Carleton's Future: A Strategic Plan for the College 2012

The College community launched in 2011 a strategic planning process to identify a clear, achievable, measurable, and powerful path for Carleton's next decade.

Purposes of and need for this Plan

Our aim in planning is clear: to preserve and enhance our academic excellence so that Carleton remains one of the very best liberal arts colleges in the world. Achieving this goal requires discernment, discipline, and difficult decisions. We must identify priorities and make—thus taking responsibility for and living with—our choices. This level of accountability is especially necessary in the current era of constrained resources and scrutiny about the value and future of liberal arts colleges and higher education more generally.

This plan identifies six critical next steps we must take over the next 10 years to secure Carleton's continued—indeed, enhanced—success and distinction.

To ensure our success and discipline in addressing Carleton's priorities, it is essential to monitor and share our progress under this plan. In many instances, metrics that will enable us to do this have already been identified by the strategic planning Working Groups and other College leaders. Some metrics will need further refinement. But we must carefully evaluate and measure our success in achieving the goals we have laid out. For this plan will drive Carleton's annual budgets (which are the fiscal embodiment of the goals of the College) and will be reflected in future fundraising initiatives.

Process

This strategic planning process has been conducted in a manner consistent with Carleton's culture—inclusive, transparent, and open. We went to special lengths to draw on the broadest swath of our community expertise.

The process followed a "Question-driven Inquiry" model that began with a set of planning "Assumptions," which were vetted and blessed by the entire community in spring 2011 (Appendix 15[1]). These Assumptions recognize Carleton's defining characteristics and profound strengths we need to draw on and retain (e.g., commitment to the liberal arts; belief in a residential learning experience; diversity as a community strength; a symbiotic relationship between teaching and scholarship; the need to recruit/retain the best faculty and staff; the importance of alumni connections).

To provide the entire community with a common framework for consideration of the issues, we launched the formal process with public "seminars" in fall 2011 to share baseline knowledge of (1) the College's economy and (2) admissions, students, and alumni outcomes.[2]

At the center of the planning process were 13 "Questions to be Answered," also vetted and blessed by the College community in spring 2011 (Appendix 16[3]). Thirteen Working Groups were charged with

[1] https://apps.carleton.edu/strategic/foundation/assumptions/
[2] See https://apps.carleton.edu/strategic/foundation/seminar/ for background information and presentations

[3] https://apps.carleton.edu/strategic/foundation/questions/

"answering" these Questions and proposing a limited set of priorities and action items necessary to bring their "answers" to fruition. In addition to discerning our key opportunities for the coming decade, it is important to note that the Groups were also requested to identify the kinds of—and likely sources of—financial and other resources necessary to achieve their stated goals (Working Group reports attached in Appendices 1-13.). Reliance upon the collective wisdom of these Working Groups (comprised of 139 faculty, students, staff, alumni, trustees, parents, and friends) made this by far the most broad-based planning effort in Carleton's history (Appendix 17[4]).

Each Group sought to conscientiously represent the Carleton community, and thus they found ways to solicit broader public opinion through: public focus groups; targeted meetings with affected parties; surveys; data collection from various offices about Carleton and its peers; studying national trends; and visiting/consulting with outside sources. Regular progress reports were conveyed to faculty and staff (at faculty meetings, Quarterly all-staff meetings, the "Occasional" staff meeting of department and program managers), students (through CSA and other venues), alumni (through the Laird 100 *Voice* column and meetings with alumni volunteer groups), and parent volunteer groups. A web site was also created to keep the community updated throughout the process: https://apps.carleton.edu/strategic/.

In May 2012, the entire Board of Trustees, senior leadership team (Tuesday Group), Conveners of Working Groups, and other faculty and staff leaders held a two-day retreat focused exclusively on the content and impact of the emerging plan and exploring broader themes that crossed Working Group boundaries. To help fill a planning gap identified during these discussions, in summer 2012 we convened a "meta-Group" (chaired by the Dean of the College) to make focused recommendations on how preparing our students for post-Carleton lives and careers should best be linked to and supported by the College's curriculum (Report attached in Appendix 14).

Also during summer 2012, the Tuesday Group and the Conveners of the Working Groups met as a "Steering Committee" to review and bless the overall set of recommendations; to designate the most pressing priorities and critical next steps; and to confirm the secondary initiatives/priorities that should also be part of the plan.

The plan describes six areas of highest priority and then also identifies four areas of secondary priority. We will turn our attention to this second set of important goals once we have begun to address the most immediately pressing recommendations, but we need not wait until our work in those principal domains has been completed.

Our planning effort has also identified other, valuable, but in some cases even longer-range goals, that are necessarily of lower or tertiary priority. Naturally, apart from the priority areas the work of the College will also proceed as part of Carleton's normal processes and evolution.

While it is not possible for every single recommendation from every Group to have the same urgency and importance (and thus not all of the recommendations rise to a "strategic" level for inclusion in an institution-wide planning document), the overall thrust and the core ideas articulated in each of the Working Group reports have been endorsed in principle by the Working Group Conveners and Tuesday Group. The details of implementing this plan must be worked out over succeeding years. Thus, the final action items may not take the precise form, order, or timing described in the relevant Working Group reports. It may be some time before we are able to turn our attention to some of the good—but not essential—ideas that have been suggested.

[4] https://apps.carleton.edu/strategic/workinggroups/

Nevertheless, we are confident that, taken together, these priorities and action items will move Carleton forward in meaningful ways and significantly improve the education we offer our students.

This plan captures the best thinking of our College community. It is "our" plan. Although no plan can address every issue and angle to everyone's perfect satisfaction, the future directions we are adopting embody a powerful consensus that has arisen from large numbers of our fellow community members, refined and strengthened by even broader critique and input. These priorities deserve our support because they arise from our shared values and reflect our shared aspirations.

