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# Hamilton

## THE HAMILTON COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN

Hamilton College  
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## MISSION

Hamilton College provides diverse and talented students with a superior liberal arts education in a residential environment. By emphasizing effective written and oral communication, academic rigor, intense student-faculty engagement, superior advising, and personal responsibility, the College enables students to demonstrate excellence in critical, analytical, and creative thinking, and breadth and depth of knowledge.

## CONTEXT FOR PLANNING

Hamilton has always been, and will continue to be, a residential liberal arts college committed to excellence in written and oral communication. Having grown from a college of fewer than 500 men before World War II to a coeducational institution strengthened considerably by Kirkland College's innovative curriculum and its emphasis on interdisciplinary study and the arts, Hamilton is widely regarded today as one of America's finest liberal arts colleges.

Hamilton is a fortunate institution. It has a superb faculty, talented students, passionate alumni, and substantial financial and physical resources. We are not content, however, to rest on our current standing because we measure ourselves not against all colleges and universities, but against the most selective and well-regarded liberal arts colleges, and, most importantly, against our own potential.

**Hamilton has always been, and will continue to be, a residential liberal arts college committed to excellence in written and oral communication.**

Strategic planning is both a product of the past and a projection into the future. Hamilton's strategic plan is based on two watershed events in our recent history — passage in 1995 of the Residential Life Plan and adoption in May 2000 of the new curriculum. The Residential Life Plan had three fundamental objectives: greater integration of academic and residential life, greater equity of social and residential opportunities, and a greater variety of activities for students. We expect the new curriculum will have as significant an impact on students in the classroom as the Residential Life Plan has had on students' co-curricular lives.

The curricular innovations in *The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education* (Appendix B) form the foundation for our strategic planning over the next three to five years. The new curriculum replaces distribution requirements with the intensity of proseminars and a Sophomore Seminar Program that encourages students to see and explain the connections between and among disciplines. In combination with each concentration's Senior Program, the plan provides the curricular freedom that makes responsibility meaningful, fosters critical, analytical, and creative thinking, and stresses excellence in oral and written communication. By presupposing excellence across all departments and programs, and building on Hamilton's traditional strengths, the plan challenges the College community to reach even greater heights.

Our primary responsibility, then, is the intellectual and personal development of our students; *The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education* reflects the faculty's response to this priority. Hamilton students learn to think critically and creatively, to write and speak clearly, and to understand a range of scientific, social, cultural, and artistic issues. Indeed, we are confident that the capacities needed for our students to lead richer and fuller lives and to contribute meaningfully to society are developed best through a demanding education in the liberal arts.

We recognize, however, that liberal learning at its best occurs in a residential community carefully conceived to supplement the formal academic program. Residential and social facilities provide the settings for students to make connections between academic concepts and their practical application, and for them to develop important interpersonal skills and values. Just as the new curricular plan emphasizes student freedom and responsibility, so too must students' residential and social experiences nurture those attributes. Given the mutually reinforcing roles of academic and co-curricular life, the people necessary for a first-rate liberal arts education include not just faculty members and academic support personnel, but helpful and caring alumni, staff, and administrators — all committed to the intellectual and personal development of each student.



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In a residential liberal arts community, people learn from each other. Diverse viewpoints and backgrounds promote an open dialogue in which community members speak freely to one another, enhancing Hamilton's learning environment and our collective ability to understand, appreciate, and embrace differences. Hamilton will accelerate the significant progress it already has made in creating a campus more representative of the world our graduates will encounter in their personal and professional lives.

This strategic plan is another step forward in the continuing process of fulfilling the educational mission of the College. We will continue pursuing excellence in all that we do, from the first two years, through the concentrations, and across all departments and programs. We will also support those programs, ideas, and activities most likely to give us an advantage in attracting the best students and faculty and enhancing Hamilton's reputation with the nation's leaders in postsecondary education. The remainder of this document describes the strategies we will follow during the next three to five years to meet our goals.

## CORE STRATEGIES

Hamilton already is well-known for the high academic standards of its programs and the intense intellectual engagement of students and faculty in their work. Our aspiration, embodied in two core strategies, is to offer an even better educational program for the increasingly

talented and diverse students who choose to study on College Hill. Over the next three to five years, Hamilton will strive to become the national leader in developing students' excellence in written and oral communication, in providing opportunities for students to pursue a variety of working relationships with talented teacher-scholars, and in emphasizing student responsibility and demonstrable outcomes.

