



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE



Building on Strength:

A NEW PLAN FOR CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

FINAL REPORT ON PROGRESS | 2024-2026



Introduction

This report covers the final two years of *Building on Strength: A New Plan for Connecticut College*, concluding the College's 10-year strategic plan launched in 2016. Over the past decade, the plan has provided a framework for strengthening Connecticut College's academic programs, enriching the student experience, investing in campus facilities, advancing sustainability, and supporting the long-term financial health of the institution.

During 2024–25 and 2025–26, the College completed several major capital projects, expanded opportunities for student learning and engagement, secured significant external funding for faculty research, strengthened career development programs, and continued to invest in the campus community. Philanthropic support remained strong, providing critical resources for scholarships, academic programs, facilities, and other institutional priorities.

Enhancing Academic Distinction

Connecticut College has continued to strengthen its distinctive liberal arts education by building on the interdisciplinary foundation established through *Building on Strength*. Over the past two years, the College enhanced the Connections curriculum, expanded opportunities for global and community engagement, supported faculty and student research, and reinforced its commitment to collaborative teaching, creative scholarship, and the arts. These efforts reflect the College's continued investment in preparing students to address complex global challenges through intellectual curiosity, experiential learning, and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Goal 1. Education

A. THE CONNECTIONS CURRICULUM

The Connections curriculum remained the cornerstone of the Connecticut College academic experience in 2024-26.

- Developed a data dashboard in collaboration with the Dean of the Faculty's office and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning to inform faculty and staff deliberations about its operations and outcomes.
- Continued the All-College Symposium as a thriving part of the fall curriculum, showcasing student integrative work across pathways. Assessment of student presentations has been conducted since the first ACS to gauge how well students are demonstrating integrative learning.
- Created the First-Year Experience Committee to coordinate pilots spanning advising reform, introductory and language course design, and the College's writing requirement.
- Piloted a new initiative, in collaboration with the Dean of the Faculty's office, Associate Dean of the Faculty Chad Jones, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC), and the newly established First-Year Experience Committee, to deepen faculty involvement in the First-Year Seminar program.

B. INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTERS

Connecticut College's centers for interdisciplinary scholarship continued to anchor the Connections curriculum and enrich campus intellectual life.

- The Ammerman Center for Arts & Technology held its 18th Triennial Symposium on Arts and Technology in March 2026 with the theme "All Too Human," an exploration of how advances in science and technology are reshaping ideas about what it means to be human.
- The Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment held its biennial Lear-Conant Symposium in April 2026, "Sea Level Rise: Measurement, Understanding, Adaptation."
- The Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) office in Blaustein Humanities Center is undergoing a full renovation, with a planned relaunch in Fall 2026.
- In May 2026, the CTL hosted the largest Camp Teach & Learn gathering since the COVID-19 pandemic and introduced new formats for its Talking Teaching programming.
- In 2024-25, the Walter Commons piloted a Faculty Fellow program to enhance faculty-led programming across the curriculum.
- In 2024-25 & 2025-26 the Bessell International Internship program placed students in funded internships in Ghana, Bolivia, and Tanzania, tied directly to the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.
- The faculty-mentored Global Research Grants program was developed and launched in 2024-25 & 2025-26, supporting students pursuing international research, either student-driven independent projects or faculty-driven research assistantships conducted internationally.
- The Walter Commons managed multiple equity-focused grant programs to reduce financial barriers to international experiential learning, including the Global Scholars Fund micro-grants, language study grants, international study and research grants, and supplemental funding for international internships.
- The Walter Commons director and associate director expanded fellowship and global engagement advising through individual appointments, drop-in hours, workshops, and class visits. Both volunteered on national selection committees for the Gilman International Scholarship and the Critical Language Scholarship programs. The office collaborated with the assistant dean of fellowship, advising on outreach and nomination processes.
- The Holleran Center for Community Action & Public Policy continued to lead and expand the Summer Civic Leaders program, securing increased external funding and growing participation to its largest cohort to date, with 20 Connecticut College students completing six-week paid internships at seven New London community organizations in 2026. Since its launch in 2020, 87 students have completed the program, which combines community-based projects, leadership development, and reflective learning to strengthen local nonprofit capacity while preparing students for careers and civic

leadership. The program is supported through generous multi-year funding from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund, the President's Office, the Dean of the College, and the Holleran Center.

- The Holleran Center collaborated with faculty and community partners to engage the campus and local community in pressing social justice issues through programs and events such as the [\[UN\]Freedom](#) and [We Live Here](#) series.
- The Holleran Center partnered with the Center for Housing Opportunity in Eastern Connecticut (CHO) to launch a Housing Justice Speaker Series, bringing students, faculty, staff, and community members together for six lunchtime presentations in the spring and fall of 2024. The series explored issues of housing justice and fostered interdisciplinary dialogue on affordable housing, equity, and public policy through collaboration with community leaders and experts.
- The Holleran Center partnered with Waterford RISE to bring author and activist Tamara Lanier to campus in spring 2026 to share her journey about reclaiming her family's legacy from Harvard University, a story chronicled in her award-nominated memoir, *From These Roots*. The event engaged students, faculty, staff, and community members in meaningful dialogue about racial justice, historical memory, and institutional accountability.
- The Holleran Center supported faculty in integrating community-based learning and community-engaged research into their courses by identifying community

partners and projects, coordinating student placements, providing training and guidance on best practices for community-engaged learning, and administering the Margaret Sheridan Community Learning Grants. Over the past two academic years, the Center supported 42 community-based learning courses, strengthening connections between classroom learning and community engagement.

- The Holleran Center successfully led the adoption of a new Community-Based Learning (CBL) course attribute in the Connecticut College Catalog, providing a formal designation for courses that incorporate community-engaged learning experiences. The new attribute increases the visibility of CBL courses for students, recognizes faculty engaged in community-based teaching, and establishes a framework for tracking, assessing, and strengthening community-engaged learning across the curriculum.
- The Holleran Center launched an annual Holleran Center Showcase in 2025 as a signature event celebrating community-engaged learning, civic leadership, and reciprocal community partnerships. Building on its successful inaugural year, the 2026 Showcase featured PICA scholar presentations, an interactive community engagement fair highlighting Holleran Center programs, student organizations, and community partners, hands-on service activities, and a keynote address by nationally recognized civic engagement leader Chris Soto, bringing together students, faculty, staff, and community members to celebrate the impact of community engagement at Connecticut College.



C. GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

- The percentage of students studying away continued to rebound following a cancellation of all study away programs in 2020-21 due to COVID-19, with 36% of the Class of 2025 studying away and 43% of the Class of 2026 doing so.
- Walter Commons coordinated Short-Term Community Based Global Learning programs in spring '24 (Ghana and Peru), spring '25 (Bolivia), and spring '26 (Ghana).
- Connecticut College hosted visiting scholar Obaid Wardak, a mathematician, through the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Program for politically exiled scholars, spanning AY 2024–25 and 2025–26. Professor Amy Dooling received a \$25,000 grant from IIE's Scholar Rescue Program to support this initiative.
- The Walter Commons director continues to represent the College at the New University in Exile Consortium, of which Connecticut College is a founding member.
- The Global Education in the Liberal Arts (GELA) coalition transitioned to the Community Based Global Learning Collaborative. The Walter Commons director and associate director are active members, contributing best practices in community-based learning to the Collaborative's work and to the ongoing development of Walter Commons experiential programs.
- Connecticut College secured membership in the NASA-funded Connecticut Space Grant Consortium, expanding faculty and student access to research grants, STEM funding and internship opportunities.

D. LOCAL/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- The Holleran Center collaborated and continued to foster long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships with 46 local, community-based organizations and facilitated a variety of community engagement experiences for over 600 students through on-going volunteer, internship and work study placements, classroom community learning experiences, Holleran Center programming such as Enrich, Horizons, Lawrence + Memorial Hospital volunteer program, Camels Vote, K-12 placements, or one-time volunteer opportunities.
- The Holleran Center facilitated and managed 159 Community-based Federal Work Study placements for students and provided approximately 1,500 community engagement shuttle rides for students to volunteer or work at local community partner sites.
- The Holleran Center continued the Enrich Mentor Program, a weekly after-school mentoring initiative that pairs Connecticut College students with New

London public school middle school students to foster social-emotional learning, positive youth development, leadership, and college and career exploration.

- The Holleran Center expanded several programs:
 - Horizons Beyond High School program is now a year-round college and career exploration model that includes a two-week summer institute, after-school mentoring, and Connecticut College credit-bearing courses for New London High School students. The Holleran Center secured multi-year funding for Horizons through grants from the Community Foundation of Eastern CT, Eversource, and Centreville Bank.
 - Lawrence + Memorial Hospital Volunteer Program supports 37 Connecticut College students in volunteer placements that provide meaningful exposure to healthcare careers while strengthening the College's partnership with Lawrence + Memorial Hospital. The Holleran Center enhanced recruitment, advising, and onboarding by implementing individualized advising appointments, orientation sessions, and centralized tracking to help students navigate the hospital's volunteer requirements, while also collaborating with hospital staff to improve the onboarding process and increase student retention.
 - Camels Vote, the Holleran Center's nonpartisan civic engagement initiative, supported a team of student ambassadors who led voter registration, civic education, and democratic engagement efforts through campus programming, educational resources, and partnerships with the League of Women Voters of Southeastern Connecticut and other campus organizations. The Holleran Center also developed Connecticut College's 2026 Campus Election Action Plan, enhancing voter education materials, and creating new resources to support informed civic participation and student voter engagement, and organized and hosted the U.S. House of Representatives 2nd Congressional District debate in October 2024. Connecticut College was recognized in both 2024 and 2026 as one of ALL IN's Most Engaged Campuses for College Student Voting, honoring the College's commitment to advancing nonpartisan democratic engagement and increasing student voter participation.
 - Connecticut College-New London Public Schools partnership coordinated 40-65 individualized student placements each semester across six schools through community-based learning courses, strengthening collaboration with district administrators and Human Resources, and providing ongoing training and support for faculty, teachers, and staff.

- The Holleran Center continued to support and host various student-led charity initiatives that supported the local community and community-based organizations such as Covenant Shelter, New London Homeless Hospitality Center, Safe Futures, Gemma Moran United Way Labor Food Center, Salvation Army, and the New London Public Schools.
- The Holleran Center organized Get to Know New London events to introduce first-year students to the city's resources and culture
- The Holleran Center financially supported college faculty, staff, and student representation at community events such as: Public Library of New London Gala, Salvation Army Red Shield Youth Program fundraiser, Wellbeing New London, CALAHE Scholarship lunch, NAACP Dinner, MLK Jr. Scholarship Dinner, Hispanic Alliance Scholarship breakfast & more
- Holleran Center staff represent the College on local boards and committees such as the New London Community Connections Coalition, IASC, Human Services Network, Center for Housing Opportunity in Eastern CT Executive Committee, Hispanic Alliance Scholarship Committee, and the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) at L&M Hospital
- The Holleran Center continued to recruit volunteers, promote, provide transportation, and subsidize student participation in New London community events such as the Maritime Festival, New London Halloween Town, Hispanic Heritage Festival, New London Food Stroll and We Are New London Parade
- Hosted local community groups and events on campus, including partnerships with New London Public Schools, Drop In Learning Center, Salvation Army, Samaritan House, LLC, college fairs, and annual World Languages Day with the Regional Multicultural Magnet School.
- Co-organized the annual Walk to End Homelessness to benefit the New London Homeless Hospitality Center. In 2026, the walk raised \$52,606 and students, staff and faculty participated on the planning committee and as volunteers and walkers.
- Partnered with New London Public Library on the addition of secure eduroam WiFi connectivity for patrons with credentials from participating institutions.
- The Arboretum created a new more accessible entrance to the Native Plant Collection at the start of the 2025-26 academic year. This new gateway is located directly across the street from 33 Gallows Lane, New London (the former Thames Science Center), which was recently renovated and now houses the Arboretum center for education and research.
- The ArboProject is a student-led organization that provides guided tours to youth in the New London area of the Connecticut College Arboretum. These free tours are led by student guides from Connecticut College and cover a range of topics, including ecology, conservation, environmental science, botany, and more. Over 200 school children visited during the 2025-26 academic year.
- The Arboretum hosted an Arbor Day celebration on the last Saturday in April. This event drew hundreds of people from the College and the Community for activities including tie-dying with natural dyes, touch-a-truck, guided tours, crafts, tree planting demonstration and seedling giveaway.
- The Arboretum in collaboration with the Connecticut Tree Protective Association, the Tree Wardens' Association of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Urban Forest Council hosted Branching Out Together: Partnerships in Urban and Community Forestry Conference held in March 2026 in Cummings and on our campus. The day-long conference attracted a wide audience including urban foresters, arborists, tree wardens, community volunteers and advocates, tree enthusiasts, landscape architects, nursery professionals, students, city planners and engineers.
- The Arboretum continues to partner with New London Trees to increase tree canopy across New London. Working together they received a grant for \$115,000 from DEEP to plant 100 trees. Four students from Connecticut College and four local college students engaged in planting, watering and planning over the course of two summers. One of these students, Paloma Doyle '26, was the recipient of the Watson Fellowship.
- Free, high-speed WiFi (1 gigabit-per-second speeds) is now offered to all Arboretum visitors in high-traffic areas including the Native Plant Collection and Caroline Black Garden.





