

# CONNECTICUT COLLEGE



## *Building on Strength*

A NEW PLAN FOR CONNECTICUT COLLEGE



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT



I am pleased to present you with *Building on Strength: A New Plan for Connecticut College*. This document reflects the work of many people over many months, the outcome of an inclusive planning process conducted during the 2015-16 academic year. With the leadership of a talented campus committee, and the collective wisdom of students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and trustees, we arrived at the strategy that will enrich our academic and residential culture, strengthen our community, sustain our institution, and ultimately raise Connecticut College to greater levels of

national and international prominence. The Board of Trustees endorsed the plan's priorities, goals, and actions at their most recent meeting in October.

A good strategic planning process always begins with an examination of mission and values. In our case, that means reflecting on the principles of innovation, equity, and excellence in education that have defined this College from the very beginning. These values provide an even more powerful foundation for our future as we seek to attract and educate a new generation of leaders for a globally networked 21st-century, citizens who will enter a world of increasing social and technological complexity. Our future success depends on the solutions our graduates will find for as-yet-unimagined problems. This will require new kinds of knowledge, judgment, and skill building.

In this respect, the plan can be read as a redoubling of our commitment to the liberal arts and to the kind of connected and worldly education that has long been a hallmark of this institution. Our new curriculum, Connections, is a reflection of that commitment and evidence that the work of the plan is already well underway. Other ideas will take more time to evolve. As a whole, *Building on Strength* offers a powerful statement of our core values and of the aspirations that we hold for Connecticut College as it enters a second distinguished century.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the many members of our community who contributed to this plan. I hope that as you delve into its details, you will be inspired by what lies ahead for Connecticut College. I invite all who care deeply about this institution to become even more involved in helping us advance to greater levels of distinction. Our future will be built on your strength.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Katherine Bergeron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

**Katherine Bergeron**

November 2016

## ■ INTRODUCTION

Connecticut College has long been known for its distinctive educational culture, fueled by rigorous inquiry, openness, and a spirit of collaboration. From its founding over a century ago, the College has promoted a uniquely progressive vision of higher learning, where serious academic pursuits are strengthened by practical work in the world to produce graduates prepared not just to make a living but to make a difference. This is the meaning of our mission: the liberal arts in action.

Building on Strength is a new strategic plan for Connecticut College that advances this mission for the 21st century. It outlines goals and actions that will support state-of-the-art teaching and research and enriched opportunities for student engagement in order to create the conditions for equitable and sustainable communities in future generations — both here on campus and in the world beyond. Using past successes to reflect on present challenges, the ideas in this plan offer an ambitious agenda to move Connecticut College forward into its second distinguished century.

### Planning Process

The past two years at the College have been an important period of reflection, action, and renewal. In the 2014-15 academic year, the Connecticut College faculty ratified a bold new approach to liberal arts education, its first major reform in 40 years. The new curriculum, called Connections, builds on the College's longstanding strength in interdisciplinary scholarship, global education, and career preparation. With its integrative structure, it equips students to deal with the complex problems of our contemporary global society by strengthening the links between the work they pursue on campus, in the community, across the world, and ultimately in their lives beyond college. In this respect, it embraces the ideal that Susan Sturm has defined as full participation, seeking to galvanize a new kind of learning environment in which all people, whatever their identity or background, have the conditions to reach their full potential and to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to society more broadly.<sup>1</sup>

The ideal of full participation was an important motivating force for the new curriculum. Educational programs

should always reflect the values and aspirations of the institutions they serve, and Connections does this in a number of important respects: in its commitment to the ongoing excellence of our educational culture; in its emphasis on student leadership and engagement; in its awareness of the multiple physical environments that contribute to learning; and in its understanding that civic development — and the future of our democratic society — will depend on the ways we educate ever more diverse communities of students, faculty, and staff to speak purposefully, listen deeply, and collaborate effectively.

