Dear Members of the Campus Community,

Today we convene on Tempel Green to mark the beginning of the academic year at the College’s 103rd Convocation. I invite all of you—students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends—to join me as we welcome 469 new students, 13 new faculty members, and 18 new staff members to the Connecticut College community. The traditional ceremony begins at 4:30 p.m. and features a keynote address by Professor Anne Bernhard, “Humpback Whales, Bacteria, and the Liberal Arts,” followed by a public renewal of our commitment to the Connecticut College Honor Code. An all-campus picnic follows on the Horizon House lawn. I look forward to seeing you there.

And yet even as we look forward to this celebration, I do not want to forget the tragic events in Charlottesville earlier this month, nor fail to acknowledge the sobering frame they provide for our work in the coming year. The deadly violence, driven by racial and religious intolerance, reveals the tenaciousness of hatred and bigotry in this country and just how unfinished the business of justice and equality really is. I ask that we use the convocation, and our recommittal to the Honor Code, as an opportunity to reflect even more deeply on our mission and values, and on the collective and urgent responsibility we have to live those values in everything we do, in order to model on this campus the truth and integrity that we wish for the wider world.

**Educational integrity**

Such integrity extends to our educational programs. Central to the priorities of our strategic plan, Building on Strength, is the ideal of full participation and a commitment to an environment that will allow all people to thrive, reach their full potential, and contribute to the flourishing of others. In keeping with this commitment in 2017-18, the College welcomes Paul Gorski as the Mellon Distinguished Fellow for Equity Pedagogy. An associate professor of integrative studies at George Mason University and the founder of EdChange, Gorski will work with the faculty and administration at Connecticut College during the fall and spring semester to advance the work of full participation in the classroom. His focus will be on equity literacy in both faculty development and long-term curricular planning. He will hold his first open meeting with faculty tomorrow, Tuesday, Aug. 29, in Hood Dining Room from 4-5:30 p.m.

The College’s work on integrative education will continue to advance this year, as the class of 2021 becomes the second class to participate in Connections. You will have noticed new banners announcing Connections along Cro Boulevard, a new presentation on our website, and a wonderful new video featuring three of our faculty explaining the program’s benefits. In the coming days, you will also be receiving a copy of the Connectionary, a how-to guide for the Connections program. These materials were developed not only for prospective students and their families but also for current students to navigate their Conn experience. Meanwhile, the
College’s work reinventing the liberal arts continues to draw notice. Over the summer, Connections was featured on the Forbes podcast *The Limit Does Not Exist*, as well as on the nationally syndicated radio program *The Best of Our Knowledge*.

**Campus Integrity**
Developing the intellectual, social, professional, and civic responsibility of our students requires thoughtful campus planning to integrate the best aspects of the academic and residential experience. In this vein, the major project completed by the Facilities Management team during the summer months was an enhancement of Hamilton Hall. Single rooms on all three floors were converted to two-room doubles, with new common rooms on each floor, resulting in a more comfortable and inviting space, enhanced by natural light. The renovated space represents the College’s first residence dedicated entirely to first-year living. Other summer projects included the revitalization of our athletic fields, the updating of our wireless systems, and the reconfiguration of our dining services, including new and expanded menus.

Key to maintaining campus integrity is a thoughtful campus master plan. Because the last such plan for Connecticut College was completed two decades ago, we are now engaged in the next iteration. A steering committee of students, faculty, and staff, led by Rich Madonna, vice president for finance and administration, and Trina Learned, director of facilities management and campus planning, launched the process in August with the help of Sasaki Associates. The new campus master plan will outline potential building projects for the next 20 years. The committee will be seeking your input during the coming semester. Among the first projects to be completed will be the Otto and Fran Walter Commons for Global Study and Engagement, a vibrant new center for integrative learning on the ground floor of Blaustein Humanities Center. Construction is slated to begin in October.

**Institutional Integrity: 10-Year Reaccreditation**
Every 10 years, all colleges and universities in New England must undergo reaccreditation by our regional accrediting body, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Connecticut College’s last reaccreditation took place in 2007, and so we are now in the process of preparing the self-study that will be used as the basis for NEASC’s work in the spring. A draft of the self-study will be shared with the campus community later in the fall for review and comment, along with a website to keep you informed of progress.

**Other news**
The College received several pieces of good news over the summer. It was another record year for the Connecticut College Fund, which reached $6 million for the first time in College history. More than 6,200 donors helped increase alumni participation for the third consecutive year, to more than 36 percent. In postseason athletic success, our women’s swim team earned the No. 1 spot for GPA (3.78) for all of Division III; Valerie Urban ’17 was NESCAC’s nominee for NCAA Woman of the Year; and Mike Clougher ’15 won the bid to represent the U.S. in the 2017 World Rowing Championship. And in our career program, the Princeton Review named Conn
No. 4 in the nation among the best schools for internships.

Finally, we will celebrate a significant milestone in the life of Connecticut College in May 2018 with our 100th Commencement. As we approach this centennial event, I look forward to reflecting with you on what we have accomplished together and to building on those successes in the next century.

Yours,

Katherine Bergeron