



The Cornerstone Plan of Trinity College

**PREPARED BY THE PRESIDENT'S
CORNERSTONE PLANNING GROUP**

May 6, 2005

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The Mission of Trinity College (Adopted 1994)

Trinity College is a community united in a quest for excellence in liberal arts education. Our purpose is to foster critical thinking, free the mind of parochialism and prejudice, and prepare students to lead examined lives that are personally satisfying, civically responsible, and socially useful.

Four elements are central to the success of that quest:

- *An outstanding and diverse faculty who excel in their roles as teachers and scholars, bringing to the classroom the insight and enthusiasm of people actively engaged in intellectual inquiry. Working closely with students in relationships of mutual respect, they share a vision of teaching as discussion – a face-to-face exchange linking professor and student in the search for knowledge and understanding.*
- *A rigorous curriculum firmly rooted in the traditional liberal arts, but one that also integrates new fields of study and interdisciplinary approaches to learning. Trinity encourages a blend of general education and specialized areas of study, and takes imaginative advantage of the many educational resources inherent in Trinity's urban location and international ties.*
- *A talented, motivated, and diverse body of students who are challenged to the limits of their abilities and are fully engaged with their studies, their professors, and one another. Our students take increasing responsibility for shaping their education as they progress through the curriculum, and recognize that becoming liberally educated is a lifelong process of learning and discovery.*
- *An attractive, secure, and supportive campus community that provides students with myriad opportunities for interaction with their peers as well as with the faculty. The College sustains a full array of cultural, recreational, and volunteer activities, and embodies the philosophy that students' experiences in the dormitories, dining halls, and extracurricular organizations are an important and powerful complement to their formal learning in the classroom.*

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An Acknowledgement

President Jones asked that the Cornerstone planning process be an inclusive one and the community responded generously with its time. Eighty-five faculty, students, and administrators served on the seven Cornerstone Advisory Committees (CACs) throughout the fall. More than half of Trinity's student body, close to 400 administrators, 130 faculty members, and more than 70 trustees, alumni, parents, and friends of the College attended meetings over the last few months, offering ideas about Trinity's strengths and weaknesses, discussing trends affecting the wider education community, and sharing aspirations for the College. Twenty members of the Advisory Committee on the Planning Process (ACPP) facilitated these meetings and have pledged to continue to communicate with our constituencies and to help in regularly evaluating the implementation of the Plan. Twenty-seven members of the President's Cornerstone Planning Group and the Planning and Budget Council established priorities and summarized them for this document. This community-wide responsiveness underscores the enthusiasm and energy available for implementing the Cornerstone Plan.

You will find a list of the many, dedicated people who served on Cornerstone planning groups, along with full reports from the seven CACs and almost 6,000 comments gathered by the ACPP at <http://Cornerstones.trincoll.edu>.

May 6, 2005

THE CORNERSTONE PLAN OF TRINITY COLLEGE

Trinity is one of this nation's most prestigious colleges dedicated to the liberal arts. Central to Trinity's mission is educating future leaders who can respond successfully to ever-changing circumstances, make their way intelligently and empathetically in communities here and throughout the world, and serve as articulate, well-informed citizens wherever they work and live. The timeless virtues of a liberal-arts education provide the best preparation for this life and work.

Trinity's value and prominence as a liberal arts college are strengthened by our setting and our history. As evident in the College's educational and civic endeavors, Trinity has increasingly defined itself through a special relationship to and engagement with its urban environment. Now, in the 21st century, our mission, so aptly articulated on the previous page, must be interpreted in both urban and global terms, and we must prepare students to understand, appreciate, and engage in urban life locally and globally during their time at the College and beyond. Trinity is uniquely equipped to embed global and urban academic goals in the larger liberal arts curriculum that has served students successfully for generations. In doing so, we pledge to bring Trinity true distinction and to *offer our students the world in a city*.

Through this Cornerstone Plan, we sustain the core values that have served us well for 175 years as we shape Trinity's future. To this end, we dedicate ourselves to improving the quality of teaching and learning at Trinity and the environment in which students flourish. We vow to strengthen Trinity's legacy of producing leaders with agile and non-parochial minds and the confidence to explore and succeed in new situations. We pledge to devote our resources in time, talent, and funding to seven interrelated Cornerstones that inform this Plan and underscore our commitment to improvement and to excellence:

- *Teaching and Research*
- *Experiential Education*
- *Diversity*
- *Global Initiatives*
- *Urban Initiatives*
- *Information Technology*
- *Capital Improvements*

The seven Cornerstones of Trinity's Plan support one another. They will be mutually strengthened by progress toward the interrelated goals noted in this Plan. The strategies listed after each set of goals articulate broad methods of achieving our Cornerstone aspirations. Together, the goals and strategies establish priorities to guide our efforts and allocate our resources. The strategies will be revisited and undoubtedly revised each year as we evaluate our progress and adjust to new information. Thus, the Cornerstone Plan marks the start of the process of reaching our goals, not the end.