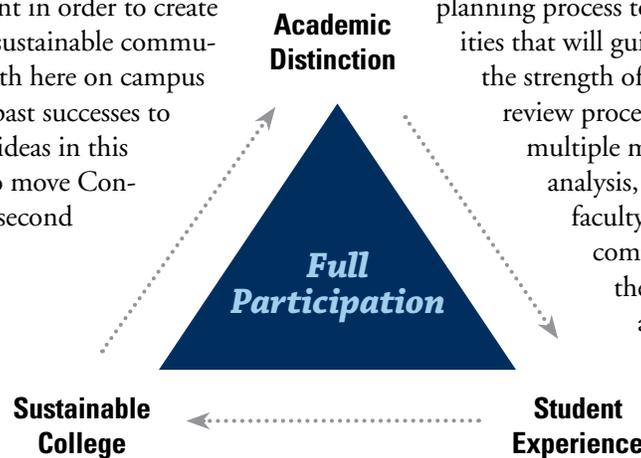
It is not surprising, then, that many of these same aspirations emerged during the 2015-16 academic year, when the College conducted a broadly inclusive strategic planning process to determine the goals and priorities that will guide our next decade. Building on the strength of the curricular revision, this new review process engaged the whole campus in multiple methods of information gathering, analysis, and discussion. Students, staff, faculty, alumni, parents, trustees, and community partners contributed to the dialogue through individual and group interviews, surveys, idea walls, and open forums.<sup>2</sup>

Those conversations produced a consensus around three strategic

priorities for the College's future: achieving greater academic distinction, creating a more robust student experience, and supporting a just and sustainable College.

The priorities are, by their nature, mutually dependent. We cannot achieve distinction in integrative education without supporting students beyond the classroom; we cannot expect to improve the student experience without developing a more just and sustainable community; and a just community is a necessary condition for a truly distinctive educational environment. At the center of all this, again, is a vision of full participation. Grounded in our mission and values, these priorities form the pillars of the plan, carrying the weight of past legacies and of current challenges we must address.

Our ability to identify challenges and collectively imagine improvements is a measure of our system of shared governance, where trustees, faculty, students, staff, and members of the administration share in the



<sup>1</sup> Sturm, Susan, et al. "Full participation: Building the architecture for diversity and public engagement in higher education." White Paper, Columbia University Law School, Center for Institutional and Social Change (2011).

<sup>2</sup> See appendix of this document and <http://www.conncoll.edu/strategic-planning/> for more information on the strategic planning process and methodology.



*A just community is a necessary condition for a truly distinctive educational environment.*

work of envisioning the future. It is also a measure of past communities and leaders who have helped make the College what it is today. The task before us now is to build on that foundation. Through this plan we seek to ensure the ongoing strength and preeminence of Connecticut College in an increasingly competitive era.

### **Connecticut College Today**

By any reasonable standard, Connecticut College is already a preeminent liberal arts college. We enjoy the benefits of an award-winning and exceptionally hard-working faculty of teacher-scholars, who are dedicated to the best possible learning for our students and who

bring intelligence, ingenuity, and passion to every project they undertake. We employ an equally conscientious and devoted staff that takes pride in its work of advancing the College. We attract talented, creative, and driven students committed not just to their own advancement but also to the betterment of their communities. We profit from a thoughtful and open administration oriented toward inclusive leadership and participatory governance. And we possess unparalleled physical, natural, and cultural resources in our campus arboretum, our coastal location, and our proximity to major metropolitan areas.

Just as important as these assets are the ways they have been deployed to create the College's special character.

## ■ INTRODUCTION

The spirit of collaboration and connection that informs our educational culture has given rise to exceptional programs that redefine academic excellence. The College's centers for interdisciplinary scholarship, with their unique certificate programs, produce student outcomes that represent the highest standard of scholarly achievement, while highlighting our excellence in the integrative study of world languages and cultures, race and ethnicity, public policy, technology and the arts, and the environment.

Our nationally recognized career office, with its impressive internship program, one of the first of its kind, prepares students for productive lives after college by allowing them to explore the connections between their academic pursuits and future career paths, both locally and globally. Our unusually supportive student culture, buttressed by our nearly 100-year-old honor code, has led to the College's national leadership in bystander intervention for sexual assault through programs that have also highlighted the citizenship of our student-athletes.

Connecticut College has earned well-deserved recognition for these and other aspects of our educational program, and yet certain conditions have also held us back, making our future position more precarious. Our status as a top liberal arts college, for example, has been increasingly difficult to detect in national rankings over the last 10 years. Our historically small endowment relative to our peer group — an important factor behind various rankings — has continued to exert pressure on operating margins and has highlighted our overreliance on tuition revenue. The cost of providing a high-quality residen-

tial liberal arts education has risen annually even while families' abilities to pay, along with the numbers of high school graduates able to attend college, are falling.

