



Who are the members of the Learning Initiative Team?

- Pam Baker – Helen A. Papaioanou Professor of Biological Sciences and Director of Faculty Research and Scholarship
- Tedd Goundie – Dean of Students
- Joe Hall – Associate Professor of History and member of Educational Policy Committee
- Judy Head – Associate Dean of the Faculty
- Leslie Hill – Associate Professor of Politics and Special Assistant to the President
- Margaret Imber – Associate Professor of Classical & Medieval Studies and member of the Facilities Master-planning Committee
- Laura Juraska - Associate College Librarian for Reference Services

- Andrew White - Director of User Services, Information & Library Services

What is our charge?

Based on the work of the Steering and Working Groups during last year's strategic planning effort, President Hansen has charged the Learning Initiative Team with creating a strategic plan for issues around learning at Bates. Specifically, we hope to create a plan that makes specific and implementable recommendations that will achieve the following objectives:

- Establish a Center for Teaching and Learning
- Intensify the Community of Learning at Bates
- Enhance the capacity to support learning College-wide
- Deepen the Commitment to Faculty Scholarship
- Track effectiveness, conduct further study of relevant topics, and report on the initiative's progress to the community.

What has been our process?

The Learning Initiative Team has met regularly (about 2 times a month) since November. We have divided into four groups to work on proposals we plan to develop: Faculty Research, Diversity & Inclusion, the Learning Commons and the Learning Environment. Each group has prepared an inventory of suggestions made by members of the Bates community during the last few years of planning at Bates, reviewed the collective inventory and selected those suggestions that will do the most to enhance the learning experience for everyone in the College. We presented these priorities to the Bates community at public meetings at the end of January, the beginning of April and at the February faculty meeting. We will also present to students before the end of the academic year. We are incorporating the advice and suggestions of the community as we have developed our priorities. These steps will allow us to integrate the recommendations of our groups into a single cohesive learning initiative for Bates College.

What values and goals define the Learning Initiative?

We have identified Bates' values of excellence, innovation, diversity and collaboration, achieved through individual and collective efforts, as the hallmarks of the programs that we want to define the Learning Initiative. We constitute a community of students and scholars who live and work together and who define ourselves by these core values.

Academics and the academic experience lie at the heart of the intellectual community that is Bates College. The College is committed to creative, adventurous, and rigorous inquiry in a mutually supportive community of teaching, learning, and scholarship across the academic spectrum. The College fosters intellectual inquiry, academic excellence, and critical reflection. Bates seeks to stimulate students' imaginations and encourage their exploration of ideas, places, and relationships. The quality of learning and the learning experience has always been the highest priority of the College. The primary focus of the College's institutional plan is to foster the academic mission of the College and build, in new and exciting ways, the learning community that stands at the center of the College. We seek to strengthen our vibrant academic core while we add dimensions that expand beyond the core and broaden our intellectual community.

The Learning Initiative will support the quality of learning and enhance the learning experience at Bates by creating institutions and processes that summon all members of the community, regardless of their status or position, to recognize themselves and others as learners and scholars, as fellow citizens of a community of learning engaged individually and collectively in the project of mastering and producing knowledge. We commit the Learning Initiative to three general goals, each of which contains subsidiary aspirations.

First, we hope to build and foster an intellectual community around the values of excellence, innovation, diversity and collaboration. This community will celebrate and privilege the life of the mind and validate and support student and faculty aspirations to excellence in learning, teaching and scholarship. While this community will incorporate the classroom it will also transcend arbitrary limitations to the life of the mind suggested by classroom walls and library carrels. We will promote support for student learning in residences and we will promote non-curriculum based interactions between faculty, staff and students around ideas.

Second, through the co-ordination and collaboration of planning across institutional boundaries, we intend to pursue diversity in excellence. We intend to shape a Bates educational experience that will cultivate a climate of learning and engagement in which members of a diverse community of learners can survive and thrive in the rigorous pursuit of a high-achieving academic and intellectual life. Further, we will encourage a Bates educational experience that prepares all students for citizenship, leadership, and service in a diverse democracy, and that will enhance the capacity of all members of the Bates community to learn from each other, and to develop new paths to knowledge together.

The commitment to diversity poses the greatest opportunity for us. Realizing this commitment poses no little challenge. In the mid 19th century, Bates founder Oren B. Cheney envisioned a new school of higher learning that would serve those who were at that time denied access. During the next century, the College reaffirmed that history, welcoming students targeted by exclusions of wartime internment, racial segregation, and economic disadvantage. Later, faculty responded to innovations in knowledge production on populations subject to historical exclusions, adding to the curriculum programs of study that explore new scholarship on gender, race, sexuality and culture. For 150 years, Bates has pursued the founding dream, providing an outstanding education in the liberal arts and sciences to a broad array of the most talented students.

The question now is how to build upon this history of open access and the College's record of curricular and pedagogical innovation in the context of contemporary challenges. Several offices are working together to address more purposefully the inconsistency of Bates' success in attracting, retaining and graduating a diverse student body. We begin with the assumption that all members of our community are here precisely because they have the ability to achieve excellence. We recognize that each person in our community brings a distinctive set of skills and experiences that will flourish in an environment that acknowledges our various and unique identities and commits to supporting each of us in our pursuit of excellence. Today, greater access and support for more and different students is still an urgent need, alongside the priority of preparing all students for leadership and service in a multicultural, rapidly changing, and highly competitive world. We strive to deepen our diversity, broadly defined, and enable all of our students to learn from its complexity.

