

# CONNECTICUT COLLEGE



## *Building on Strength:*

A NEW PLAN FOR CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

**REPORT ON PROGRESS | MAY 2017**

The College's new strategic plan, *Building on Strength*, includes specific goals, objectives, and actions that will enhance the quality of the academic, residential, and community experience at Connecticut College. This is the first six-month report on progress. Actions taken are indicated in red following each section. While many more initiatives are underway, this report is limited to work that has been completed as of May 2017.

## 1. Enhancing Academic Distinction

### Goal 1: Education

**Become a recognized leader in integrative education promoting the intellectual, social, professional, and civic development of every student.**

#### OBJECTIVES

- *Ensure the success of Connections*
- *Advance and strengthen the College's centers for interdisciplinary scholarship, teaching, and learning*
- *Deepen faculty and student engagement off campus and around the world*
- *Broaden educational opportunities through new institutional partnerships*

#### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Increase resources and staffing for continued development of Connections <sup>1</sup>
- Create Global Commons to integrate world languages, off-campus learning, and local and global engagement opportunities <sup>2</sup>
- Develop new resources to support departments in their work toward full participation
- Clarify curricular requirement for learning about social difference
- Enrich STEM opportunities by establishing a program in engineering in partnership with U.S. Coast Guard and Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- Expand opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning, including potential precollege and master's programs
- Enhance support for the five centers for interdisciplinary scholarship and consider new centers of distinction (e.g., in informatics)
- Extend educational partnerships with the city of New London <sup>3</sup>
- Develop exchange programs with new global partners (e.g., Universidad de la Tierra in Mexico, Ashesi University College in Ghana) <sup>4</sup>
- Strengthen academic advising across four years <sup>5</sup>
- Continue improving classrooms to support new forms of teaching with technology

#### DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS OF MAY 2017:

- <sup>1</sup> Received \$1.55 million in grant funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation to support the development of Connections. | Developed eight new integrative pathways: Bodies/Embodiments, Eye of the Mind, Global Capitalism, Peace and Conflict, Public Health, Social Justice and Sustainability, Entrepreneurship, and City Life and Learning. | Reorganized staffing in library, Office of the Registrar, and Office of the Dean of the College to provide critical administrative support for Connections. | Offered 37 sections of 25 different ConnCourses in 2016-17, 20 of which were new. | Refined the team advising component of the First-Year Seminar and added five new student adviser coordinator positions. | Created a suite of new admission materials to promote Connections, including six new viewbooks, companion videos, and website for prospective students and families. | Secured media coverage in national media outlets, including the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Education*, and Sirius XM Radio.
- <sup>2</sup> Appointed new associate dean of global initiatives/ director of the Global Commons and assistant director of the Global Commons. | Completed architectural designs for new space in Blaustein Humanities Center. | Retained project manager and completed construction estimates and project timeline. | Secured two grants to support construction: \$750,000 from the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, and \$175,000 from the George I. Alden Trust. | Expanded programs, course offerings, training programs, and participation in World Languages. In Fall 2016, 69% of first-year students were enrolled in a language course in their first semester, compared with 44% the previous year. | Held professional development seminar for eight faculty and staff members to improve study-away advising. | Piloted new departmental study-away pre-departure and re-entry courses in Fall 2016 and Spring 2017. | Expanded mandatory pre-departure study away orientation to include faculty and student voices.

- ③ Partnered with Spark Makerspace in New London on community-based initiatives, such as the Edible Landscape Project. Worked with New London and Groton businesses and non-profit leaders to create proposal for Thames River Innovation Place with \$50,000 State planning grant.
- ④ Sent nine faculty and staff abroad to deepen relationships with established and emerging partners, including Ashesi University, Collegium Civitas in Poland, and the National Theatre Institute/Moscow Arts Theater program. | Created institutional agreements for reciprocal student exchange program with Ashesi University College and for teaching collaborations with New Bulgarian University.
- ⑤ Held year-long advising seminar for faculty and staff to enhance first-year and pre-major advising.