*The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education* presents frequent opportunities — from proseminars and the Sophomore Seminar through the major and Senior Project — for close intellectual engagement with the faculty. In consultation with advisors and other faculty members, students must take responsibility for designing a coherent course of study that includes both breadth and depth of knowledge. The Sophomore Seminar and Senior Project serve as integrating and culminating experiences by requiring students to communicate, in writing and speaking, their understanding both within and across disciplines.

To reach these goals, Hamilton must continue to recruit, support, and retain outstanding teacher-scholars. The Hamilton faculty is increasingly well-known for its professional achievements across the range of subjects represented in the curriculum. The passion faculty members bring both to their scholarly and artistic endeavors and to their classrooms — whether the lecture hall, seminar room, laboratory, studio, or performance space — inspires students to engage in rigorous academic work. Only when students have addressed significant questions and problems that arise in the careful study of a subject can they demonstrate what they have learned through effective, persuasive communication.

*The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education* expects students to be active learners and to be accountable for the choices they make. Faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and peers will guide students during their four years on College Hill, but ultimately each student will be responsible for her or his own education, both in the classroom and as part of the larger campus community.

**FIRST OBJECTIVE** — Hamilton will strive to become the national leader among liberal arts colleges for teaching students to demonstrate their knowledge and insights effectively through written, oral, and other forms of communication.

Excellence in written and oral communication has long been associated with a Hamilton education. Several recent studies conducted under the auspices of the Mellon Foundation and the Knight Higher Education Collaborative have validated Hamilton's historic competitive advantage in these areas, while additional data confirm that excellence in written and oral communication is highly valued among high school seniors, alumni, and employers.

**Hamilton students learn to think critically and creatively, to write and speak clearly, and to understand a range of scientific, social, cultural, and artistic issues.**

As part of *The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education*, the faculty has significantly strengthened this emphasis by reaffirming the centrality of writing, instituting special first- and second-year proseminars that emphasize intellectual engagement in both writing and speaking, and establishing an interdisciplinary seminar program at the end of the sophomore year that culminates in an integrative project with public presentation. Knowing the importance of effective communication in all its forms, and recognizing that building on our strengths in this area will require sustained institutional commitment, we will move forward in becoming the national leader in the teaching of written, oral, and other forms of communication by:



“Excellence in written and oral communication has long been associated with a Hamilton education.”

- Implementing the Sophomore Program
- Expanding the reach of the Writing Program and the Nesbitt-Johnston Writing Center
- Establishing an oral communications center and continuing development of courses in oral communication
- Expanding student opportunities for public presentations and performances
- Creating opportunities for faculty development
- Recognizing achievement in writing and oral communication

**SECOND OBJECTIVE** — Hamilton will strive to become the national leader among liberal arts colleges in the opportunities it provides students to engage in academically rigorous work and to take responsibility for their academic and personal development.

One of Hamilton’s strengths, as students and alumni are quick to point out, is that a shared commitment to learning leads to exciting interactions with professors dedicated to communicating the complexities and richness of their disciplines. In the new curriculum, proseminars and the Sophomore Seminar anticipate considerable individual attention to student work in a context of student responsibility and engagement prior to the declaration of a major. By expanding programs such as the Emerson grants and other funding for summer research, Hamilton will further increase the opportunities for students to pursue collaborative work with faculty members across all areas of the curriculum. We will also support ways for students to connect their academic programs to societal concerns through internships, service-learning programs, and academically oriented partnerships with civic, cultural, and other organizations. Strong positive feedback from students about their off-campus study experiences encourages us to promote further our programs in Spain, France, China, Washington, and New York.

One of the most important ways students interact with faculty members is through academic planning and advising. In this environment, students are responsible for making their own decisions based on their best judgment and the best information and advice available to them. For their part, faculty members work with students to craft an individual academic plan based on each student's strengths, weaknesses and goals. The College supports this new program by providing appropriate administrative assistance, information, and procedures that make academic planning meaningful for students and by providing support and recognition for faculty advisors.

As part of its strategic planning, Hamilton will also seek to expand the ways in which the College's residential environment contributes to its academic mission. Through active involvement in student organizations, athletics, community service, and the everyday life of the College, students can demonstrate responsibility for their own personal development. Whether negotiating a roommate conflict, organizing a major concert, leading a student group, managing a budget, or serving on the Honor Court or Judicial Board, students gain experiences that enable them to see the connections between responsible citizenship and the goals of a liberal arts education. In this context, the College will explore establishing residence hall seminar rooms and the reintroduction of academic interest housing and a faculty-in-residence program, as well as increase opportunities for student self-governance.

