

Hamilton

Foundations for  
Hamilton's Next 200 Years

Strategic Plan – January 2009

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary .....	2
<b>Hamilton’s Foundation</b> .....	3
<b>Hamilton Today</b> .....	6
The Academic Program .....	7
The Community .....	7
<b>Four Fundamental Priorities and Four Strategic Themes</b> .....	8
Education for Self-Direction .....	8
Advising and Curricular Programs, Policies, and Procedures .....	8
Co-Curricular Programming .....	9
Athletics and Physical Education Program .....	9
Academic Facilities .....	9
Self-Governing Community .....	10
Community-Building .....	10
Governance Policy and Procedures .....	10
Co-Curricular Social and Residential Facilities .....	10
Sustainability .....	11
Dialogue and Debate .....	11
Effective Communication .....	11
Student Development .....	11
Faculty and Staff Development .....	12
Engagement with the World .....	12
Diversity and Access .....	12
Scholarship and Creative Activity .....	12
Employee Satisfaction .....	12
Community Service and Outreach .....	13
<b>Action Items</b> .....	13
Priorities for Planning .....	13
Core Values .....	13
<b>Community Involvement</b> .....	16

# Foundations for Hamilton's Next 200 Years

## Strategic Plan – January 2009

### SUMMARY

Strategic planning is institutional self-definition. It clarifies relative strengths and weaknesses, it articulates strategic intent consistent with historical values and traditions, and it takes into account the external realities that provide new opportunities and challenges. What emerges is a blueprint to guide our future work. In this document we build on previous initiatives identified in the College's 2002 Strategic Plan, which have emphasized Hamilton's notable leadership position in teaching students to write and speak well and to take responsibility for their academic and personal development.

As we plan our future direction, we face major demographic shifts resulting in fewer high school graduates and a wave of baby-boomer retirements. Since a college education is fundamentally about the interaction that takes place between individuals, these shifts will define Hamilton in important ways for years to come. We also face, in the near term, an economy in peril, and we anticipate that during the next five years the College will encounter new challenges in revenue growth, student recruitment, fundraising, construction, renovation, and financial aid.

Hamilton enters this new environment from a position of strength. Enrollment is steady, the budget is balanced, new facilities have opened, and over the past decade Hamilton has excelled in the areas of admission selectivity, philanthropic support, and endowment growth and performance. The College has provided an increasing number of opportunities for students to collaborate with faculty members, and our students have won national fellowships and scholarships in unprecedented numbers.

Institutions and organizations in decline tend to alter their course out of necessity, but strong institutions have a clear sense of who they are and the capacity to

realize their vision. With our history of continual self-assessment and the ambition to improve on previous benchmarks, our purpose in planning strategically is to enhance the Hamilton experience, not transform it radically. As current economic conditions limit available resources, we must identify the initiatives that matter most to us in the short term. Planning enables us to make the strategic choices that promise the greatest benefit to the College.

Over the course of the planning process, we have come to recognize our greatest strengths to include inspired teaching, a supportive, nurturing community, an alumni body of exceptional loyalty, and a campus graced by natural and architectural beauty. We have also recognized that insufficient funding for financial aid is a significant weakness.

From a review of our history and an assessment of our current circumstances, four priorities emerged to guide our planning for the next five years:

*“In a world where relationships, jobs and personal geography can change often, Hamilton is an anchor — a shared time and place and experience that will always be there in our individual and collective memories.”*

JAMES STEAR '66  
25th Reunion Yearbook, 1991

- An academic program that is rigorous, challenging, and relevant to a new generation of students
- Student services that encourage and support personal development and responsibility
- Financial aid that meets the demonstrated need of every student, and a long-term goal of being need-blind in admission
- An inclusive community whose demographics reflect those of the coming generation of faculty and college-bound students

With these priorities in mind, the subcommittee recommendations were categorized according to four defining values:

- Education for self-direction
- Self-governing community
- Thoughtful dialogue and debate
- Engagement with the world

The articulation of these priorities and values followed a strategic planning process that began with the faculty, eight of whose members chaired subcommittees that addressed the following topics:

- Academic Program
- Athletics
- Ethics and Academic Freedom

- Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Development
- Residential Life and Co-Curricular Programs
- Resources, Facilities, and Environment
- Shared Governance and Administration
- Student Recruitment and Retention

Each of the strategic planning subcommittees included an additional tenure-track member of the faculty, along with representatives of the student body, the Board of Trustees, and the staff (p. 16), and each subcommittee consulted other members of the community. The process included a series of open meetings and surveys so that as many voices as possible could be heard. Several hundred members of the community participated. At the conclusion of deliberations, the eight subcommittees prepared reports that articulated the context for their recommendations to the Strategic Planning Executive Committee. Those observations and recommendations were compiled and posted to the College's Web site for comment, and open meetings were held to elicit additional reactions. The strategic planning Web site also received ideas, and a community blog facilitated exchange.

The following pages provide the rationale for the goals and priorities on which we will focus in the coming five years. We will take from this document a focus for future discussions, especially those leading to our Middle States reaccreditation process in 2010-11 and to the formulation of objectives for our next capital campaign.

## I. HAMILTON'S FOUNDATION

We began planning for Hamilton's future by reviewing its past. The College's history is fundamental to its identity, mission, and purpose. What follows is an account of the forces that have defined Hamilton over the past 200 years and continue to shape its destiny.