Critical Next Steps to Secure Carleton's Continued Distinction

The six top priorities for Carleton's coming decade are as follows:

1. **Prepare students more robustly for fulfilling post-graduation lives and careers** (§ 1.).
2. **Enhance our curriculum to improve liberal arts teaching and learning** (§ 2.).
3. **Strengthen the socio-economic diversity of our student body** (§ 3.)**.**
4. **Maintain a self-sustaining economy with a growing endowment per student** (§ 4.).
5. **Make focused investments in facilities that directly advance our mission** (§ 5.).
6. **Embrace collaborative opportunities with other institutions to enhance our academic programs and save costs** (§ 6.).

The following sections describe these priorities and some of the key tactics recommended to accomplish them.

1. <u>Prepare students more robustly for fulfilling post-graduation lives and careers.</u>

Post-Carleton planning will be a four-year process at the center of each student's Carleton experience, and we must create more intentional connections between the curriculum and the lives our students will eventually lead. To do this, we will:

A. <u>Create an integrated, more holistic academic, personal and career advising system for students. This model will be based on a student's four-year developmental arc.</u>

The "first two years" advising program will specially focus on helping students identify aptitudes and interests, translating these into possible life paths, setting goals, selecting classes, and reflecting on learning experiences inside and outside the classroom. First and second year students will be assigned to "Liberal Arts Advisers" who will introduce them to the breadth and richness of Carleton and help them understand the relevance of a liberal arts education for the "real world." Liberal Arts Advisers will principally be faculty, but we shall experiment with selected staff playing this role.

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We will need to train Liberal Arts Advisers carefully and provide them with the right tools—especially online tools (e.g., updated advising web site; "discussion" forms with prompts for topics to cover at individual meetings)—to do their jobs well.

We need to incorporate more of an academic focus during New Student Week. Rather than having incoming first-year students register over the summer, blocks of time could be devoted to academic and life advising, and with group sessions that address general topics followed by individual meetings with Liberal Arts Advisers about course selection.

To maintain students' forward momentum (thus countering the risk of a "sophomore slump,") we will experiment with a two-day "re-orientation" that parallels first-year orientation. In preparation for their sophomore fall advising meeting (perhaps also at other times), students will be asked to write a personal statement reflecting on why Carleton has the graduation requirements it does, the interconnectedness of their courses, and how they envision their liberal arts education relating to their future. Such a statement would then be a key part of a student's advising file (it might also be included in his/her writing portfolio) and would help students articulate to prospective employers and/or fellowship or graduate admissions committees the value of the critical thinking, information literacy, ethical reflection and other skills they have acquired here.

Students in all classes will also benefit from web-based tools such as individually-tailored portfolios of possible advisers/mentors, links to FAQ pages based on class year, and upper-class "pen pals."

Reflecting the importance of advising to our students' success and the fact that advising is a form of <u>both</u> teaching and service, advising should be included in a more substantive way in faculty personnel decisions. Staff serving as Liberal Arts Advisers will also be evaluated as part of their regular performance reviews.

B. <u>Create curricular "pathways" that help students and their "Liberal Arts Advisers" organize and channel learning experiences—and construct a compelling narrative about one's Carleton education.</u>

Web pages for each "pathway" would include suggested courses, co-curricular activities, off-campus study, internships, and service and student work opportunities that prepare students for given endeavors, as well as key campus, alumni, and parent contacts.

A full-time position (most likely in the Dean of the College Office) will likely be needed for a year or so to create and curate these web-based "pathways." Each academic department will be asked to designate a Career Center liaison who will help develop and promote department-linked internships and alumni networking.

C. <u>Urge and then help students to purposefully explore possible careers, with a particular emphasis on internships.</u>

We should strive to expose students to the full range of available career/life planning programs. For instance, we can more aggressively publicize internships and experiential learning opportunities and create conversations around the value of these possibilities. We believe that, through better coordination and integration of existing programs, by rigorously evaluating such programs, and being willing to modify or terminate those that are not

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effective and efficient, we can provide students with a strong set of experiences that will lead to additional opportunities after graduation.

Because internships are among the best ways to consider and contrast various paths, we must maximize the internship opportunities available to and secured by Carleton students. By their third year and thereafter, students should have options to participate in internships, potentially multiple times in different areas. While most internships will take place during summers and winter break, internships might also be created during the academic year on campus and in Northfield and its environs.

Promotion of internships will require a multi-faceted approach, including:

i. discussing internships in academic advising sessions;

ii. devoting appropriate staff resources in the Career Center (probably at least one full-time position) to identifying, creating, filling and evaluating internships.

iii. designating a specific course number for internships and enabling students to earn credit for them through "analysis of the experience" independent study or credit-bearing seminars in which students returning from internships (or other off-campus experiences) debrief and reflect on what they have learned.

D. Emphasize student research as a defining component of a Carleton education.

Our Senior Comprehensive ("Comps") requirement is a distinguishing characteristic and can be an excellent foundation for the kinds of professional independence and initiative that will be demanded of our graduates. (§ 2. A. i.)

E. Have Student Life staff and Carleton faculty collaboratively design programs to help students integrate—and to understand and articulate the value of integrating—the skills they have developed through co-curricular activities (e.g., athletics, volunteering, student leadership) with their academic work, and vice versa.

A director of advising, based in the office of the Dean of the College, will play a leadership role providing advising support for faculty and staff and—in conjunction with the Division of Student Life—helping to bridge curricular and co-curricular student learning.

F. Academic Offerings beyond the confines of the campus.

We will increase our commitment to off-campus study, academic civic engagement, and service learning programs. (§2. A. iv.)

G. Make opportunities for practical career preparation available on campus.

Student work supervisors will teach student employees about expectations and professionalism in the workplace. Campus jobs can also give some students the opportunity to learn how to supervise less-experienced peers. We should also offer non-credit courses and/or workshops in life and career skills (e.g. managing household finances, interviewing, networking), typically taught by alumni and staff.

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H. Tap the expertise and help of Carleton alumni and parents.

These key groups will be asked to offer students guidance (e.g., sharing their own lives/career paths), furnish practical tips, create internships, build connections with professional schools and graduate programs, and hire Carls.

To fully tap alumni/parent expertise and to more effectively report on alumni outcomes, we will need to improve the quality of student and alumni databases. We will also need to devote full-time staff (either in the Career Center or Alumni Relations) to creating and managing large networks of alumni and parent volunteers.