TRINITY'S CORNERSTONE GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING THEM

To enhance teaching and learning

Goals

- Strengthen Trinity's commitment to the liberal arts through supporting faculty as models of intellectual commitment and in their roles as teachers, scholars, and creators.
- Become second to none in collaboration among faculty, students, and staff in learning and discovery.
- Build attractive, technologically sophisticated teaching and learning facilities and support them at a level permitting Trinity to attain a competitive edge among our peers.

Strategies

- Direct more resources to support faculty-student collaboration in scholarship and creativity.
- Endow chairs for distinguished faculty throughout the liberal arts curriculum and through a focused effort in disciplines or interdisciplinary fields that contribute to our distinction.
- Continue to reduce reliance on adjunct faculty.
- Establish a firm plan for ongoing improvement to the technological configuration of teaching and research spaces.
- Increase student, faculty, and staff information-technology literacy and recognize and reward innovative use of IT by faculty in teaching, research, and advising students.
- Visibly reward academic, scholarly, and artistic accomplishments by faculty and students.
- Revise faculty governance and administrative procedures to allow more time for teaching and research and to facilitate long-range curricular planning and resource allocation.

To increase the intellectual vibrancy of campus life

Goals

- Attract and retain students committed to the life of the mind as the signal (though not exclusive) reason for attending our College and with the highest motivation and potential to make a positive difference to the world through their personal and professional lives.
- Strengthen our students' learning and development through a richer, more intellectually vibrant residential, liberal arts experience, where in- and out-of-the-classroom activities reinforce one another and where the campus culture makes it harder and less comfortable for those who are content to do the minimum.
- Ensure that each student finds both a satisfying niche and a way to contribute his or her talents and energy to the campus and to our surrounding community.

Strategies

- Create residential programs that support and honor high achievement, personal and social responsibility, and camaraderie across classes.
- Create a hub for student-centered campus activity fostering interaction among groups and add specialized venues to enable individuals and groups to pursue shared interests.
- Promote equity in access to the resources that shape student life.
- Focus resources on creating additional opportunities for scholarly and intellectual engagements for students outside the classroom.

To bring Trinity true distinction through offering our students the world in a city

Goals

- Distinguish Trinity as the leading urban-oriented liberal arts college in the nation and, in so doing, appropriately and creatively pair global and urban educational efforts and enhance the College's academic reputation.
- Ensure that the complex political, economic, environmental, scientific, and social dynamics of a multicultural, interdependent world find appropriate reflection in a Trinity education.

Strategies

- Provide incentives for faculty to strengthen global and urban dimensions throughout the curriculum and through connections to Hartford and our global sites abroad.
- Guided by educational goals, increase the global movement of students and faculty and enhance opportunities for students to learn and grow through connections to the resources of Hartford.
- Integrate study-abroad with students' academic and social experiences on campus and in Hartford.
- Raise the profile of student-initiated and student-oriented urban engagements, creating opportunities consistent with our educational mission and enhancing Trinity's distinction.
- Create a center for global and urban engagement to formalize Trinity's commitment to this vision.
- Involve Trinity alumni, parents, and friends in support of the new global and urban agendas.

To foster and reap the benefits of a broadly diverse educational community

Goals

- Expand access for students with special potential, regardless of their ability to assume the full costs of a Trinity education.
- Increase the diversity of students, faculty, and staff—including but not limited to the dimensions of race, culture, and gender—to ensure intellectual and social vitality, to stimulate transformative learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom, and to foster appreciation of both our commonalities and our differences.
- Create an atmosphere where students, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds and beliefs feel safe and respected.

Strategies

- Raise endowment to reduce our dependency on tuition and increase financial aid to help diversify our student body.
- Encourage widespread use of curricular, pedagogical, and co-curricular practices that enable students of all backgrounds to achieve success and satisfaction both academically and socially.
- Assist all offices in responding to the needs of the full range of students we attract to Trinity.
- Create shared experiences and reduce parochialism, taking full advantage of the presence of non-traditional-age students, international students, students of varied religious backgrounds and those who would push us to engage issues of equity and justice and civic responsibility.
- Strengthen hiring procedures and support systems to assure significant diversity.

To reinforce our commitment to our city, the Trinity community, and our constituencies

Goals

- Consolidate and strengthen Trinity's role as a civic leader through responsive, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial partnerships with institutions and individuals in the greater Hartford community.
- Become a Trinity community "united in a quest for excellence in liberal arts education."
- Build and support a more engaged and active community of alumni, parents, and friends who strengthen and enhance the vitality of our College by giving their time, expertise, and resources to help Trinity meet its goals.

Strategies

- Continue to transform the area around the College into a vibrant community for current residents and an attractive location for student, faculty, and staff, complemented by businesses that extend the many benefits of Trinity's urban location.
- Evaluate and reallocate resources, as needed, to sustain Trinity's leadership and mutually beneficial partnerships in our city, especially as they enhance our academic mission.
- