

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR
SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
Planning Update
September 2011



DRAFT FOR COMMENT

Strategic Directions for Swarthmore College

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This update reports on a year of work by the members of the Swarthmore College community to establish strategic directions for the College's future. To share your ideas or join a conversation on this draft, please visit www.swarthmore.edu/strategicplanning.

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September 6, 2011

Dear Members of the Swarthmore Community,

Since its founding nearly 150 years ago, Swarthmore has periodically examined its mission, programs, sense of community, and engagement in the world. Most recently, during the last year, many community members have participated in wide-ranging strategic planning conversations organized to identify and address the opportunities and challenges confronting both Swarthmore and the world of higher education. Our work together on this plan aims to build upon the traditions that have been a hallmark of a Swarthmore education since its founding.

Swarthmore is renowned for its deep commitment to reflection, intellectual exploration, and creativity. In a college with 175 full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members and a small student body of slightly more than 1,500, Swarthmore professors, internationally recognized in their fields, get to know students well and become their intellectual mentors. Highly skilled staff members, known for their commitment to our community, continue to be one of our sustaining strengths. Our students are among the brightest and most talented of their generation, ultimately becoming the alumni who make exceptional contributions in their careers and communities. Surrounded by the natural beauty of the College's arboretum campus not far from Philadelphia and symbolized by the heart of the campus Parrish Hall, Swarthmore stands as a world-class model of undergraduate education including the humanities, sciences, social sciences, and engineering.

Throughout the planning process this past year, I have had the privilege and pleasure of listening to many faculty and staff members, students, alumni, parents, and friends of the College describe the special meaning Swarthmore holds for them. One experience that stands out involves an alumnus explaining what he looks for when he interviews prospective students:

I don't look for the student with the three-page resume. I look for the student who is so excited and energized about something he just can't hold back. I don't care if students are interested in local politics or astrophysics, as long as they want to explore their passion, question their passion, and work with other people to expand the knowledge base and impact of their passion.

Swarthmore passion, in my experience, is unique. In the world at large, passion is a "personal feeling," allowing emotion to govern reason (something our Quaker founders would find abhorrent). Swarthmore passion, though, is almost always guided by the needs of the world in all its dimensions: whether to unravel a mathematical problem, design a way to improve the lives of impoverished children, or express beauty through sculpture. "To find your mission in life," author Frederic Buechner has said "is to discover the intersection between your heart's deep gladness and the world's deep hunger." Swarthmore students, and ultimately our graduates, invariably seek and successfully express that intersection.

As a college, we engage in planning to ensure that Swarthmore extends this cultivation of passion to the next generation. We want the words of one of our alumni to ring true for everyone who experiences our campus: “The joy of Swarthmore is to live within a community where intellectual excellence is valued and where each of us does what we can to support, achieve, and celebrate that excellence.” These words also resonate with so many faculty and staff members, students, and alumni who shared their ideas during these many months in meetings and conversations.

Of course, planning has always come naturally at Swarthmore, as we think critically about what students need and how those needs intersect with the needs of the world. But this effort has been undertaken at a time of significant change on and beyond campus and within a particularly intense, complex environment. It has required a sharp focus on what we do well and deep analysis about how to sustain those strengths.

After spending a year discussing Swarthmore and its place in the world and examining data about this college and peer institutions, we have formulated a draft of strategic directions that includes five underlying principles and seven multifaceted recommendations. I emphasize that this is a draft, because we offer this work in progress as a means to encourage further good ideas to emerge throughout the fall semester. We will discuss the draft in regular gatherings, such as faculty meetings as well as in special events such as a Friday Collection on planning, at all staff meetings, and through alumni conversations around the country and the world. The draft is on the Web (www.swarthmore.edu/strategicplanning) to supplement face-to-face discussions, and we invite everyone to contribute to the conversation there. As we move through the fall semester, it is with the goal to present a plan to the Board for their consideration this winter. If the Board approves the plan, we will articulate steps for implementation in the spring and look forward to sharing those ideas with the community as they evolve.

Special thanks go to the Strategic Planning Council, Steering Committee, and Working Groups, through which more than 80 staff, alumni, students, and faculty members came together in monthly meetings and marathon sessions to examine and explore the ideas, options, and opportunities offered by hundreds of people on campus and by more than 1,300 alumni. I am also grateful to all members of our community who took the time to attend a fireside chat or meeting about strategic planning, or post their thoughts to the website, or come out to an alumni event. Your contributions and commitment to this process and, more fundamentally, to our community are invaluable, and I thank you.

It is my privilege and honor to engage in this exciting work with so many who are devoted to Swarthmore—this most remarkable, challenging, and inspiring place.

With warm regards,



Rebecca Chopp

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. For more information about community engagement in this process, please see *A Summary of Community Conversations* at www.swarthmore.edu/strategicplanning.

Strategic Planning Council 2011–2012

Lisa Bao '14

Don Cooney, *interim vice president for development and alumni relations*

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

H. Elizabeth Braun, *dean of students*

Tim Burke, *professor of history*

Garikai Campbell '90, *associate vice president for planning and associate professor of mathematics*

Mark Chin '12

Rebecca Chopp, *College president*

Reed Coke '13

Bernadette Dunning, *administrative coordinator, Music and Dance Department*

Maurice Eldridge '61, *vice president for College and community relations and executive assistant to the president*

Stu Hain, *vice president for facilities and services*

Constance Hungerford, *Mari S. Michener Professor of Art History and former provost (2001–2011)*

Eric Jensen, *associate professor of astronomy*

Koof Kalkstein '78, *member of the Board of Managers*

Gil Kemp '72, *member of the Board of Managers, chair*

Sabrina Martinez '92, *president of the alumni association and alumni council*

Barbara Mather '65, *chairperson of the Board of Managers*

Nancy Nicely, *vice president for communications and public relations*

Christopher Niemczewski '74, *member of the Board of Managers*

Stephen O'Connell, *Eugene M. Lang Research Professor of Economics*

Robin Shores, *director of institutional research*

Thomas Spock '78, *member of the Board of Managers*

Thomas Stephenson, *provost and James H. Hammons Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry*

Suzanne Welsh, *vice president for finance and treasurer*

Patricia White, *professor and coordinator of film and media studies*

Sharmaine LaMar, *interim vice president for human resources*

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

Working Groups 2010–2011

Mission, Values, and Goals

Diane Downer Anderson, *associate dean for academic affairs and associate professor of educational studies*

Dulany Bennett '66, *member of the Board of Managers*

H. Elizabeth Braun, *dean of students, co-convener*

Michael Brown, *professor of physics*

Emily Bryant '12

Garikai Campbell '90, *associate vice president for planning and associate professor of mathematics*

Joy Charlton, *director of the Eugene M. Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility and professor of sociology*

Rhonda Resnick Cohen '76, *member of the Board of Managers*

Reed Coke '13

Janet Smith Dickerson H'92, *member of the Board of Managers*

Maurice Eldridge '61, *vice president for College and community relations and executive assistant to the president, co-convener*

C. Stuart Hain, *vice president for facilities and services*

Adam Hertz, *Marian Ware Director of Physical Education and Athletics*

Koof Kalkstein '78, *member of the Board of Managers, chair*

Ellen Magenheim, *professor of economics*

Eileen Petula, *assistant vice president for finance and controller*

Robin Shores, *director of institutional research*

Craig Williamson, *Alfred H. and Peggi Bloom Professor of English Literature, coordinator of the Honors Program, and coordinator of medieval studies*

