

The Hickman Friends Senior Community of West Chester, a non-profit Quaker-based personal care home in West Chester, Pennsylvania, has wrestled with the issues of mission and margin. This is a common concern of non-profit organizations that ask how they can honor their mission to serve others and, at the same time, maintain good business practices that will allow for the future development of their business.

To this end, the Board of Managers of The Hickman appointed a task force to look into the subject of mission/margin. This task force met five times over the course of several months to discuss the many issues involved. In the end, they agreed that it is important to maintain the mission of The Hickman, including charitable care grants to the residents where warranted, and to maintain a margin of funds sufficient to ensure a sustainable business model. The attached series of queries were developed by the task force to be used by committees and other task forces when making decisions so that an appropriate balance is maintained between the mission and the margin of The Hickman.

Queries to Guide Decision-Making Regarding New Policies and/or Initiatives

From the Mission/Margin Task Force, Approved, May, 2010

Below are queries developed by the Mission/Margin Task Force that are to be used when considering new policies, projects or initiatives. These were developed in response to the Board's request that this Task Force explore concerns related to our long-term fiscal health and viability. We recommend that these be used in decision-making, ensuring there will be sufficient consideration of how any new initiative would impact our financial health.

Please note that the nature of a particular policy or initiative will shape the relevance of specific questions; moreover, there may be additional questions or concerns that are not explicitly listed below. Nor it is necessary that these queries be answered sequentially. It is intended that these queries be applied in a holistic manner, creating the space for broad examination, reflection and dialogue.

- I. Queries deriving from our governance responsibilities for mission, vision and values
 - How does it reflect and/or incorporate Quaker values of peace, equality, justice and/or simplicity?
 - Is this initiative consistent with our mission?
 - How does it move our mission forward and help us achieve our vision?

- II. Queries deriving from our governance responsibilities for strategic direction and priorities
 - How does this initiative align with our strategic priorities?
 - What forces or factors in the external environment could impact our ability to achieve the goals – either positively or negatively?
 - Are we confident that we have the internal capacity/infrastructure to achieve the goals?
 - How will “success” be defined?

- Is this a unique opportunity ... and/or an opportunity not to be missed?
- What are the “opportunity costs” in pursuing this initiative, i.e., if we pursue this initiative, how might it affect our ability to pursue other projects or activities?

III. Queries deriving from our fiscal responsibilities

- How will this initiative impact our overall financial picture and fiscal health?
- Will this require any capital investment?
- How will it generate revenue (including contributed revenue)? What will be new (related) expenses?
- How will this initiative impact our development program?
- Will anticipated revenues exceed costs? If not, why should this initiative be further considered?
- What level of financial risk is associated with this initiative? What is the source of this risk(s)?

IV. Queries regarding the sense of the recommending/approving body

- In light of the response to the queries above ...
 - Is there energy and enthusiasm for this initiative?
 - Has the idea garnered the support it needs from board and senior management to ensure effective implementation?
 - What is the recommendation from this body?
 - What are next steps if approved?

The Hickman

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