Goal 2. Research

A. FACULTY AND STUDENT RESEARCH SUPPORT

External grants secured by faculty in fiscal years 2025 and 2026 include:

- Associate Professor of Biology Maria Rosa (\$1,496,250 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the Mamacoke Island Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project)
- Associate Professor of Biology Maria Rosa (\$590,250 from the Connecticut Audubon Society for the Mamacoke Island Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project)
- Associate Professor of Art History and Architectural Studies Anna Vallye (\$500,000 from the Mellon Foundation for the project A Right to Housing)
- Professor of History Eileen Kane (\$500,000 from the MacArthur Foundation for the HBCU Fellowship Program)
- Associate Professor of Biology Mays Imad (grants totaling \$272,911 from the Hewlett Foundation for work toward the creation of a Trauma-Informed Growth Institute at Connecticut College)
- Profs. Stanton Ching, Peter Siver, Rachel Spicer, Taegan McMahon, Maria Rosa, and Anthony Graesch (\$251,418 from the National Science Foundation for Acquisition of a Scanning Electron Microscope for Multidisciplinary Research and Research Training)
- Peter Siver, Charles and Sarah P. Becker '27 Professor Emeritus of Botany and Environmental Studies (\$204,499 from the National Science Foundation for research on silica-bearing freshwater protists)
- Associate Professor of Biology Maria Rosa (\$201,837 from Restore America's Estuaries/EPA for the project Innovations for Eelgrass Restoration in Long Island Sound Using Different Seed Dispersal Methods)
- Associate Professor of Biology Maria Rosa (\$67,616 from Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership for work on eelgrass restoration in Long Island Sound)
- Associate Professor of Biology Maria Rosa (\$56,000 in Congressionally Directed Spending for the project Feasibility Study for Transforming a Wrecked Barge into Usable Marine Habitat Along the Thames River)
- Associate Professor of Government Mara Suttman-Lea (\$48,379 from the MIT Election Data & Science Lab for research on improving public understanding of voter registration practices)
- Professor of Art History Karen Gonzalez Rice (\$46,500 Smithsonian Institution fellowship)
- Kathryn O'Connor, Director of the Connecticut College Child Development Lab School (\$44,287 from the Caplan Foundation for Early Childhood for research on links between playful learning and metacognitive processes)



- Associate Professor of Biology Maria Rosa (\$40,000 from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut for co-restoration of key invertebrate species associated with eelgrass meadows)
- Assistant Professor of Classics Brett Evans (\$39,137 from the Loeb Classical Library Foundation)
- Assistant Professor of History Matt Swagler (\$30,000 Associated Kyoto Program Visiting Faculty Fellowship)
- Professor of Chinese Amy Dooling (\$25,000 from Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Program)
- Professor of History Sarah Queen (\$20,000 from the Tang Center for Early China/Columbia University to organize an international conference)
- Associate Professor of Dance Rachel Boggia (\$15,888

from the New England Foundation for the Arts for a creative residency)

- Professor of Film Studies Ross Morin and Greg Surnam (\$15,000 from the Messler Family Foundation for equipment for Film Studies)
- Professor of Mathematics Christopher Hammond (\$13,000 from the Connecticut State Department of Education for the New London Scholars Program)
- Assistant Professor of Music Shou-Ping Liu (\$12,985 from the United States-Japan Foundation for the Connecticut College Orchestra Tokyo Concert Program)
- Associate Professor of Biology Maria Rosa (\$10,000 from the Southeastern New England Educational and Charitable Foundation for work on eelgrass-shellfish interactions in Long Island Sound)

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

- The Summer Science Research Institute continued to grow: in 2024–25, 50 students conducted research with 15 STEM faculty; in 2025–26, 51 students worked alongside 19 STEM faculty.
- Digital Scholarship Fellows program: new projects and faculty participation [Showcase site](#)
- Open Educational Resources (OER): faculty grants and new course adoptions [OER Grant Dashboard](#)

2025-26 Grant Recipients

Timothy Becker, Computer Science
Stephen Douglass, Computer Science and Biology
Priya Kohli, Mathematics and Statistics
Ross Morin, Film Studies

2024-25 Grant Recipients

Candace Howes, Economics
Adam Kleman, Chemistry
Priya Kohli, Mathematics and Statistics
Laura Little, Slavic Studies
Frida Morelli, Italian Studies
Ross Morin, Film Studies
Karen Gonzalez Rice, Art History

- Eight students were selected by the U.S. Department of State as Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship honorees, providing financial support for the undergraduates to travel abroad and develop skills related to economic development and national security.
- In 2025, three graduating seniors earned \$40,000 Thomas J. Watson Fellowships for international travel and independent research, bringing Connecticut College's total to nine Watson Fellows since 2021.
- Another student was awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship in 2026.
- A 2025 graduating senior was named a Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Graduate Fellow, receiving up to \$48,000 over two years to pursue a relevant master's degree and prepare for a U.S. Foreign Service career.
- During the two-year reporting period, three students each earned a \$10,000 Davis Projects for Peace grant.
- A Conn student was selected from more than 550 applicants for Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights' yearlong John Lewis Young Leaders fellowship, joining a national cohort of 16 emerging community-organizing and civic-engagement leaders.
- Two Connecticut College students earned Fulbright awards during the report period, advancing the College's longstanding record as a leading producer of Fulbright recipients.

