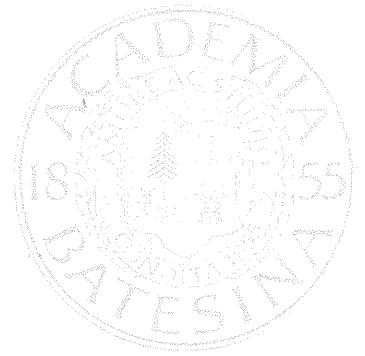


A letter from the president



Bates College

September 2008

Dear Members of the Bates Community,

Welcome to the new academic year. As many of you know, last fall we started an ambitious process of planning for the future of Bates. I am pleased to report that after a year, we have made great strides toward learning more about our distinctive strengths and articulating our aims and goals for the College. We have many, many people to thank for this progress. It is wonderful that so many of you have participated and are contributing to our effort. The vibrancy and quality of our future depends on your help. Now we are ready to take our next steps. Before describing our work for the fall, I want to give you a brief update on our efforts so far. As you read this letter, please keep in mind that new rounds of consultation and collaboration will accompany each of the steps I describe. As with each phase of this important work, I seek and invite your engagement and your ideas.

Learning more about what makes Bates great

Last September we began our process by inviting about 175 faculty, staff, and students into small-group discussions about the College's aspirations and about what is and is not working well. In addition to exploring just what it is that makes Bates great and how the experience can become even greater, the small groups discussed external forces that are affecting strong liberal arts colleges and how to leverage those challenges to Bates' advantage.

Most participants in these talks were chosen randomly to increase the likelihood that a wide range of voices and opinions were heard. In the talks and through e-mail contributions from other members of the campus, many people offered helpful input about specific improvements we should consider. They also shared ideas about how we should be think-

ing of our roles as scholars and teachers, how we might strengthen the concept of educating the whole person, and how we can continue to build on the College's unique character and rich history.

As the information was coming in, I invited 18 members of the faculty and the senior staff and two very talented students to join me in a steering group to guide the planning process throughout the year. We were and are pleased that so many of you were willing to lend your voices to the work. From you, we learned a great deal about what forms of progress the community hopes for and just how you think we should proceed.

In general, the findings formed four themes, including the need to (1) clarify Bates' priorities and refresh the ways we communicate to various constituencies about the College; (2) ask how learning in all of its forms might be strengthened and improved; (3) con-

sider new forms of encouragement and support for teaching and scholarship, and (4) think about ways to strengthen the College community and our ties outside the College overall.

Our next steps were to ask a larger group of the faculty, staff, and students to form four working groups to shape our progress along the lines of each theme. A member of the faculty chaired each group, and those four chairs joined the Steering Group. Throughout the winter and spring, the groups consulted with each other and with the College community extensively. They also applied their own deep knowledge of Bates and of higher education to the ideas they developed.

At the end of the winter semester, the chairs of the Working Groups presented the groups' findings to the Steering Group and held three open sessions on campus to gather more feedback to aid in the completion of their combined report. The groups forwarded the report to the Steering Group and to me in June.

Opening with a new articulation of the College's enduring purpose, the document offers four guiding principles to consider. These principles address Bates' commitment to creative, adventurous, and rigorous inquiry; our aspiration to be diverse and inclusive; the importance of community and civic engagement as vital dimensions of teaching, learning, and research; and the value of open communication as a condition for creating shared knowledge, deepening understanding, and facilitating discovery.

In addition, the document describes distinctive programs that embody those principles and offers 39 issues and 87 recommendations. Developed from the groups' campus-wide work and consultation, the report is rich, inclusive, and very helpful.

To ease the process of considering all these ideas (and to prepare for future fundraising activities in some of the cases), the Steering Group and I decided to cluster or combine the elements of the report to increase the focus and impact of the ideas. In essence, we considered the data carefully and asked:

- What ideas or clusters are right for consideration and possible action on the part of existing departments, offices, committees and/or administrators?
- What elements of the report call for further deliberation before implementation? In those cases, what processes will encourage helpful and widespread involvement as well as useful gains?

- Around what three to five significant concepts might we now be ready to organize useful strategic action? As we develop those plans, how can we invite even more creative involvement and encourage transformative progress for Bates?