This circumstance has put additional stress on enrollments as well as on the proportion of our budget given to financial aid. It has also contributed to the underinvestment, over time, in many aspects of the student experience as well as in our aging physical plant, including research facilities and classrooms, athletics facilities, arts facilities, residence halls, and other student spaces. From a very different perspective, the intensifying national dialogue around race and inequality in America has foregrounded the urgent need not only to improve the climate for racial and ethnic diversity on campus but also to rethink many of the structures through which we support students, faculty, and staff. Addressing all of these concerns is central to the new strategic plan.

### **Building on Strength**

Connecticut College has a number of distinctive advantages that we should look to strengthen as we seek to fulfill our ambitions for the future. One advantage is the excellence of our faculty in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and the life and physical sciences, along with the strong sense of collaboration that defines our academic community — a combined strength that has made interdisciplinary inquiry and faculty/student research a signature of this College. Another advantage is the global perspective that permeates the work of so many departments and programs. A third is our location along the Northeast corridor, which encourages new possibilities for teaching, research, and internships

## ■ STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS

Three distinct but intertwined priorities form the structural foundation for this strategic plan: We seek to support a more diverse, just, and sustainable campus and community through new efforts that will both enhance the academic distinction of this College and enrich the overall student experience. These priorities represent complementary and mutually reinforcing aspirations, motivated by a vision of an educational culture that makes it possible for everyone — students, staff, and faculty — to thrive, to reach their highest potential, and to contribute.

between New York City and Boston. A fourth is our membership in the elite cohort of NESCAC athletics.

Finally, and most importantly, there is the progressive thinking and openness to change that have defined this institution from its founding. That attitude enabled the faculty to take a risk and do what for many other institutions would be impossible: to transform an outdated general curriculum into a model program for the 21st century. This courageous and creative work will solidify the College's leadership in the landscape of American liberal arts education.

We are at a critical moment in the history of Connecticut College when all of us who care deeply about the institution have an obligation to set it on the right course for the future. We cannot afford to be complacent. As we launch a new curriculum that will advance the College's distinction for the next generation, we must do even more to shore up the institutional structures that will support its flourishing. This is the time to make significant improvements to our educational, residential, and campus resources in order to ensure the ongoing success of Connecticut College. The following pages outline the goals and actions that we believe are necessary to make it happen.

## ■ NEXT: PRIORITIES

- 1 *Enhancing Academic Distinction*
- 2 *Enriching the Student Experience*
- 3 *Supporting a Diverse, Just, and Sustainable Community*



# 1 Enhancing Academic Distinction

The vision of a more deeply connected and engaged education runs through all the goals and priorities of this plan to inform our ambitions for the Connecticut College campus, the broader community, and the world. With the creation of a new curriculum as both the prior condition and the catalyst for this strategic plan, we begin the discussion with our academic mission.

## Goal 1: Education

**Become a recognized leader in integrative education promoting the intellectual, social, professional, and civic development of every student.**

### OBJECTIVES

- *Ensure the success of Connections*
- *Advance and strengthen the College's centers for interdisciplinary scholarship, teaching, and learning*
- *Deepen faculty and student engagement off campus and around the world*
- *Broaden educational opportunities through new institutional partnerships*

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Increase resources and staffing for continued development of Connections
- Create Global Commons to integrate world languages, off-campus learning, and local and global engagement opportunities
- Develop new resources to support departments in their work toward full participation
- Clarify curricular requirement for learning about social difference
- Enrich STEM opportunities by establishing a program in engineering in partnership with U.S. Coast Guard and Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- Expand opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning, including potential precollege and master's programs
- Enhance support for the five centers for interdisciplinary scholarship and consider new centers of distinction (e.g., in informatics)
- Extend educational partnerships with the city of New London
- Develop exchange programs with new global partners (e.g., Universidad de la Tierra in Mexico, Ashesi University College in Ghana)
- Strengthen academic advising across four years
- Continue improving classrooms to support new forms of teaching with technology

The best liberal arts education is a deeply connected exploration of the different ways of thinking, being, and knowing that define the world and one's place in it. It compels students to grapple with complexity through their interactions with different disciplines, cultures, and identities. It inspires them, in turn, to take responsibility for what they learn by engaging with their communities and contributing to a more equitable society.