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

The Future of Knowledge and the Ways in Which Knowledge is Taught and Learned

Lisa Bao '14

Gayle Barton, *chief information technology officer*

Tim Burke, *professor of history*

Garikai Campbell '90, *associate vice president for planning and associate professor of mathematics*

Constance Hungerford, *provost and Mari S. Michener Professor of Art History, convener*

Eric Jensen, *associate professor of astronomy*

Jacob Krich '00, *member of the Board of Managers*

Bennett Lorber '64, *member of the Board of Managers*

Barbara Mather '65, *chairperson of the Board of Managers, chair*

Stephen O'Connell, *Eugene M. Lang Research Professor of Economics*

Adam Rosenberg '12

Peggy Seiden, *College librarian*

Robin Shores, *director of institutional research*

Lisa Smulyan '76, *associate provost and professor of educational studies*

Thomas Stephenson, *provost designate and James H. Hammons Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry*

Will Treece '11

Suzanne Welsh, *vice president for finance and treasurer*

Patricia White, *professor and coordinator of film and media studies*

Admissions, Access, and Affordability

Jim Bock '90, *dean of admissions and financial aid, co-convenor*
Garikai Campbell '90, *associate vice president for planning and associate professor of mathematics*
Mark Chin '12
Bernadette Dunning, *administrative coordinator, Music and Dance Department*
Cheryl Grood, *associate professor of mathematics*
Mark Kuperberg, *professor of economics*
Alex McClung, *assistant director of institutional research*
Barbara Milewski, *associate professor of music*
Christopher Niemczewski '74, *member of the Board of Managers*
Eileen Petula, *assistant vice president for finance and controller*
Salem Shuchman '84, *member of the Board of Managers*
Darryl Smaw, *associate dean for multicultural affairs*
Thomas Spock '78, *member of the Board of Managers, chair*
Sonja Spoo '13
Thomas Stephenson, *provost designate and James H. Hammons Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry*
Laura Talbot, *director of financial aid*
Danielle Toaltoan '07, *member of the Board of Managers*
Joseph Turner '73, *member of the Board of Managers*
Suzanne Welsh, *vice president for finance and treasurer, co-convenor*

Alumni Engagement and Development

Jenny Bailin '80, *member of the Board of Managers*
Richard Barasch '76, *member of the Board of Managers*
Tiffany Barron '13
Stephen Bayer, *vice president for development and alumni relations, co-convenor*
Eric Behrens '92, *associate chief information technology officer*
Karen Borbee, *assistant athletic director, professor of physical education, and head women's lacrosse coach*
Nancy Burkett, *director of career services*
Garikai Campbell '90, *associate vice president for planning and associate professor of mathematics*
Susan Clarey, *director of advancement communications*
Don Cooney, *director of development*
Maurice Eldridge '61, *vice president for College and community relations and executive assistant to the president*
Alisa Giardinelli, *associate director of news and information*
Gil Kemp '72, *member of the Board of Managers*
Thomas Laux '14
Lisa Lee '81, *director of alumni relations*
Susan Levine '78, *member of the Board of Managers*
Sabrina Martinez '92, *president of the alumni association and alumni council, chair*
Nancy Nicely, *vice president for communications and public relations, co-convenor*
Jorge Munoz '84, *member of the Board of Managers*
Robin Shapiro '78, *member of the Board of Managers*
Robin Shores, *director of institutional research*
Martha Spaninger '76, *member of the Board of Managers*
Rick Valelly '75, *Claude C. Smith '14 Professor of Political Science*
Philip Weinstein, *Alexander Griswold Cummins Professor of English Literature*
Myrt Westphal, *associate dean for student life*
Melanie Young, *vice president for human resources*

Strategic Directions for Swarthmore College

Planning Update, September 2011

One year ago, we began our planning process by asking community members, on campus and off, to identify Swarthmore's greatest strengths. Though expressed in a variety of ways, the hundreds of responses we received produced a remarkably consistent list:

- Our commitment to academic rigor and creativity
- Our diverse and vibrant community of students, faculty, staff, and alumni
- Our Swarthmore values, derived from our Quaker founders and including respect for the individual, decision-making by consensus, simple living, social responsibility and justice, generous giving, and the peaceful settlement of disputes
- Our desire to support access and opportunity for all students, regardless of their financial circumstances
- Our belief in the responsibility to improve the world.

The goal of this planning process is to preserve these five core strengths to meet current and future needs, and in so doing, continue to provide the kind of education that can, and does, positively transform the world.

We—Swarthmore's students, faculty and staff members, managers and alumni—are stewards of a living heritage. Although we should never change simply for the sake of change, we should, as our predecessors have done, ask tough questions and take action when it is needed to ensure that Swarthmore continues to offer the best possible education to our students.

A college...must be conducted that while best serving each generation in its turn, it will ever adapt itself to the new and larger wants of the rising one.

Swarthmore President Joseph Swain at his inauguration, 1902

Challenges Facing the Liberal Arts

As our work unfolded, we looked carefully at the current environment facing Swarthmore and higher education more broadly. We read literature, examined data, and engaged in intense dialogue with each other, all of which surfaced a number of issues. These issues range from the significance of the residential liberal arts model; to questions about our financial model; to the flexibility of our structures to accommodate the rapidly changing ways that knowledge is produced, taught and learned; to the shifting demographics of students; and to our increasingly global and interconnected society. And 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 we confronted and the questions they prompted:

Residential liberal arts colleges educate only two to three percent of the undergraduate population in the United States. Our model of a liberal arts education values a low student-faculty ratio; students and faculty closely working together, not only inside but also outside the classroom; a robust campus life; a diverse and inclusive experience for students with a wide variety of extra-curricular activities; and both infrastructure and staff to support a deeply engaged community. Needless to say, this way of providing an education requires an incredible commitment and investment of time, energy, and resources.

But the power of this model is undeniable—students become critical and creative thinkers and leaders who are trained to be ethical, collaborative, and innovative. Americans developed this model as a social investment in the formation of citizens who could cultivate democratic society while pursuing a productive and satisfying life.

Now this model is under assault by critics who question its value and challenge its ability to prepare students with the skills required in the current and future workplace. Paradoxically, this criticism comes just as many others around the world increasingly recognize the liberal arts as a type of education that is peculiarly suited for the 21st century. So we asked: *Can Swarthmore illuminate and shape the relevance of the residential liberal arts model for the 21st century? If so, how can we support our faculty and encourage others to continue to innovate in the liberal arts? How do we ensure that this model continues to educate for lifelong learning, leadership, and service for our graduates?*

As the public continues to question the value of the liberal arts, financial conditions remain volatile. More families need financial aid, and many will require increases in the amount of aid they receive. Because most of our operating expenses go to financial aid, which is escalating, and to personnel costs, our budgets are not as flexible as those in other types of organizations. One pressing challenge is the pressure on the financial model for higher education in general and for Swarthmore in particular. This prompted us to ask: *How do we build flexibility that might help us navigate this uncertain environment? How do we ensure and expand the generous financial aid packages that are so vital to our commitment to access?*

Changing demographics present challenges and opportunities for higher education. Overall, the population of college-bound high school graduates in the U.S. will shrink for

Swarthmore is not a business, not a governmental organization, not a family, not even a big university.

Swarthmore is a scholarly community that educates undergraduates through the study of “great things” and “big issues” and through engaging them in a holistic, complex, multifaceted microcosm of the world with a distinct view toward the future.