More broadly, we will need to demonstrate and communicate the life-long value of a Carleton education to a public that is focused increasingly on costs. Alumni mentors and parent contacts will be listed as potential resources on appropriate "pathways" (§1. B.)

I. Extend career and life planning assistance to recent Carleton alumni.

Our goal should be to help alumni for at least two years after graduation.[5]

2. Enhance our curriculum to improve liberal arts teaching and learning.

In recent years, Carleton has revamped and strengthened its graduation requirements (e.g., adding Argument and Inquiry Seminars for first-year students), added selected new programs/majors (e.g., Environmental Studies, Arabic), and embarked on curricular initiatives (e.g., emphasizing visuality, academic civic engagement, interdisciplinary science) that enrich our academic profile. Though Carleton's curriculum is dynamic and constantly-evolving, we anticipate that the coming decade will be less about new programs and more focused on refining and sharpening the quality and effectiveness of our current academic offerings—steps that will help us achieve the educational goals laid out in this plan.

A. Integrate learning experiences across our curriculum.

i. As noted in §1. A., we will create more intentional and sustained connections between the curriculum and the lives students will lead after graduation.

In addition to research for Comps, we will expand opportunities for student research across all disciplines (both independently and in collaboration with faculty) through additional grants and incentives for faculty. We will particularly emphasize expanded student research in the humanities and social sciences and securing student research funding necessary to maintain Carleton's historic leadership in the physical and biological sciences. This will also include: publicly trumpeting and celebrating our students' research achievements; providing more financial and logistical support for students to attend conferences where they share their research; and helping students become more skilled at and comfortable with talking about their achievements (an important aspect of positioning oneself for any career). (As noted in §5. A. ii., investments in undergraduate and faculty research space will advance this goal.)

[5] Also recognizing that many students will need assistance applying to graduate and professional schools more than two years after graduating.

We shall generate expanded internship opportunities, drawing more extensively on Carleton alumni and parents. Such internships give students experiences that can help them choose a career path and land a first job (§1. C.).

We currently offer a number of courses in "practical" topics of great interest to students including clinical aspects of medicine, accounting, banking, finance, journalism, public policy administration, and counseling psychology. Such existing courses should be integrated into curricular "pathways," and the number of such courses should be expanded across the curriculum. Such courses can be grounded in disciplinary frameworks, and may be taught by visiting experts, including alumni or parents, drawing on appropriate endowed funds. We do not envision creating formal concentrations or majors in such areas, however.

ii. Explore ways to foster integration of learning across disciplines and fields (e.g., through multidisciplinary courses, dyads, linked courses, or course projects). As with all pedagogical innovations, we will thoughtfully assess student learning outcomes from such efforts. (As noted in §5. A. i., state-of-the-art interdisciplinary classrooms will advance this goal.)

iii. Student Life staff and Carleton faculty will jointly design programs to help students link the skills they develop through co-curricular activities with their academic work. A director of advising (as described in § 1.E.) would help integrate student learning and leadership, as well as improve advising.

iv. We will increase our commitment to and promote programs and experiences that connect the education students receive on campus with communities beyond campus—locally, nationally and internationally. This includes off-campus study, academic civic engagement and other forms of service learning. To this end we will:

- Encourage students to travel to areas of the world that are becoming increasingly important (e.g., Africa, Latin America and the Middle East) and that have been underrepresented in terms of off-campus study participation.

- Create required pre-departure and re-entry workshops or other programs that lead students to prepare for and reflect on their off-campus experience in order to integrate it more fully with their education on campus.

- Have all departments review their major requirements to ensure they do not unintentionally preclude students from having an off-campus experience.

- Off-campus study offerings that draw our students to Carleton-hosted programs will help retain financial aid that would otherwise go off-campus.

v. We shall promote an institution-wide perspective in communications and conversation about the curriculum, including topics such as new initiatives, the allocation of faculty lines, and external challenges and opportunities facing the College. In supporting this broad context for discussion, the Dean of the College will also solicit input from Admissions, alumni, and parents on how our curriculum meets the perceived and actual needs of prospective and matriculated students.

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B. Experiment with Online Learning Models.

Online educational materials and platforms are proliferating. While based on a fundamentally different educational model than Carleton's, low- or no-cost online offerings could evolve into a serious threat to traditional colleges. However, online teaching and related technologies could also provide intriguing opportunities to improve our pedagogy, our efficiency, and to enhance the residential liberal arts model of learning.

The best way to ensure that Carleton remains smart and nimble in responding to changes in technology and the growth in online learning is to monitor and experiment continually with emerging pedagogies and to know them well. Entirely apart from any shifts in our competitive landscape (as discussed in § Secondary Initiatives, 1.), such experimentation can also help us adapt new technologies and techniques to our own purposes and benefit. We can count on our faculty and staff to take the lead in making smart pedagogical choices and sharing best practices.

Online learning may prove especially attractive in high-demand areas (e.g., introductory prerequisite courses) so that faculty can make the most effective and efficient use of limited contact time.

i. We will establish an ongoing Future Learning Technologies Group that will:

- Evaluate and audition opportunities for Carleton faculty to benefit by using online tools in classes, in other academic settings, and for institutional programs.[6]

- Identify mechanisms (e.g., grants, course releases, workshops, hardware/software options) to help faculty/staff develop online tools and materials for blended learning, utilize other technology platforms (e.g., tablet/PC apps) and experiment with new learning technologies and equipment.

- Study, educate, raise awareness campus-wide, and make recommendations related to the following key areas: joining with other institutions in new and established technology consortia and partnerships (§ 6.); investigating threats to the residential liberal arts model from lower-priced, quality online alternatives; exploring the use of online teaching and related technologies by our competitors, including both the pedagogical and cost-effectiveness of such use; monitoring emerging trends such as employer/institutional/societal acceptance of new online learning credentials (e.g., badges, certificates) versus traditional degrees; and conducting assessments of learning outcomes of online education, particularly for 18-22 year-old undergraduates.