The essence of this preparation lies in intellectual and social encounters through which students not only gain theoretical and practical knowledge but also learn about difference, struggle with difficult conversations, and question familiar habits and assumptions.

The College's new curriculum, Connections, calls for a deepened commitment to this kind of intentional education, with heightened expectations for learning across the disciplines, language study, cultural immersion, and off-campus work — along with new structures to support their integration.

Integrative learning has long been a signature feature of the College's centers for interdisciplinary scholarship. As such, the plan also calls for advancing this aspect of our educational culture through strengthened resources, programming, and teaching opportunities within the centers, as well as new partnerships with local and global institutions. A relationship with Universidad de la Tierra in Mexico will help advance our work in sustainability and social justice. An exchange with Ashesi University College in Ghana will provide new opportunities for STEM students studying abroad. A partnership with the Coast Guard and Worcester Polytechnic will add engineering to our liberal arts offerings. Through the strategic plan, we will invest in the infrastructure needed to develop our distinctive model, ensuring that Connecticut College delivers the best kind of liberal arts education to produce the best kind of citizen leaders.

## Goal 2: Research

Open new channels for groundbreaking research, scholarship, and creative work.

### OBJECTIVES

- Enhance funding, spaces, and technology for knowledge creation
- Multiply opportunities for student/faculty collaboration
- Enrich campus intellectual dialogue

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Develop new resources for student and faculty scholarship and conference travel
- Establish high-profile scholar-in-residence program
- Upgrade research facilities, labs, and other spaces in which faculty and students conduct their work
- Create new program in digital scholarship
- Raise funds for new endowed chair positions
- Improve conditions for obtaining external grant funding
- Expand resources for research computing and scientific instrumentation

The creation of new knowledge is fundamental to the mission of higher learning and an essential element of high-quality teaching. The best teachers are deeply engaged scholars whose research projects and creative endeavors extend beyond the classroom and the campus. The Connecticut College faculty is unusually productive in this respect, and they bring their passionate engagement back to students in a variety of ways.

The close relationship between faculty and students is a distinctive asset of this community, nowhere more evident than in the rigorous research they pursue with each other. Boosting scholarly research not only advances the reputation of the College, it also creates new opportunities for intensive student engagement. We have already seen the positive impact that the renovation of New London Hall has had on teaching, learning, and research in the life sciences, computer science, and robotics. Through this plan we will build on that success by enhancing the ability of instructors to innovate and excel. New resources for faculty and student research and conference travel, upgraded research facilities, endowed chairs, as well as research computing and digital scholarship will enrich the environment for intensive intellectual collaboration.

## Goal 3: Arts

Advance the College's distinction in the creative and performing arts.

### OBJECTIVES

- Attain national leadership in collaborative arts practice oriented toward social change
- Enhance facilities and technology to match the excellence of the College's programs
- Develop academic offerings based on signature programs and centers
- Leverage artistic resources along the Northeast corridor

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Renew Palmer Auditorium and other spaces for the arts as part of campus master plan
- Establish robust artist-in-residence program
- Build new partnerships with nationally known arts institutions
- Expand the mission and program of the Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology
- Cultivate internships with distinguished alumni
- Create new summer arts initiatives to promote excellence
- Explore feasibility of master's in digital arts
- Bolster campus connections to Lyman Allyn Art Museum

The future of innovation in every field will depend increasingly on students whose intellectual development includes research in the arts. Students who practice design thinking learn to find and to solve problems in creative and experimental ways. The arts offer a powerful platform for experimental practice, as well as a vehicle for advancing social change. Connecticut College has a long history of excellence in both. As the original home of the American Dance Festival, a founding partner of the Eugene O'Neill Center's National Theater Institute, and the site of a widely recognized biennial symposium on arts and technology, the College has acknowledged the centrality of the arts for most of its 100-year history.

We enjoy the benefits of a full suite of programs in dance, theater, music, and visual arts along with a professional performance series, but our uniqueness and originality are most evident in the integrative work produced through artistic collaborations across departments. The path-breaking experiments of the Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology have opened new vistas for research at the intersection of computer science and every arts discipline. Through this plan we will strive to build on the College's historical legacy, and advance our distinction, by redefining the role of the arts in the liberal arts.