Hamilton will strive to become the national leader in promoting student responsibility and faculty-student interaction by:

- Providing students with a wider range of opportunities to pursue rigorous academic work in classes, performances, student-faculty collaborative work and undergraduate research, and off-campus study
- Supporting more active advising relationships
- Connecting academic objectives with practical applications
- Expanding opportunities for student leadership and community involvement

## **SUPPORTING STRATEGIES**

In striving to become the national leader among liberal arts colleges committed to excellence in oral and written communication, high academic standards, faculty-student engagement, and student responsibility, Hamilton has adopted the following four supporting strategies.

**THIRD OBJECTIVE** — Hamilton will provide the infrastructure necessary to implement the core strategies.

Facilities are an integral component of a high quality liberal arts education, but only if they match faculty members' pedagogical practices and values. In the sciences, for example, cur-

rent facilities are beginning to constrain the faculty's emphasis on hands-on, inquiry-based teaching. In response, Hamilton is building a science complex, the largest construction project in the College's history. The new facility will highlight the faculty's inquiry-based approach to science education, strengthen interdisciplinary work within the sciences, and provide a welcoming space for non-majors. It also will be one of the main centers of an expanded summer program that emphasizes undergraduate research and faculty-student collaboration.

Similar pedagogical needs are the driving force in the plan to renovate and redesign social science facilities, most likely on the Kirner-Johnson site. With the largest enrollments and number of majors at the College, the social sciences have a serious need for better classroom and office space. Also, as students are given more research opportunities in courses and in the summer, there are particular needs for "laboratory" spaces near the social science departments and the Levitt Center. These spaces, parallel to those in the sciences, will be used for student-

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faculty work in courses and in research projects, such as surveys and policy studies with local groups (e.g. the Oneida County Resource Center). The Term in Washington, now in its fourth decade, provides an off-campus study opportunity in which students combine academic work with internships. This program will be strengthened by developing a permanent D.C.-area center that not only will house students, but also will enable the program (and other Hamilton groups, including the Levitt Center) to pursue new off-campus study opportunities.

The visual and performing arts faculty are continuing to plan for much-needed facilities that parallel the quality of the Schambach Center complex. Studio and theatre spaces are inadequate, and there are needs for better classrooms and office spaces in all departments. Support spaces for the arts (e.g., slide and music library, Jazz Archive) also need to be upgraded. Additionally, the mission of the Emerson

Gallery is seriously hampered by physical limitations, which also constrict the ability of the College to build an arts collection that complements the academic program. We need to address these space deficiencies in ways that highlight the value and the importance of the arts at Hamilton.

In focusing on these larger capital projects, we must remain aware of the importance of our current stock of classrooms for the new curriculum. Proseminars and sophomore seminars require teaching spaces that are properly furnished and configured and that have the acoustics and lighting to support the kind of intense interaction and engagement we expect. Ongoing renovation of classroom and related instructional spaces, particularly those in the humanities (e.g., North Campus classrooms, language labs, and other support spaces), must be accelerated.

Since the library serves as a critical resource for the new curriculum, planning to meet its needs should begin immediately. We believe a college library serves as a center for the intel-



lectual life of an academic community and as a “laboratory” for the humanities and the social sciences. To safeguard and strengthen this vital resource, the College’s recent Middle States Self-Study placed special emphasis on the Burke Library and its future, including its relationship with Information Technology Services (ITS). A series of recommendations addressed issues related to evolving print and electronic media, adequacy of facilities and staffing, evolving division of labor between the library and ITS, and the effectiveness of library and ITS services delivered to users. The Middle States Report contains the blueprint for protecting our community’s intellectual center.

As the Middle States Report made clear, information resources (technologies, content, services) are critical for supporting the needs of academic programs and preparing students to be leaders in an information-driven society. Hamilton will identify and then incorporate those information resources that are consistent with the College’s liberal arts mission, especially its focus on providing a demanding educational experience.

As these projects proceed, we are mindful that many of the buildings on the Kirkland side of campus are approaching the end of their life-cycles and will require significant renovations. In addition, the College will determine in the near future the specific uses of several former fraternity houses and will consider the constraints faced by the Department of Physical Education and Athletics for offices, court space, and playing fields. Attention to these projects, coupled with a strategic review of the College’s land holdings, will help sustain a uniformly excellent educational program.