These roles are consistent with the recommendations and needs identified by the Dean of the College's recent study group on Online Learning Models.[7]

[6] Of course, the Education and Curriculum Committee will also need to play its proper role in any curricular experiments.
[7] Study group report available at https://apps.carleton.edu/strategic/.

ii. The Dean of the College, in consultation with faculty governance, will organize a competitive internal grant program offering summer support to faculty revising their courses to experiment with hybrid, blended, "flipped," or other technology-infused course models.

iii. Some online courses could enhance our curriculum by enabling us to tap into faculty expertise on other campuses. Accordingly, pursuant to recommendations from the Future Learning Technologies Group, we will explore collaborating with peer institutions to develop courses or course modules that are provided live in one location and accessed online in others.

iv. Carleton should create a series of distance learning courses for alumni. In addition to giving faculty and staff experience with the technology, such "alumni college" courses would serve the College's mission of creating life-long learners and increase alumni connection with Carleton. The length of courses could vary from as short as a lecture to as long as a term. The Carleton Institute for Teaching Excellence, recommended by the Blue Sky Working Group (§ Secondary Initiatives, 2. B.), could also provide an excellent venue for these and other online learning experiments.

Additional resources will have to be devoted to these purposeful forays into online learning. More costly investments in information technology infrastructure (e.g., expanded bandwidth, new media support, development of mobile device applications) may also be required.

As detailed in the report of the Competition Working Group (Appendix 13), Carleton will rigorously assess the outcomes of these online experiments, looking, for instance, at the number of courses created/revised; the number of students/alums in those courses; student/alumni learning and satisfaction; and interviews with teaching faculty.

3. <u>Strengthen the socio-economic diversity of our student body</u>.

The College must work to ensure that a Carleton education remains (and is also perceived to be) financially accessible to individuals across the entire spectrum of socio-economic diversity. While there are a number of ways in which Carleton would like to increase the diversity of its student body (this being consistent with the assumptions that underlie our planning process), the most pressing such "gap" at this time is in the socio-economic diversity of our students.

We recognize that socio-economic diversity is correlated to some extent with other kinds of diversity that will enhance our student body and students' learning experience (e.g., racial and ethnic diversity; first-generation college students). This creates recruitment opportunities because some of these other important forms of diversity should also be enhanced on both educational and competitive grounds (§ Secondary Initiatives, 1. A. ii.).

Carleton exists in a dynamic and competitive environment for the caliber and character of the students we seek to recruit. Our admissions and financial aid policies must be sensitive to these realities. Our practices, therefore, should balance this need to be competitive with the need to live within our means.

A. <u>Setting Tuition.</u>

Consistent with the analysis and recommendations in § 4, Carleton will continue to attempt to set its tuition/fees at levels comparable to our national peers (as opposed to being a price-leader or a price

discounter). While in any given year relative measures will vary, tuition should be adjusted to ensure that, over the intermediate term, our pricing remains in the second or third quartile of this group. Aggressive tuition increases (e.g., beyond the rate of inflation) are likely to reduce Carleton's ability to attract students from diverse backgrounds and force us into even fiercer competition for full-paying students who meet our admissions standards.

B. Providing Financial Aid.

The College's financial aid policies must be rooted in enduring Carleton values. By articulating and prioritizing these values, our community can ensure that our admissions and financial aid decisions are consistent with our beliefs.

Our current financial aid policy, crafted in the early 1990s, has led us to focus more on the mechanics of the admissions and financial aid award process (in particular, whether and how we stay within the confines of a "15% cap" on need-sensitive admissions) rather than on enrollment outcomes—that is, the desired characteristics of the classes we are able to recruit, enroll, and graduate. Over time, this has constrained our ability to recruit and enroll our ideal class. Consistent with the conclusions of the campus Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (AFAC), our financial realities, our strategic priorities and the changing demographics of the United States, Carleton must adopt a new and more sustainable policy.

Our overall goal is to admit students without regard to financial need to the greatest extent possible. Accordingly, while making admissions decisions consistent with the goals that have been articulated by the Ideal Student Body Working Group, our financial aid decisions and policy will be rooted in these values:

i. Meeting the full demonstrated financial need of current students on campus;

ii. Meeting the full demonstrated need of all accepted students;

iii. Similar packaging of financial aid for students with comparable financial need; and

iv. Striking a balance between grants, loans, and on-campus employment in our aid awards such that all students have access to the full Carleton experience.

Student enrollment outcomes measures (e.g., the size of the average aid award; the percentage of our student body receiving aid; and the income distribution of our student body) will serve as "guardrails" to enable us to ensure that our results are consistent with our goals. AFAC should monitor our performance, reporting to the College community and spurring further dialogue as needed.

Loans are an important component of the Carleton financial aid package and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. While average loan balances for our graduates still remain at what we view to be manageable levels, the College should remain vigilant that the demands of future loan repayments do not materially constrain our students' ability to take full advantage of Carleton while here or their schooling and career choices soon after they graduate. Therefore, we must continue to evaluate the impact of loans on Carleton students and explore ways to reduce harmful stress. The College will also need to maintain policies and practices that reduce the impact of economic differences on students' Carleton experience (e.g., no sororities/fraternities,

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no differentiated housing fees).

Over time, financial aid will need to increase relative to our fees if we are working to improve our socio-economic diversity.

C. We must increase our efforts to pursue additional funds for need-based scholarships.

Endowing such scholarships is especially important because it will help cover our growing financial aid budget and simultaneously increase Carleton's endowment-per-student ratio (which is a key determinant of our long-term fiscal health).

4. Maintain a self-sustaining economy with a growing endowment per student.

Some might characterize this as a means to our academic ends, rather than a goal in itself. But unless we have a solid fiscal and personnel base, our ability to achieve our mission is compromised. Recommendations about Carleton's economy became much clearer in light of the conclusion of the Size of the College Working Group that our student body should not grow greatly (See Appendix 1.).

The Working Group charged with examining the College's economy identified a powerful set of constraints on Carleton's ability to grow its traditional revenue streams (e.g., the market will not sustain large increases in the comprehensive fee; forecasts call for modest returns on endowment; our current "spending rate" draws an appropriate balance between present and future needs; the world economy remains sluggish; and—while there is important room for improvement—our fundraising efforts are already very sophisticated). There are also acute pressures on the expense side of the ledger (e.g., more generous financial aid and deferred maintenance of campus buildings top this list, followed closely by more competitive faculty salaries).

