

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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*for Swarthmore College*



*December 2011*



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Dear Members of the Swarthmore Community,

In the course of its nearly 150 years of service, Swarthmore has periodically examined its mission, programs, sense of community, and engagement in the world. During the last 18 months, our community continued this tradition by immersing itself in conversations about the opportunities and challenges confronting both the College and the world of higher education. We did so in the context of a particularly complex environment of financial constraints, shifting demographics, and fundamental changes to teaching, learning, and research, all requiring a sharp focus on how to meet the challenges before us and deep analysis of how to sustain our strengths. In typical Swarthmore fashion, our community engaged in this direction-setting process thoughtfully, civilly, and generously, devoting itself to the significant task of carefully stewarding our future direction together.

We became increasingly aware that the challenges and opportunities confronting higher education in the 21st century are quite different from those that have preceded it. Our students are preparing for an era characterized by global connections, filled with diverse peoples and perspectives, and dominated by the acceleration of technological change. After the deep discussions and careful analysis that were components of our planning process, I believe that the sheer challenge of preparing students to think creatively and critically for a future of dramatic progress and rapid change makes this one of the most exciting times in the history of higher education.

Three great unifying passions emerged in the process of developing our strategic directions: academic rigor and imagination, an intentional community dedicated to the common good, and the future of liberal arts in the nation and the world. To make it possible to fulfill these passions, we must attract and support students who are capable and enthusiastic about our distinct approach to education. Current and future generations of students come to us from a world with few boundaries, where they multitask, and tweet through the day. They are also civic-minded and curious about spirituality, the arts, and politics across nations, languages, ethnic groups, and religions. They come to us wanting both traditional forms of teaching and learning and seeking more and better forms of problem-centered, community-based, digitally-informed learning.

We need faculty who will, like their predecessors, be devoted to our students. Our ways of attracting and retaining a diverse faculty will need to keep pace with the changes both in academics and in our student body. Our

forms of support for faculty will need to be tailored to how they teach, how students learn, and how research is conducted by faculty as well as by faculty and students together.

At Swarthmore we are well-positioned to meet these challenges. Our energized and passionate faculty and students delight in new, often interdisciplinary ways to organize knowledge and routinely use problem-based learning to teach. Equally dedicated and passionate faculty and students continue to follow well-honed traditions of learning, teaching, and research that in some cases are centuries old. This plan embraces our dedication to rigor and creativity in emerging as well as established ways of teaching, learning, and research. We want to ensure that Swarthmore continues its legacy of teaching people to think critically and creatively, no matter what the topic, situation, or challenge.

We also want to ensure that our students will continue to be innovative and ethical leaders who can build intentional communities dedicated to the common good. Liberal arts education, by definition, prepares young men and women for building robust democratic communities by requiring them to live in residential communities and experiment with leadership in the arts, athletics, cultural activities, and student government—all practices that develop community-building skills. During the planning process, many expressed concern that the current structures and cultures of democratic community are too diminished to provide the robust community a thriving society needs. Swarthmore aims to be an exemplar of how a residential community supports the work of developing individuals; manifesting a diverse, inclusive, and engaged community; and building new models of democratic communities in the world.

Another passion identified in the planning process is that of maintaining the liberal arts as a viable and powerful form of undergraduate education in the 21st century both nationally and internationally. This plan calls for developing an institute for the future of liberal arts that will help our faculty address both practical and theoretical problems of the future. It will also connect alumni fellows who are living lives shaped by the liberal arts to engage with our students and faculty. And, perhaps most significantly, it will champion the liberal arts nationally and internationally, joining with other schools to do so. As society and the world of higher education continues to

evolve in dramatic and often unpredictable ways, we must be willing to share what we know, and to learn from those all around the world who are similarly devoted to educating future generations.

In these strategic directions, we have also placed an increased emphasis on alumni engagement. We look to our alumni to engage with our community in creative ways and at deeper levels, both on campus and with each other in what is now a worldwide Swarthmore network. We have been heartened by the enthusiasm expressed for the Swarthmore approach to undergraduate education and by the wealth of talents, ideas, and support alumni want to share with our community. We have also heard the desire alumni express for more forms of communication and networking with each other as well as with the College.

As we end this phase of the planning process, I am deeply grateful to the more than 80 staff, alumni, students, and faculty members who came together in special groups to explore the ideas offered by hundreds of people on campus and to the many alumni who participated in this process. I also appreciate the efforts of each person who engaged in conversation, posted to the website, or attended a community event in which strategic planning was the focus.

It is a privilege to share this plan with you in order that we may extend our commitment to rigor and imagination, our willingness to be an intentional community dedicated to the common good, and our commitment to championing liberal arts education in the nation and around the world. I look forward to working together to implement the plan and to secure our future direction together.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca Chopp". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Rebecca Chopp

As you ascend Magill Walk to Parrish Hall and take in the view, it's impossible not to experience the beauty and strength of Swarthmore College. Standing on this spot today, where generations of Swarthmoreans have stood for nearly 150 years, we see a College with considerable strengths. We have a student body that is among the brightest and most talented of its time; an outstanding faculty, many of whom are internationally recognized in their fields; a highly skilled staff known for its expertise and commitment to community; and thousands of alumni who make significant contributions in their careers and communities.

Swarthmore's exceptional approach to teaching and learning combines the humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences, together with engineering, to provide one of the finest residential liberal arts educations in the world. Our signature Honors Program offers an intense and ambitious learning opportunity across the entire curriculum, culminating in examination by outside experts. And Swarthmore's success in placing its graduates in the world's top graduate and professional schools is a cornerstone of our reputation.

Swarthmore students learn how to learn—how to find, evaluate, sort, and use knowledge throughout their lives—and benefit from the extraordinary wealth of information available through information technology and the modern library. Our academic program is built on an impressive infrastructure, including a system of libraries and special collections that support the research and information needs of students and faculty members alike. Significant investments in information technology have provided powerful new capabilities for teaching and learning—encouraging innovation, creativity, and connectedness throughout the curriculum.





Supported by the work of the Intercultural Center and Black Cultural Center, the College's residential experience challenges students to bridge differences and live together in an intentional, diverse, inclusive, and mutually supportive community. But Swarthmore's concern for community doesn't end at the edge of campus. Through the Eugene M. Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility, individual students and student groups, faculty, staff, and engaged community partners work both locally—in Chester and Philadelphia—and globally to promote service, social action, and social responsibility. And, as the community increasingly views sustainability as a global institutional responsibility, coordinated efforts are underway to assert Swarthmore's leadership in environmental initiatives, both on campus and off.

Many of our strengths flow directly from our historic commitment to a set of underlying values. Our commitment to access, inclusivity, and diversity is deeply ingrained in the College culture and programs. It is no surprise that as Swarthmore weathered the economic downturn of 2008–2009, there was broad community agreement to protect, first and foremost, the academic program but also to preserve financial aid and to avoid layoffs. Even as our

community confronted difficult choices about which programs to cut, invoked a salary freeze, and considered how to realize significant savings across the budget, we held fast to the preservation of these core values.

As we stand atop Magill Walk in 2011, there is much to celebrate about Swarthmore. For generations, committed individuals have come together on this campus to create and sustain an institution that is fundamentally aimed at educating the best to make a better world. Throughout our history, we have consistently engaged in self-study, planning, and imagin-



ing—and then taking action to make our vision a reality.

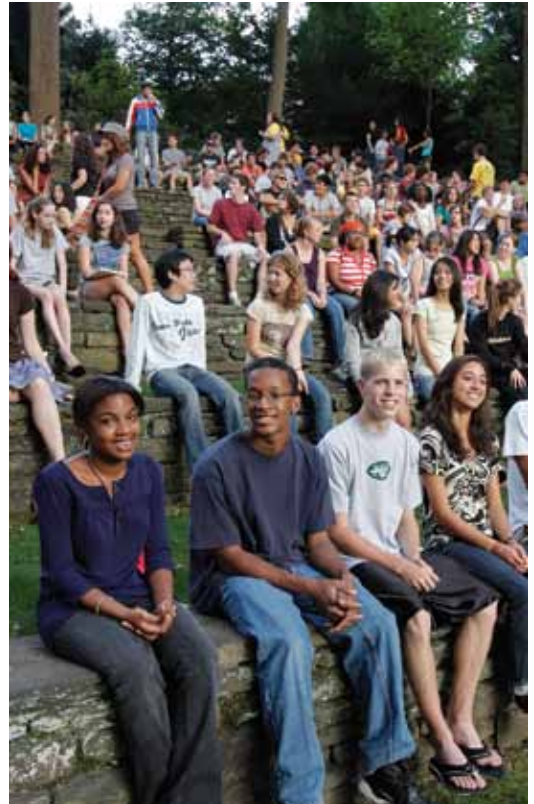
More than one year ago, we embarked on a strategic planning exercise, mindful that we are stewards of a living heritage. We committed ourselves to applying the best of our critical and creative thinking to the times in which we live, in order to ensure that the College and the liberal arts are sustained in America and may expand around the world. The recommendations that follow reflect the combined wisdom of our community; our deep sense of our own values and principles; and the strategic directions we must follow to ensure that the College continues to educate future generations for the common good.