Barbara Mather, '65
Chair, Board of Managers

at least the next five to 10 years. Domestic populations projected to experience growth during this period include first-generation college students, students of color, and those in the West and Southwest. We want to be well positioned to attract and recruit students who may not have traditionally considered Swarthmore in the past. International students are increasingly interested in applying to Swarthmore, yet we have not been able to devote adequate resources to recruit them. We know that a diverse and global student body will enrich the Swarthmore experience for every student, and we recognize the challenge to reach these and other potential students given our current recruitment practices. *How do we reach out to potential applicants? How do we best share who we are to unfamiliar audiences? How do we identify and reach students who will thrive at Swarthmore? How do we recruit a student body diverse in background, ethnicity, experiences, talents and perspectives?*

Swarthmore's commitment to academic rigor and creativity lives in an environment in which information, teaching, learning, and research are expanding and changing due to a variety of forces. Among the more powerful forces, technology has accelerated the amount of information that is available and has also stimulated the expansion of pedagogical methods. Although the traditional curriculum remains vital, some pressing contemporary questions require that the ideas and perspectives of different fields and disciplines be integrated. *How can our traditional structures gain the flexibility they need to support interdisciplinary teaching and new forms of problem-based teaching? What spaces and resources do teaching and research in the 21st century require? How do we help our students navigate the acceleration of information we are all experiencing?*

The 21st century places a high premium on intellectual agility, making it imperative for our students to develop critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to innovate. Faculty members have also expanded their forms of engagement with students, supervising research and other high-impact learning experiences in the summer as well as during the academic year and offering new levels of support beyond the traditional classroom. Teaching at Swarthmore is a profession that increasingly includes both traditional classroom and seminar lectures and discussions and individual, laboratory, and community projects outside the classroom. Research has come to involve, and in some cases require, more collaboration, often taking place with colleagues from around the world. Although Swarthmore faculty have always gone beyond traditional classroom teaching and support, the demands of today's teaching and learning have resulted in far more work and collaboration with

Only by encountering and attempting to comprehend the origins, assumptions, and logics of perspectives that are different from—even repellent to—our own, can we adequately understand our own convictions. True learning, in short, requires broad exposure along as many parameters as possible. This type of “deep” diversity is not politically correct but educationally mandatory.

Robert DuPlessis, Isaac H. Clothier
Professor Emeritus of History and
International Relations, at
Baccalaureate 2011

students outside the classroom. *How do we support all the ways faculty engage students and teach critical thinking and intellectual agility? Given the new demands these forms of teaching and learning create, do faculty have enough time and space to stay abreast of their fields and continue to produce artistic works, publish, and conduct research? What can we do to recruit, retain, and develop the best faculty for Swarthmore—one that reflects the diversity of our nation and of our world?*

Most alumni from whom we have heard spoke eloquently to having experienced the community at Swarthmore as stimulating and profound, citing the importance of learning from fellow students with different perspectives and backgrounds among their most powerful experiences on campus and the ones that ultimately shaped their world view. Creating a complex community allows Swarthmore to provide a microcosm of the world as students learn to address some of the most pressing issues of the day including diversity and inclusivity, sustainability, and civil discourse. The capacity to imagine and

Among the values that resonate deeply at Swarthmore are fostering an environment in which all members of our diverse community are teachers and learners; and the unapologetic belief that students with the privilege of an elite education should put it to use in service for the greater good.

Rafael Zapata, Assistant
Dean and Director of the
Intercultural Center

build a diverse, enriching, and compassionate community is an urgent social and global need in the 21st century. Too many in our society stay within life-style enclaves or simply associate with those who share the same beliefs. Enabling students to learn to create and sustain a robust, diverse, and inclusive community should be considered an important contribution to the common good. At Swarthmore, a goal of our substantive community is to support students as they learn skills of a Swarthmore style of leadership, civic engagement, and, ultimately, as they help to improve

the world by addressing communal and global issues. *Do we have the right facilities for students, staff, and faculty to build substantive community and engage in civil discourse? Do our extra-curricular programs, including athletics and fitness, adequately meet the needs of current students? Are we doing all we can to steward our own natural resources and protect and sustain the earth for future generations? How do we expand our community to more actively include our alumni in an enduring, life-long relationship with the College?*

Against the backdrop of these complex and compelling issues, we engaged in rigorous dialogue and critical review. While we affirm many established elements of Swarthmore, we also urge imaginative new approaches where there are opportunities for growth. The plan presented here is a blueprint, not a final product. The next steps require additional consultation with the campus community, alumni, and the Board of Managers, followed by collaborative efforts among them to put the best ideas into practice and, ultimately, create an implementation plan. In the coming weeks and months, we will actively engage

with all our constituencies to discuss the values and recommendations described in this document and to continue to refine the plan together.

In a world that so desperately needs the agility of thought and ethical leadership our graduates offer, our goal must be to ensure that the power of a Swarthmore education remains viable and strong. These strategic directions are meant to help Swarthmore and each of us build upon our heritage, serve our students, and provide the world with thinkers and leaders who can set the world anew and aright.

Principles to Affirm Our Values and Guide Next Steps

The principles guiding the planning process are drawn from the traditions of the College. Throughout our history, these principles have been expressed in different ways, demonstrating the values, traditions, and practices we hold in highest regard and guiding us as we look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead. Even as the plan envisions specific recommendations, it affirms and updates, for our times, the fundamental principles that make Swarthmore distinct.

Principle 1. Swarthmore acts to advance uncompromising excellence in the study of the liberal arts, embracing both rigorous inquiry and imaginative thinking.

Swarthmore is characterized by a distinctive tradition of intellectual intensity shared by faculty and students and represented in our alumni. This tradition is embodied by the Honors Program and shapes the overall culture as well. It is fostered by the close student-faculty collaboration made possible by a low student-faculty ratio and by the character of our residential community set on a campus of natural beauty.

Swarthmore's approach to teaching and learning, whether in an art studio or theater, in a biology laboratory or economics seminar, in a community practicum on religion and the environment in the city of Chester, Pa. or fieldwork for a sociology thesis in Nicaragua, is to encourage students to understand and question the significance of what they learn. Swarthmore supports opportunities for experimentation, the fortuitous collisions of ideas, and even moments of discomfort and unease from which students can learn and become more confident. Faculty members and students work hard

Since 1922, the Honors Program has symbolized the rigor of Swarthmore's academic programs. The experience includes seminars, research, performances, and other exercises that represent intellectual curiosity, passion, and the ongoing search for truth. The students' final assessment is performed by visiting examiners who not only test our students; they also evaluate the faculty and academic programs. They often remark positively upon the distinctive intellectual culture they encounter here.

Craig Williamson, Alfred H. and Peggi Bloom Professor of English Literature and Honors Program Coordinator

to refine analytic thinking, particularly the ability to ask hard questions and then formulate answers; the capacity to evaluate, interpret, and synthesize evidence; design lucid and well-substantiated arguments; and instill the habits of intellectual agility. Working collaboratively, faculty and students test received wisdom; engage respectfully with differing views; forge viable courses of action for difficult issues; and strive to deal with limits, contradiction, and ambiguity. The passion that unites faculty and students involves engaging intensely and responsibly with ideas, both for their intrinsic and lasting value and because of a commitment to the common good.

The culture for students, faculty, and staff outside the classroom also encourages critical and imaginative thought. The Swarthmore community treasures discovery and wonder. Whether in a discussion at Sharples, on the bus to a soccer game, or walking in Crum Woods, we celebrate the life of the mind. Playful and serious, analytic and passionate, the culture at Swarthmore promotes the critical and creative integration of ideas—and the good that such ideas can contribute to the world. In a time in which the public intellectual is rarely found, much less celebrated, Swarthmore stands as a beacon for the idea that careful and creative thought matters.