Finally, as a 24-hour-per-day, seven-day-per-week residential community, Hamilton recognizes its obligation to provide a diverse array of extracurricular activities and attractive spaces for students to gather formally and informally. Given the College’s rural location, this commitment is essential since off-campus, late-night social events are limited in the surrounding area. Conversely, Hamilton’s proximity to the Adirondack Park offers a multitude of seasonal outdoor activities for students with those interests.

Hamilton will provide the physical resources and infrastructure necessary to support curricular emphases by:

- Building and renovating facilities that support the faculty’s pedagogical practices and values
- Providing an excellent library and rich information resources
- Preparing students to be leaders in an information-driven society
- Providing appropriate spaces and support for a diverse array of co-curricular and extracurricular programs



**“The Levitt Scholars program assists students in developing their communication skills through presentations of their thesis research at secondary schools.”**

**FOURTH OBJECTIVE** — Hamilton will increase its support for students, faculty, and all other employees, particularly with respect to diversity, and will provide the financial resources necessary to support strategic objectives.

Hamilton will increase its support for the people who comprise its community, especially those at the center of the educational enterprise. In particular, the College recognizes that increasing the amount of financial aid available and awarding it strategically since 1995 to the most desirable students has helped improve the profile of our entering classes. Future progress toward the ambitious admission goals for the College will require Hamilton to continue this strategy. Similarly, Hamilton will remain generous in sustaining the intellectual growth of the faculty through support for research, travel, and other means of professional development. The College must recognize and encourage the scholarship of its increasingly active faculty as

a way of attracting and retaining the best teacher-scholars. A talented staff is also essential to carrying out Hamilton’s mission. Sustaining a work environment that is supportive of all employees remains a College priority.



**“Diversity, in its various forms, adds depth, complexity, and strength to a community and is an essential part of a liberal arts education.”**

Making the Hamilton campus more accepting of difference is a fundamental imperative and a strategic necessity. The recent report of the Diversity Task Force will be a starting point for planning coordinated efforts at increasing diversity and making Hamilton “a welcoming and productive environment for all groups of people.” Programs that create representational diversity (e.g., Posse, HEOP, the Grinnell Consortium, and the ACCESS Project) need to be complemented by curricular and programmatic initiatives. Diversity, in its various forms, adds depth, complexity, and strength to a community and is an essential part of a liberal arts education. It promotes an open community where students, faculty members, and staff speak freely to each other, and it allows for a multitude

of perspectives, enhancing Hamilton’s learning environment and our community’s ability to understand and appreciate difference. Recent initiatives undertaken by faculty members involved with the Kirkland Project for the Study of Gender, Society and Culture further demonstrate how issues of diversity can connect academic and residential life, and we believe a permanent physical presence for the Kirkland Project will support such initiatives even more. Increasing diversity will also increase Hamilton’s attractiveness to the widest range and the most talented group of students, faculty, and staff.

Implementing Hamilton's strategic plan will require determination, consensus among our various constituents, and, ultimately, new sources of revenue. To fund the various objectives, Hamilton will undertake a careful review of its financial planning, including an assessment of current and projected revenues from the endowment, ongoing stewardship of resources tied to strategy and vision, and preparation for new revenue sources through the development of a capital campaign.

Hamilton will increase support for those who live and work here by:

- Increasing support for students, faculty and other employees
- Increasing diversity on campus
- Securing new revenue sources and carefully stewarding existing sources

### **FIFTH OBJECTIVE** — Hamilton will support and promote distinctive academic programs, which create recognition for the College's overall excellence.

The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education depends upon excellence embodied in the relationships of motivated teacher-scholars and intellectually inquisitive students. Our first priority, then, is creating or sustaining excellence across the curriculum, the foundation of any superb liberal arts college.

In addition, as part of its planning over the next three to five years (and each three- to five-year period that follows), Hamilton will support and promote those programs, ideas, and activities that actually or potentially create recognition for the College's high academic standards. Certainly, most students come to Hamilton because of the general excellence of our program. Nevertheless, the College must always be ready to invest in good ideas and programs that demonstrate the intense student-faculty engagement and student responsibility that characterize a Hamilton education, particularly when such programs tend to distinguish Hamilton from its peer institutions and thereby attract top students. Investing in these areas provides an additional means for persuading the best students to choose Hamilton.

