Dear Members of the Connecticut College Community,

The Connecticut College Board of Trustees convened for its spring meeting this past weekend. I am writing with a summary of the major topics discussed and actions taken.

**Athletics, Career Education, and Financial Strength**

The plenary session on Friday morning continued the conversation begun during the February Board meeting on three goals of the strategic plan: achieving financial sustainability, enhancing athletics, and heightening the distinction of our career program.

Richard Madonna, vice president for finance and administration, reported on the budget for fiscal year 2018 and discussed the College's plan for building financial strength in the context of a challenging enrollment landscape. Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Andrew Strickler provided a preliminary analysis of the College's new financial aid strategy and gave an update on the Class of 2021. Discussions of the College's budget continued in the trustee-faculty liaison committee, where faculty shared their concerns and expressed interest in becoming more involved with the Board.

The plenary session went on to consider recommendations provided by the task force on athletics. Dean of the Faculty Abby Van Slyck discussed the importance of athletics and the role that varsity and club sports often play in students' enrollment decisions. The report highlighted opportunities to increase competitiveness, improve facilities, and develop stronger synergies between academic and athletic experience. A standing committee of trustees, faculty, coaches, and students will be established to carry on this work in the coming year in order to advance the College's priorities around athletics. Dean of the College Jefferson Singer outlined efforts to enhance the College's career program, including a new organizational structure designed to strengthen employer relations, on-campus recruiting, and alumni participation. He also highlighted a new initiative in "career-oriented learning" that brings alumni professionals into specific courses to engage students in real-world problem solving. The initiative, which was tested this semester in an introductory environmental studies course, will expand to six courses next year.

**Student Experience**

The Board discussed ongoing efforts to enrich the student experience, including plans to expand three floors in Hamilton to first-year housing as well as the steps taken in 2016-17 to create a more vibrant social experience on campus. Geoff Norbert, assistant dean for student engagement and new student programs, highlighted a 45-percent increase in social programming and a successful pilot for an upgraded transportation program that provides vehicles to members of the campus community.

Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion John McKnight discussed the restructuring of his division, which will promote greater coordination and collaboration among the affinity-based student centers and offer new leadership opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students.
Capital Projects
Work on a new Master Plan for the College is underway, including the selection of an architectural firm that will work with students, faculty, and staff on this effort over the next eight months. Projects slated for the summer include the creation of three first-year floors in Hamilton; roof replacements on several buildings; upgraded wireless environment for the residence halls; and renovation of the lower floor of Blaustein Humanities Center for the new Global Commons. The trustees also discussed a preliminary renovation concept for Crozier-Williams and urged the administration to move quickly toward architect selection and the next phases of design.

Budget
The Board approved a cash-operating budget for FY18 of $105.9 million, which includes a provision for $40 million in financial aid, an increase of $3 million over the prior year. Also included is a provision for up-to-2 percent increases for both faculty and staff in January 2018. A 3.75 percent increase in tuition and fees was also approved, bringing the comprehensive fee to $67,440 for the 2017-18 academic year.

Fundraising
The trustees acknowledged several significant gifts. For the Global Commons, three new commitments: $750,000 from The Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, $175,000 from The George I. Alden Trust, and $500,000 from a generous alumna. A $237,000 gift from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will support Associate Professor of History and Director of the Global Islamic Studies Program Eileen Kane's research fellowship at Brown University next year. The Advancement Committee also discussed the progress of the Connecticut College Fund, which currently sits at $5.3 million, or 86% of our $6.2 million goal.

Appointments, promotions, and departures
Three promotions to full professor and eight promotions to associate professor with tenure were approved by the Board effective July 1, 2017. Promoted to full professor were Mohamed Diagne (Physics), Andrea Lanoux (Slavic Studies), and Margaret Thomas (Music). Promoted to associate professor with tenure were Terry-Ann Craigie (Economics), Karen Gonzalez Rice (Art History), Karolin Machtans (German Studies), Ross Morin (Film Studies), Sabrina Notarfrancisco (Theater), Caroleen Sayej (Government/IR), Tanya Schneider (Chemistry), and Mark Seto (Music). In addition, Associate Professor Kenneth Prestininzi (Theater) was tenured, while Petko Ivanov (Slavic Studies) and Frida Morelli (Italian Studies) were promoted to Senior Lecturer.

Three new trustees will join the Board on July 1: Peter Skaperdas P'17, Cynthia "Cici" Kossman Wilkinson '84 P'19, and Maurice Tiner '17. Four trustees were reappointed for a second, four-year term: Martha Joynt Kumar '63, Laurie Norton Moffatt '78, Sharis A. Pozen '86 P'19, and Timothy E. Yarboro '75. And two trustees—David H. Palten '76 P'04 '09 and Blake Michael E. Reilly '14—were honored for their distinctive contributions and service.
Other Business
Winners of this year's faculty awards and the Presidential Staff Recognition Awards joined trustees for lunch on Friday, along with the seniors who have received Fulbright fellowships and those who were nominated for the Anna Lord Strauss Medal and the Oakes and Louise Ames Prize.

The conclusion of the weekend couldn't have been more perfect as we celebrated the College's 99th commencement exercises on a spectacular day on Tempel Green. The ceremony included a memorable commencement address from Pulitzer-prize winning author Colson Whitehead.

My best wishes to all for a restful and productive summer.

Yours,

Katherine Bergeron