We believe that the core premise upon which Carleton rests—the life-changing value of a residential, personalized liberal arts education—remains compelling. However, we must be willing to anticipate and embrace changes that help us realize that goal. Taken together, budget projections for "business as usual" do not lead to a sustainable economy a decade from now. And unforeseen upheavals in the higher-education market (e.g., low-cost models of online education reduce our applicant pool) could force Carleton to make quicker, more radical changes.

The most powerful way to continue to achieve our current academic aspirations while also ensuring that Carleton is in a position of the greatest-possible strength as we embark on future planning is to raise the level of the endowment.

A. Explore opportunities for revenue enhancement.

Although these may be limited, we have had some very real success at generating revenues (approximately $507,500 in FY11) through a suite of summer programs aimed principally at high school students and teachers. We need to aggressively pursue the expansion of this funding stream, aiming towards a goal of $1 million in net revenue. In formulating plans for our summer programs, we should keep in mind the following objectives (in prioritized order): generating net revenue; recruiting prospective students; raising Carleton's visibility and the profile of the liberal arts; and supplementing faculty/staff compensation.

B. Savings through productivity.

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Since 57% of our budget is spent on compensation[8], savings will chiefly need to come from productivity gains across the College–i.e., doing what we do now (or even more) with fewer people on the payroll. This means seeking to keep the student:faculty and the student:staff ratio at or above its current level. This also means increasing productivity through the use of technology in teaching and developing further efficiencies in administrative operations.

C. Reallocation of resources.

As a consequence of all the foregoing, necessary new programs and colleagues are likely to come from reallocation of extant resources rather than by accretion. As we evaluate changes and proposals to reallocate funds, we will do well if we constantly and honestly ask ourselves: "How does this proposal enhance the core mission of the College?"

Given that we still will need to evolve and grow in certain areas—both curricular and co-curricular—we should approve new programs or initiatives that require significant investments of time and money only sparingly, and we must also be willing to dial back or even end our commitments in other areas. Natural attrition will provide opportunities to reallocate faculty and staff positions on the margins. But the College should adopt a policy of "start one–stop one" to make sure that the evolution of our offerings does not end up simply adding faculty or staff lines.

D. Human resources.

While the quality of the people who teach and support our students is paramount to Carleton's excellence, we must make recruitment and retention choices in the context of the broader economy and values of the College.

i. Our most pressing need is to raise associate professor salaries, moving closer to the median of our peer group.[9] The College began to address this gap in its FY13 budget by increasing the salary "bump" to newly-tenured associate professors to $7,000 (and doing so retroactively).

ii. Our second priority is raising full professor salaries to a more competitive position[10]. We should also aim to hold our currently-strong position for staff recruitment and retention.

iii. We must also manage the cost of employee benefits, keeping the percentage of the budget devoted to payroll and benefits from exceeding the current 33% level. According to an employee survey conducted as part of the strategic planning process, health and retirement plan costs and coverage take precedence over all other benefits.

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[8] Economy of Carleton Seminar (September 19, 2011) Slideshow, p. 40: https://apps.carleton.edu/strategic/foundation/seminar/.

[9] Historically Carleton has used a 16-member peer group for its compensation analyses: Amherst College, Bowdoin College, Bryn Mawr College, Colorado College, Grinnell College, Haverford College, Macalester College, Middlebury College, Oberlin College, Pomona College, Reed College, Smith College, Swarthmore College, Wellesley College, Wesleyan University (CT), Williams College.

[10] Compared to peers, full professor salaries are not as low as those of associate professors. The higher base built in through more competitive associate professor salaries will help address some of the shortfall for full professors—as long as we are able to maintain those gains.

iv. The College will support the professional development of all its faculty and staff. Funding for faculty development grants must be increased so that professors at all ranks have opportunities to grow. These opportunities will be especially important since we are not planning for faculty expansion to meet new curricular demands and frame new initiatives.

Parallel investments in our employees are needed to build loyalty and job satisfaction alongside essential expertise. Staff with enhanced skills will make Carleton more efficient. Our Human Resources office also will undertake a discussion with staff and seek creative approaches to the issue of "paid time off," studying best practices among our peers.

E. Freeing up time and resources for core academic functions.

To become more productive, we must use time and structure the College's administrative operations, including its technological infrastructure and other support, in ways that help faculty focus on teaching students and on their research.

i. We must identify and provide the types of support that faculty most need (e.g., administrative assistants, student workers, information technology professionals, new or different technology applications, improved work processes). This may entail restructuring, sharing, or consolidating some positions.

ii. We also need to reduce the amount of time community members, particularly faculty, devote to governance without undermining our values of transparency, inclusiveness, and building consensus. This will require some fundamental cultural shifts. If there is committed faculty and administrative leadership, support for change, and greater willingness to trust one another, we can streamline and improve governance and College operations by:

- Reducing the number of formal and informal departmental, program, constituency-based, and College-wide committees and task forces (hereinafter collectively "Committees"), while expanding and clarifying the mandates and reporting lines of remaining Committees;

- Reducing, where appropriate, the number of individuals serving on Committees;

- Providing for overlapping Committee membership where this would increase effectiveness and efficiency;

- Setting termination dates for Committees whose work can be completed in a finite period; and

- Enhancing the ways in which Committees maintain the continuity of their records and keep both their members and the broader community informed of their work.

iii. We should devise a system whereby faculty who regularly supervise student research or take on additional advising responsibilities either receive teaching credit or are relieved of some other responsibilities.

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By making more effective use of faculty and staff time, taking advantage of technology, and leveraging inter-institutional collaborations (§ 6.), new energies and resources can be devoted to the advising and curricular enhancements called for in this plan (§ 1.).

In the long term, the single most important guarantor of Carleton's fiscal health is the endowment. Increasing the College's endowment-per-student ratio must therefore be a major goal, since it gives us the wherewithal to achieve our mission, creates greater financial flexibility, and allows us to keep pace with (and ideally to catch or surpass) our chief competitors. We can achieve this key objective by superior investment performance, attracting significant gifts to the endowment, and continuing a highly-disciplined approach toward the endowment draw.