## 2 *Enriching the Student Experience*

The next priority of Connecticut College's strategic plan builds on the previous one. To achieve greater distinction and integration of student learning, we will commit to creating experiences outside of the classroom that extend intellectual enrichment, build a stronger sense of community, and prepare students for meaningful lives and careers.

### **Goal 1: Life and Career**

**Cultivate the talents of all students to lead lives of meaning and purpose.**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- *Establish the premier liberal arts career program in the country*
- *Increase access to high-quality internships and other career-enhancing experiences*
- *Educate students about the relationship between health, well-being, and success*

#### **SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

- Establish task force on careers to evaluate the state of advising for life after college
- Take steps to relocate career office to central campus
- Expand expertise in emerging fields in technology and business
- Fully integrate career education into four-year curricular and advising structure
- Create new career modules for academic courses across the curriculum
- Tap alumni and parent network for competitive paid internships
- Increase resources for summer internships
- Make Connecticut College a critical stop for recruiters in key industries
- Establish job-shadowing program during winter and spring breaks
- Develop an intensive summer career workshop for students on campus and beyond
- Integrate new programs related to well-being into career education and across the co-curriculum

The nature of careers is changing dramatically in the 21st century, reflected in new patterns of living and working in which flexibility, adaptability, and resiliency are paramount. Career education fulfills our mission of the liberal arts in action not just by enhancing the ability of students to apply learning to different situations

but also by developing their capacities to deal with intergenerational and cultural difference.

While Connecticut College's exemplary career program is already a distinctive feature of our educational culture, it requires continual renewal to remain relevant. The College's new curriculum, Connections, envisions educational pathways that require new kinds of career support. Our graduates are entering a workforce dominated by new technologies. The strategic plan thus calls for a significant strengthening of our approach: expanding staff expertise in business, entrepreneurship, and technology; situating career advising within the four-year curriculum; bringing the career office itself to central campus. Through innovations in teaching, advising, off-campus learning, and personal support, we will produce superior outcomes and better prepare our graduates for lives of professional achievement, personal balance, and fulfillment.

### **Goal 2: Campus Living**

**Stimulate a more vibrant, four-year residential living and learning experience.**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- *Implement phased strategy for upgrading campus housing*
- *Redesign campus social spaces to facilitate greater contact among students, faculty, and staff*
- *Expand high-quality social activity, leadership, and mentoring opportunities across four years*
- *Increase student engagement with New London and the surrounding regions*

#### **SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

- Renovate and expand the College Center at Crozier-Williams
- Develop comprehensive initiative for intergroup dialogue and leadership
- Increase permanent funding for student clubs and organizations

- Establish robust weekly, monthly, and annual roster of student activities
- Advance plan for improving residence halls as part of campus master plan
- Explore new options for apartment-style living
- Continue expanding spaces and programs that enhance the first-year residential experience
- Develop centralized transportation system to support intellectual, social, and community engagement beyond the campus

Connecticut College’s commitment to active and engaged learning through its mission implies an ongoing responsibility to promote student learning and leadership outside the classroom. Opportunities for engagement of all kinds — both in activities and in residences — help students not only find their place at college but also, and more importantly, model their relationships to society and the world.

The residential experience has been an area of historic underinvestment at Connecticut College. Through this plan we will provide more vibrant living and learning opportunities that enable our students to engage passionately and creatively with their education. Through new and upgraded living spaces, new organizations, and new programs for student leadership, we will seek to create a residential environment that matches the quality and engagement of our academic programs.

An important aspect of this priority, related to another historical legacy, is our connection to the local community. The College’s founding in 1911 was supported by the citizens of New London as well as by local benefactors who donated land and helped establish the first endowment. The relationship has continued to develop over the years, even as highway and urban development appear to have increased the physical and metaphorical barriers between our campus and the city. Building on the strength of this ongoing partnership, we will seek to expand the ways in which students can engage with and contribute to the city’s many social, cultural, and educational resources.