## Core Values

We began our planning process by asking community members, on campus and off, to identify Swarthmore's greatest strengths. A remarkably consistent list emerged—and it was no surprise that many identified six core values, derived from our Quaker founders, as the foundation of all of our other strengths: respect for the individual, consensus decision-making, simple living, social responsibility and justice, generous giving, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

From this foundation spring Swarthmore's key strengths as an educational institution:

- Our singular commitment to academic rigor and creativity
- Our desire to provide access and opportunity for all students, regardless of their financial circumstances
- Our diverse and vibrant community of students, faculty, staff, and alumni
- Our conviction that applied knowledge should be used to improve the world



We hold these fundamental principles dear. If we cannot sustain them, we worry that we may not be able to sustain our distinctive model of residential liberal arts education—an experience that inspires students to pursue their own passions even as they learn to create and tend to the multifaceted dimensions of a democratic community. The cultivation of individual and community at Swarthmore is characterized by a low student-faculty ratio; students and faculty members working closely together both in and outside the classroom; a robust campus life; a diverse and inclusive student experience with a wide variety of extracurricular activities; and both the staff and infrastructure to support such a deeply engaged community.

## Current Environment

As we considered the strengths of the College, we also looked carefully at the current environment facing Swarthmore and higher education more broadly. We read literature, examined data, and engaged in intense dialogue with one another, all of which caused a number of issues to surface. These issues range from the relevance of the residential liberal arts model to questions about our financial model; the flexibility of our structures to accommodate the rapidly changing ways that knowledge is produced, taught, and learned; and to our increasingly global and interconnected society. Given this broader context, we also considered how best to describe to future students, faculty, staff, and the broader public, the special and distinct nature of Swarthmore. Here are some of the most significant issues that Swarthmore must address both in the context of this strategic plan as well as our longer-range financial planning:

- Volatile financial conditions with pressures on costs and revenues which threaten the sustainability of our financial model
- More families needing financial aid and many families requiring increases in aid
- Changing demographics for domestic students and international recruitment of students
- The expansion and transformation of knowledge, information, teaching, learning, and research due to technology and other external factors
- The need for intellectual agility with the expansion of problem-based and interdisciplinary teaching, learning, and research

- Students coming to college with not only great talent but also appreciably different preparations
- The social and global need for creative and ethical leaders who can develop diverse and inclusive communities and organizations in which civility flourishes
- The pressures around environmental sustainability both in terms of stewarding the earth's resources and in terms of generating interdisciplinary solutions
- Domestic critiques of the liberal arts, even as international interest grows

While we recognize the opportunities many of these issues offer, we are also keenly aware of the challenging financial conditions we face. The College weathered the Great Recession because of our prudent financial practices. Our financial plan to address the first wave of the current economic crisis implemented budget cuts but preserved essential programs; our endowment had ample liquidity to meet cash needs; and we had the enduring financial support of our board, alumni, and parents. But this crisis reminded us that the global financial future is difficult to predict and financial consequences can be severe.

As we plan for our future, we recognize several areas of vulnerability in our financial model. First, our budget relies heavily on endowment support, totaling about half of its resources. Since we can not rely upon the higher returns of previous years, we need to be conservative in modeling support from our endowment. Second, we practice need-blind admissions, which means that we admit students without knowledge of their ability to pay and, once they are accepted, we meet their full need. Changing demographics and economic conditions may cause financial aid needs to increase, putting stress on our limited resources for aid. Third, most of our budget supports personnel, with 61 percent of our operating budget funding salaries and benefits. Notably, health insurance has increased at a rapid rate over the last 10 years. Fourth, all across the higher education sector regulatory costs have expanded rapidly in recent years and show no sign of abating. And finally, in order to ensure that families can continue to afford a Swarthmore College education, we must monitor continued increases in tuition and fees.

Swarthmore has faced difficult financial times before. In 1861, when the Civil War was declared, the founders delayed their plans to launch a fundraising campaign to start the College. Sixty years later, President Aydelotte's significant plans for new buildings and programs, and additional faculty to accommodate the changes brought about by the Honors Program and academic innovation were carried forward despite the Great Depression thanks to sound financial management and generous donations to the College. Like our predecessors, we know that a robust future depends on our capacity to evolve to meet the educational needs of future students. But we are also aware that we must be vigilant about our finances, grateful for the support of our alumni, and realistic about our plans. So as we move forward, two principles will guide implementation of this plan: 1) pay as we go, and 2) start small, evaluate progress, and slowly grow any programs or initiatives that require significant resources only when we can afford to do so.

We believe our vision is realistic and critical to the College's future, especially in these difficult financial times. Given the challenges and opportunities in the current context, we are convinced that Swarthmore's continued academic excellence will depend on our ability to attract the most gifted and motivated students and to set them to work with a superb faculty of scholar-teachers who are fully engaged in the creation of new knowledge and artistic production and are driven to share their knowledge with others. Swarthmore should demonstrate visibly to others how the liberal arts are essential for the common good. Although we do not think any plan can fully address all possible circumstances in one brief document, we believe that these recommendations, when coupled with longer term financial planning, will build upon our heritage, serve our students, and provide the world with thinkers and leaders who can help set the world anew and aright.

## Recommendations

*The recommendations that emerged during our planning process were based on the many substantive and stimulating ideas that were brought forward by community members. These respond to both internal priorities and external forces. The recommendations follow naturally from the articulation of our core values—they are a distillation of both our traditions and our aspirations. They also spring from our heritage of innovation and imagination. Like our predecessors, we continue to challenge ourselves to think creatively about how to offer the best residential liberal arts education in order to graduate future leaders—and in so doing, effect positive, enduring change.*



**Recommendation 1. Through structures and incentives that encourage innovation, Swarthmore should foster a curriculum of intellectual rigor and creativity that combines disciplinary strength and flexibility.**

In 1864, Swarthmore's founders made a bold statement when, governed by a board composed equally of men and women, they chartered the College to admit both female and male students. Nearly 60 years later, President Frank Aydelotte's introduction of the Honors Program served as another bold act of hope for future generations when it made academic rigor the cornerstone of the College. Swarthmore's most enduring tradition, it could be said, is to imagine, inspire, and innovate in order to continually provide students with an exceptional educational experience.

Swarthmore's approach to teaching and learning encourages students to both un-

derstand deeply and question vigorously the significance of what they study. In this rigorous academic environment, students learn to refine analytic thinking; to ask difficult questions and formulate answers; to evaluate, interpret, and synthesize evidence; to make lucid and well-substantiated arguments; and to develop the habits of intellectual agility.

Some of today's most intense academic experiences take place in interdisciplinary arenas, where scholars with very different ways of looking at problems join forces to confront the challenging questions of our time. Yet some of Swarthmore's current structures are not flexible enough to encourage work across the boundaries that define traditional academic communities. We need to develop flexible structures, creative networks, and innovative collaborations that will work well given that some of the best teaching, learning, and research occur in new and different configurations.

Swarthmore's academic program has always helped students develop the intellectual capacity to think critically and write cogently. Now, faculty members increasingly help students develop other vital competencies that equip our graduates for professional careers and responsible citizenship. High-impact learning experiences such as research collaborations and summer internships also allow students to develop intellectual agility even as they master the rigors of disciplinary knowledge. We must continue to learn how best to support our students as they navigate the accelerated growth of information and a greater number of critical competencies.

Facilities are also critical to meeting the needs of today's young scholars. Up-to-date facilities provide the space for laboratory

## *Learning in the Real World*

The Kids Asthma Management Program was gathering data on the effectiveness of its school-based interventions before embarking on a home-based program. Were they reducing the severity of asthma among the children of Chester, Pa.?

The food bank at Chester's Bernardine Center was worried about the healthfulness of their clients' diets. Were they providing a balanced menu?

And Philadelphia Young Playwrights needed to assess progress toward fulfilling its mission among students in urban and suburban schools. Could they provide a compelling case to potential funding sources?

All three organizations had collected data, but they had a problem: None had the resources to analyze the statistics and draw conclusions. Through Swarthmore's Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility, they found what they needed—an innovative statistics class taught by Lynne Steuerle Schofield '99, assistant professor of mathematics and statistics.

Schofield had been teaching Stat 31, a statistics course that covers analysis of variance (ANOVA), analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), regression analysis, and other standard methods. But she wanted to try a new course that substituted community-based learning (CBL) for the usual "case studies" component of the course. And, in the interest of science, she wanted to compare this new class—called Stat 32—with the traditional course. So, last spring, she taught the two different courses side-by-side, with 13 students in the CBL course and 15 in the traditional section.

In Stat 32, instead of working with provided data sets, three teams of students fanned out into the community as "consultants" for the three nonprofits. They applied what they were learning in class to real-world situations—concluding the semester with reports that addressed the questions that each organization was asking.

The subject matter covered was almost exactly the same, and both courses had bi-weekly problem sets, two exams, and a final paper. It was only in the practical application of data analysis that the classes diverged.

Schofield learned that students who chose to take the CBL course were "more likely to have less mathematical and statistical background, are more interested in community service, and want a statistical course that aligns closely with their career goals and aspirations. In comparison, students in the more traditional course have stronger mathematical and statistical skills, are more interested in a course where they learn the methods from a variety of 'case studies,' and have less time and interest in a community project."

But, she says, "it's a data-driven world, and no matter what career path our students choose—whether they become economists or scientists or social reformers—they will need to know how to interpret data."