Consistent with the College's tradition of egalitarian access, our commitment to diversity in the 21st century demands a broader and more complicated understanding than the representational diversity of students, faculty and staff provided by demography. By diversity we mean not only our range of embodied identities and cultural perspectives, but also the range of experiences and ideas, consideration of which we share and we value as necessary prerequisite for achieving excellence in the life of the mind. The multiplicity of diversity is made meaningful when we pursue its possibilities for seeing new varieties of the subjects of our inquiries and engaging in conversations about their evolving definitions and meanings. Liberal arts education at Bates has as one of its purposes preparing students for responsible citizenship and civic engagement. Exposing students to a diverse range of peers and professionals positively influences their cultural awareness and democratic citizenship. The social location of the College itself can be a resource for teaching, learning, and scholarship. Diversity, thus, enables the College to achieve its educational goals and to position its graduates as citizens for sustained local and global participation, service and leadership. We advance our achievement of excellence through nurturing this diversity.

Third, the Learning Initiative seeks to focus and coordinate intellectual energy on campus. We will provide a forum for ideas and conversations at Bates about teaching, scholarship and learning and a vehicle for translating those ideas and conversations into actions and results. We will provide a forum for critical inquiry and innovation where members of the community can both reflect on Bates practices and help connect Bates to

a the larger world of ideas and practices. More specifically we want to provide the means for the members of the Bates community to think reflexively about the nature of the conversations we are having and should be having, and to pose question that promote reflection on questions of urgency to the campus community.

For example, members of the Learning Initiative team identified a number of questions that are basic to the constitution of the learning environment at Bates that the community at large needs to discuss and debate. Some of these debates must explicitly consider how we will address seeming paradoxes in our communal life. In discussion we will discover deeper commitments that unite us and tackle potential points of conflict to the best possible result. Bates College, for example, has a long tradition of openness (to women and African American students) which it often equates to "egalitarianism" and that it has not always honored as well as it should. We will nurture critical reflection in discussion, so that our efforts to clarify, amend and update action consistent with our values will be thoughtful as well as innovative.

If the vitality and academic excellence of an intellectual community depends on its diversity and egalitarianism, we must consider carefully how we promote the opportunities that can best nourish that vitality. In debate and discussion we have learned that diversity, egalitarianism and excellence are values that not only do not contradict each other, but indeed subtend and unify the intellectual community we aspire to be. Our discussions, in fact, can approach supposed tensions as creative ones, giving us the opportunity to explore them in service to the College's educational mission.

Bates also enjoys a consultative culture in which the most effective decisions are achieved by consensus. Are the processes we use to achieve consensus capable of incorporating the range of diverse ideas and people we hope will populate our community? If not, let us begin to reason together about how are practices and processes can help us realize our values. It is our hope that by exploring and embracing such challenges, members of the Bates community will more effectively realize their aspirations to excellence within a democratically constructed and organized community.

It is our belief that the vitality of the intellectual life of our community requires us to commit ourselves to debates and conversations about such enduring challenges in the life of the College. In fact, we believe these debates and conversations enrich and enhance the quality of life at Bates and should be deliberately addressed by the community as an animating part of its process of intellectual renewal and recreation.

How will the Learning Initiative achieve its goals?

We have identified two institutional innovations: the Learning Commons and the Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence, as the institutional vehicles that will help

Bates achieve the goals of the Learning Initiative in a manner that is both consistent with and sustaining of our values of excellence, innovation, diversity and collaboration. Herein we describe why we believe these new organizations will fulfill the goals of the Learning Initiative, how they will fulfill these goals and what specific projects we expect the Learning Commons and Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence each to undertake as their inaugural mandates.

Why and in What Ways will the Learning Commons fulfill the goals of the Learning Initiative?

First, the Learning Commons integrates four functions which other institutions often and in our view mistakenly separate.

1. Like many Centers for Teaching and Learning, the Learning Commons will coordinate, foster, and supplement services and programming that support student academic achievement.
2. The Learning Commons will consolidate, foster and build programs that support development of faculty pedagogy.
3. Like many college and university "think tanks," the Learning Commons will function through its Center for Innovation and Critical Thinking as a nexus of conversation and engagement within the Bates community on issues of transformational importance both to Bates and to the larger world in which we reside.
4. Like the Research Centers at many colleges and universities, the Learning Commons will house a Center for Faculty Scholarship that supports, fosters, and highlights the work of producing knowledge to which members of the Bates faculty devote their careers.

By combining these functions, the Learning Commons will function within Bates much like a traditional New England town square. Various members of the community will be drawn to the Learning Commons for different purposes and in search of support for and engagement in a range of academic endeavors. As any Yankee with a sense of history knows, the intentional and incidental interactions and conversations that occur in a town square between citizens of a community who share fundamental values and goals, but who also represent a wide range of individual experiences and daily purposes, can lead and has led, to individual and communal innovation and transformation of extraordinary import.

The Learning Commons will be a hub in the College community that helps focus the intellectual energy of the community and helps individuals in the community organize their intellectual lives. On the one hand, the Learning Commons will help support providers at Bates collaborate on programming that will support students who strive for academic success and faculty committed to developing the skills and resources necessary for pedagogical excellence. Through its Center for Faculty Scholarship, the Learning Commons will also organize support for faculty in their research and scholarship and recognition of the invaluable contribution faculty research and scholarship makes to the intellectual vitality of the community of learning at Bates.

As important as these distinctive lines of programming support for faculty, students and staff are, the Learning Initiative team believes that it is equally if not more important to integrate the efforts of members of the community who focus on particular constituencies or concerns in the College into collaborative processes that cross institutional lines. For example, efforts to enhance the learning experience for students at Bates College appropriately differ from efforts to increase the College's support for faculty research and scholarship or the College's efforts to provide support for members of the faculty to continue to develop as teachers. These efforts have different constituencies, are spearheaded by different personnel and organized by and within different organizational structures within Bates.