Hamilton was founded as the Hamilton-Oneida Academy — its very name demonstrating a commitment to inclusion — in the aftermath of the American Revolution, at a time when many of the nation's most enduring

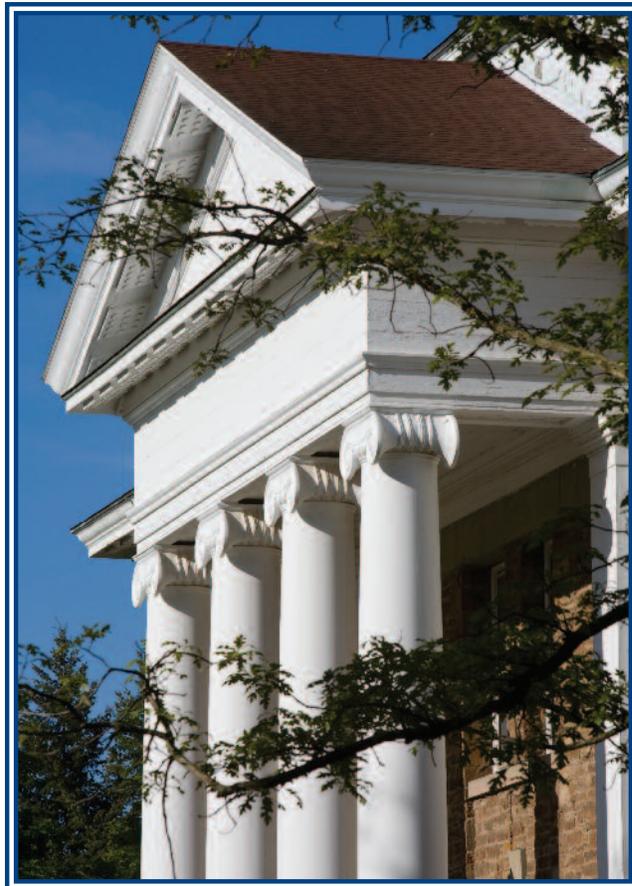
institutions were established. President George Washington granted "approbation" to the Plan of Education presented by the Reverend Samuel Kirkland in 1793, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton consented to be a trustee and lent his name, and Inspector General of the Continental Army Baron von Steuben and Oneida Chief Skenandoa were present when the cornerstone for the new Academy was laid. Townspeople welcomed the school, too, and assisted in the construction of its first

building. Support for what was to become the third oldest college in New York State extended from community leaders to the highest levels of the nascent republic.

Throughout its nearly 200-year history, Hamilton has produced graduates who are leaders in their fields and active in their communities. Early on, attesting to the College's emphasis on rhetoric and debate, Hamilton alumni were educators, ministers, and public servants, including governors, congressmen, state supreme court justices, and university presidents. The 20th century saw a number of prominent statesmen and public servants, and more educators — fitting for a college founded in a village that earned the sobriquet “schooltown” for the many academic institutions in its environs. Even today, more alumni pursue careers in education than in any other field.

At the same time, some of Hamilton's salient characteristics are relatively new: coeducation, the open curriculum, and emphases on interdisciplinarity, the arts, and hands-on learning. Each of these changes may be traced in some measure to the mission and curriculum of Kirkland College, which redefined College Hill. In fact, one might argue that the Hamilton of today is a place of two interlocking histories, proud, enduring, and complementary. These two histories are definitional, not merely incidental, to Hamilton. The College is at once the site of continuity and tradition, and discontinuity and innovation. It blends old and new, while adhering to the liberal arts as the best preparation for a life of purpose and engagement. Central to institutional identity is the simultaneous cultivation of tradition and innovation, and we welcome the creative energies produced by their interplay.

Hamilton provides a 24-hour learning community, recognizing that education and personal growth transcend the boundaries of classrooms, laboratories, and studios. Education on College Hill happens whenever and wherever people encounter one another: in the dining hall, on the playing field, at the concert, in the residence hall. All members of a residential liberal arts community learn from one another, and all students are enriched as they gain knowledge of backgrounds different from their own and interact within a cohort characterized by a variety of experiences and origins. This being the case, it is incumbent on the College to ensure that a range of views, experiences, and backgrounds characterize the learning environment.



Hamilton's tradition of self-criticism is fostered by a commitment to academic freedom and an understanding of academic responsibility. In addition, all faculty members have in recent years increasingly attended to assessment and developed measures of accountability.

Professors at Hamilton are involved in the life of the College — intellectually, of course, but also socially, recreationally, and culturally. Faculty come to Hamilton knowing that the formal part of a student's education is governed by a rigorous liberal arts curriculum with an emphasis on writing and speaking, but that teaching, advising, and mentoring extend beyond the classroom, beyond the subject matter, and beyond the traditional instructional day.

The student body has changed as society has changed. The most dramatic transformation was the admittance of women when Hamilton and Kirkland combined in 1978, while the move to a more racially and ethnically inclusive community has been more incremental, with most of the progress coming in the past half decade. New programs and organizations have evolved, with more

likely to come. Hamilton is also expanding its reach nationally, enrolling more students from beyond New York and New England, although the talented student from rural Upstate New York remains a target of our recruitment efforts. Hamilton's reputation as a school of opportunity can be traced to Samuel Kirkland's Plan of Education, and socioeconomic diversity remains a core value.

One measure of the intellectual prowess of past student bodies is their success after graduation. Hamilton alumni include winners of the Nobel Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom; educators, non-profit leaders, community volunteers, and philanthropists; college and university presidents; past and current members of Congress, the Administration, and the National Academy of Sciences; Fortune 500 CEOs, entrepreneurs, and Wall Street executives; and authors, journalists, Emmy Award-winning entertainers, and Tony Award-winning playwrights. They make contributions in every professional field, and because of the role Hamilton has played in their success, alumni remain loyal and supportive. Part of that support manifests itself financially, most evidently in an endowment created and managed by alumni. Despite the relatively small number of Hamilton graduates, the College's endowment is often listed among the top 100 of all 3,200 non-profit colleges and universities in the United States; Hamilton's endowment-per-student places the College even higher.