Stat 32 was the first CBL course offered in Swarthmore's mathematics and statistics department and one of a handful so far in the natural sciences division. Schofield says, "It's a great approach for some of our students, especially when it's used to address an appropriate problem—and when that enhances the content of the class."

Then there's what has been accomplished for three community groups that lacked the resources to crunch their own numbers.

The Kids' Asthma Program learned that it needs more data to effectively assess its effect—and the students suggested ways of gathering it. At the food bank, the students recommended reorganizing some menus so that multiple high-sodium foods weren't as likely to end up in the same food basket. And the Young Playwrights learned how their student surveys could be used both to assess achievement of goals and to impress potential funding sources.

experiments, for seminar discussions, for creative expression in the arts, for reading books, and for using technology in the library. Several of the College's academic buildings are simply inadequate, outdated, and undersized to meet student and faculty needs. As we consider what kind of new or adapted facilities are required, we will be practical with our design selections in order to make wise and prudent use of our resources.

The recommendation has five parts:

*Support teaching, learning, and research initiatives to cultivate traditional and new competencies and to support students who come to Swarthmore with a range of preparations.*

Students come to Swarthmore from schools in both the United States and abroad with high levels of ability but different levels of curricular preparation and academic competencies. We should meet this range of strengths positively and proactively by relying on faculty members as well as peer mentors such as writing and science associates to reveal how courses connect to strong habits of mind. We should ensure students have support to develop competencies in public speaking, in media design, as well as informational, visual, and quantitative literacies.

The establishment of a teaching, learning, and research project would bring together existing initiatives to share best practices and expedite training of students and faculty in these core competencies. Professional staff in collaboration with faculty would administer the project. This effort should intersect with appropriate initiatives of the Eugene M. Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility and the study-abroad experience managed through the Off-Campus Study Office and

provide students with access to the full range of support and engagement programs at Swarthmore.

The teaching, learning, and research project would also administer student research fellowships, internships, and other summer experiences, including immersion language study and other forms of student support as well as take the lead on appropriate assessment practices. We should also incorporate leadership and life-skills development into student and advising services, coordinating these efforts with the proposed Center for Innovation and Leadership (found within Recommendation 2) intended to help students further develop their leadership potential.

*Provide high-impact learning experiences.*

Swarthmore should invest in research and independent work experiences for all students, including travel to research sites, student stipends, and further providing





enhanced possibilities in the humanities and social sciences. Swarthmore should expand funding for such experiences and draw upon existing resources such as alumni connections, study abroad programs, and experiences through the Lang Center. We must also find an appropriate means to recognize and support the work of the faculty members who supervise students in their labs and other settings in summer research programs and make a powerful impact through this close mentoring relationship.

*Strengthen the infrastructure and mechanisms for helping students navigate the curriculum, discover opportunities, and manage their choices.*

We should use technology to help students identify, understand, and converse with others about course content, study abroad, internships, and research experiences. An enhanced infrastructure of information and support should help students think beyond requirements and imagine what

courses they might take and what activities and research they might conduct during their time at Swarthmore.

*Support curricular innovation, especially interdisciplinary teaching and programs, with helpful structures and additional faculty positions.*

We recommend the establishment of three specific measures: (1) several full-time positions for visiting faculty members to supplement interdisciplinary efforts. With this support, interdisciplinary programs could bring a visiting professor to teach in new areas or to substitute for a regular faculty member in their home department in order to free full-time faculty for sustained immersion in a new area, thereby strengthening existing programs. (2) New improved standards to govern interdisciplinary appointments to reduce risk for junior faculty and encourage more experimentation across disciplines. (3) Stipends for course releases and course development during the summer to facilitate special offerings, including interdisciplinary team-teaching that is independent of formally structured programs.

*Address facilities needs for academic programs.*

We should develop new spaces or substantially renovate existing ones to include updated labs and offices for faculty and other instructional staff, places for students to work on independent projects, and classrooms designed and equipped for current practices across the curriculum and to encourage collaborative learning. New or renovated academic facilities will support a number of key goals: encouraging collaboration across disciplines, expanding close mentoring relationships between students and faculty, and enlisting technology in the



service of the most effective pedagogy and scholarship.

Our initial focus must be on the departments of engineering, biology, and psychology. Engineering is still housed in Hicks Hall, built in 1919 and seriously inadequate for the needs of a contemporary engineering program. Engineering education in the 21st century focuses on teamwork and collaboration, but Swarthmore's department lacks adequate space for group work in courses, for students' senior level design projects, and for engaging students with faculty research. Swarthmore's Engineering Department is the model for an interdisciplinary, problem-based, collaborative, innovative, and community-based program that marks the future of the liberal arts. We must bring our facilities in line with the contemporary needs of this dynamic program.

The Biology Department is housed in Martin Hall, which dates to 1938. Although it was partially renovated 10 years ago as part of the Science Center project, many teaching spaces were left untouched. Biology is one of our largest majors and its honors major requires a substantial research project for each student. The department needs more space to accommodate larger enrollments. We must ensure that classrooms and laboratories are upgraded to keep pace with changes in technology, instrumentation, and pedagogy.


The Psychology Department is another program with a large enrollment and antiquated facilities. Its current home, Papazian Hall, was built in 1929 and, until 1977, was occupied by the Bartol Research Foundation. This facility was initially repurposed to accommodate philosophy, linguistics, and psychology but can no longer accommodate the demands of psychology's substantial enrollments, a growing emphasis on experimental psychology, active student/faculty

research programs, and a major that requires an independent project of all its students.

As new space is built and old spaces are vacated, we should refurbish existing spaces to address the significant needs of a number of other departments for additional teaching spaces and offices.

Swarthmore's libraries must evolve to reflect changes in learning and scholarship. McCabe Library was built in 1967 and typifies mid-20th century ideas of libraries as passive places for the housing and consumption of printed texts. We must re-envision the library to provide for functions as varied as quiet study, group study, informal conversation—spaces that allow our students and faculty to engage with knowledge in its many forms.

In addition, a new media commons on campus could provide space for students, faculty, and staff to work collaboratively within academic programs like film and media studies or on extracurricular initiatives.

 **Recommendation 2.** Swarthmore should draw on its traditions and strengths as a community to serve as a model for purposeful communities in the 21st century.

The grand ambition of the liberal arts college, America's unique contribution to higher education, is that the residential experience should inspire students to pursue their own passions even as they learn to create and tend to the multifaceted dimensions of democratic community. Through engagement with extracurricular activities as well as the academic program, students develop the capacity to appreciate culture in all its many and diverse forms.

### *Strung Together With Intention*

What transpires when members of a professional dance troupe mentor a group of Swarthmore dance students, who in turn mentor girls from the Chester Children's Chorus (CCC)? "Everybody makes dance together," says Sharon Friedler, professor of dance. "And you get a new kind of community."

Add the energy of Orchestra 2001, the College's professional orchestra in residence—now in the midst of celebrating the centennial of composer John Cage; engage Philadelphia artist Anthe, whose dynamic drawings capture the poetic motion of dancers; cook it all together with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and contributions from many other sources—and you create powerful connections that Friedler describes as "both a Quaker-like focus on mutual benefits across communities and a view into the creative process that is common to all of our dance-making practices."

Friedler calls it "tiered mentoring," and it's a little like a sculpture intentionally made of strings: Pull on one string and, for sure, something else is going to move. In a small college community, many threads pull together, connected yet elastic, attractive and inventive, open, constantly catching new dreams. For example:

IdiosynCrazy Productions, the dance company mentoring Swarthmore students, is tied to the College by its principal, Jumatato Poe '04. Dancer Greg Holt '05 serves as another of the mentors. Poe, a California native who discovered dance at the College, also teaches part time as an assistant professor of dance. For Swarthmore-educated Poe, "tiered mentoring" is a natural way to work.

The CCC was started at the College by Associate Professor of Music John Alston, under whose tutelage it has grown to more than 120 voices. Its education programs extend far beyond voice and instrumental instruction, ranging from reading and science to art and dance, involving myriad faculty and staff members and students. The children who are mentored by the Swarthmore students are just one thread of many at the chorus.

Connections abound at Swarthmore, so it's no accident that Orchestra 2001, directed by Daniel Underhill Professor Emeritus of Music James Freeman, offered to involve some of the dancers in its John Cage celebration. Or that famed choreographer Jane Comfort, whose company performed on campus in 2005, could be enticed to do a choreography workshop for the community that has formed around the dance project, which has been titled "Caged Ventures."

It's all so rich and connected that there's hardly room for more, but Friedler's colleague Jon Sherman, who teaches ballet at the College, met artist Anthe Capitan-Valais at a Pennsylvania Ballet performance, where she was drawing the dances. Sherman invited Anthe (who goes by her first name) to attend his classes and draw his students. Before long, more strings were attached, and Anthe was showing up for the CCC girls' dance classes—teaching the girls how to draw their own dances. Then there's Samantha Panepinto '13, an educational studies major with an interest in arts education—and a passion for costumes. She's helping the girls make dance costumes based on block prints of their drawings, plus many yards of muslin.

Students, faculty, alumni, and staff frequently remark on the distinctive nature of the Swarthmore community. Alumni describe the friendships developed, ideas learned, hard work shared and often enjoyed, skills developed in areas as varied as debate, lacrosse, music, and more, as well as the parties, pranks, and performances etched in their memories. Swarthmore must continue to support student engagement in a wide variety of extracurricular experiences, thereby enlarging their habits of appreciation, deepening their civic and social commitments, and expanding their leadership skills.