Despite these differences, however, we believe that collaboration by those who plan such efforts would better serve the different constituencies. We believe, for example, that those who provide programs to support students with learning differences and those who prove programs to enhance pedagogy will design better and more effective systems of support for both students and faculty if they collaborate with each other on the design of their respective efforts.

The Learning Commons will foster the scholarly connections, conversations, and communications among members of the faculty that infuse the intellectual life at Bates with vitality. Such conversations can reinvigorate both an individual's commitment to her scholarly work and her appreciation for the connection between that work and the work of the College. It is in conversation with one another that we challenge our assumptions about our own work and our identities as scholars. In conversation with one another we can better perceive how our individual efforts as scholars and researchers benefit not simply ourselves, but also the community within which we live and work. In conversation with one another we can imagine and test ideas that have the potential to transform not simply our own work, but also the work of the College. Conversation without consequence, however, is often a frustrating, ephemeral experience. The Learning Commons must also provide the vehicle through which members of the community can transform ideas into policy and practice.

The Learning Commons will take physical location in an inviting and spacious central area of Ladd Library where staff and faculty will collaborate on the coordination, integration, innovation, implementation and evaluation of a range of programming in support of student academic achievement, faculty development and the discussion of

transformational questions within and beyond Bates (see Appendix 1 for a more detailed discussion of the phased implementation of the Learning Commons).

1. *The Learning Commons and Support for Students Learning*: An important goal of the Learning Commons will be to support student intellectual life inside and outside the classroom. The Learning Commons shall coordinate the planning, implementation and evaluation of existing programs like the Math & Statistics Workshop, the Peer Writing Project, Technical Writing Assistants and Peer Assisted Learning Groups, adding to these programs that support of student academic skills like visual and oral presentations skills and peer tutoring programs in student residences. A collaboration this past spring supported student poster and panel presentations in our annual Mt. David Summit. By drawing in students, whether they are working with a peer writing assistant, looking for support at the math workshop, searching for assistance on a national fellowship, or just looking for a place to study, the welcoming Learning Commons will promote the message that working together to improve skills, ways of learning, and acquiring knowledge are what all students do. The Learning Commons will also support and expand the learning environment at Bates by collaborating with Campus Facilities Master Planning Committee in the design of new student housing space that will accommodate new programming that will cultivate and enhance the life of the mind.

Bates College is not residential by accident, nor is it residential merely as a convenience to students in attendance. While the curriculum and classroom experience are at the core of a Bates education, meaningful learning opportunities in residence halls, on campus, and in the surrounding community present significant and essential components to this education, including the opportunity for students to observe and apply concepts learned in the classroom to practical settings.

Phase II of the Campus Facilities Masterplan presents an opportunity to take full advantage of the concept of learning in residence through the proposed Campus Avenue project. By interspersing student residential space with space that draws to the area faculty and staff, as well as local community members, meaningful interactions between the groups are fostered. Spaces such as the Bookstore, a coffee shop, and a mailroom in close proximity to student living space create opportunities for serendipitous interaction as well as for planned meetings outside of the formal classroom setting.

We have demonstrated through the success of our newest residence hall, 280 College Street, that when the enterprise of learning is kept at the forefront of the design of a building, the facility itself becomes the program. Fostering a stimulating learning environment in the residence halls, an environment that promotes studying and preparing for classes as well as one that promotes exploration of ideas and topics not specifically related to the students' current classes, is crucial to a Bates education. Students from different backgrounds and different interests living and learning together provide exposure to and understanding of difference. Informal conversation among a diverse group of students leads to the creative exploration of topics from different perspectives. However, we also want to promote the opportunity for students to pursue a passion in a residential setting with others who share that passion. The ability to offer a range of

residential program options, from randomized housing assignments to closely identified theme living, presents learning opportunities for a diverse array of interests and learning styles. As students develop over their four years of college, it is important to note that their interests and learning styles are likely to change; different residential programs may appeal to students at different times in their college careers.

PROGRAM CONCEPTS

A. Design Student Housing Options to maximize learning opportunities.

Recognizing the diverse interests and learning styles of the students at Bates, it is important to offer an array of housing options that will appeal to different students and allow them to learn in a style that best fits them. We therefore envision four main types of residential options on campus that will allow students to choose their living and learning experience based on their interests and learning styles, while at the same time providing students with different opportunities as they develop intellectually and their learning styles evolve over their four years. Some of these options already exist at Bates, while others require new facilities and a broader campus discussion of the feasibility of the options before implementation can begin. The four varieties of housing options currently offered or under consideration are 1) random housing assignments chosen through lottery (currently offered); 2) student-proposed theme living (currently offered); 3) pre-determined theme living into which students may choose through lottery (pilot program in 2009-2010); and 4) First Year Centers for all new students (currently offered), with the future consideration of connecting them to the First Year Seminar program. We would like to explore the idea that theme living could be developed so as to count toward fulfilling a GEC requirement for certain GECs through the co-curricular activity component.

