

August 27, 2008

To The Campus Community,

I want to extend a warm welcome to you. We are beginning what promises to be an extraordinary year for all of us at Connecticut College. I am delighted to have everyone back on campus and to welcome all newcomers.

For those who are joining the Connecticut College community for the first time—new students, faculty and staff members—please note that I send e-mail updates on a regular basis to keep everyone informed of our progress.

In May, I reported to the Board of Trustees on our performance against last year's goals and objectives. I am pleased to tell you that in the vast majority of areas we met or exceeded our goals. As with last year, we will be coming out with a President's Report in October, so you will have more details on our 2007-2008 accomplishments.

As we begin the new academic year together, I am pleased to share with you this year's goals and objectives that the College's senior administrative and academic leadership team has worked with me to develop (document is attached). These goals are based on the strategic priorities of the College and each one is connected with one or more senior administrators who, in addition to me, are ultimately responsible for achieving it. Our goals will benefit students, faculty and staff directly and lead to the overall objective of advancing Connecticut College among liberal arts institutions nationwide. These goals will be discussed with the Board of Trustees during our September conference call and at the October meeting here on campus.

Today, I am also pleased to share with you some of our recent achievements. Over the summer, the College completed \$11 million of campus renewal projects—65 projects in all. These included renovating all residence hall common rooms, which have made possible more freshman seminars in the residence halls. In addition we developed a new walkway and plaza connecting Cro with Shain Library and Blaustein Humanities Center, created the new Opatrny Plaza and Lott Courtyard at the Plex and updated Winthrop Hall.

We also renovated three classrooms, including Bill 106, the largest classroom space on campus, which has now been renamed "Silfen Auditorium" in honor of Lyn Silfen '67 who funded that renovation. Lastly, we started site work on the new fitness center, which is expected to be completed in the fall of 2009. The amount of work accomplished was remarkable – and there is more to come next summer.

On Saturday, we welcomed the Class of 2012 and our 24 new transfer students—outstanding young people who will add much to this community. We also are joined this year by 23 new visiting and tenure-track faculty members. These include the new Mellon fellows for the Ammerman, Holleran and Goodwin-Niering centers, as well as professors and instructors who will teach a range of subjects in areas from sociology, anthropology, and history to mathematics, computer science, and foreign languages, and many more.

I know from recent conversations that our faculty members have had a very productive summer, and I want to draw your attention to just one recent achievement that exemplifies these outstanding colleagues. Michelle Dunlap, associate professor of human development and chair of the Human Development department, is the 2008 recipient of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education's Ernest J. Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement. This award recognizes Michelle for her ability to connect her teaching,

research and community outreach in meaningful ways.

In other good news, I am delighted to tell you the College has entered into a partnership with the POSSE Foundation and will bring our first group of 10 students from Chicago to campus next fall. POSSE identifies, recruits and trains student leaders from urban public high schools to form multicultural teams called "Posses" that enroll in top-tier colleges nationwide; indeed, some of the best colleges and universities in the country partner with POSSE.

Over the next several weeks, the College will move ahead with its plans to upgrade the local transportation options for students. We have contracted with a professional car service for Camel Van, the shuttle service that makes regular runs to local shops, restaurants and malls Thursdays through Sundays. In addition, we are working out the final details in making Zip Cars available on campus. You will receive more information on Zip Cars within the next few weeks.

I am pleased to share the news that our year-end fundraising results were very positive. We surpassed our overall fundraising goal of \$20 million with about \$26 million in new gifts and commitments to the College. These results include annual giving, a record number of individual gifts and a very high participation rate, including 96 percent participation among the graduating Class of 2008 and 100 percent participation in the Class of 1958.

In October, we will officially launch the public phase of our comprehensive campaign for Connecticut College. The campaign will provide the resources for a bold transformation of Connecticut College in which the education we offer will become richer, deeper and stronger than ever. The campaign has already significantly impacted the College in many important ways that benefit all current students, faculty and staff, and we look forward to accomplishing even more.

I hope everyone plans to attend Convocation tomorrow in Palmer, when we will celebrate the start of the new academic year. The procession begins at 4:15 p.m. and the program should start at 4:30 p.m. Convocation will be followed by an all-campus picnic on Tempel Green in front of Knowlton.

This promises to be an extraordinary year – I look forward to seeing you all on campus.

Sincerely,
Lee Higdon