These questions helped us think about our next phase of work in three categories — improvements that rely mainly on administrative action by committees, departments, and other existing structures; ideas or concepts that need more extensive study and planning; and three areas that we believe are ready for specific College-wide attention and fundraising efforts now. Let me give you examples of each.

Using administrative action to achieve gains

Many of the issues and recommendations in the Working Groups' report are ready for action by the existing administrative and governance structure, often in consultation with additional faculty members, students, or other staff. Some of those recommendations — like the calls to increase endowment for financial aid and to increase fundraising for diversity — include work that is already underway. Indeed, the new *Educating for Excellence* initiative, which is designed to increase resources for a range of projects advancing the diversity of our community and the breadth of intellectual life at the College, is being tested with donors now.

Others, like the broad and frequently mentioned recommendation to design a new communication plan and update our web presence, are on our master to-do list but will require new staffing or resources. Yet others, like modifying the class schedule grid to create times for meetings and all-campus discussion, creating a grid for co-curricular activities, and reviewing the educational effectiveness of short term, are more embryonic and require long-range thought. The Steering Group and I will forward the recommendations in this category to the appropriate office or committee for consideration and ask for a quick response about how they will proceed. At periodic intervals, we will report on progress in this category of action. Many of the projects will require community input, and I encourage you to help out when called on to give advice and support.

Extending our engagement with important ideas

The second category contains recommendations that call for a more comprehensive process of study, sharing ideas, and developing concrete next steps. We found last year, for example, that there is widespread interest in continuing and broadening the discussion of our values and principles, and in drawing on that effort, to articulate a new mission statement for the College.

The Working Groups identified initial interest in these themes, and their campus conversations in the spring underscored the finding. In May, about 130 members of the campus community took part in one of several conversations that focused, in part, on topics that ranged from improvements in the language of the mission statement to guiding principles and how to integrate them routinely into the practices and policies of the College.

The Steering Group and I agree that we need faculty leadership and community engagement to pursue this category of work and we are seeking that. You will hear much more about future action in this category soon.

Three initiatives to take forward now

Three exciting near-term projects or initiatives make up the third category, and each of these is in varying degrees of progress. Coming out of an existing and widely shared vision of our strengths and needs, their capacity to make a critical contribution to our future development was underscored by last year's work. In short, these initiatives not only meet current needs, but do so in ways that celebrate and build on the many distinctive strengths our recent efforts have affirmed.

Each at the core of a complete liberal arts education, these initiatives draw on College-wide or multi-departmental work that is underway now. To extend and deepen those efforts, the Steering Group and I have used the report of the Working Groups to identify objectives for each initiative to pursue. The following working titles introduce lists of objectives that are not meant to be complete. Rather we hope these provide strong starting points for our next phase of work.

Learning at Bates

Recognizing that Bates is committed to creative, adventurous, and rigorous inquiry, the purpose of this initiative is to enhance our mutually supportive community of teaching, learning, and scholarship. The following objectives will be pursued:

- Establish a Center for Teaching and Learning. The center should support efforts to enhance student learning, help faculty and staff learn more about inclusive pedagogies and serve as resources to one another, promote awareness of multiple ways of learning and knowing, take full advantage of the College's cultural diversity, and create a structurally and financially sustainable system of mentoring and advising.
- Intensify the community of learning at Bates. This includes increasing support for excellent and varied informal learning opportunities and addressing space and facility needs as outlined by the Campus Facilities Master Plan.
- Increase our investment in the learning environment; encourage innovation related to teaching, learning, and scholarship; and pose ideas about endowing special teaching and learning activities.
- Track effectiveness, conduct further study of relevant topics, and report on the initiative's progress to the community. This includes recognizing the need for more internal study of Bates' practices and procedures, more robust comparison with peers, and guidelines to manage this category of effort College-wide.

Natural sciences and mathematics in the liberal arts

Recognizing that the natural sciences and mathematics play an ever-increasing role in our world today and that scientific reasoning, laboratory experience, and quantitative literacy are critical components of any complete liberal arts education, the purpose of this initiative is to build on the strength of learning and inquiry in the sciences and mathematics at Bates and to promote the robust collaborative and cross-disciplinary work that is an integral part of an excellent and inclusive liberal arts education. The following objectives will be pursued:

- Further develop an innovative curriculum of science and math instruction at all levels: within the traditional majors, in interdisciplinary programs, in introductory courses, and in light of the new

General Education requirements. Intensify support and enlarge the audience for these programs of study across the campus.

