



Dr. Stephen R. Briggs



# Experiencing work firsthand

“Our goal is to provide the premier program in the nation for the benefit of our students and as a model for other educational institutions.”

Berry College stands apart from other colleges and universities today in large part because of our century-long commitment to meaningful work as an integral component in our students' educational experience. Because of our work experience program, Berry students have the opportunity to gain important life lessons about personal and social responsibility, determination, and resourcefulness, as well as valuable skills involving the management of time, people and projects.

Firsthand work experience sets Berry students apart when applying for jobs and graduate-school programs. More importantly, with guidance, it can encourage them to pursue lives of passion and purpose. As our visionary founder, Martha Berry, grasped intuitively, intellectual skills and practical skills can be combined to powerful effect in molding people known for their work ethic, moral character, integrity, ingenuity and willingness to serve – especially when these skills are developed in a community that encourages faith-based values.

The face of work at Berry has changed with each passing decade, yet the concept of meaningful work done well has always been preserved, nurtured and shaped to meet our students' needs. Today, society's esteem for meaningful, ethically performed work is

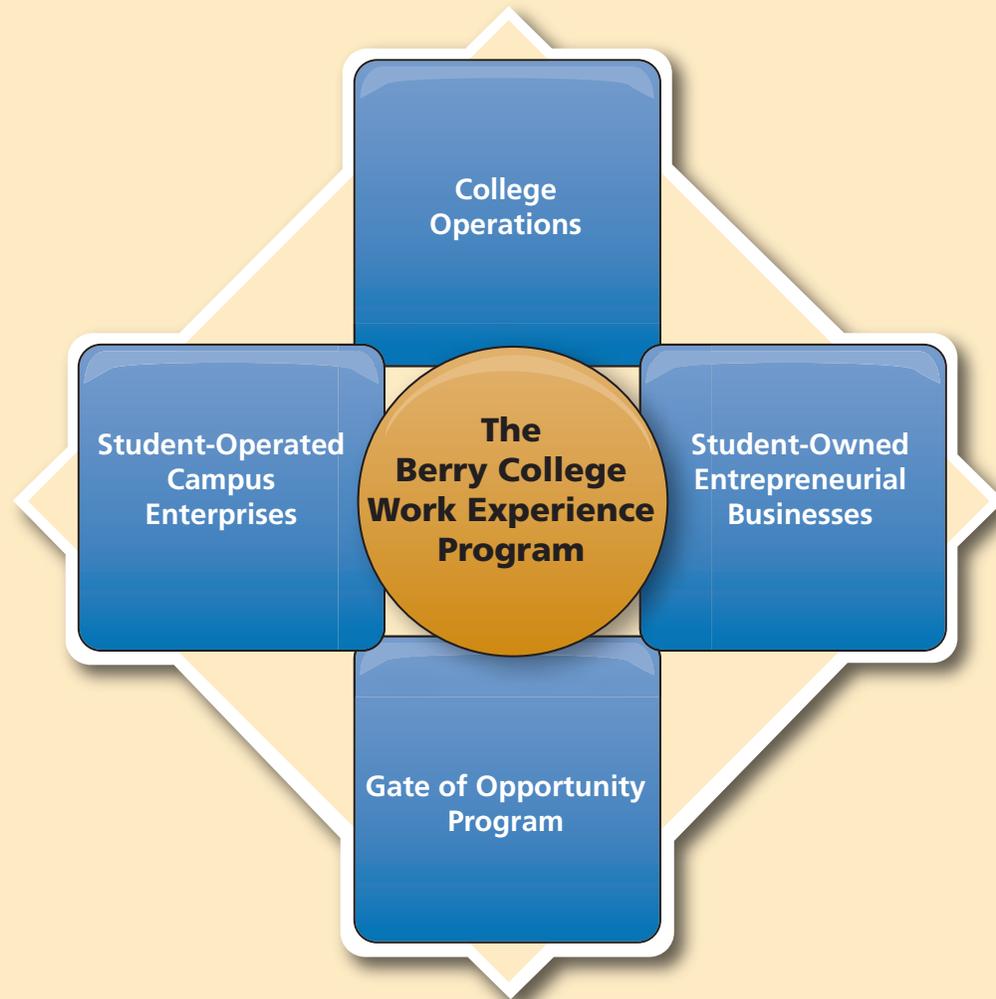
growing as the pitfalls of its antithesis become clear. The world needs more of the character of a Berry education, and it needs more citizens engaged in work not simply for what they can get, but fundamentally for what they can give.