5. Make focused investments in facilities that directly advance our mission.

Since we do not project any substantial increase in the size of the student body (and will need to plan deliberately even for any modest incremental growth), any physical plant expansion will be driven by programmatic needs rather than in response to a projected increase in the student population. At this time we need not plan for significant new construction of dormitories, additional office space for an expanded faculty and staff, and the like.

To help us determine the best uses of our space and future needs, we will begin a Facilities Master Planning process that is informed by the goals and issues addressed in this Strategic Plan. In addition to our programming needs, project costs and the availability of funding will determine changes in our physical plant.

Some of the cost of necessary projects can come from borrowing, as Carleton has the capacity to add more debt without lowering its Aa2 debt rating. While we need to maintain that rating, it is possible that borrowing for selected maintenance projects may save us money over the long term if the costs of such projects increase faster than inflation.

A. The three most pressing projects to be addressed in the next decade are:

i. All disciplines—but especially the Humanities and Social Sciences—need more 30-50 seat classrooms that allow for multiple teaching approaches and the fulsome use of educational technology. For example, space in Leighton Hall might be renovated into classrooms.[11]

ii. We must make necessary investments in facilities so that Carleton maintains its historic leadership in undergraduate physical and biological science education. We must still determine the correct mix of renovating extant spaces and/or new construction through a focused planning process, but we need modern, interactive teaching space, space for undergraduate and faculty research, and appropriate faculty offices and infrastructure (e.g., storage and utilities). The overarching goal—consistent with our recent campus-based curricular innovations and the vision of the Science and Math Steering Board—must be the development of shared spaces that explicit drive forward interdisciplinary and cross-departmental teaching and research.

[11] Full utilization of all current teaching periods (and perhaps adding earlier or later periods) might reduce the need for additional classrooms.

iii. Consistent with numerous prior studies that have addressed the chronic problems and shortcomings of the Music and Drama complex, we need to demolish that structure and meet the music teaching and performance needs of our academic and co-curricular programs by building new classroom and rehearsal spaces, practice rooms, appropriate storage space, and a smaller recital hall. Further study will be needed as part of Facilities Master Planning on how best—and over what time frame—to meet campus needs for events requiring large (400-plus seat) venues.

B. Other priority—but less pressing—physical plant needs that we should address are:

i. Renovate and restore Scoville Hall for a highly visible and important purpose;

ii. Consistent with the recommendations of the 2007 Residential Life Strategic Housing Master Plan[12], build more townhomes to accommodate student interest in more independent living and board options;

iii. Centralize academic support functions in Gould Library and expand research and teaching space in Special Collections and Archives; and

iv. Reconfigure and make the best possible use of spaces within Sayles-Hill as our Campus Center.[13]

C. The College must also make meaningful headway in addressing its considerable backlog of deferred maintenance projects.

We can do this by continuing with renovations of extant campus buildings (e.g., Evans, Scoville, and other projects noted above); restoring the annual maintenance budget at least to its pre-2008 recession level; and budgeting for a contingency fund of between .5% and 1% of the total operating budget. When not used for contingencies, this would become a modest annual budget surplus that would be reserved for maintenance needs. Such stewardship of the College's physical plant is part of maintaining a self-sustaining economy (§ 4.).

6. Embrace collaborative opportunities with other institutions to enhance our academic program and save costs.

Enhancing the academic experience we offer at Carleton need not be a solitary undertaking. Carleton is fortunate to have potential partners in geographic and philosophical proximity. Exploring these potential relationships with other institutions is an important lever in maximizing our resources and opportunities.

A. The prospects for collaboration with St. Olaf are especially compelling.

The two colleges recently sought and received a joint planning grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to explore and support such links. Building off the strong extant relationship between our two libraries, we will seek to coordinate and share "back office" functions. Similarly, technological support across both campuses—including the use of shared online

[12] Strategic Housing Master Plan 2007 report of the Residential Life Task Force, executive summary available at https://apps.carleton.edu/strategic/.

[13] While this issue will be addressed as part of Facilities Master Planning, an excellent foundation for such study is the 2011 Student Life report *Sayles Hill Campus Center Master Space Plan Exploratory Potential* (report available at https://apps.carleton.edu/strategic/.)

learning technology—would seem to be a prime candidate for sharing resources to improve service and reduce costs. We should also experiment with shared faculty development programs and offer incentives for collaborative curricula.

The two Northfield colleges need to look for ways to share positions, since this is where the bulk of our respective budgets lie. This will involve careful discussions and arrangements—especially for any potential joint faculty lines. But the possible savings and opportunities for expanded and improved programs are significant. We should also pursue modest changes to our academic calendars to enable further cooperation (e.g., synchronizing the opening of fall term) and explore ways to make it easier for students to take courses at either institution.

B. Partnerships with other colleges, universities, educational and research institutions (e.g., the Mayo Clinic), and foundations interested in undergraduate teaching and learning could provide funding, branding and participants for the visibility- and revenue-generating recommendations (§ 4, A.).

The preceding priorities will be Carleton's strategic foci during the coming decade. Sustained attention to these six areas will allow us to do an even better job of living up to our aspirations for our students and our College.

Secondary Initiatives/Priorities

Four additional areas also deserve particular attention in future years. Each of these recommendations would further secure Carleton's position as one of the very best liberal arts colleges.

1. **Monitor and respond to our competitive landscape** (§ Secondary Initiatives 1.).
2. **Raise Carleton's visibility** (§ Secondary Initiatives 2.).
3. **Explore student interest in an honor code** (§ Secondary Initiatives 3.).
4. **Be more efficient, flexible, and creative in how we structure the learning environment** (§ Secondary Initiatives 4.).

Without waiting for our work on the six top priorities to be completed, we should also turn our attention to these important goals for Carleton.

