



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Katherine Bergeron
President

October 17, 2014

Dear Parents,

The glory of the autumn is now upon us, and I am still relishing the experience of my first Fall Weekend as president. I know a number of you were on campus for that event, attending seminars, showing your Camel pride at the athletic contests, picking up something uniquely Conn at Harvestfest and, of course, spending time with your daughters and sons. It was great for me to be able to meet so many of you and to sense the remarkable spirit that defines the CC family.

I have spent my first eight months meeting with students, faculty, and staff in order to listen and to learn as much as possible. One of the things I have come to see — and deeply admire — is the seriousness of the educational mission of Connecticut College. This is a place where learning is taken very, very seriously. Whenever I ask students about the best aspects of their time here, they are quick to point to two things: their classes and their professors. And it's no wonder. Our faculty are the best kind of teacher-scholars: as passionate about the art and craft of their teaching as they are about engaging students in their own research and creative work. For this reason, you'll find that they are also very accessible.

Please keep this fact in mind as we reach the mid-point in the semester, when the demands of college work tend to increase. For new students, especially, the first months in school can be unsettling. Whatever your students might be experiencing, you can do a lot of good by reminding them of the many resources available to them. We want your sons and daughters to develop a sense of independence and individual responsibility — and that means learning to ask for help. The Academic Resource Center, Math Center, Writing Center and career office are good places to start. Professors, academic advisers, and academic deans are also here to listen, answer questions, and offer advice. If you would like to speak about any aspect of your child's college experience, simply call the Dean of Studies office (860-439-2050) and you will be put in touch with an appropriate person.

Let me mention a few other things we are doing to improve the lives of your students. The first, and most visible, is the \$9.9 million renovation of the Charles E. Shain Library that began in June. This restoration is actually a transformation, which will bring more technology, more collaborative study space, and more natural light into the 40-year-old structure. You can follow the progress at www.conncoll.edu/shainreno.

Along with this architectural rebuilding is an even more exciting project — a renovation of our curriculum — that is now in full swing. The faculty has been working on a new,



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four-year plan with a strengthened first-year foundation; a more intentional sophomore year in which students map out their future course of study; a junior year during which they engage with the world beyond campus; and a senior year that puts it all together in an integrative project. They are calling the project “ReVision” and they expect to finalize the requirements before the end of the year.

Finally, to complement the revised academic program, we have been rethinking our career program. You may have seen the editorial in *The New York Times* on Labor Day that called out the excellence of career training at Connecticut College. *The Princeton Review* also named the College among the top 20 schools for career advising in North America — the only liberal arts college in New England on the list. We are very proud of what we have been able to achieve but, in the current climate, we cannot afford to be complacent. In the summer, I convened a working group to discuss the future of career training at Connecticut College, and the group has recommended a number of enhancements, including a wider range of internships, networking opportunities, and workshops for students and alums. It is an ambitious agenda that, combined with the curricular ReVision, speaks directly to the College’s mission of “putting the liberal arts into action.” I look forward to telling you more as the year unfolds.

In January, I will be completing my first full year as president — a year that has been characterized, as I said, by much listening and learning. Later this spring, I want to put that new knowledge into action by launching an inclusive strategic planning process that will chart the College’s course for the next decade. I have already heard many wonderful ideas from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents that are likely to shape future priorities and goals. You can be sure I will be reaching out to you again.

In the meantime, I want to thank you for supporting your daughters and sons at Connecticut College. It is a special place. I hope they are taking full advantage of this campus and enjoying, as I do, every moment of their learning. I am so glad to have you as part of our community.

Yours,

Katherine Bergeron