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The College has, since the beginning of The New Century Campaign, highlighted the sciences, particularly the senior project, and the programs of the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center as being distinctive. We will capitalize on the fact that Hamilton is the only college in its peer group that requires all science concentrators to conduct independent research in a senior project that culminates in a written and oral presentation. The rigorous programs lead-

ing to these projects and the responsibility students must take for their work provide good examples of the intense faculty-student engagement that leads to clear, positive results at Hamilton. Similarly, the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center offers the resources of an undergraduate public policy think tank that supports community-based research projects, ranging from analysis of local policy issues to national surveys that produce widely recognized student work. In addition, the Levitt Scholars program assists students across the curriculum in developing their communication skills through presentations of their thesis research at secondary schools. By already following through on plans to support the distinctive curriculum in the sciences and the distinctive programs in the Levitt Center, Hamilton has demonstrated its commitment to a demanding liberal arts education that develops excellence in students' written and oral communication.

Acting strategically, the College must continue to identify and support other academic areas that have similar potential: for example, the multidisciplinary combination of an East Asian Languages and Literatures Department and an Asian Studies program served by nationally known experts on Asian politics, history, and culture (a combination recently recognized and strengthened by a significant grant from the Freeman Foundation). An international conference hosted by the College titled "Technology and Chinese Language Teaching in the 21st Century" is evidence of our leadership position in Chinese language acquisition, and



**"...Hamilton's Associated Colleges in China Program is a leader in study abroad programs there."**

Hamilton's Associated Colleges in China Program is a leader in study abroad programs there. Increasing international interest in China and the Pacific Rim, the unusual breadth and quality of Hamilton's curriculum, and the opportunity to highlight programs that diversify the College make East Asian Languages and Literatures and Asian Studies academic areas worth supporting as distinctive examples of the general excellence that can help attract the best students to the College.

Any academic programs or groups that demonstrate high standards, that encourage student responsibility, and that can be or already are distinctive present new opportunities for creating recognition of Hamilton's excellence. These opportunities may involve faculty members from many departments (e.g., the Kirkland Project, the New York City Program), or be

centered in one or two departments (e.g., music performance groups, the Antarctica Program). In some cases, the College will invest in these programs and groups by pursuing foundation support, as in the current grant funding the Kirkland Project's interdisciplinary courses as a distinctive curricular and pedagogical approach to issues of diversity. Where new resources might not be as essential, we can increase publicity for performances and other activities that call attention to our excellence and that will help attract outstanding students.

Hamilton will support and promote the programs that call attention to the College's general excellence by:

- Identifying and supporting ideas and activities that demonstrate high standards, particularly when such programs tend to distinguish Hamilton from its peers

**SIXTH OBJECTIVE** — Hamilton will evaluate the impact of its educational program on student performance and develop other measures for assessing the success of this plan.

The foundation of this strategic planning effort is *The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education*. Our success, therefore, will be measured by the impact a Hamilton education has on individual student learning, especially as it pertains to effective written and oral communication, increased

**Our goal is to improve the outstanding education we already provide talented students and to show evidence of that improvement.**

opportunities for student-faculty engagement and student responsibility, and growth in critical, analytical, and creative thinking. Our goal is to improve the outstanding education we already provide talented students and to show evidence of that improvement. Measuring our efforts will enable us to adjust our programs as necessary, and, if we are as successful as we expect we will be, such measurements will make Hamilton's story that much more compelling to our various constituencies.

Hamilton has a strong interest in and commitment to evaluating the impact of its academic program on students. During the past several years, the College has participated voluntarily in a number of externally administered pilot programs aimed at assessing student learning, including the Collegiate Results Instrument and the Carnegie-Pew National Survey of Student Engagement. At the same time, Hamilton secured funding in 1999 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to conduct its own assessment of student learning in a liberal arts setting.

The results of these early efforts at assessment have, for the most part, validated Hamilton's claims about its traditional strengths. The Mellon study suggested that Hamilton students feel very well served by their education, particularly in writing, speaking, and critical thinking. However, these surveys also indicated a number of areas in which students felt Hamilton's program could be improved: students said they needed more practice in oral communication, more consistent expectations of high standards, better advising, and more opportunities for independent work. It is these areas, in addition to Hamilton's traditional strengths, that are emphasized in *The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education*.

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As this plan is implemented, we must evaluate its impact on our students' writing, speaking, and critical thinking. This assessment will primarily involve conversations with our students

about their education, as in the Mellon project's use of student surveys and focus groups. Other measures that might be developed must be appropriate and relevant, rather than artificial or externally imposed. Assessment is relevant to other aspects of the plan as well. We need to evaluate how well we are implementing the plan with respect to each strategy, including the supporting strategies. Therefore, it also is desirable to monitor Hamilton's performance on external indicators, such as those for increased diversity, admission selectivity, alumni satisfaction, and institutional reputation. But these performance appraisals are clearly secondary to our top priority: measuring the impact of a Hamilton education on student learning.