1. Monitor and respond to our competitive landscape.

In this era of heightened accountability and increasingly fierce competition, we must be even better at critiquing and improving our performance in all we do, while scrutinizing the performance (and, where helpful, adopting the best practices of) our peers and rivals. This is a time both to be proactive and to respond quickly and strategically to new opportunities. The following areas are where we feel the most acute competitive pressures at present:

A. Prospective Students.

i. Anticipating national demographic shifts, Carleton needs to strategically re-shape its student body toward areas with growing numbers of prospective students. While we shall continue to have many Midwestern students—and indeed, to retain our Midwestern charm and candor as defining aspects of our culture—this will require us to continue to place greater recruitment emphasis on the West Coast (Washington, Oregon, and California), which is already an area of growing strength, and in the Southeast (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina), an area of current relative weakness. Additional Admissions staff resources will likely need to be devoted to these efforts, and Admissions should also make the fullest possible use of technology (including emerging social media tools) to recruit students virtually.

Success will lead to increased applications from targeted areas. Looking out ten years, we should aspire to 10% more applications from the Southeast and 25% more from the West (relative to 2012). In addition, we hope that by 2022 the fraction of the class hailing from the West will rise by 10%; an aspirational goal might be to increase students from the West by 20%. These increases will be accommodated by reductions in students from the Northeast and/or Midwest, where prospective student populations are expected to keep dropping.

ii. Maintaining and enhancing the racial/ethnic diversity of Carleton's student body is desirable on educational grounds (this adds to the quality of all students' learning and personal growth) and is a positive factor in the competition for the best prospective students. Since 2005, students of color have comprised at least 20% of our students. The College should seek to sustain these levels while working towards a combined goal of 25% or more domestic students of color. As the overall percentage of students of color increases, so should populations of various groups (i.e., African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native) and mixed- and multi-racial students.[14]

iii. Carleton should work towards an international student enrollment goal of 12%. Ideally, international students should also come from a variety of countries and reflect a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

B. Current students.

Carleton must enhance the competitive position of its graduates, whatever their desired pursuits. To this end, we will aggressively pursue connections with top professional and graduate schools to strengthen career advising and help students in the application process. Stronger links would be especially helpful in nursing, veterinary science, public health, accounting, actuarial science, and elementary and science education certification.

C. Faculty/staff recruitment and retention.

Projected 2% annual increases in the faculty and staff compensation pool (contained in the College's present budget model) are unlikely to keep Carleton competitive in attracting and retaining outstanding employees over the long term. More immediately, since—fortunately—our

[14] The new federal racial/ethnic category guidelines will tend to increase Hispanic ethnicity counts and are likely to lead to statistical drops in groups that we would have formerly classified racially as African-American, American Indian, and Asian. New counting methods will also lead to an increase in the "two or more races" group.

current health and retirement plans meet or exceed those provided by our peer group, the compensation priorities discussed in § 4. D. are our most pressing needs in this realm. Carleton should also develop a more formal program to assist with seeking appropriate employment for the spouse/partner of prospective faculty.

Going forward, we will regularly monitor, in a rigorous way, the actions and impact of other entities (colleges, universities, for-profit business and other organizations) who can affect our ability to attract the students and faculty we seek and to deliver the best liberal arts education.

2. Raise Carleton's visibility.

A common and longstanding frustration among even the best liberal arts colleges is that they do not garner the recognition they deserve. To help correct for this, the College should:

A. Aspire to raise its profile and reputation for excellence among key constituencies—especially prospective students and those who influence them (e.g., parents, guidance counselors); potential donors; current and prospective employers of our graduates; and opinion leaders.

Carleton will always conduct and promote itself in ways that are genuine and consistent with its values and culture. Among the steps we can take to achieve wider recognition for our quality are:

i. Aggressively push stories about the work of our faculty, students, and staff and campus events on our web site, through local and national media outlets, in talks by touring faculty, and via a College YouTube channel. Our successes and impact will also be shared widely on campus and with alumni.

ii. Creatively use the College's convening power—its ability to draw prominent visitors and illuminate vital issues of the day—through Convocation and other speaker series, sponsoring conferences or symposia, or positioning Carleton as a leading authority or source of important information.

iii. Seek to instill in our student body a deeper ethos of leadership and promote and celebrate as examples the accomplishments of our alumni.

iv. Develop important tools such as a standard thumbnail description and an "elevator speech" that capture the gist of Carleton's quality and distinctive strengths. Our staff can help College representatives, alumni and parents become comfortable using these concise and consistent messages. In recognition of growing public concern about college costs and the value of an investment in higher education, special attention should be given to developing clear and useful information about Carleton's affordability and the outcomes of a Carleton education.

B. Pilot a summer workshop on pedagogy aimed at faculty who are just beginning their teaching careers.

A Carleton Institute for Teaching Excellence ("CITE"), modeled after the Learning and Teaching Center's new faculty workshop, would demonstrate why the College is ranked so highly in undergraduate teaching, help us "own" this particular attribute in the eyes of a broader public, and facilitate our keeping abreast of innovations in liberal arts pedagogy. We would expect the CITE to generate a profit. If the pilot is successful, CITE could be expanded to attract graduate

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students/post-docs and/or international faculty interested in the liberal arts teaching model, or to include more specialized workshops that could attract more senior faculty seeking professional development.

C. Determine the feasibility of a post-baccalaureate pre-med program that would leverage Carleton's strength in the sciences and produce significant new revenues.

Raising Carleton's profile will take time and effort and will cost money. As an initial matter, the internal steps to bolster the College's recognition as discussed above will require a reallocation of resources to the External Relations division. Pressing ahead more aggressively, we should commit resources to retain professional marketing and branding expertise on how to increase awareness of and admiration for Carleton among our key audiences. This is likely to involve engaging a sophisticated agency with public relations, advertising, research, and digital capabilities. Ideally we can draw upon knowledgeable alumni and friends to assist in these efforts.

3. Explore student interest in an honor code.

If there is broad student support, committed leadership, and a willingness to take responsibility for its operation, Carleton should adopt a Code governing students' academic and social rights and responsibilities. Such a Code—grounded in and reflecting Carleton's core values and reinforcing many existing positive campus customs —would help nurture an open and inclusive environment where all students can grow and develop. It would inform other College policies and practices and also help guide faculty and staff in their work with students.