To uphold our tradition of intellectual rigor and intensity, we must attend to the changes in information and knowledge that may well comprise the most important opportunities and challenges of the century. In this expansive culture of knowledge, how do we develop the flexible structures, empowering networks, and innovative collaborations that will serve the multiple dimensions of teaching, learning, and research for a 21st century model of academic rigor? How do we bring to bear the intellectual capital of various fields and disciplines on enduring, complex issues such as peace, justice and poverty? To ensure that our most fundamental commitment to rigor and creativity endures, we must address these compelling questions.

Swarthmore's excellence depends on its ability to attract the most gifted and motivated students and to set them to work with a superb faculty of scholar-teachers who exemplify for students the creation of new knowledge and artistic production and possess a drive to share their knowledge with others. The College offers to the larger world a model of intellectual engagement with the challenging issues of our times, a model that is also illustrated by its alumni, many of whom are leaders in their chosen fields throughout the world. Swarthmore stands ready to demonstrate visibly to others how the liberal arts can be used for the common good.

As faculty we are guides and fellow travelers, helping students to build the intellectual agility so critical to a life of discovery. Our task is to light the way, knowing that our students will shape a world characterized by new problems, new methods, new evidence, and new possibilities.

Stephen O'Connell, Eugene
M. Lang Research Professor
of Economics

Principle 2: Swarthmore cultivates an intentional, substantive community in order to shape engaged and thoughtful leaders who will contribute to a more just, civil, and inclusive world.

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 their capacity to appreciate culture in all its many and diverse forms. In this social learning environment, students are educated to be leaders who contribute to society in a wide variety of ways. Swarthmore, as a liberal arts college, should be the exemplar of how a residential college supports the work of developing individuals and building democratic communities in the world.

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. Programs including Garnet athletics, the Socially Responsible Leaders Initiative, and those shepherded by The Eugene M. Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility provide opportunities for students to cultivate and become leaders within the community. Swarthmore must continue to support students to engage in a wide variety of extracurricular experiences, thereby enlarging their habits of appreciation, deepening their civic and social commitments, and expanding their leadership skills.

"There were times when I worked 24 hours straight on papers, and that's a real part of life here. But there's such a huge payoff, and that comes from the friendships I've been able to form, the relationships with teachers and staff, and the different activities I've been involved in. Soccer has been an integral part of my life, and the group of guys that I play with [have] become brothers to me."

Philippe Celestin, '11

Swarthmore's residential environment is not meant just for the satisfaction and maturation of the individual but, as is true to our tradition, is aimed also at educating leaders of a particular type who can address the opportunities and problems of the day. Swarthmore leaders lead in both quiet ways and through major roles. They are driven by their passions and abilities to fill a particular need, challenge, or opportunity. Swarthmore understands leadership as the principled practice of working collaboratively and ethically, and using knowledge to improve the world. We must constantly ask: What are the most pressing challenges and opportunities our students need to address in building substantive community in the future? We have identified three areas of immediate opportunity and challenge as we imagine the next chapter of life as a community: diversity and inclusivity; civil discourse; and sustainability.

We must attempt to represent the world in all of its diversity among students, faculty, and staff and also provide an inclusive, challenging environment. 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. Intentional residential communities also can develop robust new practices that foster even greater inclusivity and engagement.

In a world marked by increasing partisanship and fundamentalism, the second challenge is to 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. 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. We will need spaces in which to bring larger groups of students, faculty, staff and alumni together for deliberative discussions and for social interactions.

The third area, sustainability, fits naturally with Swarthmore's values of simple living, respect for others, and justice, and is central to the College's commitment to educating students to be leaders and global stewards. Sustainable use of resources, equitable distribution of the benefits and consequences of technology, and an understanding of the complex interactions between natural- and human-made systems are all vital to our mission.

Principle 3. Swarthmore recognizes that the faculty is critical to ensuring the excellence of the academic program. Our professors should be dedicated to teaching undergraduates while pursuing research, scholarly writing, and creative production in the arts.

Swarthmore recruits highly gifted and dedicated professors who are passionate about learning and devoted to inspiring in students that same passion to explore and discover.

These scholar-teachers come to Swarthmore for a 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. Over and over, our investment in a low ratio of students to faculty is affirmed as faculty members create more opportunities to engage with students in a variety of ways.

In being active scholars and artists, often enlisting students as collaborators, faculty members model for students the processes of rigorously and imaginatively analyzing received wisdom and ultimately creating new knowledge and understanding, the practices we hope they too will pursue.

Constance Hungerford,
Mari S. Michener Professor of Art History
and Provost (2001–2011)

While 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. They encourage students to do independent research—and the possibilities are almost unlimited. Faculty members in history have taken students to archives in Barcelona and Vienna for independent research leading to award-winning theses, while some dance faculty members actively Skype with students while they are pursuing projects abroad. Others teach students to use the Web to record disappearing languages or create digital humanities archives. Many students arrive at Swarthmore with the expectation of a one-on-one research experience with a faculty member. The research experiences of our undergraduates prepare them for a variety of careers, including those of successful teachers, doctors, lawyers, financiers, entrepreneurs, and social activists. Graduate admission and fellowship award committees increasingly expect that undergraduates have this experience, sometimes along with a publication record. As more students seek supplemental experiences and plan for post graduation careers, their professors advise them closely, support their independent projects and creative ideas, and write many recommendations on their behalf.

Challenge us with your best work, your alternative visions of the world, and your insights, because I promise, we will challenge you. ... This is a serious community of learners.

Sarah Willie-Lebreton,
Associate Professor of
Sociology

These increasing time commitments on the part of faculty come on top of the considerable time they spend outside class engaging with and helping each student to thrive. In grading papers and lab reports, they consider not only content but also writing skills, critiquing multiple drafts and conferring with students individually about ways to strengthen their work.

In an era where the emphasis on teaching combines rigor and creativity, faculty must stay productive in their research in order to keep current with new advances in their fields. Continuing engagement with one's field invigorates curricular innovation, as well as teaching and research. 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. The changes in teaching, learning, and research in the current era make it challenging to carve out time for their own scholarship and creative expression and to be engaged with professional communities around the world.

Just as faculty work has evolved in response to changes in the higher education landscape, so should teaching responsibilities and institutional support reflect these expanding roles. Most peer institutions have already recalibrated teaching loads to meet the current demands of teaching, learning and research in order that faculty members may meet the needs of students, including students' expectation that they will be taught by

faculty who excel in rigorous and creative thought in their fields. Support for faculty excellence in scholarship and artistic production takes many forms, ranging from funds for travel to conferences to support for regular sabbatical leaves. Swarthmore has long been committed to staying competitive with peers in this area to ensure faculty excellence.

Principle 4: Swarthmore strives to enroll students who will thrive intellectually, socially, and personally while helping enrich our community. We value access as an individual opportunity for students and as an institutional responsibility to educate students who—collectively—represent the world.

Demographic trends, along with the current uncertain economic climate, suggest that we look even more closely at our recruitment efforts to ensure that our commitments to access and diversity remain strong. Our admissions efforts have fared well during the economic downturn, but some families express concerns about the value and perceived cost of a liberal arts education. Although the College received its largest applicant pool to date this past year, we must continue to communicate the value of a liberal arts education to a broader audience and respond to mounting pressures challenging the merits of residential liberal arts colleges.

Swarthmore must better communicate its commitment to access for qualified students from all backgrounds, regardless of financial circumstances. The College's need-blind admissions and financial aid packages that meet each family's calculated need have 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 to engage broadly in their chosen careers and civic lives, but its value must be conveyed widely and more forcefully.

The College remains committed to its fundamental admissions and financial aid principles, which were re-examined carefully in the strategic planning process. 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 see, and to work with complexity; and initiative—a drive to accomplish challenging goals that require courage, dedication, and hard work.

At Swarthmore, 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.

The strategic planning process affirmed the need to recruit individuals on their own merits but also to do so in the context of building a strong community. The individual and community are strengthened when students learn in a community that is diverse intellectually; socioeconomically; socially; politically; and in terms of religious, cultural, and racial identity; as well as balanced in terms of gender. Students who want to make a genuine difference in the world; students who are interested in excelling professionally; students from rural, suburban, and urban areas; and students who are the first generation in their families to attend college benefit individually and collectively when they come together at Swarthmore.

Swarthmore often feels to me like a real-life social experiment with lots of soon-to-be sociologists and scientists and humanities scholars trying to integrate the theory that they learn in the classroom...that creates a very curious combination of self-reflection and an intense desire to live and make change.

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. Need-blind admission for domestic students is still fundamental to Swarthmore's goal to provide a high-quality liberal arts education to all deserving students. The practice of *not* considering financial circumstances in admissions decisions for domestic students should continue as long as our financial strength allows. We should seek to achieve socio-economic diversity among international students that mirrors the socio-economic diversity of domestic students.

Camille Robertson, '13

The composition of the student body is vital to the academic and student life experience for everyone. Although our approach requires substantial investment, especially in these challenging financial times, it is an integral part of Swarthmore's identity and mission. Financial aid policies should help attract and enroll a diverse national and international student cohort.

Principle 5. Swarthmore maintains its tradition of bold leadership in undergraduate education in order to create practical, visionary solutions to the most complex issues confronting our world.

In 1864, Swarthmore's founders made a bold statement when they opened the doors of the College to both female and male students, and constituted a board equally comprised of men and women. The founders understood that this radical initiative must strive to serve the needs of their community and of the broader society. Nearly 60 years later, Swarthmore President Frank Aydelotte's introduction of the Honors Program served as another bold act of hope for future generations because 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.

We live in challenging and exciting times for higher education and especially for small, residential liberal arts colleges. The accelerating rate of the production of information, a more pervasive awareness of global connections, vast technological changes, and daunting financial pressures combine to produce a complex, somewhat unstable climate. Swarthmore should be vigilant in analyzing the pressures and opportunities for our future because we cannot easily assume that the historic conditions that allow us to flourish will readily continue. Our entire community should continue to engage in generative thinking about the future and about what our students and faculty will need to keep Swarthmore steady and strong. The best of our critical and creative thinking must be applied to the times in which we live in order to ensure that the College flourishes and to maximize the opportunities for advances in teaching, learning, and research.

We educate to set anew and set aright in the midst of clamor: the clamor of the voices of the peoples of the world; the clamor of diversity; the clamor of different opinions, beliefs, demands, needs, and opportunities. Swarthmore College is blessed by its deeply rooted commitment to educate to set anew and set aright; we have at our command the intelligence and the imagination that, when guided by our values, will enable us to uncover and respond to the demands expressed in the midst of that clamor.

President Rebecca Chopp at
her Inauguration, May, 2010

Indeed, just as Swarthmore created the Honors Program as a way to manifest its transformative academic rigor, so too should we now explore new ways of learning and evolve new approaches to teaching and research. For example, the College should support new course development that uses team-teaching, location-based learning, and virtual classrooms. Few schools are fortunate to have the history, structure, and culture to lead in this way. Our balance of academic tradition and innovation—offering a curriculum that includes engineering as a discipline intrinsic to the liberal arts—and our style of critical and creative reflection position Swarthmore to continue at the forefront of academic leadership for undergraduate education.

Swarthmore must take seriously the obligation and opportunity to serve the world as a leader in undergraduate education. We should lead humbly and with an eagerness to learn from other models. 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.

In addition to supporting the faculty's ongoing research and teaching and in making the case for liberal arts in this country and in the world, Swarthmore should convene others to analyze future trends and best practices for the organizational model of the liberal arts. What will demographic shifts in student populations mean in 2030? Is our business model sustainable? Can financial aid keep pace with need? Can residential colleges serve

their alumni better over their lifetimes? Higher education, on the whole, has done very little generative thinking about its future. The time to do so, we believe, is now. The place to convene and lead such thinking, we believe, is Swarthmore.

Recommendations

The working groups and committees of the strategic planning effort have worked diligently to formulate a vision and to shape recommendations from the many substantive and stimulating ideas that were brought forward by community members that respond to both the internal priorities and external forces we identified together. The carefully considered recommendations that follow

surfaced from extensive meetings, conversations, and feedback among faculty, staff, students, and alumni. They follow naturally from the articulation of our five core principles—in essence they are the manifestation of both our traditions and our aspirations. As such they reflect a remarkably consistent set of shared values—including academic excellence, social responsibility, a diverse and inclusive community, and access for students. They also underscore our rich tradition of innovation and imagination. Like our predecessors, we continue to challenge ourselves to think creatively about how to offer the best liberal arts education we can in order to graduate future leaders and in so doing, effect positive, enduring change.

Swarthmore's academic vitality is based on three foundations: the excellence of our faculty, the talents of our students and the spaces that we provide to bring them together. Essential components of our responsibilities are to design, build, and maintain facilities that encourage creativity, foster collaboration, and harness technology—all in the pursuit of the intense and innovative educational experiences that have always characterized Swarthmore.

Provost Tom Stephenson, James H.
Hammons Professor of Chemistry and
Biochemistry

Recommendation 1. Swarthmore should foster a curriculum of intellectual rigor and innovation that combines disciplinary strength with flexibility and should provide structures and incentives to encourage innovation.

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 current structures are not flexible enough to encourage work across the boundaries that define traditional academic communities. To eliminate this significant barrier, Swarthmore must provide the physical conditions and institutional structures to advance interdisciplinary scholarship and team teaching across departments, offering faculty members the invigorating experience of learning new material and new modes of inquiry and sharing that experience with our students.

Creating the physical conditions for imaginative thinking and interdisciplinary exchange requires facilities that keep pace with rapid changes in teaching and scholarship. Given technological advances, the volume and variety of disciplines and areas we teach, and the interrelationships among them, some current buildings are simply inadequate, outdated, and undersized to meet needs. The College should build new facilities and remodel current structures to enhance interdisciplinary and collaborative work and stimulate organic, frequently unexpected interactions across disciplines and fields.

The academic program has always helped students develop the intellectual abilities to think critically and write cogently. Now, faculty are aware, however, of their potential to help students develop other competencies, including quantitative analysis, visual intelligence, collaborative team work, and the skills to speak articulately and confidently in public and to use technology effectively. These capacities can also be enhanced through course assignments and the independent learning experiences students routinely seek. Research and summer internships and other similar opportunities equip our graduates for professional careers and responsible citizenship.

It is Swarthmore that suggested a terrain of deeper thought. That this frontier terrain is as teeming with truth and insight as all the rest of life is an extraordinary discovery. Others might come to this insight on their own. I needed Swarthmore.