### **Goal 3: Athletics**

**Heighten the competitiveness, success, and integration of the College’s athletics programs.**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- *Make strategic investments in infrastructure and operating support for varsity athletics*

- *Develop club, intramural, and recreational programs for everyone*
- *Strengthen connections among athletics, academics, and the co-curriculum*

#### **SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

- Develop plan for upgrading athletics facilities as part of campus master plan
- Establish task force on athletics to evaluate team staffing, funding, and performance
- Employ new assessment methods to review program effectiveness
- Provide enhanced professional development for coaches
- Expand Camel Athletics Club to increase engagement of alumni athletes
- Augment funding and oversight of club and recreational sports
- Connect athletes to new initiatives in intergroup dialogue and leadership

Athletics offers another important avenue for student leadership and engagement. As a member of the elite cohort of the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), Connecticut College has recruited students of promise and supported them with dedicated coaches and facilities. Camel athletes have set new standards of citizenship for NESCAC through their involvement in a variety of social causes. To enhance the health and well-being of all students, we will create more opportunities for students to engage in athletic endeavors through a comprehensive club sports program, intramural program, and recreational program. We will also seek to forge stronger connections between varsity athletics and the campus through new investments that increase our competitiveness, lift school spirit, and heighten campus, community, and alumni pride.



## 3 Supporting a Diverse, Just, and Sustainable Community

The culminating priority of the strategic plan builds on the previous two through a vision that both acknowledges pressing needs and speaks to longstanding values of the institution. To enable a truly just and sustainable institution, we will commit to policies and practices that ensure equity, protect precious resources, and enable all people to flourish in their lives at the College.

### Goal 1: Full Participation

**Empower an increasingly diverse community of students, faculty, and staff to thrive in their work and contribute to the flourishing of others.**

#### OBJECTIVES

- *Develop new policies and programs in support of full participation*
- *Enhance resources to enroll and retain students from historically underrepresented groups*
- *Support and retain an increasing number of faculty and staff of color*
- *Foster a culture of respect and recognition for all employees*
- *Improve the accessibility and safety of the campus*

#### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Develop comprehensive initiative for intergroup dialogue and leadership
- Establish new programs for development and recognition of staff excellence
- Assess and eliminate structural barriers for student success
- Leverage financial aid to expand the socioeconomic diversity of the student body
- Revise policies for opportunity hiring to assist with diversity goals
- Address systemic and cultural impediments to retaining international and domestic faculty and staff of color
- Increase endowed resources for the Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity and relocate the Center to central campus
- Enhance support for, visibility of, and connections among campus centers and programs focused on identity and inclusion
- Expand staffing and programming to promote inclusive pedagogies across the curriculum
- Develop new resources to support departments in their work toward full participation
- Clarify curricular requirement for learning about social difference

- Launch pre-orientation programs to boost student success
- Improve dining options to include halal and kosher food
- Generate near- and long-term accessibility plans in conjunction with campus master plan
- Explore the possibility of a second, accessible pedestrian bridge

From its founding at the turn of the 20th century as the only college in the state dedicated to providing higher education for women, Connecticut College has embraced the principles of equity and inclusion as part of its distinctive moral framework and sense of obligation. What defined us during our first century will be amplified in the next, through a new commitment to full participation. According to Sturm's formulation, full participation is an "affirmative value," a way of redefining institutional structures in order to make it possible for all people to thrive and contribute.<sup>3</sup> This value, which is central to the new curriculum, has deeper roots in the impressive teaching and scholarship undertaken over the past decade at the College's Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity, a unique resource for a liberal arts college.

We will build on this distinctive legacy by expanding the Center's intellectual reach and also by strengthening and clarifying its intersection with the work of other important campus centers and programs focused on the exploration of identity and difference. New opportunities for staff and faculty development and a new initiative on intergroup dialogue are among the proposals that will help ensure the College's ongoing leadership. Increasing the proportion of students, faculty, and staff of color will not be a precondition but rather a consequence of providing such resources. The College commits to reducing structural barriers and supporting a campus environment that understands difference, engenders productive debate, and provides equitable access to resources for all members of the community.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1.

## Goal 2: Sustainability

Become a beacon of sustainability through careful stewardship of the College's physical, natural, and human resources.

