



# CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Katherine Bergeron  
*President*

February 14, 2017

Dear Members of the Connecticut College Community,

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

## **Building on strength**

The plenary session on Friday morning focused on efforts related to the College's strategic plan, Building on Strength. Representatives from CCS, our fundraising consultants, led a conversation about the philanthropic landscape for Connecticut College and the prospects for a future campaign to support the plan. They reported a strong sense of energy and engagement among our alumnae and alumni, as well as enthusiasm for the plan's priorities. The next phase of their work will include crafting a case for the campaign, engaging volunteer leadership, and developing a multi-year fundraising plan.

The discussion went on to consider three specific objectives of the strategic plan: career education, athletics, and financial aid. Persephone Hall, the Hale Family Director of the Office of Career and Professional Development, outlined her vision for the future of the career office. She highlighted current strengths of the program, plans to integrate career education more deeply into Connections, and goals to strengthen the College's employer relations as well as alumni participation.

Dean of the Faculty Abby Van Slyck offered a preliminary report on the work of the taskforce on Athletics. She presented an overview of varsity sports at Conn and at peer schools within the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), and discussed findings from a recent external review of the Athletics Department. The taskforce plans to present a set of recommendations around varsity and club sports, physical education, and recreational/personal fitness at the next Board meeting in May.

The importance of financial aid for the sustainability of the College was another topic of conversation. Rich Madonna, vice president for finance and administration, and Andy Strickler, dean of admission and financial aid, outlined plans to expand the College's financial aid model to increase the socio-economic diversity of our student body, attract the strongest possible students, and maintain selectivity.

## **Academic affairs and the student experience**

Enhancing the academic distinction of Connecticut College is a central priority of Building on Strength, and the Board discussed the dramatic growth of primary research within the College's Special Collections and Archives. Last year, as many as 22 percent of our students used the archives in courses or research projects. Board members heard a



# CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Katherine Bergeron  
*President*

report by Ben Panciera, director of the Linda Lear Center for Collections and Archives; Becky Parmer, College archivist and special collections librarian; Rose Olivera, the Linda Lear special Collections Librarian; Ariella Rotramel, assistant professor of gender and women's studies; and Ellen Lee, C3 post-doctoral fellow in classics.

Students gain more from their academic pursuits when they have rich experiences outside the classroom, and the Board considered the impact of several recent initiatives to enhance the student experience, including new first-year floors in Morrisson, expanded student activities programming, and other ongoing efforts to improve the first-to- second-year retention. Representatives from the Student Government Association as well as from a variety of clubs, organizations, and advisory boards offered compelling testimony about the importance of these groups in creating alternative learning spaces and fostering a sense of belonging on campus. Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion John McKnight augmented the conversation with a progress report on work being undertaken to improve campus climate, to expand opportunities for education and dialogue, and to strengthen the connections between Unity House, the LGBTQIA Center, and the Womxn's Center.

## **Finance, capital projects, and new gifts**

In the area of finance, the Board approved the target parameters for the fiscal year 2018 budget, including ranges for establishing the comprehensive fee for 2017-18, as well as the faculty and staff salary pools and the financial aid allocation. In light of this, they also discussed the challenges of our tuition-driven model and the planning that the campus will undertake this spring to identify new revenue generating ideas and cost-saving opportunities to enhance financial sustainability. Preliminary work on the College's new master plan was also discussed, along with campus improvements slated for summer 2017. Board members reviewed the many projects being completed by Information Services, including an upgrade to wireless access points to increase bandwidth in residence halls. Cambridge Associates, the College's investment advisers, reported on the annual performance of the endowment, which rebounded in the second quarter of fiscal year 2017 to \$289 million.

In annual fundraising efforts, the Connecticut College Fund currently sits at \$4.3 million, or 69 percent of this year's \$6.2 million goal. The trustees acknowledged receipt of several significant gifts: from Patricia Roth Squire '51, a \$300,000 endowment for the Roth Writing Center; from Beverly Benenson Gasner '51, a \$250,000 gift to the Dorothy Benenson and Dorothy Gasner Endowed Scholarship Fund; and from Former Trustee Zoe Klein Henriquez '99, a \$120,000 gift to help match a challenge grant from the Harriman Foundation for the Science Leaders Summer Research program.



# CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Katherine Bergeron  
*President*

Finally, a beautiful new issue of the CC Magazine was available for review along with some new materials created by the Office of Communications for my travels in the next few months as I bring Building on Strength to alumnae and alumni across the country.

Yours,

Katherine Bergeron