Hamilton will evaluate the success of this plan by:

- Assessing student performance
- Comparing Hamilton's outcomes with those of its peers
- Measuring Hamilton's performance on key external indicators

## CONCLUSION

Throughout their history, America's liberal arts colleges have provided the knowledge, values, and skills that prepared citizens to understand and address a range of problems and issues. To succeed in today's rapidly changing, information-driven world, citizens will be required to gather information, critically analyze it to create knowledge, and use it to communicate effectively to solve problems. The enduring skills of a liberal arts education are developed most effectively through an academically rigorous program in a residential learning environment that emphasizes students' intellectual and personal responsibility.

To achieve the status we believe is appropriate and attainable, we will focus on strategies and objectives that are consistent with our mission and valued by society. To that end, this strategic plan is built on the ongoing successful implementation of the Residential Life Plan and *The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education*. Their common emphases on strengthening the ties linking academic and residential life, and creating greater opportunities for students to exercise academic and personal responsibility, reflect two dramatic changes we have taken in recent years to symbolize our commitment to academic rigor, student-faculty engagement, student responsibility, and demonstrable outcomes.

This planning process represents an investment in organizational excellence. Meeting the objectives in this plan will lead to a richer and more fulfilling educational program for the students we are fortunate to attract and serve, a more meaningful and rewarding working environment for our talented and committed faculty and staff, and an improved national stature for the College.

## APPENDIX A

### OPERATIONAL PLAN SUMMARY

A more detailed operational plan is being developed for implementing each of the following initiatives. The plan will identify the appropriate college officer and faculty committee responsible for each item, and the target dates for completion. The initiatives listed below are not in priority order.

#### I. COMMUNICATION

Hamilton will strive to become the national leader in written and oral communication by implementing the Sophomore Program, expanding the reach of the writing program and the Nesbitt-Johnston Writing Center, establishing an oral communications center, increasing student opportunities for public presentation and performance, creating more opportunities for faculty development, and recognizing achievement in writing and oral communication.

- Hire new faculty members to complete implementation of new curriculum
- Launch annual celebration of the Sophomore Seminar presentations
- Provide faculty development support to create Sophomore Seminars
- Implement Writing Center initiatives including: standards for writing brochure; online resources for writing; additional staff; and plenary sessions for writing-intensive courses
- Hire an Oral Communications Center Director; develop program and purchase equipment
- Expand opportunities for student presentations, including national and international conferences, Root-Jessup debate team and Model United Nations program
- Provide workshops for faculty in written and oral communication, and interdisciplinary study
- Create new prizes and promote existing prizes in writing and speaking

#### II. RIGOR AND RESPONSIBILITY

Hamilton will seek to become a national leader in providing students with opportunities for academic rigor and personal responsibility by improving the advising system; expanding student-faculty collaborative work and undergraduate research; increasing options for off-campus study, internships, service learning and community-based research; and encouraging greater student ownership of co-curricular and extracurricular life.

Implement the components of the new curriculum:

- Enhance challenging teaching and learning environments across the curriculum, including support for proseminars and the Sophomore Program
- Encourage high academic standards and recognition of outstanding student achievement
- Fund 75 summer collaborations, including support for faculty
- Develop advising resources, including Web access to student information; infrastructure for advising system; funding for advisor/advisee dining events; and hire one additional staff member

Connect academic objectives with practical applications:

- Hire full-time health professions advisor
- Promote the Student Fellowship Program, in partnership with the Career Center
- Develop summer internships in diverse fields (e.g. non-profits, arts, government)
- Increase the number of alumni who assist students with career exploration and mentoring
- Increase the number and diversity of corporate, non-profit, and governmental employers recruiting at Hamilton
- Expand opportunities for student involvement in decision-making
- Strengthen communication between students and administration

### III. INFRASTRUCTURE

Hamilton will provide the infrastructure necessary to support curricular emphases by building and renovating facilities, strengthening the library, improving extracurricular offerings, and providing excellent information resources.