David Bradley, '75

This recommendation has five components:

Support curricular innovation, especially interdisciplinary teaching and programs, with helpful structures and additional faculty positions. In particular we highlight three specific measures, including the creation of three full-time positions for temporary faculty members. With this support, interdisciplinary programs could bring a visiting professor or substitute for a regular faculty member to the home department in order to free full-time faculty for sustained immersion in a new area.

We should also develop new, improved standards to govern interdisciplinary appointments to reduce risk for junior faculty and encourage more experimentation across disciplines. We should fund 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 by developing new spaces or substantially renovating existing ones to include updated labs and offices for faculty and other instructional staff, places for students to work on independent projects, and classrooms that are designed and equipped for current practices across the curriculum and that will encourage collaborative learning. New or renovated academic facilities will provide spaces that will support a number of key goals for the College: encouraging collaboration, expanding close mentoring relationships between students and faculty, and

enlisting technology in the service of the most effective pedagogy and scholarship. In addition, a key consideration in the placement and design of facilities will be to encourage the building of interdisciplinary connections among both faculty and students.

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 our department lacks adequate space for group work in courses, for their signature senior level design projects, and for engaging students in faculty research. The Biology Department is housed in Martin Hall, which dates to 1938. Although it was partially renovated as part of the Science Center project, many teaching spaces were left untouched. Biology is one of our largest majors and their Honors major requires a substantial research project of each student. The department needs more space to accommodate larger enrollments and we must see 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 repurposed to accommodate Philosophy, Linguistics, and Psychology, but can no longer accommodate the demands placed by 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 of its students.

If new space is built and old spaces are vacated, we will be able to refurbish the existing spaces to address the significant needs of a number of other departments that require both teaching spaces and offices. Primary attention must go to creating spaces for a media commons with a video studio, class and study rooms, and offices for ITS support staff so that students and faculty—working within academic programs (such as film and media studies) or with extracurricular initiatives—can engage with contemporary media.

Provide high-impact learning experiences in the summer. We should provide new funding and draw upon existing resources such as alumni connections, study abroad programs, and experiences through the Lang Center. We should invest in research and independent work experiences for all Swarthmore students; enhanced possibilities in the humanities and social sciences, including travel to research sites; and student stipends. We must also find an appropriate means to recognize 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. This includes advancing the use of technology to help students identify, understand, and converse with others about possible Swarthmore experiences. This effort should begin with course content and include study abroad, internship, and research experiences. The 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 teaching, learning, and research initiatives to cultivate traditional and new competencies and support students across a range of preparations. We should reveal to students how courses connect to strong habits of mind and support the range of strengths students bring to Swarthmore and develop while they are here, relying on faculty as well as peer educators such as writing and science associates.

It would be tragic to let our students graduate without the capacity to exercise not only critical thinking but self-critical thinking. They must understand their own position and social responsibility as citizens....

Administered by professional staff in collaboration with faculty, this project could bring together existing initiatives to share best practices and expedite training of students and faculty. 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, providing students with access to the full range of support and engagement programs at Swarthmore.

Aurora Camacho de Schmidt,
Associate Professor of Spanish

The teaching, learning, and research project would 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. Finally, we should incorporate leadership and life skills development into student and advising services.

Recommendation 2. Swarthmore should draw on the tradition and strength of its community to serve as a model for substantive communities in the 21st century.

As a residential college we must build and sustain a strong and vibrant substantive community, attentive to the opportunities and challenges of diversity, civil discourse, and sustainability. We must resist the practice of defining community merely as a collection of interest groups and find meaningful new ways to join together socially and intellectually. We must welcome and support new members of the student body, staff, and faculty and prepare our students to live in and nourish communities that are diverse,

inclusive, and engaging—honoring the Swarthmore values of respect, listening, developing consensus, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We must create physical and cultural spaces that help us use differences as a resource for inclusive interaction and extend our respect for the earth and simple living to sustain the campus and ensure that our students learn to serve as good stewards of the earth.

This recommendation has five parts:

Create new common spaces and re-imagine existing ones to support our objectives for the community. The perspectives, ideas, and cultures students bring to campus benefit Swarthmore greatly, and bringing together people with different ideas and experiences is one of the many ways Swarthmore supports students as they grow intellectually, socially, and as citizens. This exchange is central to our sense of community, and we must offer spaces that provide opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and sharing, both intentional and serendipitous.

We need large spaces to accommodate the community gatherings of students, faculty, and staff who take part in teach-ins stimulated by 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. This need has sometimes been expressed as the desire for a “student center” since Tarble burned in 1983. Sharples, our dining hall since 1964 has at times served as a large gathering space. Unfortunately, now Sharples is too small to accommodate our entire student body and would require extensive work to meet current standards for food preparation and service, let alone to become an environmentally friendly building. Designed to fill this role, Tarble-in-Clothier is also too small and incapable of supporting the programs students desire.

Given these needs and the limitations of Sharples and Tarble-in-Clothier, we recommend that Swarthmore develop a new campus commons that (1) includes a new dining facility to accommodate all of our students and (2) renovated and repurposed forms of Sharples and Clothier to support programming in more effective ways, with Sharples becoming a more flexible space that encourages new modes of collaboration, performances, rehearsals and the varied activities of student groups. This would provide a central “hub” of campus activity near the new dining hall. We would then also create more effective means to support community through Tarble-in-Clothier, the new media commons, and improved wellness and fitness spaces.

Physical spaces, when intentionally designed, have incredible power to draw people together in creative, substantive, and meaningful ways. Ideally these spaces should support and cultivate the creation of community committed to diversity and inclusion, civil discourse, and wellness.

Liz Braun, Dean of Students

Our campus commons, with a nucleus of activity near Sharples and a new dining hall, would also extend throughout campus and support the activities that are part of our

commitments to sustainability and wellness and offer new venues where students, faculty, and staff can meet casually or intentionally. With the capacity to attract and collect all the members of our community in varying numbers and configurations, the commons would encourage, inspire, and sustain the kinds of stimulating experiences and memories that have always been hallmarks of Swarthmore.

Before sustainability became a watchword, Swarthmore's Facilities Management Program was guided by a Quaker ethic of frugality that has yet to leave us. Waste was anathema best embodied by a quote I was given as I walked in the door "Why use new when used will do?"

Continue to recruit and support a staff whose devotion to the community make such a profound impact on our students and others.

Ralph Thayer, Director of Maintenance and Co-Chair, Sustainability Committee from remarks given during Alumni Weekend 2010

Residential colleges are multifaceted living and learning environments. In addition to meeting the high levels of excellence and demands within their individual areas, Swarthmore staff also routinely goes beyond the call of duty to support, mentor, and nurture students in and out of the classrooms. Across the campus from the residence halls, to the dining hall, athletic facilities, performance and exhibition spaces and common community areas, and across all walks of campus life, College staff model and facilitate community for our students, deepening their connections to Swarthmore and instilling in all of us a sense of pride in our collective efforts.

Swarthmore is fortunate to have a dedicated staff, and many choose to stay for most of their careers. The commitment, talents, and expertise of our staff strengthen our community immeasurably. We must continue to 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.

Develop a plan for diversity, inclusivity, and engagement that supports the campus as a model learning and living community for an increasingly complex global world. 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 Swarthmore plan to expand our commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and engagement must aim to recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff, as well as students. The plan should nurture the culture of trust that enables us to share differences freely while exchanging ideas and perspectives that might conflict.

