

President Lee Higdon reflects on his first year

› **WRITE THIS** as my wife Ann and I mark our first year as official members of the Connecticut College community. And what a year it's been!

New presidents must engage in learning the institution, intimately. There's just no substitute for face time. Throughout my first year here, I have entertained faculty and staff in my home, visited every residence hall, dropped in on nearly every campus office, attended classes and performances and cheered for Camel athletes in a wide range of sports.

I continue to log many miles getting to know you, the institution's alumni, parents and other friends. Again, I believe visibility is essential in building relationships.

By getting to know as many people as I can — both on campus and off — I've gained a deep understanding of the issues and culture here which has enabled me to work with people throughout our community and, importantly, prioritize our strategic plan.

You'll hear more about the College's strategic priorities over the coming months as we transform the document created earlier this year and approved by the trustees in May — and from which we have been working — into something we can publish and share with the broader community.

Until then, look for news about many of our strategic priorities — new programs, excellence and diversity in people, reputation building and communications, facilities and campus, and resources and efficiencies — in this magazine, in the alumni and parent newsletters and on the College's Web site.

I was pleased to meet so many of you during Reunion 2007 in June, a phenomenal gathering that drew a record number of alumni and their spouses, partners and children to the campus. During the

Alumni Convocation, I shared some of our successes of the past year and aspirations for the future. The excitement and pride were palpable.

One very significant indication of the College's positive momentum I am delighted to tell you about is the four separate, seven-figure gifts to the College we recently received. These gifts include \$1 million for financial aid, \$1 million for classroom renovations, \$3 million to fund faculty and student-faculty research and another \$1 million unrestricted gift. These gifts help us take great strides toward our goals of broadening access to the College, upgrading our classrooms, and supporting faculty scholarship and student-faculty research — key strengths of the College.

When we announced some of these generous gifts at Reunion, the rousing applause echoed the deep appreciation I feel for those who are supporting the College in such a meaningful way.

Alumni, parents, faculty, staff and other friends of the College also helped us achieve strong 2006-2007 fundraising results, fueled by an increase in alumni participation and record-breaking annual giving. The financial support and increase in participation clearly indicate what we've always known: that our extended community understands the value of a Connecticut College education and wants to support the College as its students and alumni continue to impact the world.

Reunion also helped us launch our new Alumni Online Community, an interactive feature of the College's new Web site that enables alumni to connect with the College — and with each other — to share professional and personal interests, post and read class notes and create personal profiles for other CC alumni to visit.



I hope alumni, families and friends are planning to join us in New London for Fall Weekend '07, Sept. 28-30. Highlights will include CONN-courses and mini-classes, athletic games, alumni gatherings, Harvestfest, panel discussions, top-notch speakers, campus tours and much more. Please visit fallweekend.conncoll.edu for a schedule.

As we approach Fall Weekend '07, I can't help but think back to last year's Fall Weekend and the wonderful College community celebration marking my inauguration as the 10th President. So much has happened over this first year, and we have so many exciting achievements ahead. Thank you all for being an integral part of our continued success.