### OBJECTIVES

- *Solidify the institutional commitment to environmentally responsible and socially just practices*
- *Establish principles to guide future campus development reflective of College values*
- *Leverage the natural assets of campus and region to advance the College's priorities*
- *Improve decision-making, conserve resources, and enhance outcomes through the use of new analytical tools*

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Undertake a campus-wide master planning process
- Take steps to heighten the College's national profile on sustainability
- Redouble efforts to spread sustainability across the curriculum
- Expand revolving fund for resource efficiency
- Enhance capacity of arboretum as a vehicle for teaching and research in the natural sciences
- Open campus access to the Thames River for scholarship and recreation
- Explore potential to develop a sustainable food initiative based on local assets
- Consider developing a sustainable residential facility as part of master planning effort
- Execute space-utilization study to inform capital planning
- Audit administrative structures to ensure efficient and maximal use of talent

At Connecticut College, the definition of sustainability is grounded in our legacy of social responsibility, scholarly activism, and environmental stewardship. Sustainability is a framework for discovering economically sound, socially just, and environmentally favorable solutions to local and global challenges. In a time of inequitable access to opportunity and threats to our natural, human, and financial resources, we commit to making choices that improve the living, learning, and working conditions of our campus community and to protecting and making the best use of our environmental assets — from our arboretum campus to our location overlooking Long Island Sound. These are matters of great personal importance to many of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Through this commitment we will seek to strengthen our national profile as a sustainable institution while also stewarding the College's resources for future generations.

## Goal 3: Financial Strength

Protect and grow the College's financial resources.

### OBJECTIVES

- *Double the size of the College's endowment*
- *Strategically deploy operating resources to ensure strong enrollments*
- *Explore new programming to diversify revenue streams*
- *Strengthen and expand philanthropic support for College priorities*

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Plan and launch a capital campaign in support of the strategic plan
- Fortify annual giving and gifts to endowment
- Increase alumni engagement and participation
- Develop a long-term budget addressing capital improvements and deferred maintenance
- Create revenue-generating initiatives that take advantage of the campus in summer
- Seek collaborative partnerships to improve operations and achieve efficiencies
- Explore new ways to make a Connecticut College education affordable

An essential dimension of the sustainability of any institution is prudent fiscal management. The emphasis on realistic budgeting practices, especially in the past decade, has left the College in comparatively good financial health. Pressures of our tuition-based model will, however, become more evident in the coming years, requiring new strategies to diversify revenues and make a Connecticut College education more affordable. To address these challenges, we will seek ways to increase philanthropic support, develop potential new revenue streams, and bolster the College's endowment.



## ■ CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The purpose of this plan is twofold: to articulate a strategy that will guide decisions and actions over the next decade, and, through that strategy, to advance the distinction of Connecticut College, improve its standing, and steward it toward a successful future. By necessity, this plan will evolve over time. It is meant to offer a long-range view of our institutional work, and thereby to focus the operations of the College, by guiding immediate and long-range budgeting and planning in many different divisions. It is also meant to serve as the basis for a more focused table of needs in a future capital campaign. The full, 10-year cost projections are now being developed.

Equally significant to the operational value of this plan

is its cultural value in setting the sights of the whole community. Strategic planning is a critical, institutional act of taking stock, where students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, trustees, parents, and friends collectively step back to reflect on strengths, weigh challenges, and propose improvements for the future.

This collective work draws on the spirit of collaboration and shared governance that defines the special character of our College. In that spirit, we conclude by expressing gratitude to the many members of our extended community who gave time and thought over the past year to shape the ideas in this plan, especially the 37 people named below whose extraordinary efforts made this document possible.



## Strategic Planning Committee

FALL AND SPRING 2015-16

**Chad Jones**, associate professor and chair of botany  
(*co-chair*)

**Abigail Van Slyck**, dean of the faculty and Dayton  
Professor of Art History (*co-chair*)

**Mary Calarese**, director of financial planning\*

**Paulina Castillo**, department of Dining Services

**Michelle Dunlap**, professor and chair of human  
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**Noel Garrett**, dean of academic support and director  
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**John Nugent**, director of institutional research and  
planning\*

**Chris Penniman**, director of instructional  
technology\*

**Darryl Phillips**, associate professor and chair of  
classics\*

**Ken Prestininzi**, associate professor of theater

**Rob Richter**, director of arts programming

**Anne Rochette**, supervisor, department of Facilities  
Management

**Jake Varsano '18**

\* *also served on summer Implementation Planning Group*

## Implementation Planning Group

SUMMER 2016

**Rich Madonna**, vice president for finance and  
administration (*chair*)

**Victor Arcelus**, dean of students

**Mary Calarese**, director of financial planning\*\*

**Christine Chung**, Jean C. Tempel '65 Associate  
Professor of Computer Science

**Jeffrey Cole**, associate dean of the faculty and  
professor of anthropology

**Jane Dawson**, Virginia Eason Weinmann '51  
Professor of Government and Environmental  
Studies and director of the Goodwin-Niering  
Center for the Environment