Income generated by the endowment has enabled the College to provide generous financial aid, build facilities that reflect emerging pedagogies, attract prominent lecturers and speakers, provide state-of-the-art technology and, more recently, offer opportunities for students to attend national conferences, accept unpaid internships, and engage in summer research.

Hamilton has long been identified with its emphasis on persuasive speaking and writing, skills that at one time were the purview of specific departments, but which now are embedded in courses throughout the curriculum. The Nesbitt-Johnston Writing Center, founded in 1987, and the Oral Communication Center, established in 2002, support Hamilton's position in these areas. Similarly, the creation of a student-governed honor code in 1912 and the College's founding of study abroad programs in France (1957), Madrid (1974), and Beijing (1996) show the prescient leadership that has helped to

distinguish Hamilton. In 1971, Hamilton's charter membership in the New England Small College Athletic Conference provided further institutional definition.

The plan described in the following pages builds on the accomplishments of the 2002 Strategic Plan, which called on the College to invest in its signature programs in writing, speaking, and public policy, and led to the creation of new centers for all three as part of the expansion and renovation of the Kirner-Johnson Building. Responding to the second core objective of the 2002 Strategic Plan, the College created more opportunities for students to conduct primary research, pursue internships, and work collaboratively with faculty mentors, and sought, with some success, to enhance the advising system. With all the progress made thus far, those 2002 priorities remain priorities in 2009.

The 2002 plan also called on the College to address issues of diversity, construct new arts and social science facilities, expand the use of technology in classrooms, maintain its commitment to assessment, and plan for the renovation and expansion of the Burke Library. Here, too, the College has made progress, but more needs to be done. The 2009 plan, then, takes as its starting point initiatives from the 2002 plan, especially those related to writing, speaking, diversity, and advising.

*“Those habits of clarity of thought and expression, and that love of learning, were the greatest gifts the College could give us and the best preparation, I am convinced, for the world of unpredictable change we were about to enter.”*

W. Robert Connor '56  
Half-Century Annalist Letter, 2006

## II. HAMILTON TODAY

The College is setting institutional records for applications, selectivity, diversity, and the academic profile of admitted students; the budget is consistently in balance and the endowment is among the nation's top 100 in size and performance; faculty members enjoy national and international recognition for scholarship, research, and creative achievement; alumni and friends have supported College programs and initiatives with almost \$55 million in the last two years, including a record \$30.8 million in 2006-07; students are winning national fellowships and scholarships in record numbers; graduation and retention rates are high, and students report high levels of satisfaction with their Hamilton education; the College is increasingly well known; and the physical plant includes beautiful new facilities and little deferred maintenance.

There is good reason to be optimistic, then, about Hamilton's future. But Hamilton — indeed, all of higher education — faces at least two extraordinary challenges: shifting demographics and a severely weakened worldwide economy.

The student body is undergoing a purposeful transformation as we seek to achieve a demographic mirroring the coming generation of college-bound students. Hamilton students are increasingly diverse, and we want to continue that trend so that all our students — minority and majority alike — are prepared for citizenship in a global community. Ultimately, we want to foster an intellectual atmosphere that reflects our commitment to exploring and acknowledging the significance of different ideas and perspectives. We expect Hamilton to be transformed, even as it transforms those who come here.

We need to be mindful of other demographic trends, too. The opportunity for learning disabled and physically disabled students to pursue a college education requires appropriate services and an ongoing commitment to inclusiveness, while the gender balance that has characterized our student body has shifted as fewer men pursue bachelor's degrees.

Demographic trends also have implications for the people who teach and support America's college students. The baby boomer generation, which includes a significant percentage of Hamilton's faculty and staff (30 percent of current employees are 55 or older), is nearing retirement, and there



will be competition to replace valued, long-time employees. We must consider not only Hamilton's attractiveness to future students, but our ability to recruit and retain faculty and staff who want to make their careers at Hamilton.

The second challenge facing American higher education is financial. An historic downturn in the economy means more students needing financial aid, moderate or negative endowment growth, constraints on tuition revenue, and a possible decline in philanthropic support. Colleges such as Hamilton may be especially vulnerable to these new financial realities because of their cost. At the same time that we seek to maintain a national profile, we are committed to cultivating, and expanding where appropriate and mutually beneficial, our partnerships with the local and regional communities.

The tendency in such times is to retrench and protect the status quo; our purpose in planning strategically is to identify those areas that have the potential to strengthen the College further. Hamilton has faced challenges in the past, but never from such a position of relative strength. Over the next several years we will focus on those areas that give us the greatest strategic advantage: the academic program and the community.

**The Academic Program** The defining feature of the academic experience is a curriculum that allows and encourages talented and motivated students to draw thoughtfully on their abilities, interests, and aspirations in shaping a course of study. The College's return to the open curriculum, beginning with the Class of 2005, has coincided with the rapid rise in the academic profile of entering students. The average of reported standardized test scores (SAT math and critical reading) has increased from 1314 in 2002 to 1366 in 2008, while the percentage of students graduating in the top 10 percent of their high school class rose from 68 percent to 77 percent over the same period. These students report that the curriculum was an important factor in their decision to attend. Indeed, an open curriculum is best suited for students who are independent, motivated, and committed to the ideals of a liberal arts education. But it requires a high level of faculty advising. Research shows increasing satisfaction with first-year advising, but decreasing satisfaction with advising for the major, and one recent survey indicated that first-year students found their course work less challenging than they expected. Clearly there are problems that need to be addressed.

