana

Staffs involved in sports, music and leisure should know that this particular area is extremely attractive to youngsters. A sound Christian worldview of sport, music and leisure should be taught and practiced.

In each domain biblical beliefs and Christian values are involved. It is the responsibility of the administration to identify in each case these specific values and to assign responsibilities to the staff members for their implementation.

3-The strategic plan

The administration of the university is willing to have specific plans as to meet the above challenges. There is a strategic plan proposed by the CAU administration and voted by the board. It involves the progressive increase of enrolment and finance and the implementation of infrastructures. As far as the enrolment is concerned, the UAC strategic plan for the 7 coming years is as follow:¹⁷

AUC STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2012

Academic year	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
School of Theology	50	55	65	75	90	105	120
School of Business	143	152	170	203	257	377	565
School of Education	60	90	100	115	120	125	135
School of Agriculture	30	60	90	100	105	115	120
School of Health Sciences	70	115	130	150	155	155	160
School of Technology			30	60	90	105	115
Humanities				30	60	90	125
TOTAL	353	472	585	733	842	1117	1415

V-STRENGTHENING IDENTITY AND MISSION IN THE CAMPUS LIFE STYLE

We said, from the student's religious affiliation chart on page 6 that Cosendai Adventist University is basically a "missionary college" by the overwhelming weight of non-SDA students whose life style is far from biblical ethics. The more

¹⁷ UAC Strategic plan. P. 22

the enrolment of the institution increase, the more the ratio SDA student versus non-SDA students would go up in favour of non-SDA students.

Students coming from public schools have to learn a lot about a SDA life style. The students' affairs department is therefore quite busy. Administration, faculty and staff, individually and collectively, should participate to the maintaining of a sound Christian behaviour on campus.

1-Lifestyle:

The appropriate domains in which the said SDA life style should be displayed are naturally:

- 1- the good and nice dressing,
- 2- the correct and responsible relationship between young men and young women,
- 3- the stepping away from alcohol and drugs,
- 4- the balance involvement in safe leisure time,
- 5- the practice of sound, safe and harmless sports,
- 6- the deliberate and willing involvement in religious and spiritual activities such as morning devotions, vespers, chapels, prayer meetings, divine services,
- 7- the acceptation and commitment to rules and regulations as indicated in the student handbook.

2 – Service:

To serve is one of the key objectives of SDA education. Students should therefore be encouraged to be involved to a lifestyle of service. Service to fellow students and service to surrounding community ¹⁸

Of course these are neither peculiar nor particular to CAU. All SDA campuses around the world carry the very same requirements as taught from the Scriptures and as part of our SDA heritage.

¹⁸ Jeremiah 29 : 7

STRENGTHENING IDENTITY AND MISSION THROUGH EVANGELISATION

The proclamation of the soon return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus-Christ is the very core of the SDA presence on earth as a church and as a movement.

We believe, as SDA, that each child, each human being is a candidate to Heaven and our responsibility as a church is to bring that good news to the wide world over.

Our schools should therefore become the nurturing centre for spiritual encounter with Jesus leading to a lifetime spiritual growth.

Our pioneers from the USA had to go back to their natal Europe, even though Europe was made of christianised nations, since pagans, as well as Christians should hear the Revelation shout "Get out from Babylon my people"¹⁹, regardless of the Christian church people belong. All CAU students, regardless of their religious affiliation, should therefore be seen as candidates to Heaven and consequently should be actively involved in religious activities the very same way these activities are done in other SDA university campuses.

In reach endeavour should be made in morning devotions and vespers, Sabbath School units, Sabbath Divine Services, chapel attendances.

Outreach endeavour should be made in scheduled bible studies by the personal ministry department of the University Church and consequently in scheduled evangelistic campaigns.

Dr Becerra emphasises here the necessary development of a Spiritual Master Plan in each SDA campus in five steps:

1. A campus appraisal, to discover the student's spiritual needs.
2. Clear short and long term goals.
3. Evidence of administration, faculty, staff and student participation in the SMP building in order to get wide participation in its implementation
4. A planned process with unified methods to promote by different means the faith development and the spiritual growth of students. It will define the how, when, who and by which means the spiritual growth will be achieved.
5. As in any educational objective, an evaluation, periodically and at the end of the year, will reveal the outcomes, and will help to build plans for the future²⁰.

We are developing, at the CAU, an effective outreach endeavour towards the surrounding community. CAU pastors and staff are involved in the leading of community churches around Nanga-Eboko town and graduating students are requested to serve in these community churches as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Practical Ministry course.

These activities in a missionary university as CAU should be carefully planned with appropriated budgets under the leadership of an appointed chairman of SMP. Up to now there is increase of baptism

¹⁹ Revelation 18 :4

²⁰ E Becerra An Institutional Master Plan for Spiritual Development 2006 IFL Seminar VVU Ghana p.6

CONCLUSION

Cosendai Adventist University is the youngest institution of high learning at the West Central African Division. Just 10 years of existence.

The welcomed solicitude of the government who grants recognition of degrees and authorisations to operate and whose curriculum requirements can be by itself a danger: the loss of our specificity and our identity as a SDA institution of high learning and the risk to becoming just a government school on a SDA campus.

Of course, Cosendai University is not the only SDA institution of high learning facing the same challenges. It is a worldwide concern. We have to meet the challenge and learn from experiences of sister universities that had already found their way through.

How to keep our specificity of a SDA institution of high learning among over 100 SDA universities around the world without jeopardizing the absolute quest of academic excellence?

The answer lays in the courageous and appropriate Integration of Faith and Learning in the curriculum, in the teaching process, in the administrative practice and deontology, in the campus lifestyle and sense of service, and in the in reach and outreach souls winning endeavours.

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