Always a leader in the comprehensive development of students – in providing an education of the head, heart and hands – Berry College now is taking the next step in the evolution of our work experience program. Our goal is to provide the premier program in the nation for the benefit of our

**From its inception**, Berry College has pursued an unusual path. Our educational plan combines challenging academic programs with meaningful work experience to foster in students a sense of direction and seriousness of purpose. The Berry plan guides students to acquire a rich variety of experiences relevant to their interests and strengths and to develop a strong sense of confidence and personal responsibility. Most importantly, it calls each student to consider how he or she might live a life of lasting value to others.

students and as a model for other educational institutions. We also intend to capitalize on the program to help growing numbers of hardworking students attend Berry. Countless students have graduated from Berry over the years because of the availability of campus jobs; given the recent economic unrest, the number of students needing such assistance is again growing dramatically. The question arises, “Is it still possible for a student to work his or her way through Berry?” In this moment of economic uncertainty and hardship in our nation, and with the support of alumni and friends, Berry boldly answers, “Yes.”

Four complementary initiatives, as described on the next page, will provide the basis for establishing Berry's work experience program as a national model. Each will enhance our students' academic studies and challenge them to develop the skills needed to become leaders in their communities and chosen fields of endeavor; one will enable students to literally work their way through school. All will give Berry students the opportunity to acquire firsthand the insights, experiences and values that will lead them to serve society responsibly as they pursue their own life's passions. Once again, Berry's forward progress is rooted deeply in the principles and achievements of its past. **B**



## A four-pronged approach to a premier program

**1 College Operations** will continue to provide the primary context for Berry's traditional but increasingly developmental work experience program, in which students hold meaningful, responsible positions in regular areas of campus operations and services. Students can build their participation over time from entry-level service jobs to apprentice-like positions tied directly to their academic or career aspirations. They are evaluated each semester according to defined performance standards and are rewarded with increasing levels of pay and responsibility, based on meritorious work. They will graduate with a work transcript as well as an academic transcript.

**2 Student-Operated Campus Enterprises** represent an exciting new component of our work experience program involving the development and ongoing operation of campus enterprises by student teams

with a staff or faculty mentor/co-manager. These student-managed enterprises include businesses distinct to Berry but not required for core college operations, such as cottage rentals; the sale of milk, beef and genetic services from our farm; an organic garden; and bike rentals and repairs. Students also are creating experimental enterprises based on their own areas of interest. Currently, nine pilot projects are up and running.

**3 Student-Owned Entrepreneurial Businesses** are developed through the academic-based entrepreneurship program in Berry's Campbell School of Business. A newly established business incubator is helping students launch successful businesses that they own and can take with them upon graduation. The next step in student support is the full establishment of Entrepreneurship@Berry, a

center designed to help all interested Berry students explore and fully develop their entrepreneurship abilities and potential.

**4 The Gate of Opportunity Scholarship Program** offers highly motivated students willing to work their way through college the chance to experience the fullness of Berry College firsthand and to graduate debt-free. As a core principle, Berry strives to keep its cost affordable, offering a top-quality education at a cost that is considerably less expensive than comparable institutions, as well as generous, need-based financial-aid packages. Yet, for many deserving middle-income students, the cost of a Berry education seems prohibitive since they must rely on substantial loans. A moderate level of debt may be appropriate in some instances, but for others it is not

appropriate or advisable.

Through the Gate of Opportunity Scholarship program, four-year scholarships are provided, each of which represents a partnership among the student, his or her family, Berry and a benefactor with a deep belief in Berry's mission. Each partner contributes to the cost of the student's education. The student earns his or her share through a total of 4,800 hours of progressively more responsible participation in the work experience program over the course of four years, including full-time work over breaks and holidays. Recipients normally are expected to rise to leadership positions in student-operated campus enterprises or college operations. Each student is assisted in developing an integrated four-year plan that includes study, work and personal development, as well as valuable mentoring experiences.