It is incumbent on the faculty to assess the effectiveness of the advising and academic programs and, if necessary, recalibrate them to match the intellectual talents of

this new, better prepared generation of Hamilton students. Hamilton faculty members must continually evaluate the intellectual level at which their course materials are set so that all students report being challenged.

The subcommittee charged with reviewing the academic program characterized the open curriculum as the centerpiece of a Hamilton education and acknowledged the curriculum's role in "providing a first-rate liberal arts education in which our students balance the depth of their knowledge in specific disciplines with the breadth of learning necessary for living in the intellectually and culturally diverse world of the 21st century." Four classes (2005 through 2008) have now graduated under the open curriculum, providing a large enough cohort to conduct a review and assessment of the academic program. Such studies are being planned or, in the case of advising, course availability, and curricular breadth, are already under way, and the results will provide direction for further strengthening the curriculum.

**The Community** Hamilton's strong sense of community is often cited as a fundamental part of its ethos, and becoming a community that more closely mirrors national demographics for college students and faculty is a priority. During their four years on College Hill, majority and minority students encounter, sometimes for the first time, faculty, staff, and other students with views, backgrounds, and experiences that differ from their own. Such valuable encounters provide opportunities to enjoy the types of dialogue and debate that lead to intellectual and personal growth. Since engaging with diverse views and experiences is an important part of education, the College must foster such interaction through its hiring practices, student recruitment efforts, financial aid programs, curricular offerings, and social and cultural initiatives. The work of the recently established Diversity Coordinating Council will guide our efforts toward creating a more inclusive campus environment, employing such instruments as the Equity Scorecard to assess our progress. Efforts in these areas continue Hamilton's history of sustaining a community that is dynamic and evolving while maintaining traditional strengths and core values.

Hamilton's beautiful and historic hilltop campus encourages a communal sense with spaces designed to bring people together around shared interests. But the Hamilton community extends beyond College Hill. Our involvement

*"The College has an ethos, passed down from generation upon generation of students, linking us all and bringing with it traditions of learning to think critically, write clearly and speak persuasively — but primarily a tradition of creating an environment where the emphasis is placed on the community."*

Elizabeth Debraggio '07  
Remarks to alumni as part of  
the Excelsior Campaign, 2006

with the Town of Kirkland and the Village of Clinton helps sustain the college town atmosphere that is part of our appeal to students and employees, and expanded engagement with the Mohawk Valley and Adirondack Park will give texture and breadth to our curricular, cultural, social, and recreational offerings. More broadly, President Stewart's signing of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment speaks to our daily efforts

to reduce consumption in concert with the worldwide sustainability movement and to encourage individual responsibility toward green initiatives.

Hamilton alumni remain connected to the campus, their classmates, and their professors. As guest lecturers, scholarship donors, internship providers, Board of Trustee and Alumni Council members, and in other ways, alumni maintain a high level of engagement with their alma mater.

### III. FOUR FUNDAMENTAL PRIORITIES AND FOUR STRATEGIC THEMES

Mindful of its history, aware of its current position, and sensitive to unprecedented challenges in the coming years, Hamilton will sustain the momentum established since the 2002 Strategic Plan.

**Four priorities** guide our planning:

- **An academic program** that is rigorous, challenging and relevant to a new generation of students
- **Student services** that encourage and support personal development and responsibility
- **Financial aid** that meets the demonstrated need of every student, and a long-term goal of being need-blind in admission
- **An inclusive community** whose demographics reflect those of the coming generation of faculty and college-bound students

New fiscal constraints will slow the pace of construction on campus and may delay our goal of becoming need-blind in admission. As a result, we will focus throughout the next several years on revamping programs and protocols that position the College to take advantage of an economic rebound. At the same time, we will undertake new initiatives that provide strategic advantage in the short term. Woven throughout those initiatives is an appreciation for how inclusion advances the intellectual and social infrastructure of the institution for the entire campus community.

**Four themes** furnish the structure for advancing Hamilton's fundamental priorities.

**1. Education for Self-Direction:** An open curriculum challenges students to acquire a broad liberal arts education. We will help students meet that challenge by making structural and policy improvements to existing advising and course selection procedures. Likewise, we will assess College programs and procedures to ensure that the educational experience is sufficiently rigorous, accessible, and pertinent to our changing student demographic. Action programs for implementation in this plan are organized into four areas:

**A. Advising and Curricular Programs, Policies, and Procedures:** Hamilton's highest priority is maintaining the quality of its academic program, and effective advising, both formal and informal, is a critical component of a residential liberal arts college; it is even more important for Hamilton because of our curriculum and because highly effective advisor-advisee relationships help ensure student success and satisfaction. Hamilton's faculty members have a history of serving as mentors and advisors, but there are inconsistencies in our practice that need to be remedied. We will use our growing array of assessment tools to address these inconsistencies and to identify and correct weaknesses in our advising

program. We have an equally strong commitment to evaluating performance and satisfaction, and we will convene task forces, working with the Committee on Academic Policy, to address curricular matters raised during the strategic planning process. These include a decline in the number of students taking courses with a quantitative literacy component; a rise in average grades since the implementation of the new curriculum; a perception that students and departments may incline toward curricular depth at the expense of breadth; and enrollment restrictions that make it difficult for some students, especially juniors and seniors, to enroll in courses outside their concentrations.