B. Increase Student Leadership Opportunities. While some colleges and universities embrace a system in which faculty or staff are in residence with students to provide leadership, guidance, and authority, Bates has chosen not to adopt this model. Students at Bates are treated as adults, including in the residence halls. Students living together in a residence hall must learn to function as a community, developing their own form of self-governance. Observation suggests that students now entering college are less developed and less adept at negotiating life's problems than students were years ago. One explanation for this phenomenon is that this generation of students has had much more adult guidance and intervention in their lives than previous generations. From a young age members of this generation are consistently scheduled into organized activities, and technology keeps the students instantly connected to parents who are quick to intervene and solve the problem for the child. We believe it would be a disservice to our students to perpetuate this delay in development by providing faculty or staff in the residence halls, who by default would be viewed by students as the

authority and would be deferred to for problem solving. We have found that using trained peers in the residence halls to help guide and be a resource to the students is a much more powerful learning experience both for the students and for the trained peer leaders. This model does not preclude having professional residence directors on staff, but these positions serve as resources and supervisors to the student staff while maintaining a less immediate relationship with the students living in the residence halls.

As we believe firmly and are committed to the idea that peer leadership as a powerful learning opportunity, we will create positions in which students are trained and assigned to residence halls in which FYC's are located to serve as academic "coaches." These students would for the most part not be subject specific (although there could be room for ensuring we have all disciplines represented, and could especially assign a coach with subject knowledge if FYC's are clustered based on FYS enrollment), but would rather coach students on how to "do" Bates. They would work with students on note-taking skills, test-taking preparation, time management, study habits—in other words how to be successful learners and scholars at Bates. These "BRATs" (Bates Residential Academic Tutors) would compliment the JA and RC positions but would be sufficiently different so allow no confusion over lines of authority. Having additional student leaders filling roles in the residence halls also ensures that there are more students in the building to model appropriate behavior and to intervene when Bates standards are not being met.

2. The Learning Commons and Support for Faculty Development: The Learning Commons will build on efforts in the last several years to provide opportunities for faculty to come together to talk about pedagogy and hear their colleagues discuss a wide range of practices in the classroom. The monthly Tools for Teaching series, featuring faculty discussions about pedagogy focused on themes identified by the faculty. Topics ranged from the second-level (W2) writing requirement to crafting clear assignments. Introducing new faculty to the culture and demands of an institution like Bates is critical to their success here. A workshop for faculty new to Bates now introduces them to their colleagues and support services available at the College. The series provides new faculty a comfortable place to come together to ask questions, the opportunity to talk with expert senior colleagues, and a setting for building a cohort of peers. Finally, the May Conference has become a regular half-day event devoted to pedagogy that ranges from writing with Wikis to assessing student learning across the College.

The Learning Commons will be devoted to strengthening these conversations and connections among faculty about teaching and will be a force for faculty teaching and innovation that promotes pedagogical discussions among faculty, supports new faculty with workshops and mentoring, and organizes opportunities for ongoing faculty to share ideas and be introduced to pedagogical advances. By hosting broad-based pedagogical discussions across divisions and disciplines, the Learning Commons will become a site where faculty share their objectives for courses and for the campus, discuss assessment of student learning, and work toward implementing changes important to their objectives of

innovative teaching. We look forward to a Learning Commons that will provide resources and be a vehicle for expanding upon existing programs with efforts that foster innovation in teaching and technology through new efforts, including our proposed Innovation Academy, which will offer expertise to faculty as they come together to talk about innovative methods of pedagogy.

3. The Learning Commons and the Center for Innovation and Critical Inquiry: The Center for Innovation and Critical Inquiry shall be a forward-thinking element of the College housed within the Learning Commons that focuses on intellectual thought and issues that are significant at the campus, state, national, and international levels. It should be both an aspect of the Learning Commons that collaborates with others on campus to discuss complex issues of modern life but be nimble in responding to issues that arise during the academic year. It will become an intellectual center in the College, fostering thinking for faculty, students, and staff. The Center will attract faculty and students in forward-looking discussions of the issues on campus and in the world beyond.

The Center shall prioritize support for the intellectual community at Bates by creating a hub that allows members of the community to organize their participation in the intellectual life of the campus by working with the range of individuals and offices on campus who bring speakers and programs to campus to integrate and coordinate programming where possible and better inform the community about existing programming, and by providing programming that responds to sudden, exigent and or newly developing “teachable moments” in the world beyond Bates (e.g., political, economic transformations; social or cultural innovations).

While keeping in mind that Bates is not an R1 university, the Center might introduce cutting-edge thinking on issues such as “Darwin at 200,” food, the environment, “What is it to be human?,” innovative technologies (wikis, beyond digital, chips in the brain—what Rosetta Stone will become), diversity and technology, and other questions. Though the Center might focus on pre-decided issues during the year, it should also be flexible enough to respond to immediate issues like 9/11, the SARS threat, economic crises.

In addition, the Center for Innovation and Critical Inquiry will support the intellectual community at Bates by identifying transformational trends and issues before the community—such as diversity, interdisciplinarity, GECs, Gen Ed, admissions, communication, and academic standards—that require debate and discussion, creating a forum that fosters such conversations. Where appropriate, the Center will take the procedural steps necessary to transform the content of those conversations into propose policies for members of the faculty and administration to consider.

4. The Learning Commons and Support for Faculty Research and Scholarship: The Learning Initiative team endorses the initiatives previous recommended by presidential planning groups with regard to faculty scholarship. The team further recommends that the Learning Commons, through a Center for Faculty Research and Scholarship, channel support for these initiatives, which will provide the essential prerequisites for scholarly work: time and money.

The Center for Faculty Research and Scholarship will help the College promote a community of scholars through commitment of institutional resources and infrastructure to protect time for scholarship. Scholarship is central to our mission as educators. It is not an add-on. It cannot be effectively done on the fly. Time needs to be available, not begged and borrowed. The college as an institution needs to recognize that need, protect it and make space for it. Scholarship connects us to the world outside of Bates and to times outside of our own. Scholarly networks make Bates known around the world.