## Goal 2: Research

Open new channels for groundbreaking research, scholarship, and creative work.

### OBJECTIVES

- Enhance funding, spaces, and technology for knowledge creation
- Multiply opportunities for student/faculty collaboration
- Enrich campus intellectual dialogue

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Develop new resources for student and faculty scholarship and conference travel ①
- Establish high-profile scholar-in-residence program
- Upgrade research facilities, labs, and other spaces in which faculty and students conduct their work
- Create new program in digital scholarship
- Raise funds for new endowed chair positions
- Improve conditions for obtaining external grant funding ②
- Expand resources for research computing and scientific instrumentation

### DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS OF MAY 2017:

- ① Became institutional member of the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity to give our faculty access to online resources of the center and its summer-long Faculty Success Program. | Led by the Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity, sponsored 11 faculty to participate in the Op-Ed project, which has resulted in the publication

of over 20 op-eds in national outlets such as *Ebony*, *The Hill*, *Truth-Out.org*, *OZY.com*, and *TRT World.com*.

- ② Held two Office of Corporate, Government, and Foundation Relations-sponsored workshops on external funding at May 2017 Camp Teach & Learn.

## Goal 3: Arts

Advance the College's distinction in the creative and performing arts.

### OBJECTIVES

- Attain national leadership in collaborative arts practice oriented toward social change
- Enhance facilities and technology to match the excellence of the College's programs
- Develop academic offerings based on signature programs and centers
- Leverage artistic resources along the Northeast corridor

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Renew Palmer Auditorium and other spaces for the arts as part of campus master plan
- Establish robust artist-in-residence program ①
- Build new partnerships with nationally known arts institutions
- Expand the mission and program of the Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology
- Cultivate internships with distinguished alumni
- Create new summer arts initiatives to promote excellence
- Explore feasibility of master's in digital arts
- Bolster campus connections to Lyman Allyn Art Museum ②

### DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS OF MAY 2017:

- ① Brought Ya'ara Moses to campus in Fall 2016 as a Dance Department guest artist; featured her in February 2017 *CC Magazine*, along with several other arts stories.
- ② With six students in his new Museum Training course, Christopher Steiner, the Lucy C. McDannel '22 Professor of Art History & Anthropology, curated *It's Only a Paper Moon: Souvenir Photography in America, 1870-1950*, on view at Lyman Allyn Art Museum, February 18–May 14, 2017. | Collaborated on David Smalley Memorial Exhibition June 3-August 13, 2017.

The next priority of Connecticut College's strategic plan builds on the previous one. To achieve greater distinction and integration of student learning, we will commit to creating experiences outside of the classroom that extend intellectual enrichment, build a stronger sense of community, and prepare students for meaningful lives and careers.

## 2. Enriching the Student Experience

### Goal 1: Life and Career

Cultivate the talents of all students to lead lives of meaning and purpose.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Establish the premier liberal arts career program in the country
- Increase access to high-quality internships and other career-enhancing experiences
- Educate students about the relationships among health, well-being, and success

#### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Establish task force on careers to evaluate the state of advising for life after college <sup>1</sup>
- Take steps to relocate career office to central campus
- Expand expertise in emerging fields in technology and business
- Fully integrate career education into four-year curricular and advising structure
- Create new career modules for academic courses across the curriculum <sup>2</sup>
- Tap alumni and parent network for competitive paid internships
- Increase resources for internships
- Make Connecticut College a critical stop for recruiters in key industries
- Establish job-shadowing program during winter and spring breaks
- Develop an intensive summer career workshop for students on campus and beyond
- Integrate new programs related to well-being into career education and across the co-curriculum <sup>3</sup>

#### DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS OF MAY 2017:

- <sup>1</sup> Completed final report of the Career Task Force and made final report to the President and Board of Trustees. | Re-organized Office of Career and Professional Development staff and elevated existing line to a director of employer relations position.