**B. Co-Curricular Programming:** The links between curricular and co-curricular programming expand the dimensions of a Hamilton education. In order to be a college whose students will be intellectually prepared for the society into which they will graduate, we will ensure that Hamilton has programs and services that foster our commitment to inclusiveness. For example, we will evaluate the reallocation of existing space for the creation of a cultural education center whose goal is to engage students and faculty members from all backgrounds in an ongoing examination of their similarities and differences, as well as the effect of shifting demographics on all aspects of society. The community will confront and engage most rewardingly with the issue of diversity when it is pursued not just as a social issue, but also as an intellectual one. Diversity thereby expands the breadth and augments the rigor of the intellectual life of the College.

*“Hamilton taught and encouraged us to think for ourselves, wherever that might lead.”*

William Hutchison '51  
Half-Century Annalist Letter, 2001

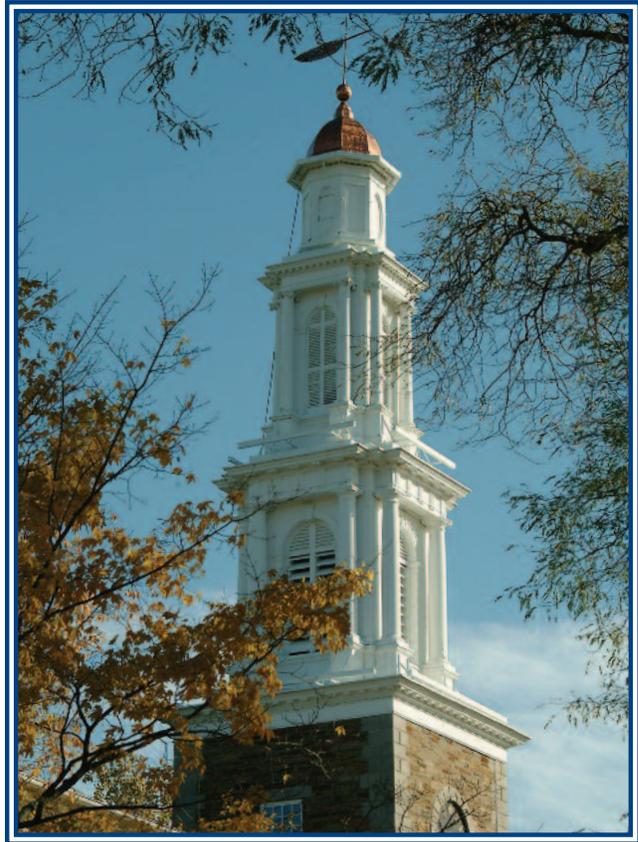
**C. Athletics and Physical Education Program:** We view physical education as an important component of the academic program. Therefore it is incumbent that we provide an athletic program that sufficiently challenges our scholar-athletes. Consistent with this objective, we will continue pursuing Hamilton's full integration into the New England Small College Athletic Conference for those students who currently do not have the opportunity to compete in that conference. We will also continue exploring ways in which physical education may be more effectively partnered with academics through seminars, workshops, and co-curricular programming.

**D. Academic Facilities:** The facilities in which learning takes place are an important part of the educational experience at Hamilton. Renovation and expansion of academic facilities have been guided by the Facilities Master Plan and funded by generous alumni donations and a favorable bond market. Some projects have been completed (the Science Center), others are in process (the Kirner-Johnson expansion and renovation), some are being planned (arts), and still others have been identified for future consideration (library, humanities). In every instance, pedagogy guides design. We will complete, as scheduled, projects under way, but will slow the pace of new construction until the necessary fundraising is in place. Planning and design will continue so that we can move ahead when the resources are secured. After discussing the possibility of using the summer for the academic program, committee members agreed that the College undertake a fuller study of the viability of such a proposal to help bring clarity to an idea that has resurfaced over the years. At the same time, they were drawn toward an alternative concept of increasing the number and scope of academic workshops, seminars, and institutes (e.g., summer writing workshops for students and writing center directors, seminars and development programs on assessment and undergraduate research, among others) that would make use of the College's physical plant without fundamentally altering the undergraduate experience.

**2. Self-Governing Community:** Education for self-direction demands an inclusive self-governing community. To the extent possible, constituencies ought to be self-regulating — students regulating students, faculty governing faculty, and staff administering to staff — as well as interlocking, to assure consistent, inclusive, and effective exchange and interaction. Some of this happens already: students regulate themselves through Student Assembly, the Honor Code, and the Judicial Board, and faculty do the same through policies and procedures set forth in the *Faculty Handbook*. Because all employees add an important perspective, new governance policies will incorporate a fuller range of voices and accommodate greater representation among and between campus constituencies. Various planning subcommittees called for enhancing self-governance at Hamilton; ideas fell into three categories:

**A. Community-Building:** While Hamilton’s strong sense of community is attractive to students and employees, there are improvements that can be made to further our commitment to inclusiveness, assuring that new members of the community feel they are on equal standing from the day they join the campus and that all community members feel respected and valued. The role of alcohol in the student culture is not only inherently dangerous but also polarizing. Pre-orientation programs that do not accommodate the entire first-year class may disenfranchise those who do not participate. Likewise, the traditional classifications of employee groups magnify differences, exacerbate communication difficulties across campus, and can create unhealthy competition for attention and resources. We will foster a greater sense of common purpose among all employee groups. Most of these issues can be addressed with minimal impact on the operating budget. We will continue our progress toward an inclusive campus population whose diversity reflects the broader population of college students and faculty members.