- Two Conn graduates received \$19,000 Mortimer Hays-Brandeis Traveling Fellowships to pursue yearlong international independent-study projects in the visual and fine arts.

Goal 3. Arts

AMMERMAN CENTER FOR ARTS & TECHNOLOGY

- The Ammerman Center hosted its 18th Triennial Symposium on Arts and Technology, themed All Too Human. Katerina Cizek delivered the keynote address.

FACULTY AND STUDENT ARTS ACHIEVEMENTS

- Visiting Assistant Professor of Theater Sam Biondolillo won his second Tony Award, serving as co-producer for *Schmigadoon!*, named Best Musical at the 79th Annual Tony Awards in 2026. Biondolillo and business partner Sam Houlihan (SAMS Entertainment) had previously won a Tony in 2024 for Best Revival of a Musical for the Broadway production of *Merrily We Roll Along*.
- Professor of Film Studies Ross Morin won a Silver Signal Award in the Genre–Education category in 2025 for his podcast, *Filmmaking Unpacked* with Professor Ross Morin.



Enriching The Student Experience

Connecticut College invested significantly in career preparation, campus facilities, residential life, and athletic programs across the final two years of the plan.

Goal 1. Life and Career

A. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Hale Center for Career Development continued to expand its reach and impact in 2024-26, deepening integration with the academic program and alumni community.

- Institutional research data shows that 90% of graduating seniors used the Hale Center and would recommend it to a friend, reflecting strong engagement across the student body.
- The Camel Connected Strategy created new pathways for alumni and friends of the College to partner with the Hale Center in supporting student industry exploration and networking.
- The NESCAC Career Collaboration expanded employer partnerships across member institutions, giving Connecticut College students access to a broader portfolio of top organizations.
- The College partnered with Institutional Research, LiveAlumni, and Handshake to collect and analyze data on graduate outcomes; work is underway to expand tracking beyond students who receive Hale Center funding.
- The Career Action Program was revamped into two distinct tracks: Career Launch, which funds skill development for first-year and sophomore students, and Career Accelerator, which funds internships and research projects for juniors.

- The Student Employment Program was formalized with handbooks for both students and supervisors, regular supervisor feedback meetings, and a new annual Supervisor Appreciation Day each spring.
- The College purchased LinkedIn Learning, giving all students access to professional credentialing; the Hale Center actively promotes its use.
- Through spring 2026, the Career-Informed Learning program hosted 123 class sessions with 114 faculty members across 105 departments, involving 206 alumni and professional guests.

B. STUDENT WELLBEING

- Implemented a revised student medical leave process, improving clarity and support for students navigating leave and re-enrollment.
- Opened the Disability Cultural Center, creating a dedicated campus space that advances disability culture, community, belonging and advocacy.
- Opened the International Student Lounge in Knowlton House, creating a dedicated hub for international students to build community, access support and engage in cross-cultural exchange.
- Initiative for enhanced support of international student mental health through targeted workshops, increased SCS training on mental health needs of international students, and identity-focused group support
- Reviewed and revised protocol with Athletics Staff/ Sports Medicine to ensure physical and mental health concerns with student-athletes are appropriately referred to the crisis on-call team and the CARE team.
- Completed review/revisions of the College's Medical Leave policy to ensure improved and consistent response to students needing a leave for mental or physical health reasons.
- Introduced depression screening tool as part of regular medical health visits.
- Focused work conducted by Campus Mental Health Coalition on *Systemically Underserved Students and Their Mental Health*. The coalition did a deep dive into campus data, examined best practices, in order to develop campus wide recommendations.
- Conducted National College Health Assessment - Fall 2025 and Fall 2026.



- All new students are required to complete the Mental Wellbeing in College online module prior to arrival on campus. This guide helps students identify concerning behaviors and familiarizes students with campus resources.
- Awarded grants for:
 - Connecticut Healthy Campus Initiative's Campus
 - Opioid and Stimulant Education and Awareness Program
 - Problem Gambling
 - SMART Alcohol Recovery Group

Goal 2. Campus Living

A. RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE

- With larger than normal enrollment, Conn leased the Manwaring Building in New London until enrollments declined to more typical levels (4 years). Transferred furniture from Manwaring to apartments and common rooms on campus to enhance spaces.
- Multiple presentations and discussions with the board of trustees on campus housing and steps the College could take to launch a multi-year strategy to enhance the quality of our campus housing. This work was informed by the Facilities Condition Assessment that rated housing renewal as a top campus priority. Established a preliminary sequencing plan that enables the College to renovate older residence halls.

- With enrollment returning to more typical levels after a post-COVID two-year surge, common rooms that were converted to rooms are returning to being common rooms, room density is returning to more typically occupancy levels, and basement rooms are being taken off-line and repurposed.
- The College partnered with Credo on the Student and Residential Life Experience Plan (SRLEP). Credo evaluated campus space and its impact on student life, formed a leadership team and gathered broad community input through focus groups, feedback sessions, open houses, tabling, and Student Government discussions.
- The Board of Trustees approved the funding for the construction of new student townhomes/apartments to replace River Ridges Apartments, Winchester Apartments, 191 Mohegan Ave, Abbey House, and Lazrus.

B. CAMPUS SOCIAL SPACES AND FACILITIES

The 2024-26 period saw transformative investment in campus social infrastructure, with several major projects reshaping how students, faculty, and staff navigate and experience the heart of campus.