But Swarthmore's residential environment is not meant just for the satisfaction and maturation of the individual. True to our tradition, it is also aimed at educating leaders of a particular type who can address the opportunities and problems of the day. Swarthmore understands leadership as the principled practice of working collaboratively and ethically, and using knowledge to improve the world. Swarthmore leaders work to build just and flourishing communities that, in turn, serve democracy in a variety of cultural forms and places.

The research we reviewed and the conversations we held with alumni, faculty and staff members, parents, and students revealed deep concerns about the nature of leadership, the strength of community, and the civility of society. Swarthmore must foster a community that elevates the virtues of civil discourse, reflecting our tradition to respect the dignity of the individual while also honoring our commitment to live in community. What are the most pressing challenges and opportunities our students need to address as they build purposeful communities of the future? We have identified three areas of immediate opportunity and challenge as we imagine the next chapter of life as a commu-

nity: diversity and inclusivity; civil discourse; and sustainability.

Central to supporting our community and crucial to educating future leaders, we should also provide strategic support and up-to-date facilities for athletics and for fitness and wellness programs for our whole community. Swarthmore understands and values the connection between physical and mental health and strength. We should think even more creatively and broadly about the physical education program with the goal of encouraging lifelong habits of wellness and fitness.



This recommendation has eight parts:

*Develop a comprehensive diversity, inclusivity, and engagement plan that will transform the College into a model workplace and residential learning community in an increasingly complex global world.*

Swarthmore must seek to represent the world in all of its diversity among students, faculty, and staff and also provide an inclusive, engaging environment. In doing so, we must define diversity as broadly as possible, including not just heterogeneity of race, gender, sexual orientation, and culture but also in other personal dimensions and identities. Residential communities offer students the opportunity to listen deeply and share experiences with those who have different viewpoints and to simultaneously celebrate that difference while discovering and embracing commonality.

We should expand efforts to educate and encourage students to create positive relationships with one another and with regional, national, and global communities, consistent with our mission of addressing broader ethical and societal concerns. We should establish specific goals that recognize our global environment and help all members of the community develop cross-cultural skills.

One goal of any plan to expand Swarthmore's commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and engagement must be to aim to recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff as well as our student body. The plan should nurture a culture of trust that enables all members of the community to exchange freely ideas and perspectives that might conflict.

*Support the common good and civil discourse.*

In a world marked by increasing partisanship and fundamentalism, we must learn new ways of living that cross over longstanding fault lines of communication and bridge communities closed off by political beliefs, racial lines, religious beliefs, or class differences. We will need spaces in which to bring larger groups of students, faculty, staff, and alumni together for deliberative discussions and for social interactions. By re-imagining Collection as a time to bring the community together informally to participate in civil discourse, we should emphasize our values of listening, respect for others, and peaceful settlements of disputes—combined with our academic commitments to evidence, clarity of arguments, and collaboration—as key components of that discourse. We should work closely with student groups to create opportunities for such gatherings to occur. In all of our programs, we should invite speakers and guests who challenge our ideas and embrace a diversity of opinion as we build the common good.

*Invest in sustainable environmental practices, including minimizing greenhouse gas emissions from the College's own operation and preserving the Crum Woods.*

Climate change will shape our society in the decades ahead and brings with it the responsibility to educate our students and campus community in its causes and consequences, to model best practices, and to provide leadership in the wider community. A cohesive, broad-based sustainability program will build upon the work of the Environmental Studies Program, Crum Woods Stewardship Committee, Sustainability Committee, Climate Action Plan Committee, Earthlust, and other environmentally conscious groups to advance the sustainable use of resources

on campus and educate our community in becoming better stewards of the environment. The College should also appoint a professional sustainability director to guide progress, coordinate communications, facilitate alumni outreach, and collaborate with sustainability efforts beyond campus. The director would also coordinate restoration and preservation efforts of students, local community members, and alumni in the Crum Woods.

*Create a comprehensive approach to leadership development including a Center for Innovation and Leadership for students.*

This recommendation builds on our tradition of educating socially responsible citizens who lead in creative, collaborative, and ethical ways in a range of professions and forms of civic engagement. A Center for Innovation and Leadership will help students develop the abilities to lead, inspire, listen, and learn in ways that reflect the values of Swarthmore's tradition and community. The Center could facilitate Web-based alumni mentoring programs and initiate an alumni innovation fellows program linking students to alumni in fields ranging from academics to business, arts, law, and the sciences. Our Career Services Office will be an instrumental partner in these and other efforts to prepare students for their career choices and leadership opportunities. The Center, in conjunction with Career Services could expand collaborations with academic departments, the Dean's Office, and others that assist students in applying what they are learning in and outside of the classroom to their future career aspirations and their roles as future leaders. This Center could build upon the Program for Socially Responsible Leadership and the Jonathan R. Lax Conference on Entrepreneurship.

*Support athletics, including recreational, varsity, and club sports, and continue to address associated facilities needs.*

We affirm the positive contribution that athletics and wellness programs make to our students' lives while on campus—and in a more enduring way as alumni. Competitive sports encourage students to learn to strategize, listen carefully, take instruction, provide leadership, cope with loss, and celebrate achievement. Through athletics, the College should encourage the lessons of fair play, integrity, discipline, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

Swarthmore should also support its athletics teams by upgrading outdated equipment and facilities. A thorough audit of our athletics and wellness spaces should be conducted, building upon the recent self-study conducted by the Physical Education and Athletics Department. We need to address the limitations of the Lamb-Miller Field House in meeting the contemporary needs of our athletes and teams as well as the wellness and recreational experiences for other members of our community. In addition to improved facilities, we should adjust varsity team travel allowances and generally support athletics in ways that match the excellence we expect in all areas of the College.

*Develop a comprehensive wellness program for students and other members of the College community.*

Swarthmore should expand and enhance the variety and scope of its wellness initiatives for students, focusing on sleep, stress management, time management, meditation and reflection, and healthy eating. The goal is to promote student success and a strong ethos of caring for oneself, and prepare students to continue positive self-care beyond Swarthmore.

We should also imagine new ways for spaces such as the Crum Woods, dorm lounges, and other physical spaces to contribute to wellness efforts. We should assess events and programs to ensure that they offer positive, coordinated, and manageable options for students.

The College's overcrowded fitness center cannot meet current demand from students, faculty, and staff while also serving the ongoing needs of our athletics teams. We should expand or build a fitness center that will accommodate our entire community's wellness and fitness efforts.

*Continue to recruit and support staff members whose contributions and devotion to the Swarthmore community make a profound impact on our students and others.*


Residential colleges are multifaceted living and learning environments. In addition to meeting the high levels of expertise and excellence within their individual areas, Swarthmore staff members also routinely go beyond the call of duty to support, mentor, and nurture students. Across the campus, from residence halls to the dining hall, from athletic facilities to performance, exhibition, and other common spaces, members of the College's staff model and facilitate community for our students, deepening their connections to Swarthmore and instilling a sense of pride in our collective efforts to provide the most humane and holistic educational environment. We must attract and retain the very best staff in higher education and fund professional development opportunities—both on and away from campus—that contribute to their increasing expertise.

*Protect and create common spaces to support our objectives for the community.*

Parrish Hall is the physical center and figurative heart of campus, whose long-term strength and beauty we must secure. We must preserve its architecture, especially the domes of Parrish Hall, which have not been renovated since 1882. Furthermore, we must ensure that the building is a comfortable living, learning, and working environment for students and staff in an energy-efficient and cost-effective fashion.

We need spaces to accommodate the gatherings of students, faculty, and staff who take part in community discussions of events that are shaping our world; who gather to celebrate each other's accomplishments and creative productions; and who come together for eating, exercise, relaxation, and fun. Since the 1983 Tarble Social Center fire, this need has sometimes been expressed as the desire for a "student center." Designed to fill this role, Tarble-in-Clothier is too small and incapable of supporting the programs that students desire. At times, Sharples Dining Hall (opened in 1964 for a student body of 1,025) has served as a space for large gatherings. Although Sharples is presently too small to accommodate the current student body, renovation or expansion could create new opportunities for students to gather together in large groups.

Given the limitations of Tarble-in-Clothier and Sharples, we recommend that Swarthmore imaginatively repurpose existing campus spaces to support programming in more effective ways. We must create more flexible community spaces that encourage new modes of collaboration, performances, rehearsals, and other activities of student groups, providing more and better opportunities for students to gather informally in both small and large groups.

 **Recommendation 3: Swarthmore should continue to encourage and support faculty excellence, embracing exceptional teaching, active scholarship, and artistic production throughout an individual's career.**

Swarthmore recruits highly gifted and dedicated faculty members who are passionate about learning and devoted to inspiring in their students that same passion for exploration and discovery. These scholar-teachers come to Swarthmore for a full life of intellectual engagement with both colleagues and undergraduates. They encourage students to be agents of their own intellectual growth and empower them to use knowledge for positive change. Our investment in a low ratio of students to faculty members is affirmed again and again as faculty members create a variety of new opportunities to engage with students.

Swarthmore almost always hires junior faculty members and mentors them as they learn the culture of faculty-student engagement valued by our community. We are proud of the strength of our faculty and of their long-term commitments to the College. Swarthmore has a long tradition of providing equitable compensation and requiring similar, or higher, levels of productivity than our peer group.