**B. Governance Policy and Procedures:** Much of the work of the College is accomplished through committees, from those of the Board of Trustees and the Senior Staff, to the policy and oversight committees of the Faculty, the Staff Advisory Council, and the Student



Assembly. The effectiveness of these governing bodies is uneven, and there are concerns that some committees are merely representational rather than participatory. Committees at all levels and across all divisions will be evaluated to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and representation from the widest possible cross-section of College constituencies, including students and non-faculty employees. We consider the opportunity for students to participate in College governance to be an important aspect of co-curricular education at Hamilton. The viability of new governance structures, such as a staff assembly for non-faculty employees, will be studied, as will a more inclusive governing organization to strengthen community.

**C. Co-Curricular Social and Residential Facilities:** High quality student services are one of the College’s four chief priorities. The renovation of Emerson Hall (ELS) into a center for student activity and student-faculty interaction is consistent with this priority and will be pursued, though probably on a slower timetable. Due to a lack of available housing on campus, the

reluctance to construct additional student housing in the current fiscal environment, the desire of some seniors to live independently, and the likely negative effect on town-gown relations, we will not seek to achieve 100 percent on-campus student housing in the near term as recommended by the residential life subcommittee, although we remain committed to the residential life strategy adopted in 1995. The subcommittee on resources, facilities, and the environment suggested the creation of additional faculty housing on campus. For similar reasons, we will not pursue this goal in the next five years but will work to achieve its larger aim, which is to increase opportunities for co-curricular faculty and student engagement. We recognize the long-term needs for athletics and recreational facilities that were identified by the athletics subcommittee, and will pursue those projects that can be accomplished in the short term through the plant renewal budget or through philanthropic support.

**D. Sustainability:** We understand the pursuit of sustainability goals as a partnership between institutional policy and personal responsibility. The College is committed to implementing the recommendations of the Green Team, to the extent possible under anticipated economic conditions, and to fulfilling the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment by modifying as appropriate institutional policies and encouraging sustainable practices among students and employees.

**3. Dialogue and Debate:** Self-direction and self-governance require and engender dialogue and debate; opportunities to enhance skills and deepen expertise will be provided to all students and employees, ensuring that the College is an educational institution for all. Hamilton stands firmly in support of academic freedom. We also recognize that with such freedom comes the responsibility to accept ownership of one's ideas and to be prepared to defend one's position, and to be able to articulate the positions of others and engage them respectfully. The strategic planning subcommittees identified three areas in which to focus our efforts:

**A. Effective Communication:** All members of our residential campus are part of the educational process. We are a stronger and more vibrant college — and we provide a better education for our students — when more, not fewer, voices are heard and decisions are shared widely. Over the next several years we will remove barriers that the subcommittees said discourage full participation in the life and workings of the College, especially for non-salaried employees, and we will encourage greater awareness and involvement in Board and Alumni Council activities.

**B. Student Development:** Education at Hamilton is participatory. Students are expected to form and defend their opinions as they encounter a variety of teaching styles and pedagogies. It is important, therefore, that they be adequately prepared to engage in such an environment. To ensure their readiness for academic work at Hamilton, we will assess how students are welcomed into the College community, how they become acclimated to college life, how they integrate their academic and residential lives, and how they process information. We will consider more direct faculty involvement in the orientation for first-year students, establishing a common academic experience for new students and an optional residential curriculum (e.g., learning communities such as the REAL program in Wertimer House), and creating proficiency in information and media literacy across the curriculum (e.g., access, analysis, evaluation, and communication of messages in a variety of forms). The financial investment necessary to house first-year students together is not practical at this time, nor is the creation of dedicated housing for seniors.

*“At Hamilton, the one sure thing that you will be endowed with is the ability to learn for a lifetime.”*

Larry Arias '84  
Speaking at the Multicultural Alumni  
Relations Committee reunion, 2007

**C. Faculty and Staff Development:** Long-term employees provide the College with knowledge of past practices, enriching on- and off-campus relationships and institutional loyalty and commitment. It is important to cultivate a sense of community among all our employees, especially those new to campus, by providing professional development opportunities and by communicating effectively so that employees feel invested in Hamilton's purposes and goals. Since colleges and universities will experience a wave of retirements in the coming years, investing in our own employees will help ensure a smooth transition to the next generation of faculty and staff.

**4. Engagement with the World:** The purpose of an education centered on self-direction, self-governance, and thoughtful dialogue is to prepare students for effective engagement with the world. Society is served by giving students and faculty members alike a place for thinking, imagining, and creating. But on a more practical level — and especially in this economy — we recognize that everything we do on College Hill is influenced by the world around us. While our purposes and goals are lofty, our realities are shaped in part by forces beyond us. At the same time, we are not here simply to perpetuate Hamilton College, but to help students prepare themselves for careers and service in the nation and beyond.