Crozier-Williams College Center Renovation | May 2024–August 2025 | \$20 million

- The College Center at Crozier-Williams underwent a \$20 million renovation that concluded with a phased reopening in May 2025, prior to Commencement.



The project focused on four key areas: the Crozier Boulevard entry, Oasis, Cro's Nest and adjacent common areas, and the 1962 Room.

- Connecticut College and KSS Architects received ACUI's 2026 Facility Design Award for the under-\$25 million transformation of Crozier-Williams into a modern, student-centered social hub.

Crozier Boulevard Pedestrian Promenade, Phase 1 | May 2024–May 2025 | \$5 million

- The historic Crozier-Williams Boulevard — a priority in both the College's 1999 and 2018 master plans — was fully converted from a roadway and parking area into a pedestrian boulevard. The promenade now connects the campus from its southernmost to northernmost points, significantly enhancing community connectivity and reducing pedestrian-vehicular conflict.

Harris Dining Renovation | April 2025–April 2026 | \$5.5 million

- Harris Dining Hall underwent a comprehensive renovation with a major milestone reopening in August 2025. The project modernized kitchen infrastructure

with state-of-the-art equipment, redesigned the dining area to improve seating, lighting, and atmosphere, and introduced a more diverse menu to meet students' dietary preferences and needs.

Residential Hall Bathroom Privacy Improvements

- Modifications to increase privacy in residential hall bathrooms — initiated in summer 2022 — were completed at the end of summer 2025, addressing a long-standing campus priority. As part of this project older bathrooms were fully renovated while more recently renovated spaces received privacy improvements.

Crozier-Plex Pedestrian Connector | June 2025–June 2026 | \$9.5 million

- A new central pedestrian pathway and accessible connector between Crozier and the Plex was designed to enhance campus safety and mobility. The project includes dedicated seating areas and an amphitheater; sustainability features include increased biodiversity, new tree plantings, improved stormwater management, and new additions to the campus Sustainability Trail.





C. STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND LEADERSHIP

- **Mock Trial:** Continued rapid growth as a club and successfully hosted the 2026 Regional Tournament, welcoming teams from multiple institutions to campus.
- **Men's Club Hockey:** Established itself as a regional and national powerhouse by winning the regional championship and earning its first-ever bid to the Club D2 National Hockey Championship in St. Louis as the #1 seed.
- **Camel Leadership Initiative:** Student Engagement created and launched a specialized monthly workshop series dedicated to enhancing leadership skill development for student organization leaders.
- **Chess Team:** Hosted the CT State Chess Association tournament on campus, welcoming over 200 participating teams.
- **Men's & Women's Club Skiing:** Developed a strong regional presence, consistently qualifying racers for regional postseason events.
- **Model UN:** Established a new chapter that quickly grew into one of the campus's largest and most active student organizations, traveling to multiple conferences each semester.
- **New Service Organizations:** Expanded community impact through the founding of two service-oriented clubs:
 - **Rotaract:** Focused on hands-on local community service initiatives.
 - **Givoroa:** A student-led organization that creates homemade items on campus to donate to local organizations in need, including a recent drive that hand-crafted and delivered blankets.
- **A Cappella Council:** Formed a unified leadership board representing all campus a cappella groups to foster collaboration. This initiative led to 6 highly successful joint concerts alongside individual group performances.
- **Wig and Candle Theater:** Expanded creative programming by establishing a Student Works Series, giving students dedicated avenues to write, produce, and direct original theatrical works.



- **Humphrey's:** Forged strategic partnerships with Chartwells to align on shared responsibilities to make the campus bar into an engaging social space, including the development of comprehensive user policies and operational procedures from scratch.
- **Digital Marketing Integration:** Partnered with Media Services to launch a digital marketing program for the electronic displays in the new Harris Refectory and in Cro, allowing student organizations to efficiently create and market digital content.
- **Conn Coffee Integration:** Collaborated with students and campus stakeholders to merge two existing coffee shops and their staffing models into "Conn Coffee," establishing unified, student-managed social spaces centered around coffee culture.
- **The Connecticut College Orchestra:** Traveled to Japan to play with Tokyo Sinfonia in March, 2025.
- **The Connecticut College Debate Union:** Achieved its strongest-ever performance at Yale IV 2025, placing in the top 25 of 124 teams and defeating teams from Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Princeton and other leading institutions.

Goal 3. Athletics

Connecticut College continued to advance its athletics master plan through significant facility investments and ongoing efforts to support student-athlete success on and off the field.

Silfen Track and Field Renovation | May–September 2024 | \$3 million

- The Silfen Track and Field complex was fully renovated to enhance athlete safety and competition readiness. The new track surface offers optimal shock absorbency and energy return; new D zones provide enhanced safety for high jump and pole vault athletes, and team shelters and broadcast-ready communications infrastructure were added.



Fran Shields Grandstands | December 2025–June 2026 | \$1.8 million

- A new 500-seat grandstand and press box at the track and field complex significantly elevated the spectator experience for men's and women's field events. The facility features ADA-compliant seating, improved access, upgraded technology for live broadcasts, new stairways, and enhanced drainage.

Student athletes and coaching staff experienced numerous successes:

- 23 All-Americans across nine sports
- Two teams qualified for the NCAA National Championships; men's soccer and women's cross country.
- 15 Individuals qualified for the NCAA National Championships in men's & women's indoor track and field, women's outdoor track and field, men's swimming & diving, and men's cross country.
- Sailing qualified two teams for the Intercollegiate Sailing Nationals and the co-ed team reached the finals and finished #13 in the country.
- 31 All-NESCAC selections
- 63% of teams qualified for conference championships
- Student swimmer Carrick Shea was the national champion in the 200 breast and the team had 9 All-Americans.
- Cumulative department GPA of 3.64 and 406 sophomores, juniors, and senior athletes were named NESCAC All-Academic with 3.5+ GPA's — which tied the department record.
- Men's Soccer was NESCAC runner-ups and made it to the Sweet 16 for the fifth time since 2019.
- Connecticut College Athletics achieved #42 in the fall in Learfield Directors' Cup and in the winter #70 but finished out the year in 98th of 327 NCAA Division III institutions, placing the Camels among the nation's top 30% of programs.