**Jennifer Fredricks**, professor of human development  
and director of the Holleran Center for  
Community Action and Public Policy

**Noel Garrett**, dean of academic support and director  
of the Academic Resource Center\*\*

**David Jaffe**, professor and chair of theater

**John McKnight**, dean of institutional equity and  
inclusion

**Chris Penniman**, director of instructional  
technology\*\*

**Darryl Phillips**, associate professor and chair of  
classics\*\*

**Fran Shields**, Katherine Wenk Christoffers '45  
Director of Athletics and chair of physical  
education

**John Nugent**, director of institutional research and  
planning\*\*

**Lisa Lombardo**, senior assistant to the vice president  
for finance and administration (staff)

\*\* *also served on Strategic Planning Committee*

## Working Group on Resource Implications for Connections

SUMMER 2016

**Jefferson Singer**, dean of the College and Faulk  
Foundation Professor of Psychology (*co-convenor*)

**Abigail Van Slyck**, dean of the faculty and Dayton  
Professor of Art History (*co-convenor*)\*\*\*

**Cheryl Banker**, senior associate director, Office of  
Career and Professional Development

**Mary Calarese**, director of financial planning\*\*\*

**David Chavanne**, assistant professor of economics

**Jeffrey Cole**, associate dean of the faculty and  
professor of anthropology\*\*\*

**Makayla Grays**, assistant director of institutional  
research and planning

**Christopher Hammond**, associate professor of  
mathematics and associate dean of the College for  
curriculum

**David Jaffe**, professor and chair of theater\*\*\*

**Marie Lalor**, associate director of residential education  
and living

**Nancy Lewandowski**, departmental assistant,  
sociology

**Sabrina Notarfrancisco**, assistant professor of theater

**John Nugent**, director of institutional research and  
planning\*\*\*

**Beth Rezendes**, associate registrar for operations

**Catherine Stock**, Barbara Zaccheo Kohn '72  
Professor of History and director, American  
Studies Program

\*\*\* *also served on Strategic Planning Committee and/or  
summer Implementation Planning Group*

## Strategic Plan Methodology

*Building on Strength* represents the culmination of a yearlong planning process commenced in fall 2015 and completed in fall 2016. The process was overseen by the planning groups named in the previous pages, and supported by the services of several consultants from Keeling & Associates.

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and Keeling & Associates (K&A) together used multiple methods for gathering the observations, ideas, and suggestions of the Connecticut College community. Between September and January 2015, they helped facilitate more than 100 individual and small-group discussions on and off campus with nearly 450 faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Almost 1,200 comments were collected from four idea walls posted on campus. Well over 2,200 people in the extended community responded to our confidential online survey. Further ideas were collected from four open forums on campus, attended by almost 90 faculty, staff, and students.

During the spring 2016 semester, the SPC commenced the second phase, oriented around analysis and synthesis of the data gathered in the fall. In early January 2016, K&A delivered comprehensive reports summarizing the results from the fall's information gathering. Additional small- and large-group meetings were held with campus constituents and trustees to solicit feedback on the priorities that emerged. In March 2016, the SPC and K&A came together with senior management in a retreat to reach consensus about overarching priorities, goals, and objectives. During April and May 2016, K&A worked with the committee to begin drafting the plan rationale, and members of the administration met individually with committee members to review and refine the goals. In early May, the SPC convened additional open forums to review the draft plan and consider additional community feedback.



During the final phase of the process, in summer 2016, the president appointed two more groups to clarify the actions necessary to achieve the plan's goals and to begin reviewing the resource implications. One considered the plan as a whole; the other focused on the new curriculum. Both contained members who had served on the SPC. The Implementation Planning Group (IPG), working with K&A, drew on the detailed community feedback provided during the fall and spring phases of the planning process to determine appropriate action steps for each goal, reaching out to others in the community to refine and clarify ideas. Specific proposals were identified with estimated costs, time lines, responsible parties, and metrics for assessment. These details are available for consultation in a set of spreadsheets that will be regularly updated as actions are undertaken.

The IPG submitted its recommendations to the president for review at the end of its work. Previous drafts of the strategic plan were then synthesized with the output of the summer working groups to produce the present document. The successful implementation of this plan will depend on the continued collaboration of multiple leaders and groups across campus.



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