When polled by the Committee on Faculty Scholarship in 2005, faculty overwhelmingly replied that their top need in support of scholarship was time.

- Blocks of time: The enhanced sabbatical program and pre-tenure leaves are significant steps. Following on that we need:

- o Additional opportunities for full year sabbaticals at full pay
- o Opportunities for “research semesters” after tenure and between sabbaticals
- o Course release to devote to scholarship

- Targeted faculty workload reallocation

- o Acknowledging that committee work often impedes scholarship, we should strive to make committees smaller, and more focused in their charge.

- Endow Funds for Faculty Scholarship.

Recognizing the variety of forms of scholarship, these funds will continue to be made available on a competitive basis for a wide range of needs. These internal funds lead to publications and to later external grant applications.

Currently we have approximately \$70,000 per year available from endowed funds. Quality projects submitted to the annual competition for internal grants typically total at least twice that amount.

Therefore, we recommend substantially increasing the endowments that directly support faculty scholarship by providing the following (see Appendix 3 for dollar specifics):\

- Time to explore new projects: Seed money to get projects started that will lead to external grant proposals
- Time in archives and at research sites
- Time spent establishing and maintaining scholarly networks
 - * Work with collaborators and colleagues, at Bates or off campus
 - * Conference presentations

- * Subvention of book publications
- Supplies that enhance the productivity of time spent on scholarship:
 - * library cards or photocopying at other libraries
 - * purchase of books, technical materials, videos, AV materials needed by individual faculty
- Time freed by research assistance:
 - * Manuscript assistance: proofing, editing, bibliographies, indexes
 - * Student research assistants during the summer or the academic year
 - * research equipment: increase funds for maintenance and replacement of equipment and for laboratory assistants to support equipment

The Center for Faculty Research and Scholarship will be organized administratively within the Learning Commons but provide space geographically distinct from the Ladd Library facility that will house other programming by the Learning Commons. This organizational unity will promote the kind of collaboration and coordination in programming that will enhance the quality of work performed by the Center. The geographical separation will allow for the needs for quiet and private space that research and scholarship demands.

There are two major aspects to a Center for Faculty Scholarship:

1. Office of Sponsored Scholarship

- To support faculty in their internal and external grant activity
- See Appendix 2 for detailed list of Sponsored Scholarship core responsibilities

Currently at Bates support consists of two full-time people within the Office of Corporate and Foundations Relations (CFR) within the Advancement Office, and a half-time position, Director of Faculty Research and Scholarship within the Dean of Faculty's Office.

We recommend that:

- The college commit to making the Director of Faculty Scholarship a full-time position (see Appendix 2 for list of duties)
- The job of the Associate Director of CFR be focused on Sponsored Research functions (see Appendix 2 for list of duties), while the CFR Director be more focused on work with foundations
- These positions move to the Center for Faculty Scholarship
- How this geographic move affects the reporting structure of these positions will need to be determined

2. Clearinghouse for support of scholarship by staff located in other offices throughout the college and networked.

- Information technology, including Research and Curricular Computing
- Ladd Library
- Imaging and Computing Center
- Academic Administrative Assistants
- Assistants in Instruction
- Writing Workshop
- Math Workshop

Finally, we anticipate that as funds become available, the Center will offer office and joint project space and programs (e.g., work-in-progress seminars, reading and writing groups) for faculty on sabbatical and in various stages of their research projects.

- Supporting a lively intellectual climate

By making scholarship more visible, celebrating and publicizing scholarship in a public way clarifies and reaffirms the institution's commitment to protecting time for scholarship.

- Recognizing the scholarly contributions of the faculty, staff, alumni and community members
- Opportunities to share and to celebrate each other's work: faculty/student dinners, library book launches, lunches

Why and in What Ways will the Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence fulfill the goals of the Learning Initiative?

Excellence invigorated by diversity lies at the heart of the Bates College mission. Diversity is more than an individual attribute. It is, as well, an intellectual resource, a site of inquiry, a tool for discovery, and a fund for creativity. A dynamic that shapes and is shaped by patterns of human interaction as well as individual self-representations, by science and technology as well as by culture, diversity offers the potential to invigorate our intellectual lives and enrich our conversations as a community. This approach to diversity realizes its full potential in the context of a community which supports the pursuit of excellence by all of its members, regardless of differences in their learning styles or educational backgrounds. The Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence recognizes the multiple dimensions of diversity and by nurturing them aims to make meaningful progress toward intensifying Bates' excellence through diversity.

The Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence provides the platform for pursuing excellence in diversity. Here, the College conveys its vision of an institution and community fully engaged in building and sustaining a community of diverse people carrying out its educational mission. The Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence articulates Bates' goals for diversity, inclusion and an affirming climate, pursued through innovation, exploration, consultation and collaboration.

The work of the college to advance these goals – in academic and administrative departments, in classrooms, in extra-curricular settings and (athletic to techno-) playing fields, in staff enrichment workshops and in faculty conversations about research and teaching – will be made visible on this platform. Another critical function of the Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence is to provide a range of resources to support faculty and administrators as they find and fashion ways to pursue diversity in excellence and a climate conducive to success by all. Members of the college community can find here inspiration, resources, partners and processes for collaboration, creativity, and accountability as we pursue the Learning Initiative's goal of diversity in excellence in the academic program, support for student achievement and leadership, faculty development and staff enrichment.

The Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence will pursue its mandate to promote student achievement and success using the methodologies – coordination, innovation and collaboration – that we employ to explore and utilize diversity as a resource for enhancing our capacity to learn from each other and develop new paths to knowledge together. The Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence will join and join with offices and individuals across the campus developing programs to assess and promote faculty understanding of students' learning experiences; encourage and allow students, irrespective of differences in their learning styles and educational backgrounds, to do their best work while at Bates; support and disseminate research and assessment of

campus experiences which promote and those which hinder the achievement of academic potential by all; and, aid faculty in developing inclusive pedagogies.

The Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence provides a nexus for collaboration and communication. It is a hub where members of the college community may discover, initiate, foster and present ideas and actions in pursuit of meaningful diversity and inclusion. It brings together individuals from across the range of institutional identities at Bates to focus and coordinate intellectual energy for nurturing diversity and supporting achievement of excellence by all members of our community. It provides spaces for posing questions; examining ideas, conundrums and questions; and, finding models or partners for new projects. Such gatherings can foster synergies for transforming energy into action. Working through these conversations and collaborations, we will offer each other feedback and appraisal, generous and generative thinking to sustain our progress and keep ourselves accountable to this strategic opening.

The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence will, on the one hand exist as a repository for resources and connections to support learning and teaching about difference and diversity issues. Additionally, this office will regularly and continually identify, review and evaluate the myriad ways that Bates faculty, staff, and students use diversity as a resource for learning, support achievement and success by traditionally underserved populations, and address diversity issues to cultivate an inclusive campus climate. The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence, furthermore, will link faculty, administrators, and academic support staff to professional networks, information and funding sources, models, best practices at other institutions, etc. for enhancing professional development, training, and capacity for constructing an inclusive climate.

We institute the Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence as a nexus where Bates community members will connect with each other for campus dialogues and intellectual engagements. Conversation among unconnected or differently interested community members to examine key issues of the day or transformational questions about College work and life, as well as communication among collaborators for support and programming will be facilitated through a variety of strategies, including connection with the Learning Commons' Center for Innovation and Critical Inquiry.

The Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence is a focal point through which to animate the College's vision of diversity and support its members' work building an inclusive climate. It is conceptualized as a hub utilizing digital as well as collaborative (physical) spaces to display ongoing work, house resources, make connections and host interactions among members of the community. The Learning Initiative Team proposes this design to project and reaffirm the collective responsibility that all offices of the College and all members of the community share for achieving the goals of diversity and inclusion. While offering the advantages of accessibility and flexibility, it diffuses sites and responsibility for originating initiatives at the same time that it fosters connections for those planning and executing novel programming. By using virtual space, by emphasizing collaborations, and by linking information and people within the College community and to practitioners and resources beyond, we aim to avoid the marginalization that can occur with the assignment of responsibility to one office and/or to one administrator who often come to be seen as the distinct repository bearing

institutional responsibility for what is, in fact, a priority of the entire community. Design and administration of the activities of the Virtual/Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence will be undertaken collaboratively and responsibility shared between the Special Assistant to the President and, in the institutional diversity province of, the Director of Affirmative Action and Institutional Diversity Projects.

While the mandate of the Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence extends to activities of the College that are not defined by learning, the “Circle” will nevertheless contribute centrally to the Learning Initiative’s goals. First, members of the Learning Commons and the Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence will collaborate regularly in the coordination, design, planning, evaluation and implementation of programming designed to support student academic achievement, faculty development, faculty research and scholarship and the organization of intellectual life at Bates. Second, the Circle’s goals for Bates as a community are in many ways the goals of the Learning Initiative writ large. Finally, the Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence will provide a nexus of communication and connection for all members of the community of learners and scholars at Bates who strive to enrich the learning environment at Bates by forging new ways of understanding and describing the world in which we live together.

The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence shall identify the ways faculty, staff and students use diversity a resource for learning and address diversity issues to cultivate inclusive an campus climate.

The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence shall link faculty, administrators, and academic support staff to professional networks, information and funding sources, models, best practices elsewhere, and other resources for enhancing professional development, building capacity, and training for constructing inclusive climate.

The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence shall collaborate with members of the Learning Commons to plan, implement and evaluate programming in support of teaching, learning and scholarship at Bates to foster a community of learning that enhances the prospects for a diverse range of students, faculty and staff to achieve excellence. It will promote awareness of the interplay between diversity of learning styles and cultural diversity, as well as of biases in how instructors and staff select people presumed to become successful.

The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence shall house resources for the College that supports learning, teaching and research about diversity and difference, inclusion and climate change.

The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence shall create a program for mentoring and advising: “Mentoring, Leadership, and Engagement.”

The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence shall endow a Summer Scholars program.

The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence shall connect Bates community members with each other for campus dialogues and intellectual engagements, including those addressing diversity, by sponsoring interactive spaces, such as blogs; “Breaking

Bread” dialogue partnerships; networking for collaborators in research, teaching, or professional development; and other activities. It will work with other offices on campus to study the feasibility of a Community Fellows Program in which students, faculty, and staff would have an opportunity (with access to funding and/or release time) to initiate community engagement programs on and off campus.

The Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence shall reconstitute and charge a committee with developing the learning environment.

Summary of Actions Recommended for the Learning Initiative:

1. Establish a Learning Commons at Bates that will:

1. coordinate, foster, and supplement services and programming that support student academic achievement
2. consolidate, foster and build programs that support development of faculty pedagogy.
3. house a Center for Faculty Scholarship that supports, fosters, and highlights the work of producing knowledge to which members of the Bates faculty devote their careers.
4. act as a "think tanks" through a Center for Innovation and Critical Thinking, serving as a nexus of conversation and engagement within the Bates community on issues of transformational importance both to Bates and to the larger world in which we reside.