On-Campus capital projects to be completed within five years:

- Chi Psi for business offices
- Science Facility and North Campus development plan
- Kirner-Johnson Buildings
- Martin's Way
- Emerson Hall for student social space
- Saunders Hall of Chemistry
- Buttrick Hall to include VPAA/DOF offices and ADA accessibility
- Visual and Performing Arts, if gift-funded

Off-campus buildings to be acquired and renovated within five years:

- Madrid Facility for HCAYS Program
- Washington DC Center

Renewal and replacement projects to be completed within five years:

- Anderson-Connell Alumni Center (for capital campaign)
- Residence halls: Dunham (windows, lounges); North (mechanicals and bathrooms); and Kirkland (mechanicals and bathrooms)
- McEwen Dining Hall
- Work with the ADA Access Committee to make College buildings accessible
- North Campus academic buildings, if gift- or grant-funded

Library and Information Technology Initiatives:

- Maintain collection development of Library materials
- Increase access to electronic databases
- Develop additional library consortial arrangements
- Maintain and enhance the excellence of our data network infrastructure in support of teaching and learning (create a reserve fund for campus network, increase the speed of our Internet connection every three years, expand wireless access, connect Hamilton to the Internet2 network, expand the use of videoconferencing, acquire hardware and software to support network distribution of multimedia)



- Maintain and enhance our technology-equipped teaching and learning spaces (create additional general purpose classrooms with computers at every student station, equip every classroom with a computer and data projector, create a multimedia presentation support facility, create facilities to support innovative uses of instructional technology)
- Begin digitizing special Hamilton resources (e.g. Beinecke Collection, Jazz Archive)
- Create a center for the development of multimedia language tools for East Asian Languages, if grant-funded
- Increase technology support staff (additional to support Web efforts, additional joint library/IT staff to support teaching and learning initiatives)

Support for Student Activities and Programs:

- Explore options for academic interest housing; create residence hall seminar rooms
- Increase funding for student-initiated social options (late-night, alcohol-free social events, expand outdoor education facilities)

#### IV. PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

Hamilton will invest in the people who comprise its community by ensuring competitive compensation and support, continuing its strong commitment to financial aid, increasing support for faculty development, increasing diversity, identifying new revenue sources, and providing effective stewardship of existing resources.

Student recruitment initiatives:

- Continue use of financial aid as a strategic tool in attracting an academically talented and diverse student body
- Attract and mentor underrepresented students by sustaining and developing effective programs (ACCESS, HEOP, Summer Starter) and by strengthening relationships with organizations such as Posse, LINK, and One Voice

Faculty and staff recruitment and retention initiatives:

- Achieve AAUP 1\* compensation status for all faculty ranks
- Establish benchmarks of competitive salaries and benefits for staff and administrators
- Maintain competitive benefits
- Improve communication by creating campuswide online and print newsletter for all students and employees
- Increase training options available to members of the Hamilton community
- Increase support for faculty research and development

Diversity initiatives:

- Hire a senior-level administrator, reporting to the president, to coordinate all College diversity efforts
- Appoint a Diversity Advisory Committee
- Increase efforts to recruit, hire and retain qualified faculty members and employees who bring diverse viewpoints and backgrounds
- Establish a permanent physical presence for the Kirkland Project
- Increase Grinnell Consortium participation to two postdocs per year
- Send campus teams to regional and national conferences focused on diversity initiatives

- Increase opportunities for residence hall discussions about diversity and difference
- Make stipends available to faculty members who wish to develop proseminars and Sophomore Seminars, or revise existing courses about issues of diversity (e.g. Hewlett Foundation grant)

Resource initiatives:

- Develop and launch a comprehensive capital campaign reflecting strategic priorities
- Increase unrestricted annual giving to \$5.5 million by 2006 from \$4.1 million in 2001
- Double funding from government sources for faculty research and priority initiatives from \$1 million annual base in 2000 to \$2 million in 2006
- For the endowment, achieve an investment rate of return in real terms (less inflation) of at least 8% annually for the next five years
- Applying the current spending formula and allowing for an additional allocation for debt service, grow the existing endowment fund (new gifts not included) to \$500-\$600 million in five years
- Improve the financial information and services (including the budget process) provided to Hamilton managers and stakeholders
- Investigate giving alumni access to digital resources through the Hamilton Online Alumni Community (HOLAC) to encourage their use of the College Web site as their informational portal for life-long learning
- Replace College print materials (e.g. employee manuals) with Web-accessible formats
- Acquire hardware and software to enable students, parents, alumni, and employees to transact business with the College online

Community initiatives:

- Plan, implement and assess a program to foster a positive quality of life in the surrounding community by completing an Economic Impact Study and providing more liberal use of college facilities and resources
- Fund local educational, cultural and civic organizations through the Hamilton College Town-Gown Fund

## V. DISTINCTION AND EXCELLENCE

Hamilton will promote distinctive academic offerings by supporting programs, ideas and activities that create recognition for the College's overall excellence.