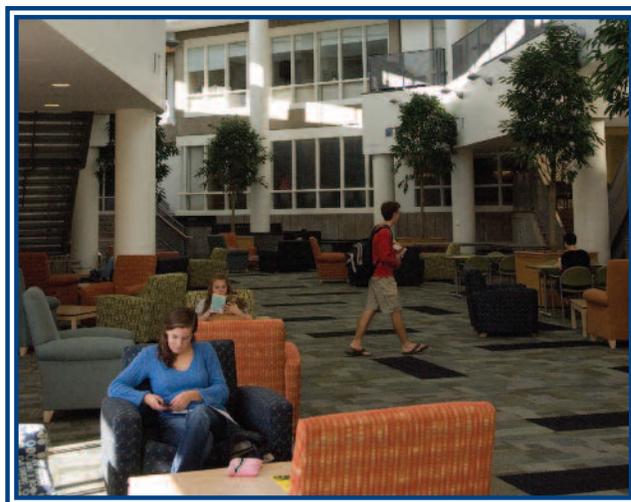
**A. Diversity and Access:** Hamilton encourages awareness, understanding, and acceptance of diverse points of view and perspectives. The cultivation and refinement of ideas adds intellectual texture and balance to the way all members of the community experience the College, including those who serve Hamilton as trustees and Alumni Council members and in other volunteer roles. Hamilton meets the demonstrated financial need of every student it admits, and we reaffirm that admission policy to illustrate our commitment to socioeconomic diversity. We recognize that demographic shifts and the economic crisis will mean that our financial aid budget must increase. Our long-term goal is to become need-blind in admission because it is consistent with our heritage, mission, and

purpose. A second emphasis of our diversity efforts is to increase the number of students and employees of color by making access to Hamilton a strategic imperative throughout the College.

**B. Scholarship and Creative Activity:** Whether a student participates in a research or creative endeavor with a faculty member or benefits from the scholarship of professors, Hamilton views research as an important component of a liberal arts education. That emphasis has guided the design and construction of new academic facilities and places us among a group of research colleges where scholarly and creative productivity are acknowledged as indispensable to a fully engaged pedagogy. We will continue to ensure the primacy of teaching, research, and service when considering faculty compensation, support faculty scholarship that leads to publication or presentation, increase the number of opportunities for student research and presentation at scholarly conferences, and will determine the feasibility of summer conferences or institutes that reflect academic themes and institutional priorities (e.g., writing, research and creativity, diversity, and assessment). Meeting these objectives will lead to increased career and graduate school opportunities for our students.

**C. Employee Satisfaction:** Our goal is to be an employer of choice in the region by fostering a community of inclusivity where all voices are heard, all contributions are valued, and employees recognize their importance to the mission of the College. Competitive salaries are important for all employees; so, too, is a clearly articulated process for evaluating performance and determining merit raises. To attract talented employees from outside the region, we will try to help their spouses/partners find suitable employment in the area, for we understand that limited professional opportunities locally can present challenges to recruitment. In addition, the members of the Budget Committee are reviewing employee salaries to make certain they are competitive. They will also review health insurance subsidies for retirees and policies governing long-term disability for all employees.

**D. Community Service and Outreach:** A Hamilton education should encourage civic engagement through classroom work and co-curricular involvement. The College will continue supporting initiatives such as those organized by the Levitt Center, VISTA, HAVOC, Alternative Spring Break, and more recently COOP, and will add ad hoc volunteer and service-learning programs, including a programmatic presence in Utica and continued partnerships with the Town of Kirkland and the Village of Clinton.



## IV. ACTION ITEMS

### *Priorities for Planning*

- **An academic program** that is rigorous, challenging and relevant to a new generation of students
- **Student services** that encourage and support personal development and responsibility
- **Financial aid** that meets the demonstrated need of every student, and a long-term goal of being need-blind in admission
- **An inclusive community** whose demographics reflect those of the coming generation of faculty and college-bound students

*“This is a place where words matter, no matter what you study, or what you do, or who your friends are. It is a place where conversation and community count.”*

Ruth Gardner Woods '99  
Remarks to alumni at the kick-off  
of The New Century Campaign, 1997

### *Core Values*

**1. Education for self-direction:** the open curriculum challenges students to acquire a broad liberal arts education.

#### *A. Advising and Curricular Programs, Policies, and Procedures*

- Convene a task force, working with the Committee on Academic Policy, to review the following (DoF):
  - A concern about disparities in advising
  - A decline in the number of students taking courses with a quantitative literacy component
  - A rise in average grades
  - A perception that department offerings and student curricular choices favor depth over breadth
  - The ability of juniors and seniors to enroll in courses outside their concentration

#### *B. Co-Curricular Programming*

- Evaluate the reallocation of existing space for the creation of a cultural education center (VPA&F, DoF, DoS, VPIT)

### C. Athletics and Physical Education Program

- Pursue full integration into NESCAC for all inter-collegiate athletics teams (DoF, DA&FA)
- Expand partnerships between physical education and academics (DoF)

### D. Academic Facilities

- Complete construction projects already under way (VPA&F)
- Continue with planning and design for new projects (VPA&F, VPIT)
- Undertake a fuller study of campus use in the summer (All)
- Pursue summer academic workshops, seminars and institutes that make use of academic buildings, reflect institutional emphases, and take advantage of faculty strengths and expertise (DoF)

2. Self-direction demands a **self-governing community**: to the extent possible, constituencies ought to be *self-regulating* — students regulating students, faculty governing faculty, administrators and staff self-regulating — as well as *interlocking*, to assure responsible, inclusive, and effective exchange and interaction.

#### A. Community-Building

- Review the way all students are acclimated to campus (DoS)
- Reexamine the four classifications of employee groups (VPA&F)
- Continue progress toward a campus population whose diversity reflects the coming generations of employees and students (All)

#### B. Governance Policy and Procedures

- Evaluate the work of all committees to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and representation (DoF, VPA&F, DoS, EAP)

- Pursue new governance structures and a more inclusive governing organization (VPA&F)

### C. Co-Curricular Social and Residential Facilities

- Convene a task force of faculty members and students to make recommendations for increased opportunities for co-curricular faculty and student engagement (DoF, DoS)
- Pursue athletics facilities that can be completed through the plant renewal budget or through fundraising (DoF, VPA&F, VPC&D, VPIT)

### D. Sustainability

- Implement the recommendations of the Green Team and fulfill the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment (VPA&F, VPIT)

3. Self-direction and self-governance require **dialogue and debate**: development opportunities should be provided to all students and employees, ensuring that Hamilton is an educational institution for all.