- Connecticut College Women's Track & Field captured the 2026 New England Division III Outdoor Track & Field Championship—its second title in program history and first since 1989—scoring 100 points. The team qualified for all 3 NCAA national championships in cross country, indoor and outdoor track & field.



Supporting A Diverse, Just, And Sustainable Community

Connecticut College deepened its commitments to equity and inclusion, continued bold sustainability initiatives, and sustained strong philanthropic momentum across the final two years of the plan.

Goal 1. Full Participation

A. EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Identity Centers and Belonging

- Hired a new Director of Zachs Hillel House (ZHH) and expanded Kosher for Passover options during the holiday.
- Increased the usage of Unity House as a space of belonging and venue for campus events.
- Expanded Unity kitchen access during Ramadan.
- Celebrated the grand opening of the Lotus Center, with expanded resources for the communities it serves.
- Celebrated the grand re-opening of the F.R.E.E. (Feminist Resource, Education & Empowerment) Center in a new location with a broadened mission.
- Expanded Genesis programming for 'Lil Sibbs to strengthen support for first-generation and underrepresented students beyond their first year.
- Increased partnership between the Office for Campus Belonging Initiatives and the Admissions Office, expanding engagement with prospective students through both in-person and virtual events.
- Established the new Office of Community Advocacy and Sexual Health (CASH), consolidating the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention and Advocacy (SVPA) and Gender and Sexuality Programs (GSP) under a unified structure.
- Expanded varsity athlete One Love training to nearly 200 participants.

Training and Policy Updates

- Implemented new bias training for faculty award committees and hiring committees.

- Introduced orientation programming for incoming faculty on civil rights policies and campus resources.
- Created a new Harassment and Nondiscrimination Policy in 2025, developed in compliance with updated government regulations.
- Developed and implemented a new Freedom of Expression and Assembly Policy for students and staff, created through the Presidential Working Group.

B. STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

- Enrolled a record-high percentage of U.S. BIPOC full-time students in Fall 2024 (23.8%) and again in Fall 2025 (26.0%). Enrolled a record-high percentage of Pell-grant-receiving undergraduates in Fall 2024 (17.7%), and the second-highest percentage in Fall 2025 (16.6%). Enrolled 13.2% first-generation-college students in Fall 2024 and 14.2% in Fall 2025.
- Achieved a 91.1% first-to-second year retention rate among students who entered in Fall 2024 (the Class of 2028). The retention rate for Pell grant recipients in five entering classes showed an average retention rate



of 88.1% for all students, with a rate of 93.5% for Black or African American students and 89.2% for Hispanic students.

- Collaborated across Admissions, Financial Aid, and Student Life to develop a formalized readmission policy and process.
- Launched the Launch! program, a targeted set of events for rising sophomores — including the housing lottery, center information sessions, and the pathway fair — designed to support continued engagement and persistence beyond the first year.

C. FACULTY AND STAFF OF COLOR

- Two tenure-track faculty members were hired in 2024–26, both BIPOC (1 joint appointment in Education and Africana Studies and 1 joint appointment in Human Development and Africana Studies).
- Since 2016, the College has hired 58 tenure-track faculty members; 60% are women and 48% are BIPOC. The retention rate of faculty hired in the most recent five years is 87% and in the most recent 10 years, 81%.

D. CAMPUS ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY

Goal 2. Sustainability

Connecticut College made measurable progress across multiple dimensions of its sustainability commitments in 2024–26, from emissions reductions to energy infrastructure to curriculum.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- Total campus emissions for FY 2025 were estimated at 13,275.56 MTCO₂e, compared to 13,538.38 MTCO₂e in FY 2024. Both years represent a 14% decrease from the College's 2017 baseline. The FY 2025 reduction was driven by significant decreases in electricity, oil, and propane consumption; natural gas use increased modestly due to expanded fuel cell electricity production.

STARS Rating

- The College achieved AASHE STARS Gold status in both 2021 and 2024 — a distinction held by fewer than half of NESCAC peers and just 15% of colleges nationally. The next STARS report will be submitted under the new version 3.0 framework on or before March 5, 2027. Data collection is underway, with the report targeted for optional peer review by mid-January 2027. While new credits and re-weightings under



v3.0 may adjust the total score, the College aims to maintain Gold status.

Energy Efficiency Projects, 2024-26

- A steam trap survey completed in March 2025; reviewed 1,211 steam traps across campus; 176 faulty or leaking traps were repaired or replaced in fall 2025.
- The Crozier-Williams renovation included new LED lighting in all renovated spaces.
- Four new EV charging ports were installed in the East Lot, bringing the campus total to 10 charging stations. The stations serve over 50 unique users per month and have supplied enough electricity to displace more than 50 MTCO_{2e} of gasoline emissions.
- Four GEM electric vehicles were added to the Facilities fleet to support the trades, resulting in a 34 MTCO_{2e} reduction in fleet emissions.
- The student-designed Dayton Arena Solar Array was fully installed and is awaiting final approval from Eversource to begin generating power.

Sustainability Curriculum

- 2024–25: 39 sustainability-focused courses; 71 sustainability-inclusive courses.
- 2025-26: 32 sustainability-focused courses; 67 sustainability-inclusive courses.

Community Sustainability Partnerships

- Sprout continued its partnership with FRESH New London's community-supported agriculture (CSA) program, providing low-cost fresh produce to New London residents.
- The College continued to place Holleran Center work-study interns with FRESH New London.
- The Arboretum continued its partnership with New London Trees to increase tree canopy across the city.

Sustainability Revolving Fund

- Projects completed in 2024-26: Becker House water filler; Vending Misers.
- Projects continuing their payback period: Service Building Solar Array.
- Projects beginning their payback period in 2024-26: Dayton Arena Solar Array.

Sustainable Building Policy

- All three major capital projects completed in 2024-26 were subject to the Sustainable Building Policy: Crozier-Williams Center renovation, residential bathroom renovations, and the Crozier-Plex Pedestrian Connector.