The academic needs of 21st-century students have shifted dramatically during the last decade or so. The ways in which faculty members conduct their work has also evolved, leading to new ways of teaching, mentoring, and engaging with students. Although delivering lectures is still an effective and stimulating way to present information to students, increasingly faculty members are integrating problem-based learning

into the classroom with projects that apply and test what is learned, sometimes in community settings.

Many students now arrive at Swarthmore with the expectation of a one-on-one research experience with a faculty member. Faculty encourage students to do independent research—and the possibilities are almost unlimited. Relationships begun in the classroom evolve into research partnerships—often during summers, when scores of students populate faculty members' labs and the College's libraries. Such supplemental educational experiences—now the norm for both students and those who will consider their applications for graduate admission, fellowships, and jobs—extend the teaching and research responsibilities of many faculty members into the summer months. As more students seek supplemental experiences and plan for postgraduation careers, we must find ways to support their professors who provide the supervision they need in their independent work.

In an era in which teaching requires both rigor and innovation, faculty members must also stay current with advances in their fields and produce their own research or creative expression. And, both for their own ongoing development as well as Swarthmore's reputation, faculty members need to engage with larger academic, creative, and performing arts communities. Such continuing engagement returns dividends for students, encouraging pedagogical innovation, focusing the curriculum on cutting-edge knowledge, and invigorating student research. Survey research indicates that faculty members, unwilling to compromise their engagement with students and the quality of their teaching, necessarily spend less and less time on research and work within their fields.



## *A Week in the Life*

Ann Renninger, professor and chair of educational studies, works all the time and loves it. But her son once questioned her about it: What made her work so much—days and nights and weekends too? "It's like fishing is for you," she told him. "You love fishing, and if you could do it all the time, you would." It's become family shorthand for work: "going fishing."

Last October, during the week of midterm exams, Renninger made a log of her professional activities. The work of Swarthmore faculty members includes teaching, student advising, research, and, many other undertakings. Here are just 15 of the 40 activities she wrote down:

- **Friday/Saturday/Sunday:** Work on Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant proposal, due Tuesday. This takes most of the weekend—with back-and-forth right through Tuesday noon, when it is submitted.
- **Monday and Friday afternoon:** Our secondary teacher certification programs are being reviewed this year by the State Department of Education. Work with a student who is helping to upload information from Swarthmore departments with which we certify student teachers.
- **Monday night:** Work on introduction for a paper a student and I are working on together that reports data from a study of productive disposition in mathematics.
- **Monday and Tuesday afternoons:** Office hours. This week's issues involve credit assessments from study abroad last spring, students wishing to study abroad next spring, and students seeking help with paper topics for a class assignment.
- **Tuesday night:** Teach three-hour Educational Psychology class; work after class with a few students on paper outlines.
- **Every Wednesday at noon:** Pick up students from their placement at Radnor Middle School. (We have no drivers for the early afternoon return run that day.)
- **Wednesday:** Proofread dossier for the third-year review of one of our faculty members before it is sent for copying. Receive and acknowledge letters received for another faculty member who is being evaluated for tenure.
- **Wednesday:** Talk with colleague at Stanford Research Institute about her interview and observation protocols for a study of math engagement. Also discuss upcoming conference and submission deadlines.
- **Wednesday, 4:15 to 5:30:** Monthly roundtable discussion for Educational Studies faculty members. This time slot is typically held for regular department meetings.
- **Wednesday night:** Write a peer review of a paper for the journal *Cognition and Instruction*. This is a professional obligation—one of about a dozen journals I review for.
- **Thursday:** Read first draft of introduction to senior honors thesis in psychology and educational studies; work with the student to further develop it.
- **Thursday:** Work online with a former student to address feedback on an essay she and I wrote about the Chester Childrens' Chorus Science-for-Kids workshops.
- **Friday:** Talk with Lynne Molter [chair of engineering] about upcoming workshop at Carleton College. We're co-investigators with Carleton faculty for a workshop called Learning and Teaching Physical Science 2: Identification of Supports for Student Success.
- **Friday:** Meet with the Media Services staff about possible virtual conferencing during the American Educational Research Association conference I'm helping to facilitate at Swarthmore next spring.
- **Friday:** Figure out transportation for next week. I need to be at a meeting of educational studies faculty at Barnard on Thursday and then get to Baltimore to the Association of Science Technology Center meeting where I am giving an invited paper.

As we seek the best faculty, we further recognize that diversity is essential. We strive to give all students strong models of accomplishment, reflecting our nation and our world, and we know that individuals with different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic identities, sexual orientation, and with different theoretical and intellectual perspectives enrich our community. As we intensify efforts to increase the diversity of the faculty, we must cultivate a community in which all faculty members can thrive. What can we do to recruit, retain, and develop the best faculty for Swarthmore—one that reflects the diversity of our nation and our world?

This recommendation has three parts:

*Recognize and support the traditional and new ways that faculty members teach.*


We must create more flexible time for our faculty to engage with students and with their professional and scholarly aspirations, fully recognizing that the landscape for higher education has been radically altered in the last two decades by technology, globalization, and experiential learning. Different disciplines and programs, and different individual faculty members, work in quite distinct ways, but a common thread has been the intensification of student/faculty interactions through supervised research, directed readings, individual attention to student preparation, and community-based learning. We will carefully examine and recalibrate faculty responsibilities in terms of coursework, research, and other forms of collaborative engagement with students to ensure that there is adequate time to balance all of them, since all support student learning in different ways.

*Recognize the value of faculty research and artistic production and support it vigorously.*

Our faculty currently receive support that is lower than what many of our peer institutions provide for travel to conferences to learn about teaching and research in their fields and to collaborate with other scholars. We should ensure adequate allowances for research and travel to professional meetings. We must continue to fund start-up costs for research laboratories and acquire depth in new monographs, journals, and databases in the library.

*Renew efforts to increase the diversity of the faculty, especially in tenure-track appointments.*

With the support of the College's equal opportunity officer, we must increase the diversity of applicant pools and develop strategies to persuade highly sought-after candidates to choose Swarthmore, including funding postdoctoral fellowships for underrepresented groups. Extending the diversity of the faculty and the instructional staff must be a key objective of the proposed diversity plan (see Recommendation 2).

 **Recommendation 4.** Swarthmore should recruit, admit, and support a varied and dynamic student body through its admissions and financial aid policies.

Academic excellence remains the primary quality we seek in our students, including intellectual curiosity and a deep desire to understand and think critically. Other important qualities are creative thinking; a willingness to question; an ability to probe, to work with complexity; and initiative—a drive to accomplish challenging goals that require courage, dedication, and hard work.

The goal for all of our students should be to thrive intellectually, socially, and personally. Just as we consider students' various aspirations and dreams, aptitudes and potential, we should also value their ability to thrive at Swarthmore. Defining what we mean by thriving should be a practice that is routinely revisited and refined.

Demographic trends, along with the uncertain economic climate, suggest that we look even more closely at our recruitment efforts to ensure that our commitment to access and diversity remains strong. Our admissions efforts have fared well during the economic downturn (the 2011 applicant pool was the largest ever), but some families have expressed concerns about the value and cost of a liberal arts education.

In addition, we are in the midst of very uncertain economic times, which affects both the number of families who need aid and the level of aid they require. Since 1998, we have experienced a notable increase in

the percentage of first-year students who qualify for aid—now up to 57 percent from 48 percent.

The College remains committed to its admissions and financial aid principles, which were re-examined carefully in the strategic planning process. Meeting each family's need has enabled us to create a community of students from a wide range of economic, geographic, and cultural backgrounds. This diversity has enriched the lives of all students and helped Swarthmore prepare leaders who engage broadly in their chosen careers and civic lives. Our commitment to access must be conveyed widely and more forcefully.

We affirm the need to recruit and admit individuals on their own merits and to do so in the context of building a strong community. Both the individual and the larger community are strengthened when students learn in an environment that is diverse intellectually; socioeconomically; politically; in terms of religious, cultural, and racial

### How Swarthmore's Investment in Financial Aid has Increased



In five decades, Swarthmore's aid to students has increased by a factor of over 3.5, reflecting commitment to access and the rise in family need for support. The sharpest increase took place in the last decade, illustrating Swarthmore's efforts to limit the average family contribution by increasing aid.

identity; sexual orientation, and balanced in terms of gender. It is critical that our financial aid and admissions principles, policies, and practices support each other and evolve together. Our first goal is to meet financial need for all students, ensuring that cost is not a factor in determining a student's ability to pursue a Swarthmore education. The practice of not considering financial circumstances in admissions decisions for domestic students should continue, assuming continued support from our donors and from the endowment. We should seek to achieve socioeconomic diversity among international students that mirrors the socioeconomic diversity of domestic students.

This recommendation has four parts:

*Raise funds specifically for financial aid to secure restricted endowment support for the existing program, increase funds for future growth in aid, and expand aid for international students.*

Strong philanthropic support for financial aid allows us to maintain and even expand our need-blind admissions and full-need-met financial aid policies, ensuring that we can continue to admit the most highly qualified students—students who will flourish here and make important contributions to our community—without regard for their financial circumstances.