- In collaboration with the program planning team, plan a major construction and renovation project for science and math facilities. These facilities should reflect and enhance an innovative College-wide vision for developing scientific and quantitative capacities that is at the leading edge among liberal arts colleges. This building project will include the replacement of Dana Chemistry and the renovation or replacement of Carnegie. Taking advantage of physical proximity for the natural sciences and math, it will realize the efficiency and excitement of faculty and students working together across traditional boundaries and enhance opportunities for intellectual collaboration, interaction, and learning from different perspectives College-wide.
- Enhance the infrastructure that promotes and supports faculty scholarship and faculty-student research.
- Take steps to ensure that as we replace a number of distinguished colleagues who have retired in recent years, we capture the full advantage of our current opportunity to recruit a significant number of new faculty members in the natural sciences division. These scholars will join our strong cadre of ongoing faculty in implementing this major effort to encourage and facilitate cutting-edge teaching and research.

The arts in the College and the community

Recognizing the role of the arts in both the educational mission of the College and its interface with the communities in which we are situated, the purposes of this initiative are to build on the strength of learning and inquiry in the arts and to coordinate the arts disciplines more completely. The following objectives will be pursued:

- Clarify and explain our educational vision of the role of creative and performing arts in serving the College's core goals. This vision includes our aims to develop individual creative and imaginative capacities as well as to sustain a vibrant intellectual and cultural community. It should expand the platform on which people at Bates from different backgrounds interact and learn.
- Develop a strategy to implement and sustain this shared vision for the place of the arts in a liberal

arts education. Elements of this strategy might include planning and coordinating calendar and use of space; bringing artists, performers, and scholars together to promote collaboration and cross-fertilization; celebrating and making more visible the high quality and rich variety of artistic and cultural activity at the College. One overall goal is to deepen and expand the impact and reach of the arts at Bates.

- Plan specific strategies to enhance the College's capacity to support and elevate the visibility of our artistic and cultural programs.
- Invite and strengthen the connection between the arts at Bates and the larger public community and enhance the participation of Lewiston/Auburn community members in Bates arts programs.

Next steps and ways to take part

Seeking feedback from the campus to the ideas in this letter is our next step — and I hope to hear from many of you soon. In addition to this explanation of our progress, there will be several opportunities in September for interactive exchange about our work so far and ways to carry the process forward. The Steering Group and I will use these venues to refine the processes we are designing and to improve our articulation of the three initiatives. Then we will ask new campus teams to take them forward in the fall. Here are specific opportunities we hope you will take:

Open meetings on September 4, 4pm to 5pm and September 5, 12 noon to 1 pm: All members of the campus community are invited to hear my brief description of our work so far and share their responses to this letter. The full report of the Working Groups will be posted for you to read before you attend.

Web site for feedback and updates: Beginning in early September, you will find a *Planning at Bates* web link on the President's page. Please follow it for an up-to-date calendar of times to give input to all aspects of the planning process and copies of the Report of the Working Groups, detailed descriptions of the initiatives, past issues of the *Planning at Bates* newsletter, and other timely materials.

Steering group members at your meetings by invitation: During September, members of the Steering Group are available to attend the regular meeting

of departments, divisions, or other groups to hear feedback and gather ideas. You are invited to contact Heather Bumps to take advantage of this opportunity.

Building the initiative teams: In September, the Steering Group and I will begin to form a faculty-based team for each initiative. During the outreach sessions described above, we will consult with you about how the objectives that define the initiative should be edited and framed and how the team should be composed. In October, each team should complete the work on its objectives, offer a timeline for moving forward, and set about forming its initiative plan.

During the fall, we will continue to issue *Planning at Bates* and develop many other ways to reach out to the community for input and ideas. If you have suggestions about this interaction, please let me know. Broad and deep participation is a critical element of our work.

On the following page you will find the names of the members of the Steering and Working Groups. They have my most sincere gratitude for their progress in making Bates even greater. I deeply appreciate their creative collaboration, their dedication, their time, and their good ideas.

In closing, let me thank you again for your crucial contributions to this work and invite you to contact me or comment on this process at president@bates.edu. I look forward to extending our conversation about the ideas I have presented and to seeing and hearing from you often and soon.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elaine", with a stylized flourish above the name.