- <sup>2</sup> Developed new career module for Introduction to Environmental Studies (ES 110) for the Spring 2017 semester, with others planned for 2017-18.

- <sup>3</sup> Incorporated sessions devoted to well-being into new faculty/staff advising seminar and Center for Teaching & Learning Talking Teaching series, as well as workshops on mindfulness in Student Health Services.

### Goal 2: Campus Living

Stimulate a more vibrant, four-year residential living and learning experience.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Implement phased strategy for upgrading campus housing
- Redesign campus social spaces to facilitate greater contact among students, faculty, and staff
- Expand high-quality social activity, leadership, and mentoring opportunities across four years
- Increase student engagement with New London and the surrounding regions

#### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Renovate and expand the College Center at Crozier-Williams <sup>1</sup>
- Develop comprehensive initiative for intergroup dialogue and leadership
- Increase permanent funding for student clubs and organizations <sup>2</sup>
- Establish robust weekly, monthly, and annual roster of student activities <sup>3</sup>
- Advance plan for improving residence halls as part of campus master plan
- Explore new options for apartment-style living <sup>4</sup>
- Continue expanding spaces and programs that enhance the first-year residential experience <sup>5</sup>
- Develop centralized transportation system to support intellectual, social, and community engagement beyond the campus <sup>6</sup>

## DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS OF MAY 2017:

- 1 Engaged architects in creating renovation concept for Crozier-Williams.
- 2 Substantially expanded student activities programming with \$100,000 in reallocated resources.
- 3 Increased social programming during the first six weeks of the semester and expanded total activities in 2016-17 by 45%. | Developed systems to make the student events calendar more inclusive of campus programs, athletics (club & varsity), and off-campus events. | Booked new national performers and programs to generate student interest and excitement at Florialia and other events.
- 4 Made site visits and met with developers to explore project feasibility and partnership models for campus apartment project.
- 5 Completed designs for converting Hamilton House into the College's first first-year student house.
- 6 Piloted a successful campus transportation program with new long-term rental agreement, student driving policy, and vehicle reservation process.

## Goal 3: Athletics

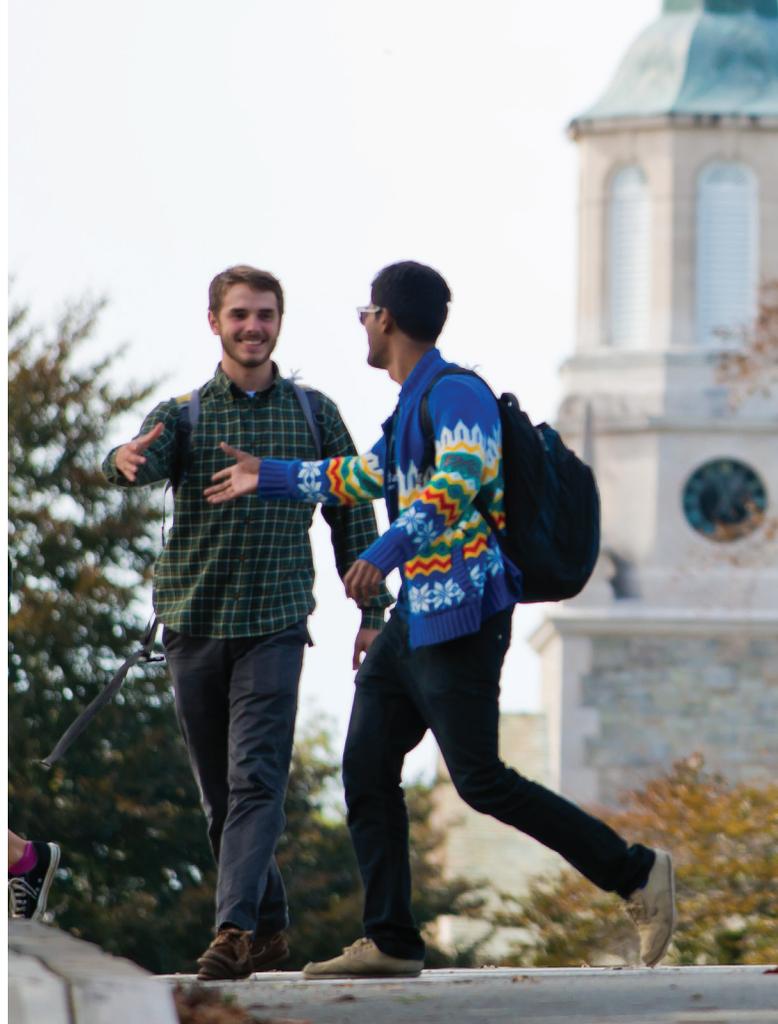
Heighten the competitiveness, success, and integration of the College's athletics programs.