*Expand the number of international students and the percentage of international students who have access to aid.*

Having a significant number of international students on campus provides another individual and collective benefit. Students from around the world are offered a transformative education, and international students enrich the campus community with

their varied backgrounds and perspectives. The College should increase the representation of international students, particularly if the student body grows over time. The College should also increase the percentage of international students who receive financial aid when we have the resources to do so.

*Promote liberal arts education locally, nationally, and internationally with renewed vigor, affirming that Swarthmore's commitment to access for all qualified students is essential for the best liberal arts experience.*

The College should make the case for the increasing need for and value of a liberal arts education in an ever-changing, demographically diverse, globally interdependent world (see Recommendation 5 concerning the creation of the Institute for the Future of the Liberal Arts); and ensure continuing access for all qualified students, regardless



## *Aid in Action*

Sara Lipshutz '11 would not have been able to graduate from Swarthmore without a scholarship. Lipshutz, from New City, N.Y., was funded all four years with money from the College's endowment. As a sophomore with a strong interest in the performing arts, she received a Margaret Hall Johnson Scholarship. During her junior year, she studied at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, in a Swarthmore-sponsored program called Globalization and the Environment. And every dollar of her financial aid went with her.

Sara is a real example of financial aid in action at Swarthmore, but hers is just one of hundreds of individual stories that could be told year in and year out at the College—and by thousands of alumni whose Swarthmore educations were made possible by scholarships.

Lipshutz says she was initially discouraged during her college search, because she found no schools that met her very high expectations for herself. Then someone suggested that Swarthmore would be a great match for her. She visited the campus and fell in love.

"You know how people say something feels just right. That was me when I visited Swarthmore," she says. So she applied for early decision and was accepted. At the time, on her mother's advice, she made the issue of funding secondary in her choice of school. More important, she says, was that she'd found a school where she knew she'd thrive. And because of Swarthmore's generous scholarship, she did.

Lipshutz says she feels very fortunate that the College helped her and her family. "I believe that probably everyone's family has trouble to some extent paying for college. It's a huge expense." As one of two daughters of a single parent, she feels indebted to and proud of her mother, who

advised both her children to aim for acceptance at the best schools possible and figure out the finances later.

But financial aid doesn't just help individuals like Sara. The fact that the College can meet the financial need of all those who couldn't attend without such support enriches the entire experience of Swarthmore and makes possible a wide range of economic, social, racial, and geographic diversity.

To recruit a heterogeneous student population, admissions officers pursue a vigorous outreach program that extends beyond typical "feeders" to rural, inner city, and international secondary schools. And wherever they go, the Admissions Office staff is proactive about getting the word out about financial aid.


"We mail all prospective students our financial aid materials, whether they ask for them or not," Vice President and Dean of Admissions Jim Bock '90 says. "We're in touch with community-based organizations that reach out to deserving and underserved students. We talk about aid during high school visits, college fairs, and our group sessions for prospective students who visit our campus."

Although they are commonly measured, racial, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity are not the only positive results of Swarthmore's ability to provide generous scholarships. "Every student admitted to Swarthmore brings special qualities to the student body," says Bock. "From the soccer player who is also a theater major to the engineering student who will return to her developing nation to teach, our educational mission is enhanced by every person we admit. Our goal is to have a well-rounded student body with all possible perspectives, talents, and ideas."

of financial circumstances or backgrounds. To reach a broader audience and recruit students who will thrive at Swarthmore, the College should devote additional resources to recruitment and provide the financial support our students require to attend.

*Establish a Board of Managers Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid to review, and monitor admissions practices, policies, and guidelines.*

The Board committee would work with existing committees to establish and review admissions and financial aid priorities as they continue to evolve. This includes establishing guidelines to evaluate the growth in scholarship expenditures relative to overall resource allocation; examine current needs; review the financial implications and effectiveness of policies on a regular basis; and monitor Swarthmore's policies compared with peers.

 ***Recommendation 5: Swarthmore should create an Institute for Liberal Arts to study and expand liberal arts education at Swarthmore, in the United States, and around the world.***

We live in challenging times for the liberal arts. The accelerating rate of the production of information, a more pervasive awareness of global connections, vast technological changes, new demographic trends, and daunting financial pressures combine to produce a complex environment. At the same time, talented students need the skill and agility to help organizations, communities, and individuals move forward on issues related to environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusivity, and other important questions marking life in the 21st century.

Higher education on the whole has done very little generative thinking about its future. At Swarthmore, we are committed to encouraging and taking part in this important work. In particular, The Swarthmore Institute for Liberal Arts should have the framework and financial resources to encourage faculty participation, time and space for reflection, delight in discovery, and further deepening of one's knowledge to exemplify the liberal arts.

As a leader in liberal arts education, we must be vigilant in analyzing the pressures and opportunities for liberal arts education. Swarthmore should convene representatives of the liberal-arts academy to examine future trends and best practices for the organizational model of the liberal arts. Our questions might include: What will demographic shifts in student populations mean in 2030? Is our business model sustainable? Can residential colleges serve their alumni better over their lifetimes? As Swarthmore increases the flexibility of our structures and practices, faculty need support and space to explore new ideas without always having to add programs and departments. Faculty, students, staff, and alumni require support and space to explore issues impacting the liberal arts as well.

Representatives of colleges and universities from around the world visit Swarthmore regularly to understand the excellence of our programs and our very special culture of intellectual creativity and social engagement. Swarthmore currently has no way to facilitate, contribute to, and learn from these international conversations. The Institute could provide such capacity.

This recommendation has three parts:

*Foster exploration and curricular innovation.*

## Institute for the Future of the Liberal Arts

### Report of the Executive Director

June 30, 2024\*

*\*Readers note: This essay is imaginative; it portrays a "look back" at what the first 10 years of the Institute for the Future of the Liberal Arts at Swarthmore might include.*

As Swarthmore's Institute for the Future of the Liberal Arts celebrates its 10th year, the moment is ripe to look back at our origins and forward to the work still to be undertaken to sustain and enhance liberal arts education. We do so with gratitude for the vision and support of the College and its alumni, who understood through personal experience the value of the liberal arts in their lives and sought to strengthen its unique approaches to higher education not only at their alma mater but around the nation and the world.

Today's Institute can be traced to three symposia held at Swarthmore during the 2013–2014 academic year: Liberal Arts and the Changing Nature of Knowledge; Teaching and Learning and the New Liberal Arts; and Sustaining the Liberal Arts Model. These gatherings drew together Swarthmore faculty members and distinguished educators from five continents, facilitating new conversations among institutions. The realization that came from them was startling. Merely "preserving" the liberal arts is a static goal; they must evolve to meet the changing needs of both students and democratic society.

The success of these symposia led to the creation of a virtual reading group that began to meet online in fall 2014 and gradually grew into the Institute's robust website, where educators around the world share in the conversations we have at Swarthmore about the liberal arts.

We saw some challenging times for the liberal arts in those years. The world economy didn't turn around from "The Great Recession," which generated important questions about the value of the liberal arts, for several more years. The financial sustainability of the residential model became more difficult to maintain. Yet research done by

educational theorists and government agencies strongly confirmed that liberal arts education produced citizens with the skill and agility to address the most vexing questions facing society in the 21st century.

The Institute, which sponsored its first full-time scholar-in-residence in 2017, contributed its own independent research on these and other issues in collaboration with dozens of established and emerging liberal-arts programs, many of them in Asia, Africa, and South America. And, in part because the mission of the Institute has always been to involve Swarthmore faculty members and staff in strengthening and innovating its own liberal-arts model, the College became an important destination for educators, artists, political leaders, and scientists, among others, seeking to understand best practices. One example is the worldwide academic partnerships now enjoyed by Swarthmore, especially in fields such as environmental science and research on democratic institutions and nonviolent change.

Scores of visitors to the Institute (which moved to a converted College-owned home on Chester Road in early 2018), have traveled to Swarthmore each year to participate in our programs and interact with College faculty and staff. In addition, Swarthmore students right from the start had access to our colloquia and its world-renowned speakers, so the Institute has played an important role in their education as well—especially in expanding their global horizons as they see new liberal arts institutions being founded around the world.

Today, the Institute for the Future of the Liberal Arts is helping create and shape that future. Guided by the leadership of Swarthmore College, and strengthened by critical partnerships around the country and world, the Institute is on track to fulfill its mission to help ensure a strong future for liberal arts education.

Swarthmore must provide a flexible structure and support for our faculty to develop new courses and pedagogical practices and host seminars on topics relating to teaching and research in the liberal arts; support new modes of scholarly production and dissemination; and sponsor publications relating to current explorations, student-faculty collaborations, and symposia. The Institute should include staff members who play a lead role in updating faculty on technological innovation in the classroom.

We should also provide a place for thoughtful, nondisciplinary-specific discussion among our faculty to foster more social exploration of great ideas and exciting innovations. In this way, the Institute can provide a space to manifest liberal arts inquiry. The proposed inn, restaurant, and retail spaces on the edge of campus might provide such spaces.

*Enhance support for intellectual rigor and creativity, signal our identification with those values, and lead in strengthening the liberal arts in today's global community.*

Currently few scholars and practitioners are devoted to understanding the intrinsic value of the residential college, encouraging innovation in this setting, or expanding liberal arts approaches around the world. Swarthmore should support this unique form of undergraduate education by ensuring that the faculty continues to innovate in the liberal arts and by hosting others to conduct critical research on the future of the liberal arts.