Elaine Tuttle Hansen

Steering Group

Terry Beckmann, Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer
Pam Baker '70, Helen A. Papaioanou Professor of Biology and Director of Faculty Research and Scholarship
Dave Chirayath, Research Analyst in Advancement (*Selected by the Bates College Staff Association*)
Matt Cote, Associate Professor of Chemistry
Meg Creedon '08
Sylvia Federico, Assistant Professor of English (*Member of the President's Institutional Planning and Advisory Committee*)
Tedd Goundie, Dean of Students
Elaine Hansen, President
Ben Hester '10 (*Selected by Bates College Student Government*)
Leslie Hill, Associate Professor of Politics and Special Assistant to the President
Bill Hiss '66, Vice President for External Affairs
Bev Johnson, Associate Professor of Geology (*Member of the President's Institutional Planning and Advisory Committee*)
Kevin McHugh, Director of Athletics (*Member of President's Council*)
Wylie Mitchell, Dean of Admissions
Helen Regan, Visiting Professor of Education
Jill Reich, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty
Tom Tracy, Phillips Professor of Religion
Gene Wiemers, Vice President for Information and Library Services and Librarian

Working Group 1: Clarifying and Explaining the Bates Experience

Helen Regan (Chair), Visiting Professor of Education
Ryan Bavis, Assistant Professor of Biology
Czerny Brasuell, Director of Multicultural Affairs
Jared Cash '04, Assistant Dean of Admissions
Jay Collier, Web Communications Manager
Rebecca Corrie, Phillips Professor of Art and Visual Culture
Paul Gastonguay '89, Head Coach of Men's and Women's Tennis
Leslie Hill, Associate Professor of Politics and Special Assistant to the President
Kristofer Jonsson '08
David Miller '08
Kerry O'Brien, Assistant Dean of the Faculty
Gene Wiemers (ex officio), Vice President for Information and Library Services and Librarian
Kathy Arsenault (administrative support), Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for Advancement

Working Group 2: Learning at Bates

Matt Cote (Chair), Associate Professor of Chemistry
Mark Bessire, Director of the Museum of Art and Lecturer in Humanities
Elizabeth Eames, Associate Professor of Anthropology
Erin Foster-Zsiga, Assistant Dean of Students
Tedd Goundie (ex officio), Dean of Students

Margaret Imber, Associate Professor of Classical and Medieval Studies
Meg Kinney '08
Garrett Kopeski '11
Carmita McCoy, Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Transition
Kevin McHugh, Director of Athletics and Chair of the Physical Education Department
Ellen Peters '87, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment
Daniela Ritter '10

Working Group 3: Teaching and Scholarship at Bates

Pam Baker '70 (Chair), Helen A. Papaioanou Professor of Biology and Director of Faculty Research and Scholarship
Ellen Anderson, Foreign Language Technology Manager
Matt Duvall, Manager, Imaging and Computing Center
Holly Gurney, Associate Dean of Students
Joe Hall, Assistant Professor of History
Laura Juraska, Associate College Librarian for Reference Services
Emily Kane, Whitehouse Professor of Sociology
Maggie Maurer-Fazio, Betty Doran Stangle Professor of Applied Economics and Associate Dean of the Faculty
Jill Reich (ex officio), Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty
Krista Scottham, Assistant Professor of Psychology
Carole Taylor, Professor of English
Marty Deschaines '75 (administrative support), Assistant Director for Community Volunteerism and Student Development, Harward Center and Office Coordinator, Chaplain's Office

Working Group 4: Strengthening the Bates Community

Tom Tracy (Chair), Phillips Professor of Religion
Terry Beckmann (ex-officio), Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer
Bill Blaine-Wallace, Multifaith Chaplain
Patti Buck, Assistant Professor of Education
Mira David '09
Fatima Diaz '08
Elaine Dumont, Den Supervisor
Jen Koviach-Cote, Associate Professor of Chemistry
Paul Kuritz, Professor of Theater
Gwen Lexow, Head Softball Coach and Lecturer in History
Mary Main, Director of Human Resources
Sarah Potter '77, Bookstore Director & Contract Officer
James Reese, Associate Dean of Students
David Scobey, Director, Harward Center for Community Partnerships
Wayne Zimmerman, Associate Director of Advancement Services
Claire Schmoll (administrative support), Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for Finance and Administration