Goal 3. Financial Strength

A. ENDOWMENT AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

- **Advanced long-term financial planning** through the development and Board approval of a comprehensive five-year financial plan.
- **Strengthened capacity for strategic capital investment**, with the Board of Trustees authorizing up to \$55 million in debt to support a new residence hall and other capital projects.
- **Improved the projected Composite Financial Index (CFI)** for FY 2026 to 2.7.
- **Strengthened the endowment**, with a preliminary valuation of \$554.5 million as of June 30, 2026. The fiscal year return for pooled assets was 16.7%, exceeding the 15.5% policy benchmark.

B. ENROLLMENT STRATEGY

- **Expanded recruitment and engagement efforts** in response to a declining national population of high school graduates, including additional Open Houses, increased participation in Camel Days for admitted students, and expanded digital advertising targeting prospective and admitted students.
- **Strengthened admitted-student yield efforts** by engaging more faculty in personalized outreach to admitted students and incorporating faculty voices into the enrollment process.
- **Advanced the admissions strategy for future classes** by beginning the incorporation of Early Action into recruitment and admissions materials for the Class of 2031.
- **Strengthened Conn's enrollment brand and value proposition** through a new brand video highlighting the College's distinctive educational experience and Connections curriculum.
- **Launched a new Outcomes website** showcasing career, graduate school and other post-graduation outcomes, providing prospective students and families with a clear view of the value of a Conn education.
- **Expanded prospective-student-focused content in CC Magazine**, including greater coverage of entrepreneurship, alumni businesses and athletics—areas of interest to prospective students.
- **Promoted strong student retention** as an indicator of student satisfaction and the strength of the Conn student experience.

C. PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

Connecticut College sustained strong philanthropic momentum in 2024-26, building on the success of the historic Defy Boundaries Campaign.

CC Fund

- The CC Fund has grown at an average rate of 3.5% per year since FY 2024.

Fiscal Year	CC Fund Total
2025-26	\$6,043,639
2024-25	\$5,881,725
2023-24 (ref.)	\$5,637,837
2022-23 (ref.)	\$6,067,827
2021-22 (ref.)	\$6,861,109

Total Philanthropic Commitments, FY 2024-FY 2026

- Secured \$82.1 million in philanthropic commitments across FY 2024 through FY 2026, supporting scholarships, athletics, endowment, the Goodwin-Nearing Center for the Environment, unrestricted funds, athletic center expansion, Crozier-Williams renovations, the Faculty Fund for Teaching Excellence, the Child Development Lab School, Natatorium upgrades, and Flagpole Maintenance.

Defy Boundaries Campaign

- Continued to advance the Defy Boundaries Campaign, with \$7.3 million in campaign pledge commitments remaining outstanding.
- Generated \$45.2 million in bequest intentions from 54 donors through the Hale Legacy Initiative between May 1 and June 30, 2023.

Camel Athletics Fund

Fiscal Year	Camel Athletics Fund Total
2025-26	\$680,345
2024-25	\$847,337
2023-24 (ref.)	\$609,002
2022-23 (ref.)	\$675,294
2021-22 (ref.)	\$646,253

Alumni Athlete Engagement

- Increased alumni athlete engagement, with event attendance growing an average of 6.6% annually and the percentage of attendees who also made a gift to the College growing an average of 8% annually.
- Engaged 1,855 alumni athletes through events over FY 2022-26, representing 27% of all alumni athletes; 1,280 of those attendees also made a gift to the College, a 69% participation rate.

Year	Attendees Donors (Participation Rate)
2025-26	654 348 donors (53%)
2024-25	562 340 donors (60%)
2023-24 (ref.)	611 327 donors (54%)
2022-23 (ref.)	554 259 donors (47%)
2021-22 (ref.)	515 261 donors (50%)

Alumni Engagement: Event Attendance and Philanthropic Participation

- Increased alumni event engagement, with total alumni event attendance growing an average of 6% annually since FY 2022 and the number of event attendees who also made a gift growing an average of 21% annually over the same period.

Year	Attendees Donors (Participation Rate)
2025-26	1,701 929 donors (55%)
2024-25	1,488 867 donors (58%)
2023-24 (ref.)	1,556 830 donors (53%)
2022-23 (ref.)	1,129 531 donors (47%)
2021-22 (ref.)	1,480 445 donors (30%)



4. Information Services, Technology, and Facilities

Connecticut College modernized the technology, library resources, and physical infrastructure that support teaching, learning, research, and campus operations. Over the past two years, the College expanded access to digital and research resources, advanced artificial intelligence initiatives, strengthened institutional data systems and cybersecurity, and made significant investments in campus facilities and capital projects.

A. LIBRARY AND DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP

- **Implemented a shared library network zone with Boston Library Consortium partners**—University of Vermont, Middlebury College, Trinity College and Wesleyan University—centralizing processes, reducing duplication and saving staff time. Boston Architectural College and Bentley University are expected to join the network zone, further expanding access to collections.
- **Created a dedicated GIS Specialist position** to strengthen the College’s support for spatial research and thinking across academic disciplines.
- **Expanded the Linda Lear Center’s collections** through a gift of the photo archive of *The Day*, documenting New London County and southeastern Connecticut from 1946–2002.

B. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND AI

- **Secured a \$375,300 Connecticut Education Network Community Wi-Fi Grant** to expand Wi-Fi to outdoor spaces across the arboretum campus and provide eduroam access at the New London Public Library.

Artificial Intelligence

- **Launched AI@Conn**, a three-year critical inquiry initiative designed to assess the role, validity, and impact of artificial intelligence in our academic programs. This project, beginning in the fall of 2024 via donor funding, will experiment with new approaches to teaching, research, and engagement with technology, including the introduction of AI-focused topics and their associated challenges, aiming to prepare students to critically evaluate the complexities, risks, and opportunities of an AI-driven world.
- **Broad Engagement:** The initiative has delivered 73 programs (literacy and tool-based) to 599 attendees, including 128 individual consultations across 12 departments.
 - Attitudinal & Knowledge Shifts: Post-workshop surveys show 90% of participants gained significant AI knowledge, with over 50% shifting from concern to cautious optimism. 65% of respondents rated the sessions as “very” or “extremely” effective.