The Swarthmore Institute for Liberal Arts would provide a flexible structure and resources for projects that might involve faculty, students, and/or guests in formats that could include reading groups, semester-

long workshops, and seminars focused on a visiting scholar. It would also promote the visibility and viability of Swarthmore College in particular and of the residential liberal arts college in general.

The Institute would support research on the effectiveness of the liberal arts and its future potential, including, but not limited to, support for liberal arts around the world. Such support may include hosting visiting fellows, convening conferences, serving as a think tank for relevant research, and encouraging a network of those who study innovative topics.

The Institute should also track regional, national, and global political trends affecting liberal arts colleges and create an information resource about those trends for interested faculty and other constituencies.

It should also become a destination for scholars outside Swarthmore who are interested in the future of the liberal arts by stimulating conversation about liberal arts education and providing a physical space to convene such activity.

*Facilitate conversations between liberal arts institutions and those who live "liberal arts lives," especially between Swarthmore faculty, students, staff, and alumni on topics related to the future of liberal arts.*

Many topics crucial to the future of residential liberal arts colleges, such as the underlying financial model, the role of liberal arts and innovation, and integrating arts and engineering are topics our alumni know well. A "lives in the liberal arts fellows" program could bring alumni to campus to engage in conversations, conduct research, and/or teach a course on the liberal arts as they are lived in professional, civic, and private life.



**Recommendation 6. Swarthmore should nurture lifelong relationships with alumni and foster greater alumni-student engagement.**

Swarthmore has long turned to its talented, accomplished, and dedicated alumni for inspiration and guidance. Our alumni serve on the Board of Managers and as honors examiners. They counsel our current students by hosting them as externs and speaking to them on campus. They give their time, wisdom, experience, and financial resources to support the College's mission in essential ways. They represent the College to prospective students and their parents, and they embody our highest ideals in their work, communities, and personal lives.

We are mindful that Swarthmore alumni are critical to the College's future and its place in higher education. Our ability to provide an outstanding academic experience for our students, to maintain and enhance our position of leadership in liberal arts education, to promote our reputation and identity worldwide, and to raise money to support these objectives necessarily depend on alumni engagement and concomitant philanthropy.

Swarthmore is deeply grateful to the generations of graduates who have created the College we enjoy today. We want our alumni to be able to more fully extend their learning experiences into an enduring liberal arts inquiry, whether through online courses, greater exposure to faculty on the road, lifelong learning programs, or faculty lecture podcasts.

In equal measure, we seek to learn more about how our alumni put the liberal arts into practice. We commit to offering alumni deeper, more generative relationships with the College and each other; more enriching academic experiences; and more active connections with current students, thus enhancing the intimacy and excellence that defines Swarthmore.

In the past, connections between alumni and the College have often been constrained by distance, time, and expense. These constraints continue to exist with our alumni living and working in more places around the world than ever before, with the increasing demands of work, family, and other commitments, and with the rising costs associated with travel. At the same time, we are aware of tremendous new opportunities. Dramatic technological transformations in the nature of communication now enable the College and its graduates to remain in



## *Swarthmore's Amazing Network*

"In traveling around the country and world meeting alumni," says President Rebecca Chopp, "I've come to think about them as part of a worldwide Swarthmore network. Its heart may be located on campus, but its reach is everywhere. Swarthmore is as real for alumni in Hong Kong and San Francisco, in New York and New Delhi, in Rwanda and Rio de Janeiro, as it is for those in Swarthmore, Pa." Here are four examples of how alumni connect with each other and the College.

For 15 years, using the academic year for a calendar and a Swarthmore professor as their guide, alumni in the Washington, D.C., area have come together over books. This year's theme is "Memoirs of Africa," with a reading list compiled by Professor of History Timothy Burke. Swarthmore book groups are also found in New York (also reading memoirs of Africa with Burke this year), Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Tucson, and Seattle. Although not all have the benefit of a visiting professor, members find that the discussions often recreate the give-and-take of the Swarthmore classroom.

When Deborah How '89 joined the College's Alumni Council in 2010, she wanted to take on a specific project. As a professional pianist and teacher in Los Angeles who coaches competitive piano, How knows how important it is to have a wide network of professional connections in the music world, so she used her personal Facebook page to start a network of Swarthmore musicians—all with an eye toward mounting a campus concert featuring student and alumni performers playing works by Swarthmore composers. It worked. In November 2010, a remarkable event transpired: the Student and Alumni Composers Concert. Nearly 30 students and alumni participated—most in person and the remainder via recordings and videos. This event was followed by a Faculty-Student Composers Concert in spring

2011 and another alumni concert last fall.

The inspiration for Swarthmore Cares—an Atlanta Connection outreach program—emerged from a strategic planning conversation about alumni engagement that Atlanta Swarthmoreans had with Alumni Council member Amy Lansky Knowlton '87. One alumnus's interest in seeing the Atlanta Connection do something as a group sparked interest in volunteering. "We decided on community service—something that would make an impact—and then to move onto something social afterwards," says Connection Chair Emily Nolte '07. This fall, Swarthmore Cares will hold its third community service event, helping with the maintenance of one of the city's parks.

The idea for a Swarthmore business group in the San Francisco Bay Area took root in fall 2009 during the depths of the recession. In January 2010, more than 75 Swarthmoreans attended its inaugural event at the San Francisco Friends School. Swarthmore College Bay Area Alumni in Business (BAAB) piggybacked its opening meeting on a Swarthmore Connections event, featuring Professor of Economics Mark Kuperberg. "Several of us were getting calls for career advice and about job openings," says Sohail Bengali '79, "and thought it would be a good idea to have a professional business group in the Bay Area." He joined Bay Area residents Gus Alverelli '00, Seth Brenzel '94, Harold "Koof" Kalkstein '78, and Autumn Quinn '04 in launching the BAAB with the goal of helping alumni grow their professional networks and share ideas, insights, and opportunities from their collective business experiences.

"I have not had a single conversation in which more than two or three alumni are in the room that hasn't been an amazing experience—an intense seminar on whatever topic comes up," Chopp says. "And this happens literally all over the world."

touch and engage each other in meaningful ways across an ever-richer array of media forms and outlets. In addition, the variety of locations and professional diversity enjoyed by our alumni allow them to gather new wisdom about the beauty, challenges, and complexities of the world today.

In recognizing the unique contributions our alumni make to the College, and to the world, we commit ourselves to a comprehensive re-imagining of the enduring connection between Swarthmore and its graduates.

This recommendation has five parts:

*Create more opportunities to engage alumni as volunteers.*

An important way to engage alumni is to enlist their support as volunteers, and we need to enhance our volunteer outreach. An expanded volunteer program would help to identify alumni who may serve effectively in leadership roles and provide expertise to admissions, career services, alumni relations, development, and other departments that benefit greatly from alumni support.

*Build bridges to bring students and alumni together in ways that are rewarding for all.*

Alumni and students alike benefit from close alliances with one another. Initiatives to cultivate stronger student-alumni relationships include a mentoring program to match alumni and students who share interests; shorter-term encounters that offer career advice, hone job-interviewing skills, and address other specific needs; and service trips that bring alumni and students together to help others in the United States and around the world in times of need.

*Introduce new programs that reach across a broad spectrum of interests.*

We should combine new technology and creative thinking to encourage ongoing involvement in the life of the College, beginning with a virtual hub that will boost alumni engagement and serve as the single online space for alumni to explore volunteer opportunities and campus events, pose questions, contribute information, and take advantage of online book clubs and other special programs.

*The College should produce high quality, provocative Swarthmore talks for the Web—similar to the popular TED series—designed to showcase the talents, knowledge, and expertise of faculty and alumni. Similarly, an online experts bureau would allow knowledgeable faculty and alumni to share expertise and serve as resources for the College and the broader public.*

Passionate about their interests, Swarthmore alumni are eager to connect with others who share them. We should look for more opportunities to create new affinity programming akin to those already created, such as the Business Affinity Group and the Black Alumni Student Advisory Group.

Our distinguished faculty and alumni can be valuable partners in our efforts to foster deeper connections to the College. We should create online discussions led by interested faculty members, perhaps either right before or right after a lecture. Online conversations would connect—and reconnect—alumni with faculty and to one another.

As useful as technology can be, College events both on and off campus present unparalleled opportunities to connect alumni face-to-face with students and one another

to relive the Swarthmore experience and learn firsthand about the College's mission, needs, and aspirations. Because events build community and foster lifelong attachment, we propose creating a central events office with the professional staff and expertise to make more effective, consistent use of resources and leverage economies of scale.

*Implement a social media strategy to promote more effective communications and build community.*

Social media can build a more productive volunteer base; increase attendance at events; bring classmates and affinity groups together for virtual reunions; and create a more seamless connection between prospective students, current students, alumni, parents, faculty, and staff by helping them share information in virtual spaces. We should develop a social media strategy that evaluates and coordinates current efforts, informs our understanding of why and when our alumni visit social media sites, investigates the best practices we should adopt, and determines how to assess emerging trends.