### OBJECTIVES

- *Make strategic investments in infrastructure and operating support for varsity athletics*
- *Develop club, intramural, and recreational programs for everyone*
- *Strengthen connections among athletics, academics, and the co-curriculum*

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Develop plan for upgrading athletics facilities as part of campus master plan <sup>1</sup>
- Establish task force on athletics to evaluate team staffing, funding, and performance <sup>2</sup>
- Employ new assessment methods to review program effectiveness <sup>3</sup>
- Provide enhanced professional development for coaches
- Expand Camel Athletics Club to increase engagement of alumni athletes <sup>4</sup>
- Augment funding and oversight of club and recreational sports <sup>5</sup>



- Connect athletes to new initiatives in intergroup dialogue and leadership

## DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS OF MAY 2017:

- 1 Engaged architectural firm to create concept renderings of athletics facility.
- 2 Completed work of the Athletics Task Force and made final report to the President and Board of Trustees.
- 3 Developed dashboards for each varsity sport, tracing competitive success, academic achievement, and other aspects of the student-athlete's experience.
- 4 Expanded Camel Athletics Club by 213 new members (70% of which were new donors), for a total of 265 members to date. | Created new section in CC Magazine devoted to athletics, including Camel Athletics Club events and activities. | Hired athletics social media strategist in April 2017 to increase engagement with former athletes across social media channels.
- 5 Provided new funding, leadership, management policies, and staffing for club sports.

The culminating priority of the strategic plan builds on the previous two through a vision that both acknowledges pressing needs and speaks to longstanding values of the institution. To enable a truly just and sustainable institution, we will commit to policies and practices that ensure equity, protect precious resources, and enable all people to flourish in their lives at the College.

### 3. Supporting a Diverse, Just, and Sustainable Community

#### Goal 1: Full Participation

Empower an increasingly diverse community of students, faculty, and staff to thrive in their work and contribute to the flourishing of others.

##### OBJECTIVES

- *Develop new policies and programs in support of full participation*
- *Enhance resources to enroll and retain students from historically underrepresented groups*
- *Support and retain an increasing number of faculty and staff of color*
- *Foster a culture of respect and recognition for all employees*
- *Improve the accessibility and safety of the campus*

##### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Develop comprehensive initiative for intergroup dialogue and leadership <sup>1</sup>
- Establish new programs for development and recognition of staff excellence <sup>2</sup>
- Assess and eliminate structural barriers for student success <sup>3</sup>
- Leverage financial aid to expand the socioeconomic diversity of the student body <sup>4</sup>
- Revise policies for opportunity hiring to assist with diversity goals

- Address systemic and cultural impediments to retaining international and domestic faculty and staff of color <sup>5</sup>
- Increase endowed resources for the Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity and relocate the Center to central campus
- Enhance support for, visibility of, and connections among campus centers and programs focused on identity and inclusion <sup>6</sup>
- Expand staffing and programming to promote inclusive pedagogies across the curriculum
- Develop new resources to support departments in their work toward full participation
- Clarify curricular requirement for learning about social difference
- Launch pre-orientation programs to boost student success <sup>7</sup>
- Improve dining options to include halal and kosher food <sup>8</sup>
- Generate near- and long-term accessibility plans in conjunction with campus master plan <sup>9</sup>
- Explore the possibility of a second, accessible pedestrian bridge <sup>10</sup>

##### DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS OF MAY 2017:

- 1 Brought two national organizations to campus to preview dialogue programs, Ask Big Questions and National Coalition Building Institute.
- 2 Created new team recognition category for Presidential Staff Awards Program.
- 3 Completed report on structural barriers to full participation.
- 4 Implemented new program for leveraging financial aid for the Class of 2021 with aim of increasing socioeconomic diversity of the student body.
- 5 Increased support of and direct communication with international faculty with regard to visa and immigration issues. | Re-established faculty and staff of color and LGBTQIA social networks and hosted six successful social gatherings.



- ⑥ Restructured campus centers and staff to ensure greater collaboration across identities. | Centers co-sponsored a DIEI Neighborhood Block Party to boost visibility (Spring 2017).
- ⑦ Enhanced Genesis pre-orientation and ALANA peer mentoring programs for Fall 2017 to address distinct needs of students of color and first-generation students.
- ⑧ Implemented new Halal and Kosher dining programs.
- ⑨ Partnered with City of New London on \$750,000 pedestrian safety grant.
- ⑩ Engaged firm in concept design and construction estimates for a second pedestrian bridge.

## Goal 2: Sustainability

**Become a beacon of sustainability through careful stewardship of the College's physical, natural, and human resources.**

### OBJECTIVES

- *Solidify the institutional commitment to environmentally responsible and socially just practices*
- *Establish principles to guide future campus development reflective of College values*
- *Leverage the natural assets of campus and region to advance the College's priorities*
- *Improve decision-making, conserve resources, and enhance outcomes through the use of new analytical tools*

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Undertake a campus-wide master planning process
- Take steps to heighten the College's national profile on sustainability ①
- Redouble efforts to spread sustainability across the curriculum
- Expand revolving fund for resource efficiency
- Enhance capacity of arboretum as a vehicle for teaching and research in the natural sciences ②
- Open campus access to the Thames River for scholarship and recreation
- Explore potential to develop a sustainable food initiative based on local assets
- Consider developing a sustainable residential facility as part of master planning effort
- Execute space-utilization study to inform capital planning
- Audit administrative structures to ensure efficient and maximal use of talent ③

### DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS OF MAY 2017:

- ① Signed Higher Education Carbon Pricing Endorsement Initiative letter in collaboration with a select group of college and university presidents. | Secured several media placements highlighting the College's sustainability leadership.
- ② Installed new docks in Arboretum to allow classes to access currently inaccessible areas.
- ③ Created Strategic Position Review Committee to scrutinize new staff position requests for possible consolidations or other cost-saving approaches.

## Goal 3: Financial Strength

**Protect and grow the College's financial resources.**

### OBJECTIVES

- *Double the size of the College's endowment*
- *Strategically deploy operating resources to ensure strong enrollments*
- *Explore new programming to diversify revenue streams*
- *Strengthen and expand philanthropic support for College priorities*

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Plan and launch a capital campaign in support of the strategic plan ①
- Fortify annual giving and gifts to endowment
- Increase alumni engagement and participation ②
- Develop a long-term budget addressing capital improvements and deferred maintenance ③
- Create revenue-generating initiatives that take advantage of the campus in summer ④
- Seek collaborative partnerships to improve operations and achieve efficiencies
- Explore new ways to make a Connecticut College education affordable

### DETAILS OF ACTIONS TAKEN AS OF MAY 2017:

- ① Completed feasibility study for a comprehensive campaign in support of the strategic plan.
- ② Completed second Founders Day Challenge with 23% improvement in participation over 2015-16.
- ③ Created 3-, 5-, and 10-year financial models to reduce the College's reliance on tuition, generate new revenue, and bring expenditures in line with enrollments.
- ④ Completed financial review to identify new revenue-generating ideas and cost-saving opportunities, such as new summer programs and collaborative partnerships.



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