- **Curricular Innovation:** The initiative supported 15+ course redesigns across disciplines—including Biology, Chemistry, Economics, and Russian—moving faculty from “AI anxiety” to clear position statements and agentic student use.
- **Qualitative Impact:** Faculty consistently report that the initiative inclusive framework, “Room for Resistance” provides “permission to be uncertain.”
- **National Leadership:** The initiative and Conn’s approach has been featured in the Chronicle of Higher Education and shared through the Fellow’s role as a Faculty Mentor for the AAC&U Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum.
- **Web resources:** <https://www.conncoll.edu/library-information-technology/ai-at-conn/>

Cybersecurity and data governance improvements

- **Advanced the “Protect the Herd” cybersecurity initiative**, including implementation of a zero-trust network access (ZTNA) tool to replace the College’s virtual private network (VPN).

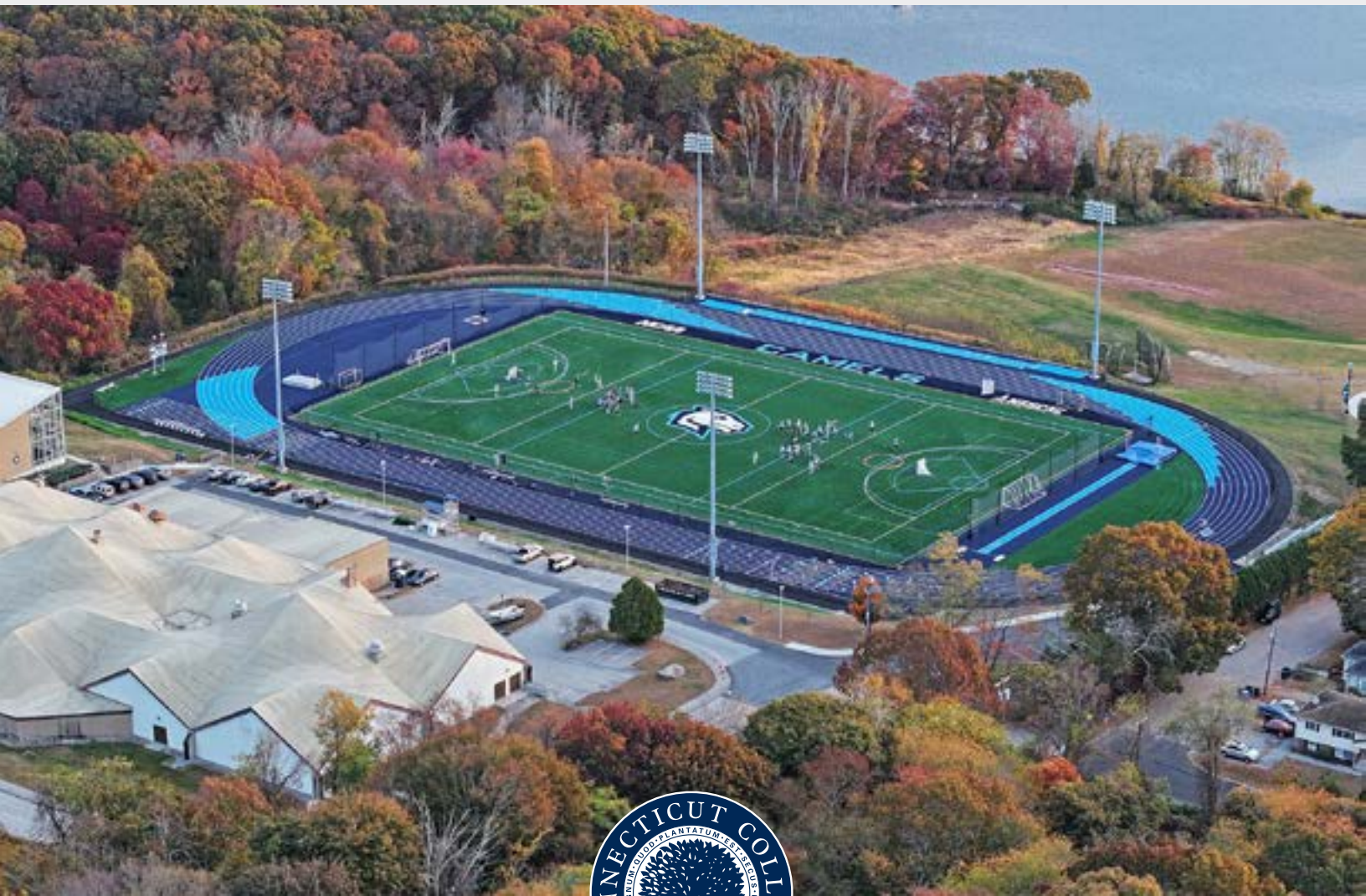
C. FACILITIES AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

- **Completed or advanced eight major capital projects**, totaling approximately \$63.3 million in 2024–26 and representing the most significant period of physical investment in recent College history.

Project	Budget Timeline
Crozier-Williams College Center Renovation	\$20M 2024–2025
Main Switchgear and Campus Generators	\$12M 2024–2026
Crozier-Plex Pedestrian Connector	\$9.5M 2025–2026
Crozier Boulevard Pedestrian Promenade	\$5M 2024–2025
East Parking Lot	\$5M 2024–2025
Harris Dining Renovation	\$5.5M 2025
Silfen Track and Field Renovation	\$3M 2024
Fran Shields Grandstands	\$1.8M 2026

Looking Ahead

The accomplishments of the final two years of *Building on Strength* reflect the dedication of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and supporters who continue to make Connecticut College such a special place. From the classroom to the residence halls, from new investments in our campus to new opportunities for students, this work has strengthened the Conn experience in meaningful ways. As we look ahead, we carry this momentum with us, building on what we have accomplished together while remaining focused on what matters most: providing an exceptional liberal arts education and helping our students discover where their curiosity, talents, and aspirations can take them.



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