- Build and maintain matching funds for faculty grants, especially in the sciences
- Expand opportunities for student-faculty collaborative work
- Expand Levitt Center programming (e.g. community-based research, service-learning, etc.)
- Increase support for Associated Colleges in China Program and for faculty in Asian studies
- Reserve funds for new initiatives that offer examples of institutional distinctiveness

## VI. ASSESSMENT

Hamilton will evaluate the success of this plan by assessing student performance, comparing our outcomes with those of our peers, and measuring our performance on key external indicators.

- Undertake a five-year assessment of student learning outcomes in a liberal arts setting
- Design and conduct surveys of recent alumni to track and determine career outcomes; publish an “outcomes report” to be used for internal and external audiences
- Continue involvement with external student survey instruments
- Increase the number of students accepted for prestigious postgraduate fellowships such as Fulbrights, Watsons, and Rhodes
- Increase the number of National Merit Scholarship winners at Hamilton to 40 (10 per year)
- Continue to improve admission selectivity and student retention
- Lead all national liberal arts colleges in alumni giving participation rate

## APPENDIX B

### THE HAMILTON PLAN FOR LIBERAL EDUCATION

The Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education provides highly motivated students with both the freedom and the responsibility to make educational choices that emphasize breadth and depth. Unique to this plan are two distinct capstone requirements — one at the completion of the general education sequence (The Sophomore Seminar) and one at the conclusion of the concentration (The Senior Program) — that serve as integrating and culminating experiences for students at decisive points in their undergraduate careers. The new plan builds on the strength of the concentration and The Senior Program by instituting a Sophomore Program and reinvigorating the advising system. To staff the new curriculum, eight faculty positions (five new FTEs plus three new endowed chairs) will be added, effectively lowering the College’s student-to-faculty ratio to 9-to-1.

#### A. General Education

As part of the new Hamilton Plan for Liberal Education, the faculty has significantly strengthened the general education sequence by: (a) replacing distribution requirements with a series of recommended goals; (b) instituting special first- and second-year seminars; (c) reaffirming the centrality of writing; (d) reinvigorating the advising system; and (e) establishing a multi-disciplinary seminar program at the end of the sophomore year that culminates in an integrative project with public presentation. Highlights of the general education program include:

- First- and Second-Year Proseminars — to ensure a high level of engagement early in their studies, students will be encouraged to participate in four special classes: small, rigorous courses of no more than 16 that offer intensive interaction among students and between students

and instructors, through emphasis on writing, speaking and discussion, and other approaches to inquiry and expression that demand such intensive interaction. (Effective with the 2001-2002 academic year)

- The Writing Program — all Hamilton students will be required to pass three writing-intensive courses, each taken in a different semester. At least two of these courses must be taken during the first two years of study. The writing requirement must be completed by the end of the junior year. (Already in effect)
- The Advising Program — with the elimination of distribution requirements, the advising system will become less administrative and more substantive as faculty members help students develop their own academic programs and understand the implications of their choices. (Effective with the 2001-02 academic year)
- The Sophomore Program — The Sophomore Program will take the form of a series of seminars that emphasize inter- or multidisciplinary learning and culminate in an integrative project with public presentation. As one possible example, the faculty may chose to pursue a seminar titled “Forever Wild: The Past and Future of the Adirondacks.” Such an offering might include content in natural history, political history, ecology, geology, popular culture, and the environment, and would attract faculty members from many disciplines and interest students with diverse backgrounds. The culminating experience might take place in the Adirondack Park, taking advantage of the College’s location. (Effective with the 2002-2003 academic year)

#### **B. The Concentration**

The number of courses normally comprising a concentration is between eight and 10, depending upon the department or the program. In addition, each student is required to complete a senior program, as defined by his or her concentration. Many students also complete an independent study.

- The Senior Program — Each department and program of concentration has designed a Senior Program to serve as an integrating and culminating experience for the concentration by requiring students to use the methodology and knowledge gained in their first three years of study. Building on their coursework and demonstrating their increasing ability to work independently in terms of both motivation and subject matter, seniors are required to produce a significant synthesis of knowledge by means of one of the following: a research project leading to a written, aural or visual creation; a seminar for concentrators, including a major presentation and research paper by each student; or comprehensive examinations ideally involving both written and oral components. (Already in effect)