2. Establish a Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence at Bates.

3. In addition to the initiatives above, the Learning Initiative Team recommends that the College should **inaugurate discussions** on the following transformational questions that demand reflection and debate across institutional lines on campus:

- a. Review the College’s Mission Statement and Recommend (Re-)Statement of Our Core Values and Priorities College-wide committee
- b. Review the course scheduling grid and class-times (EPC and CCC).
- c. Consider our Academic standards (EPC)
- d. Evaluate our Academic calendar, especially the place of Short Term (CCC and EPC)

e. Consider the creation of a Non-academic grid (an ad hoc committee composed of CCC, EPC, DoF, DoS, the Registrar, Athletics, Theater, Music, Art, Debate, the Harvard Center, faculty, and students)

f. Evaluate the connection between the Learning Initiative and the Admissions Office; the Bates College system for scheduling and publicizing events; the College Web site. (We believe that these topics will be best considered once the new Vice President for Communications and Enrollment is in place).

g. Create a survey of faculty expectations of student time allocation and an audit of actual student time allocation in order to prompt reflection on whether the choices and practices we tacitly support in fact enhance the learning environment and promote the values of excellence, innovation, diversity and collaboration that we wish to embrace.

Appendix 1: Phases in the Implementation of the Learning Commons

What is the Learning Commons? The Learning Commons at Bates has a double identity. On the one hand, members of the community have been planning the organization, design and mission of the Learning Commons for several years. Thus, we might say that the Learning Commons presently is a strategic plan for the implementation of a new institutional structure at Bates designed to foster collaboration between members of various campus offices and organizations in support of student learning, faculty development, faculty research and scholarship and the organization of the intellectual life of the campus.

On the other hand, the members of the community who have been planning for the Learning Commons have done so in part by collaborating on the kind of programming we hope intend to see coordinated, integrated, planned, implemented and evaluated by members of the Learning Commons in the future. Thus, the Learning Commons, in a sense, already exists. Campus programs like the May Conference or the New Faculty Workshop are the work of a collaborative network of individuals from the Offices of the Dean of Faculty and the Dean of Students, the President's Office and the Office of the Vice President for Information and Library Services and the Bates faculty. Similarly, the support providers who are planning the Learning Commons collaborated this year on the design and implementation of an integrated program of support for students who presented at the Mt. David summit.

We anticipate, accordingly, that the Learning Commons team will continue the work it has already begun when it begins the first phase of its operation. In that phase, we will consolidate the calendar of programming on which we currently collaborate, expand our

numbers to include more providers of support for learning, teaching and research on campus and plan additional programs. Participants in the Learning Commons will include: the Director and administrative assistant (new appointments), the Peer Writing Coordinator, the Director of Writing, the Director of the Math & Statistics Workshop, representatives from Ladd Library, representatives from Academic Technology Services, the Director of the Imaging Center, the Dean and Associate Dean of Students, the Swing Dean, representatives from the Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence (new appointment), the Graduate Fellowships Advisor, and the Director and Associate Directors of Faculty Research (new/expanded appointments).

We expect these members of the Learning Commons to collaborate on the implementation of a coordinated peer-tutor training program already being planned by members of the Learning Commons who work with peer tutors and to plan and implement several projects under consideration (for example, a residential tutors program, a web-based Virtual Commons to organize and streamline faculty and student access to support and resources for learning, teaching and scholarship) and an Innovation Academy (an intensive workshop for faculty interested in exploring new technologies and pedagogies) and the Summer Scholars program suggested by the Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence. Additionally, we suggest that members of the Learning Commons begin planning the processes by which they can describe and communicate to the Bates community in a meaningful way the range of activities that contribute to the intellectual life of the campus, and can identify and plan programming that brings the innovations and concerns of the world beyond Bates to the campus. Finally, we expect members of the Learning Commons to establish a process by which they regularly evaluate existing programming offered in support of teaching, learning and research at Bates and suggest reauthorization, refinements or replacements to, or terminations of those programs.

During the first phase of implementation (September 2009 – September 2011), space will be prepared in Ladd Library for the Learning Commons and Coram Library for the Center for Faculty Research & Scholarship. When these spaces open, members of the Learning Commons will turn their attention to the second phase programming. In this phase, in addition to sustaining the programming implemented or planned in Phase I, members of the Learning Commons will begin planning programming to be implemented in Phase III (2013-2016). We suggest that the Learning Commons participants plan peer tutor programs in support of oral and visual presentation skills, faculty leadership development, programs in support of faculty scholarship and the Mentoring, Leadership and Engagement program proposed by the Virtual/ Virtuous Circle of Diversity in Excellence. We further expect members of the Learning Commons to work closely in Phase II and III with members of the Campus Facilities Master Planning committee on the design of new student residences and plan programming based in student residences designed to encourage both student commitment to the pursuit of academic excellence and the cultivation of the life of the mind. We anticipate that the process of programming evaluation designed by the members of the Learning Commons in Phase I will be a routine feature of the Learning Commons calendar of programs and activities in all subsequent Phases of the implementation of the Learning Commons.

By the end of Phase III and throughout subsequent phases, we anticipate that the Learning Commons will have created both a complete calendar of programming in support of teaching, learning, scholarship and community attention to transformational issues within and beyond Bates, and processes for identifying ways to identify and plan programming for emerging student and faculty needs.

Appendix 2: The organization of support for faculty research and scholarship within the Learning Commons:

Functions of an Office of Sponsored Scholarship

Sponsored Projects are those for which funding is awarded competitively on a merit basis, and after substantial peer review, whether it be a federal review panel in science, a jury in the creative and performing arts, or by other mechanisms. As such these projects differ fundamentally from the major work of the Advancement office, which is to interface with donors.

