

Mission & Vision: Defining your Research Group

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Why?

It might seem a strange thing to do, but your university has a mission statement. Odds are that the stakeholders you work with have vision statement. What are your goals, and what do you do to achieve those goals? Mission and vision statements help you realize your goals and share them within your group—to realize greater productivity.

Mission

- A short paragraph
- Expresses group's purpose in a way that inspires support and commitment
- Motivates those connected to your group
- Is easy to understand and free of jargon
- Short enough to be memorized or repeated
- Uses active verbs
- Answers the 3 questions at right

Vision

- Looks 5 years into the future
- Defines a future state that your group is working toward
- Written in a way so that people can be held accountable
- Is about aspirations and desired outcomes rather than day-to-day activities

Q1: What *principles or beliefs* guide your work?

Q2: What are the *opportunities or needs* that your group exists to address?

Q3: What are you *doing to achieve* the reason you exist?

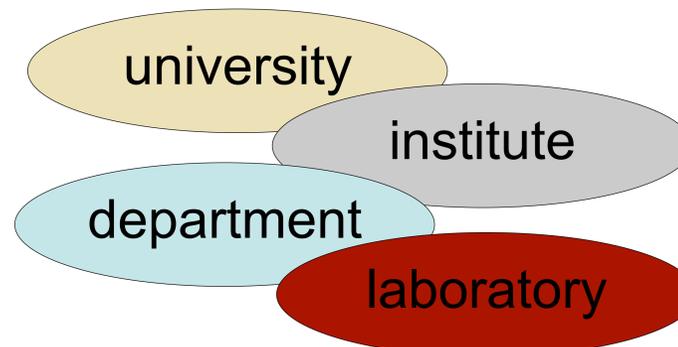
Southwest Airlines' mission doesn't say anything about flying, so yours might not say anything about doing science.

Group project

On the flip-boards, briefly answer Q1, Q2, & Q3 for your primary research group or organization

I will compile the answers and synthesize them for the Leopold group. This will provide ideas for your mission and vision statements.

Works for all levels!



DRAFT Example

MISSION: Climate and other environmental changes demand society's attention. The world needs leadership in understanding the biological impacts of global change and potential for solutions to those impacts. We believe that decisions about global change must be informed by scientific understanding and public values. Therefore, we: 1) develop and deploy cutting-edge science to understand the changing natural world, and 2) engage diverse stakeholders in conversation about solutions to environmental change.

VISION: We envision a world abundant with biodiversity that sustains humanity. To help achieve this, we strive to:

- 1) Understand ecological responses to climate and other environmental changes;
- 2) Develop strategies to help people and ecosystems reverse or adapt to these changes;
- 3) Engage in regular dialog with the public to implement such strategies.

We desire and enable sustainable management of Earth's ecosystems, for the benefit of all.

More information

<http://adaptingnature.blogspot.com/>

Gerwin, V. 2012. Turning point: Jessica Hellmann. Nature 483: 7390.

Radtke, J. 1998. How to write a mission statement.

Simek, S. 2009. Start with why.

Can you improve the example at right? Please email suggestions to hellmann.3@nd.edu