Support the common good and civil discourse by reimagining “Collection” as a time to bring the entire community together in dialogue informally, and to engage in civil

discourse. We should work closely with student groups to create opportunities for such gatherings to occur. In all of our programs, we should emphasize our values of listening, respect for others, and peaceful settlements of disputes combined with our academic commitment to evidence, clarity of arguments, and collaboration as key components of civil discourse. We should invite speakers and guests who challenge our opinions, and embrace a diversity of opinion as we build the common good.

Invest in sustainable practices including preserving the Crum Woods by instituting a cohesive, broad-based program of sustainability that reflects our values of simple living and respect for the environment and builds upon the work of the Crum Woods Stewardship Committee, the Environmental Studies Program, the Sustainability Committee, Earthlust, and other environmentally conscious student groups. The College should also appoint a professional sustainability director to guide progress, coordinate communications, and facilitate alumni outreach. The director would also coordinate the efforts of students, local community members, and alumni to help work in the Crum Woods.

Recommendation 3. Swarthmore should provide a residential liberal arts experience that serves the needs of students and contributes to the vitality of substantive community. Efforts should strengthen leadership initiatives, support athletics, develop wellness programs, and encourage extracurricular arts programs.

Swarthmore must provide a living and learning environment that enables students to explore, experiment, discover, and lead on campus and, ultimately, in the world. We must support and challenge students while encouraging the fortitude, creative expression, insight, self-awareness and other habits they will need in the world they will inhabit. Critical needs include the abilities to communicate well, listen carefully, consider alternative points of view and possibilities, and persuade. Programs in leadership, athletics, wellness, and arts should serve current students while contributing to the vitality of the community.

This recommendation has four parts:

Create a comprehensive approach to a Swarthmore-style leadership development including a Center for Innovation and Leadership for students. This recommendation builds on our tradition of educating socially responsible leaders who lead in creative, collaborative, and ethical ways in a range of professions and forms of civic engagement. Components should include a Center for Innovation and Leadership that helps 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 representing fields that range from academics to business to arts to law and the sciences. This Center could build upon the Program for Socially Responsible Leadership and the LAX Conference in Entrepreneurship.

Affirm support for athletics including recreational, varsity, and club sports and continue to address associated facilities needs. Swarthmore values the interconnection between mental and physical health and well-being. We should think even more creatively and broadly about the physical education courses we offer to encourage lifelong practices and habits related to fitness. Our fitness center has become overcrowded due to increased use by our students, faculty, and staff in addition to the ongoing needs of our athletics teams. We should expand or build a fitness center to accommodate our community's wellness and fitness efforts.

Swarthmore affirms the positive contribution that athletics and wellness 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 and take instruction, to provide leadership, cope with loss, and celebrate achievement. The College should encourage the lessons of fair play, integrity, discipline, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

Swarthmore should support its athletics teams by upgrading out-dated equipment and facilities. Serious consideration should be given to whether the Lamb-Miller Field House meets the needs of our athletics teams as well as whether it positively supports the wellness and communal experiences for all members of our community. 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. 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 wellness program for students and the community by expanding and enhancing the variety and scope of our wellness initiatives, 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 the Crum Woods, lounges, and other physical spaces to contribute to wellness efforts. We should analyze patterns of events and programs to ensure that they offer positive, coordinated, and manageable options for students.

Encourage students to engage in and with the arts outside the classroom. Swarthmore has many academic programs in the arts but students who wish to do studio work or pursue their interest in theater and dance on a noncredit basis have no access to our over-subscribed facilities. We should examine the requirements for students to use these

facilities for extracurricular work and provide adequate space for all students to create, rehearse, and perform on campus including studios for visual and media arts.

Recommendation 4. Swarthmore should encourage and support faculty excellence, embracing exceptional teaching and active scholarship and artistic production throughout an individual's career.

Given the complex demands of teaching, learning, and research and the exponential expansion of information, the College must recruit and retain the best teacher-scholars and support their ongoing development. Continuing engagement with one's field prompts a scholar to rethink courses; update readings, labs, assignments, and other materials; and ask new questions constantly. As active scholars and artists who often enlist students as collaborators, faculty members model for students the process of rigorous and imaginative analysis of received wisdom and ultimately the creation of new knowledge and understanding. The dedication, creativity, and high standards Swarthmore faculty members bring to teaching are grounded in their identities as scholars and/or creative artists.

As we continue to support work in the traditional classroom, we must also facilitate the new teaching formats that faculty members are using to an increasing degree. These include high-impact experiences such as supervising research and field work; incorporating problem-based learning into academic courses; working with individual students to improve writing and communication skills, and guiding students in an ever-changing technological environment. These new teaching formats require faculty members to change the way they allocate their time. Swarthmore's policies and practices should recognize this change and ensure that we are encouraging scholarly and artistic achievement effectively. As we seek the best faculty, we 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 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.

This recommendation has three parts:

Recognize and support the full range of ways that faculty members teach by recalibrating the teaching load. In recent years, the learning needs and expectations of students have changed, greatly affecting the ways faculty members deploy their time and efforts. Traditionally, Swarthmore faculty members have taught five courses per year, and this—coupled with advising and engaging students, producing scholarship or other creative work, and completing service requirements—has made up the academic work of

a scholar. Recognizing that the time devoted to intensive, individualized teaching represents a portion of the academic work of a faculty member, we must recalibrate the assignment of faculty time to include four formal courses (with adjustments for courses with labs) each academic year. This means that the recalibrated course load would be four plus one, with the fifth “course” being used to support teaching, research, and artistic production in the expanded ways that are so essential to current forms of learning and research. Students benefit when our faculty can engage them in new forms of teaching and research, and since our peers have already recalibrated teaching loads, this will allow us to remain competitive in our recruitment efforts.

This recalibration will require a comprehensive examination of the academic program, enabling the Council on Educational Policy (CEP) to determine where to add new faculty lines. The CEP must also evaluate the essential elements of the academic program and identify needs to consider courses with very low enrollments, how requirements are sequenced, and the circumstances that justify releasing a faculty member from a course for administrative service.

Recognize the value of faculty research and artistic production and support it vigorously. We should ensure adequate allowances for research and travel to professional meetings and expand internal fellowships to support second-semester research and creative production in the arts. We must continue to fund start-up costs for research laboratories and acquiring 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 and opportunity hires. Extending the diversity of the faculty and the instructional staff must be a key objective of the proposed diversity plan.

Recommendation 5. Swarthmore should create and support a varied and dynamic student body through its admissions and financial aid policies.

Swarthmore exists to educate students. For this reason, it is imperative to attract and select students who will thrive and contribute to our strong community. We value access not only as an individual opportunity to learn and flourish, but also as an institutional responsibility to educate a student body that represents the nation and the world. To continue to provide an unparalleled educational experience, we must enroll higher numbers of exceptional students from around the world, adjusting our practices in order to seize the opportunities of changing demographics, respond to new economic

constraints, and push back against increased skepticism about the value of a liberal arts education.

This recommendation has six parts:

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 and value of a liberal arts education in an ever-changing, demographically diverse, and globally interdependent world; and ensure continuing access for all qualified students, regardless 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.

Raise funds specifically for financial aid in the next campaign to increase restricted endowment support for the existing program, secure funds for future growth in aid, and expand aid for international students. Providing access to education is among Swarthmore’s most cherished values because it allows us to build a diverse learning community in which many backgrounds and points of view are represented. Strong philanthropic support for financial aid allows us to maintain and even expand our need-blind/full-need–met admissions and financial aid policies, ensuring that we 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.