Even when an individual initiates a grant it is awarded to the institution, and the institution is responsible for legal and financial compliance with the regulations of the funder. These regulations and compliance with them are becoming ever more complex and the legal penalties for non-compliance ever more onerous.

Core Functions abstracted from an outline by the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA; 2006).

A. Proposal Services

Collection and dissemination of funding information

- o Liaison with funding agencies
- o Provide education and training for faculty and staff

Proposal development and assistance

- o Proposal writing
- o Understanding and complying with rules
- o Review of the business, administrative and financial aspects of the proposal, including sub awards and collaborations
- o Evaluation of sponsor restrictions e.g., use of funds, appropriate personnel, publication rights, intellectual property, export controls, nondiscrimination, and more

- o Electronic submission on behalf of the institution
- o Certifications and assurances

B. Award management

- o Fiscal management
- o Education and training for faculty and staff
- o Reporting, data and record retention, property control
- o Research ethics
- o Financial conflict of interest
- o Research integrity
- o Human subjects
- o Animal Use
- o Biohazards, Radiation safety, Bioterrorism
- o Maintaining records of grant applications and active grants

Current functions of the Associate Director of CFR

- All of the responsibilities listed above by NCURA
- Works with individual faculty on grantsmanship, grants preparation and submission (a total of 35 submissions last year, a number that is rapidly increasing)
- Collaboration with Finance on post-award grants management
- Meets with individual faculty and groups of faculty to identify potential sources of funding, then works with them to develop the proposal
- Organizes monthly Grants Lunches on topics such as: Everything you want to know about residencies and residential fellowships; Grants for scholarship, creative activities, and/or teaching abroad and for international exchanges and collaborations; The importance of communication and networking in being grant savvy; and more
- Works with DOF on federal compliance issues and files compliance documents
- Works with Grants Advisory Group and Equipment Advisory Group

- Writes stewardship reports
- Maintains database of faculty and institutional grants activity

Core Responsibilities of the Director of Faculty Research and Scholarship

- Communicates, coordinates and facilitates support for Faculty scholarship
- Works with individual faculty on both internal and external funding for scholarship
- Assists in the Grants lunches organized by the Associate Director of CFR to support faculty scholarship
- Holds meetings to help groups of faculty organize their thoughts for collaborative institutional grant submissions
- Collaborates on writing institutional grant submissions
- Writes stewardship and grant reports
- Works with the Finance Office on grants management of individual faculty grants
- Manages some institutional grants
- Chairs the Grants Advisory Group (representatives of Finance, CFR, DOF and Human Resources offices working on establishing systems for external grants submission, tracking and management at Bates)
- Chairs the Committee on Faculty Scholarship, an elected faculty committee that distributes the Faculty Development Funds, arranges celebrations and develops policy in support of scholarship
- Co-Chairs, with the Special Assistant to the President, of the Committee on Faculty Innovation and the Mellon Innovation Funds
- Chairs the Equipment Advisory Group that maintains the inventory of research and teaching equipment in the sciences, monitors equipment condition, and makes decisions on expenditures from the capital budget for equipment replacement
- Works with Media Relations to publicize faculty scholarship

Appendix 3: Some specifics about the cost of programs to increase time and productivity of Faculty Scholarship

• **Blocks of time:** The enhanced sabbatical program and pre-tenure leaves are significant steps. Following on that we need:

- o Additional opportunities for full year sabbaticals at full pay
- o Opportunities for “research semesters” after tenure and between sabbaticals
- o Course release to devote to scholarship

• **Endow Funds for Faculty Scholarship.**

Recognizing the variety of forms of scholarship, these funds will continue to be made available on a competitive basis for a wide range of needs. These internal funds lead to publications and to later external grant applications.

Currently we have approximately \$70,000 per year available from endowed funds. Quality projects submitted to the annual competition for internal grants typically total at least twice that amount.

Therefore, we recommend substantially increasing the endowments that directly support faculty scholarship by providing:

- Time to explore new projects: Seed money to get projects started that will lead to external grant proposals (proposals are in the \$3000 to \$7000 range)
- Time in archives and at research sites (travel expenses such as airline tickets, room and board \$7000 to \$10,000 per year)
- Time spent establishing and maintaining scholarly networks:
 - o Work with collaborators and colleagues, at Bates or off campus (travel, living expenses)
 - o Conference presentations (\$800 to \$1500 per conference)
 - o Subvention of book publications (\$2000 to \$5000 per request; two to 3 requests per year= about \$10,000)
- Supplies that enhance the productivity of time spent on scholarship:
 - o library cards or photocopying at other libraries
 - o purchase of books, technical materials, videos, AV materials needed by individual faculty (\$500 to \$1000 per project)
- Time freed by research assistance:
 - o Manuscript assistance: proofing, editing, bibliographies, indexes (\$500-\$1000 per request; two or three requests per year= about \$2300 per year)
 - o Student research assistants during the summer or the academic year

o research equipment: increase funds for maintenance and replacement of equipment (currently the Equipment Capital Budget for replacing equipment is \$75,000 per year; an additional \$25,000 to \$50,000 per year is needed over the next 3 to 5 years to replace aging and out of date equipment)

* laboratory assistants to support equipment (salaries in the \$35,000 range)

Supporting a lively intellectual climate

By making scholarship more visible, celebrating and publicizing scholarship in a public way clarifies and reaffirms the institution's commitment to protecting time for scholarship.

- Recognizing the scholarly contributions of the faculty, staff, alumni and community members
- Opportunities to share and to celebrate each other's work: faculty/student dinners, library book launches, lunches (about \$1000 per dinner for about 50 people) \$3,000