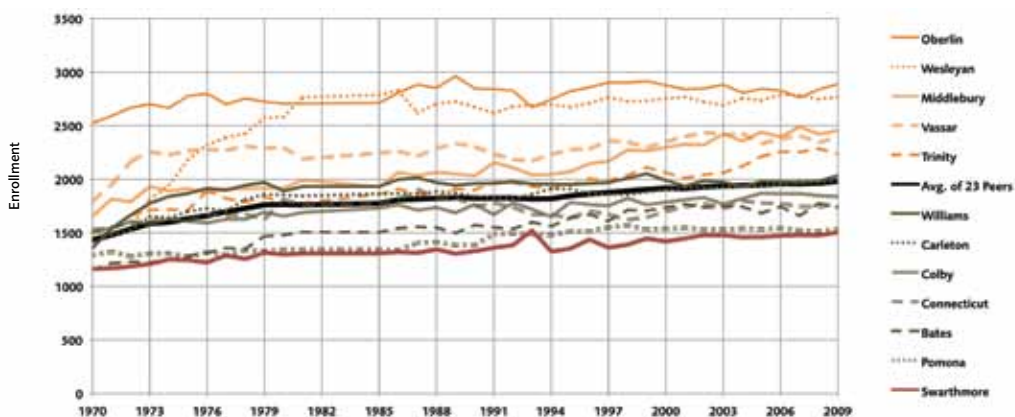
## Commitments that Support this Work

As we embark on our next steps, we will be guided by the following commitments to our institutional infrastructure:

***The College is committed to financial sustainability.*** Swarthmore has a proud history of careful stewardship of all its resources, not only financial ones, but human and operational infrastructural resources as well. At the same time that we use existing resources wisely, we also try to plan for an uncertain future. We identify possible scenarios, develop contingency plans, and seek a prudent course. We will continue to make financial decisions against an economic backdrop that is increasingly uncertain, which means we must exercise an even higher measure of scrutiny and flexibility in our financial forecasting and recognize that substantial new directions are not possible without increased philanthropy.

***The College is committed to staying small while offering a challenging curriculum and a vibrant extracurricular program.*** Swarthmore’s size is essential to retaining the spirit of our community and the close, collaborative nature of our faculty/student relationships. Swarthmore is the smallest of the highly selective liberal arts institutions if one combines institutions in geographically close consortia, which allow these schools to share operational support, seamless access to an expansive curriculum, and student programming. As economic and global conditions change, however, many peer institutions are finding that there is a “new normal” for small. A range of considerations—programs that students and faculty expect, sustainable cost structures, and desired technology and facilities—are leading many of these institutions to increase their size. Our historical pattern of continued, slow growth might enable us to offer a broader curriculum and academic program and a richer set of

Size of Swarthmore College Relative to Peers Over Time



Of 23 peers we studied, these 12 were founded as coed or became coed by 1970. Over time Swarthmore has remained one of the smallest. Compared to these peers, Swarthmore’s enrollment decreased from 81% of the average in 1970 to 76% of the average in 2009.

student experiences. It may also increase the breadth of our student body. The College has no intention of pursuing a dramatic or sudden increase in our student population, and we will carefully scrutinize potential growth in the student body to ensure that the considerable benefits we derive from being small are not compromised.

***The College is committed to providing a supportive workplace.*** Swarthmore's community is deeply enriched by the substantial contributions of a dedicated staff, known for its excellence, commitment, and its exuberance about the College and its mission. Every staff member at Swarthmore contributes in a meaningful way to ensure that the College provides a positive experience for our undergraduates. We know that an excellent staff remains excellent when it is able to take advantage of rich opportunities to continue learning and developing professionally. In the current climate of rapidly advancing technology and ever-developing competencies, we must provide greater opportunities to stimulate professional growth for staff. We are also especially mindful, in these stressful times, of the need to create greater wellness programs and opportunities for staff to enable them to lead healthy, balanced lives both on and off campus.

***The College is committed to creating a campus where buildings and infrastructure support the strength of the academic program and increase opportunities to enhance community.*** This plan calls for improvements to our building infrastructure in support of our academic mission, most notably the development of new facilities to extend the excellence of our science programs, and a new media commons, and a re-imagining of our library spaces. It calls for new and improved spaces to further develop community including the reconfiguration of the dining

facility for students and significant improvements to Clothier to support student performing and studio arts, provide community space, and meet other needs. The plan also notes that the athletics facilities need to be upgraded and a new fitness center will greatly enhance our wellness initiatives. These spaces, along with the potential to develop an inn, restaurant, and retail spaces on the edge of campus, compel us to take a strategic approach to the overall campus footprint. A master plan will focus on sustainability issues as well as ensure that the fundamental nature of our special community is retained and enhanced.

***The College is committed to environmental sustainability.*** The College is committed to proper stewardship of our natural environment, which includes conservation of resources, reduction of waste, and careful maintenance of facilities. The College grounds encompass 425 acres and are also an arboretum: the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College was established in 1929 and is recognized internationally and accredited by



The American Association of Museums. We are proud of our recent history of controlling deferred maintenance, using innovative building practices that meet LEED standards, and creating a culture of sustainability as well as maintaining a cohesive, broad-based program that includes policy, curriculum, and operational components that protect the environment.

***The College is committed to assessment.***

Swarthmore has placed a high priority on assessment for many years. Throughout our history, our periodic reviews of curricular elements such as the Honors Program, our participation in research with consortia of peer institutions, and our constant attention to the effectiveness of our work as teachers, scholars, and administrators has been part of our stewardship of the College. In 2006, we formally articulated a plan to make these efforts more systematic. Throughout the strategic planning process, the importance of ongoing assessment for new initiatives as well as ongoing programs has been underscored. As the College uses its resources in the most effective ways, we must continue to instill a culture of continuous evaluation relative to our mission and goals.

## Implementation and Next Steps

This strategic plan is designed to give Swarthmore a broad vision and recommendations for our future together. It is meant to be an organic document that can adjust both to additional community input and new challenges or opportunities as they arise. How do we now translate these ideas into action? Beginning in 2012, we should:

1. ***Charge existing committees and groups such as the Council on Educational***

***Policy, Staff Advisory Committee, the Sustainability Committee, the Alumni Council, and others to act on relevant recommendations.*** We will also organize new committees and task forces to take up other, specific recommendations in depth. This plan includes many recommendations for new or existing groups to consider how to implement these recommendations or review the effectiveness of existing programs. Many of these groups should be formed expeditiously, as their work will inform the longer-term development of the College. The first step in the work for each of these groups will be to articulate the project's goals, which will clarify our purpose and priorities, provide a map for implementation activities, and establish touchstones against which to measure our progress.

2. ***Develop detailed next steps for the implementation of these recommendations.*** A coordinated effort to integrate and implement the recommendations will begin. This effort should include not only detailed next steps for specific initiatives, but some broad College studies as well. For example, a ***campus facilities master plan*** should provide details about the new facilities this plan recommends. A ***financial profile*** should detail the costs of specific initiatives and show how those costs will influence comprehensive scenarios for the future. A ***diversity and inclusivity plan*** should further advance the College's enduring mission to create a wholly diverse, engaged, inclusive community. A ***capital campaign*** should be designed to excite donors, encouraging them to engage with us to achieve our vision for the future, and to commemorate the College's Sesquicentennial in 2014.

## Afterword

This strategic plan for Swarthmore, firmly grounded in our values, experience, and reason, is also imbued with our aspirations. We know that planning and aspiring are not the same, yet to inspire action, our plans must contain a measure of our aspirations. We know from our history that Swarthmore has long been nourished both by powerful intentions and lofty ideals. We acknowledge that our own experience of this College—whether four years as an undergraduate, 40 years on the faculty or staff, or a lifetime as an alumna or alumnus—is part of a living institution whose future we are charged to create.

In this document, we present a collectively imagined vision of that future. We imagine an innovative curriculum that is intellectually rigorous, yet flexible and creative; we support a community that draws on our traditions and strengths and serves as a model for the new century; we pledge to support an outstanding faculty that combines exceptional teaching with active scholarship and creative expression; we seek a varied and dynamic student body that will thrive intellectually, socially, and personally at Swarthmore; we envision an Institute for Liberal Arts that will study and expand the liberal arts, not just at Swarthmore and in the United States, but around the world; and in doing all of this, we will nurture lifelong relationships with alumni and foster greater alumni-student engagement.

The thoughtful consideration of our future requires us both to plan and to reach. While you can walk from the train station to Parrish Hall in just a matter of minutes, the journey to our future will be longer, with as yet unforeseen challenges. As we look out from Parrish across the green, we stand

together on the threshold of tomorrow and affirm our mission to educate for the common good for the next generation and all that follow.

## Members of the Strategic Planning Council and the Working Groups

In summer 2010, a preliminary strategic planning task force composed of faculty, members of the Board of Managers, and senior staff members outlined the structure and timeline for a strategic planning process; constituted a Strategic Planning Council of faculty, students, and staff to guide the planning efforts; and established four working groups charged with providing a vision for the future. All of Swarthmore's constituencies were represented in this comprehensive process, including more than 80 staff, alumni, students, and faculty members who served on the groups; more than 1,300 alumni; and many others who attended meetings, took part in conversations, or posted to the strategic planning website. A special thank you goes to the following group members for their invaluable contributions and commitment to this process and, more fundamentally, to our community.

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Jim Bock '90, *dean of admissions and financial aid*

H. Elizabeth Braun, *dean of students*

Timothy Burke, *professor of history*

Garikai Campbell '90, *associate vice*

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Mark Chin '12



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Rafael Zapata, *assistant dean and director of the Intercultural Center*

### *Working Groups 2010–2011*

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