#### A. Effective Communication

- Increase communications vehicles that contribute to full participation in the life and functioning of the College (All)

#### B. Student Development

- Establish a task force to review how students are acclimated to Hamilton (DoS, DoF)

#### C. Faculty and Staff Development

- Invest in new and continuing employees (All)

4. An education centered on self-direction, self-governance, and thoughtful argument makes for effective **engagement with the world.**

*A. Diversity and Access*

- Meet the demonstrated financial need of every student (DA&FA, VPC&D)
- Become need-blind in admission (DA&FA, VPC&D, VPA&F)
- Increase the percentage of students and employees of color (All)

*B. Scholarship and Creative Activity*

- Compensate faculty based on teaching, research, and service (DoF)
- Support faculty scholarship that leads to publication and presentation (DoF)
- Increase opportunities for student research and presentation (DoF)
- Consider the establishment of summer conferences and programs that reflect institutional priorities (DoF, VPA&F, VPIT)

*C. Employee Satisfaction*

- Be the employer of choice for all employees (All)
  - Maintain competitive salaries for all employees
  - Ensure clear processes for evaluation and compensation
  - Provide support for spouses/partners of talented new hires in finding employment
  - Review health insurance subsidies for retirees and long-term disability policies

*D. Community Service and Outreach*

- Support initiatives that encourage civic engagement (DoF, DoS, VPIT)
- Create and sustain partnerships with the Town of Kirkland and Village of Clinton (VPIT)



## Senior Staff

Implementation of the Strategic Plan is the responsibility of the College's Senior Staff:

Joan Hinde Stewart  
President

Meredith Harper Bonham  
Executive Assistant to the President (EAP)

Monica Inzer  
Dean of Admission and Financial Aid (DA&FA)

Karen Leach  
Vice President, Administration and Finance (VPA&F)

Dave Smallen  
Vice President for Information Technology (VPIT)

Dick Tantillo  
Vice President, Communications and Development (VPC&D)

Nancy Thompson  
Dean of Students (DoS)

Joe Urgo  
Dean of Faculty (DoF)

## V. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Strategic Plan emerged from the effort of several hundred Hamilton College faculty members, staff, students and alumni to identify the themes and priorities that ought to guide College decision-making through 2014. Their work began in fall 2007 and included open meetings, surveys and comment periods. Eight subcommittees presented their recommendations to an executive committee.

### ***Executive Committee***

President Joan Stewart  
Dean of Faculty Joe Urgo  
Chairs, Trustee Planning Committee,  
Susan Skerritt K'77 and Steve Sadove '73  
Vice President, Administration and Finance Karen Leach  
Student Assembly President Stephen Okin '10  
Faculty representatives Sam Pellman and Todd Franklin

### ***Subcommittees***

#### **Academic Program**

*Chair/Faculty*, John McEnroe  
*Faculty*, Nicole Snyder  
*Student*, Caroline Canning '10  
*Trustee*, Jaime Yordán '71  
*Staff*, Janet Simons  
*Staff*, Kristin Strohmeyer

#### **Athletics**

*Co-Chair/Faculty*, Bob Simon  
*Co-Chair/Faculty*, Sally Cockburn  
*Faculty*, Nigel Westmaas  
*Student*, Kara Labs '09  
*Trustee*, Greg Hoogkamp '82  
*Staff*, Cameron Feist '04  
*Coaching Staff*, Steve Stetson

#### **Ethics and Academic Freedom**

*Chair/Faculty*, Peter Rabinowitz  
*Faculty*, Yvonne Zylan  
*Student*, Kye Lippold '10  
*Trustee*, Art Massolo '64  
*Staff*, Vige Barrie  
*Staff*, Randy Ericson

#### **Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention**

*Chair/Faculty*, Margaret Gentry  
*Faculty*, Steve Ellingson  
*Student*, Blythe Winchester '08  
*Trustee*, Ann Hutchins  
*Staff*, Susan Mason  
*Staff*, Mark Tillson  
*Staff*, Maureen Scoones

#### **Residential Life and Co-Curricular Programs**

*Chair/Faculty*, Rob Kantrowitz '82  
*Faculty*, Wei-Jen Chang  
*Student*, Sarah Patterson '08  
*Trustee*, Barry Seaman '67  
*Staff*, Cindy Smiegal  
*Staff*, Brenda Davis

#### **Resources, Facilities and Environment**

*Chair/Faculty*, Ella Gant  
*Faculty*, Jean Burr  
*Student*, Greg Ray '08  
*Trustee*, Jeff Little '71  
*Staff*, Bill Huggins  
*Staff*, Andrew Jillings

#### **Shared Governance and Administration**

*Chair/Faculty*, Stuart Hirshfield  
*Faculty*, Chaise LaDousa  
*Student*, Martin Connor '09  
*Trustee*, Trix Smalley  
*Staff*, Irene Cornish  
*Staff*, Susanna White

#### **Student Recruitment and Retention**

*Chair/Faculty*, Rob Kolb  
*Faculty*, Masaaki Kamiya  
*Student*, Ian Doran '10  
*Trustee*, Amy Goodfriend '82  
*Staff*, J.D. Ross  
*Staff*, Phyllis Breland '80