The precise provisions of the Code would be drafted by a community committee and approved by the student body so that all students would feel a sense of ownership in defining and living up to communal standards. The Code would encompass not only expectations of academic honesty typically embodied in honor codes, but also values of tolerance and respect for the well-being and property of everyone who lives and works in the Carleton community. The Code could evolve in response to ongoing conversations among students, faculty and staff (perhaps sponsored by Ethical Inquiry at Carleton and others) about the values essential to our community and the ways they are expressed.

4. Be more efficient, flexible, and creative in how we structure the learning environment.

The following strategies, together with inter-institutional collaborations (§ 6.), will enable Carleton to deploy its resources to add academic quality.

A. Efficiency through wise use of technology.

Because technology at Carleton is ubiquitous, expensive, and subject to continual rapid change, it is essential that our spending on technology be driven by established strategic priorities. Our technology infrastructure must be developed coherently and efficiently. Furthermore, given the high financial, operational—and, in some cases, even emotional—stakes of investments in technology, decisions and processes in this realm must be especially transparent, inclusive, and consistent so as to engender maximum trust and confidence.

B. Creative Uses of Time.

Our allocation of time needs to reflect our values and priorities. We need to be creative in our thinking and challenge our assumptions in order to leverage this singularly precious resource. Recommendations for changes include:

i. Offering more 5-week and 15-week courses (especially if this facilitates longer research projects, more sustained engagement with community partners in civic engagement courses and more collaboration with St. Olaf).

ii. A mix of one-on-one and group advising will let students take advantage of peers' experiences and more effectively use faculty time.

iii. Consider creative ways of using winter break (not only for faculty development workshops and two-week off-campus programs, but also for internships, student research opportunities, and other initiatives).

C. Wise and efficient use of campus space.

As noted in the sections on a Sustainable Economy (§ 4.), and Facilities (§ 5.), Carleton should make the best use of its available space and work to lower the operating and maintenance costs of its existing and new physical plant.

Resource Implications

This plan lays out a path for Carleton's successful and distinguished future. In order to proceed in the directions we have identified, the College will need to devote appropriate resources to the critical tasks at hand. Therefore, as part of the planning effort, each of the Working Groups was required to identify the level—and sources—of any new funding necessary to achieve their stated goals. In the prevailing tight fiscal climate, such recommendations have not been made frivolously. Many of the Working Groups offered a variety of suggestions for developing or directing resources, including cutting growth in the College's operating budget growth by one or more percentage points; reallocations within the current budget (apart from any growth); new fundraising; new or expanded revenue-generating activities; and taking on new debt.

The College's regular budget process and its duly-constituted leaders (e.g., the Budget Committee, Tuesday Group, and ultimately the Board) must determine the mechanics of how to pay for the priorities articulated in this plan—including how we ultimately add or redeploy faculty and staff positions called for in the Working Group reports to support various initiatives.

It bears repeating that progress toward our goals will require taking responsibility for and living with choices we have made through this planning process. Our budgets and future actions must reflect our planning goals and our underlying institutional values. This is sure to result in some reallocations of time, effort, and money.

Evaluating our Progress

The focus and budgetary discipline called for above will help us steward our resources wisely and ensure that we achieve our desired outcomes. Indeed, the truly important work lies not in the formulation but rather in the implementation of this plan. This will involve:

A. Utilizing existing or new structures to evaluate and report on the results of our work. Appendix 18 lists possible metrics identified by the Working Groups, with additional suggestions generated by the Office of Institutional Research and the Tuesday Group. Immediately following the adoption of this strategic plan, a principal task for the College's leadership will be to sharpen and refine these potential tools, selecting a modest set of data that can be collected and assessed longitudinally. We shall share the relevant metrics and the resultant data with the community in periodic reports that will let us evaluate our progress towards our principal goals.

B. Engaging in a Facilities Master Planning process, which must flow from the objectives outlined in this plan (§5).

C. Monitoring the College's competitive landscape by critiquing our performance and the activities of our peers and by recommending adoption of best practices (§ Secondary Initiatives, 1.).

D. Considering, through a Future Learning Technologies group (§2,B.i.), Carleton's ongoing strategic position relative to new online pedagogies, working with faculty to explore and implement initiatives that align with our values and the competitive landscape.

We will principally turn to existing offices and structures, campus leaders, and governance bodies to bring our recommendations to fruition.

Going forward, like all great colleges and universities, Carleton must also make efforts to peer into an even longer-range, more murky and fluid future. Even as we plan for the next decade, events occur and ideas and technologies emerge whose full impacts may only be apparent years hence. Fortunately, as we develop skill at monitoring our current performance and envisioning changes and alternatives, we can become more nimble as an institution and instill creativity in all our decision-making—thus maximizing our future choices and range of actions.

Conclusion

With special thanks to all of the members of the strategic planning Working Groups, we now have a clear road map for Carleton to follow in pursuit of enduring academic quality. We know what we must do to continue to provide a truly superb liberal arts education to our students, to meet the expectations of our graduates, to remain central in the lives of our alumni, to promote outstanding faculty scholarship and artistry, and to serve the larger world. We know as well that these goals are achievable and important.

As each of us in the College community embraces and works to realize this exciting shared vision, we can draw further confidence that our success in accomplishing these plans will make Carleton stronger and better and, indeed, ensure its continued distinction and its brilliant future.

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Appendices

1. Report of Working Group 1: Size of the College
2. Report of Working Group 2: Ideal Student Body
3. Report of Working Group 3: Tuition and Financial Aid
4. Report of Working Group 4: Curriculum
5. Report of Working Group 5: Compensation
6. Report of Working Group 6: Career Preparation
7. Report of Working Group 7: Advising and Mentoring
8. Report of Working Group 8: Sustainable Economy
9. Report of Working Group 9: Rethinking Administrative and Faculty Functions
10. Report of Working Group 10: Physical Plant
11. Report of Working Group 11: Community
12. Report of Working Group 12: Blue Sky
13. Report of Working Group 13: Competition
14. Report of the "meta-Group": How preparing our students for post-Carleton lives and careers should best be linked to and supported by the College's curriculum
15. Assumptions
16. Questions to be Answered
17. Working Group Membership
18. Metrics

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