Sustain slow growth in the student population over time to meet needs of the academic program and support a robust community. Swarthmore’s transformative experience relies on our small size. We affirm the strength of being one of the smallest liberal arts institutions among our peers and recognize that growing slowly affords the opportunity to add faculty to expand academic offerings, allocate new resources to facilities and other needs strategically, and continually enhance the student body.

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

Establish a Board of Managers Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid to help the College seek students who exhibit academic excellence broadly imagined. The committee would review and monitor admissions practices, policies, and guidelines; and 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; examining current needs comprehensively; reviewing the financial implications and effectiveness of policies on a regular basis, perhaps every three to five years; and monitoring Swarthmore's policies compared with peers.

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

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 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.

This recommendation has four parts:

Evaluate the effectiveness of existing alumni engagement activities and introduce new programs that reach across a broad spectrum of interests. Before introducing new opportunities, we should learn more about the effectiveness of current alumni-outreach activities and use that knowledge to guide the commitment of dollars, staff, and time. That done, 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. Opportunities for creating new programming abound such as those already created like 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 first-hand about the College’s mission, needs, and aspirations. Because events build community and foster lifelong attachment, we propose creating a central event office with the professional staff and expertise to make more effective, consistent use of resources and leverage economies of scale.

Swarthmore had a tremendous influence in making me an entrepreneur....Entrepreneurs are ... driven to make change. They break out of the mold to innovate and to make their mark. I think this is essentially Swarthmorean thinking.

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 gain greatly from alumni support.

Iqbal Quadir, '81 at
Commencement 2011

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.

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, learn more about why and when our alumni visit social media sites, investigate the best practices we should adopt, and determine how to assess emerging trends.

Recommendation 7. Swarthmore should create the Swarthmore Institute for Liberal Arts in the 21st Century to study and expand liberal arts education at Swarthmore, in the United States, and around the world.

Swarthmore should enhance support for intellectual rigor and creativity and signal our identification with those values and our potential to lead in strengthening the liberal arts in today's global community. The Swarthmore Institute for Liberal Arts in the 21st Century would provide a flexible structure and resources to promote projects that might involve faculty, students, and/or guests in formats that include reading groups, semester-long workshops, and seminars focused on a visiting scholar.

The Institute should have the frameworks and financial resources to encourage faculty participation, time and space for reflection, delight in discovery, and further deepening of one's knowledge. It should also become a destination for scholars outside Swarthmore who are interested in the future of the liberal arts by stimulating generative conversation about liberal arts education and providing a physical space to convene such activity.

Currently no collection of scholars and practitioners is devoted to understanding the intrinsic value of the residential college, encouraging innovation in this setting, or expanding liberal arts approaches around the world.

Swarthmore has both an opportunity and an obligation to 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. A faculty-led task force should study this proposal more in-depth.

The Swarthmore Institute for Liberal Arts in the 21st Century will manifest the intellectual values we hold in highest regard: rigor, collaborative and cooperative exchange, and imaginative and innovative solutions to some of the most pressing problems confronting us in these times.

This recommendation has three parts:

Foster exploration and curricular innovation by providing a flexible structure and support for 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.

Timothy Burke,
Professor of History

We should also provide a place, such as that envisioned as part of the proposed inn project, for contemplative, nondisciplinary-specific discussion among faculty to foster more social exploration of great ideas and exciting innovations.

Convene and support scholarly activity on the future of the liberal arts at national and international levels. Promote the visibility and viability of Swarthmore College in particular and of the residential liberal arts college in general. This includes supporting

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 study innovative topics.

We 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 our other constituencies.

Bridge conversations between liberal arts education and those who live “liberal arts lives,” especially between Swarthmore faculty, students, staff, and alumni on topics related to the future of liberal arts. We should create a structure to guide and govern the institute, including a board, a Swarthmore faculty director, adequate administrative support staff, project fellows for faculty, and “lives in the liberal arts fellows” for alumni. 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.

Commitments that Support this Work

As we embark on 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.

Scores of faculty, staff, students, and Board members have invested untold hours in our strategic planning process. Why? Because we believe that doing so will make Swarthmore an even stronger institution as it embraces the challenges and opportunities of the next two decades. A thoughtful, articulate, and inspirational plan will energize the entire Swarthmore community and solidify our position as the nation's leading liberal arts college.

Gil Kemp, '72, Chair,
Strategic Planning Council

The College is committed to a supportive workplace. Swarthmore's community is deeply enriched by the substantial contributions of a dedicated staff, known for its excellence,

commitment, and indeed, its exuberance about the College and its mission. Every staff member at Swarthmore contributes in a meaningful way to ensure that the College provides an unparalleled positive experience for our undergraduates. The College has long valued its relationship with staff. Although we have made great strides in recent years to create an even more professional environment, there is more to be done. 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 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 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, with 117 acres around our academic, administrative, and residence halls, 35 acres of athletics facilities, and the 190-acre Crum Woods, used by a number of academic departments for teaching and research and by students, faculty, staff, and townspeople for recreation. The grounds also include the 30-acre Martin Tract (a limited access mature forest) and 53 acres of land owned and managed as part of the faculty/staff housing program. The campus is 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 having little 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. Where financially possible, the College will promote sustainable living on campus that serves as a role model for students, faculty, and staff.

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. Indeed, with a current enrollment of about 1,500 undergraduates, 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. We are also aware that our historical

pattern of continued, slow growth might enable us to offer a broader curriculum and academic program and a richer set of student experiences. It may also increase the dimensions of our student body. There is no desire for 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 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. It calls for new and improved spaces to further develop community including the addition of a dining facility for students and significant improvements to the repurposing of Sharples and Clothier to support student performing and studio arts and 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 move forward with a campus facilities master plan 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 “place” is retained and enhanced.

The College is committed to a culture of assessment. Swarthmore has placed a high priority on assessment for many years. Even before recent public and government demands for accountability and the new assessment standards of accreditation organizations, the College developed a foundation for assessment of both student learning and overall institutional effectiveness. 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 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, guiding principles, 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. During the coming weeks and months, on-campus, and alumni communities will be encouraged to respond to this plan by attending community forums, posting suggestions or responses on the Strategic Planning website, or by directly contacting any of the members of the Strategic Planning Council.

After we discuss the plan, what are the next steps? How do we translate these ideas into action?

1. ***The Board will evaluate the plan during winter 2011–2012.*** If the plan is approved, we will develop a detailed plan for implementation. If we encounter questions or issues that warrant additional research or conversation, we will take the time to address them.
2. ***Charge existing committees and groups such as the Council on Educational Policy, Staff Advisory Committee, the Sustainability Committee, the Alumni Council, and others to study relevant recommendations.*** We will also organize new committees, task forces, and study groups to study other, specific recommendations in depth. The plan includes many recommendations for new or existing groups to study proposed initiatives or review the effectiveness of existing programs. Many of these should be formed expeditiously, as their work will inform the development of longer-term plans.
3. ***Develop an overall prioritization and implementation plan.*** A coordinated effort to prioritize, integrate, and implement the recommendations will begin. This effort should include not only detailed plans for specific initiatives, but some broad College studies as well. A ***campus facilities master plan*** should provide an evaluation of existing facilities and the need and shape of new facilities. A ***financial plan*** should quantify the costs of specific initiatives and integrate them into several comprehensive scenarios for the future. A ***diversity plan*** should be developed to 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.

Thank you for your attention to this planning update and for ideas and suggestions you might contribute to the next phase of this important work. Several more opportunities for broad discussion are scheduled during fall 2011. Please visit www.swarthmore.edu/strategicplanning to share your ideas or join a conversation on this draft.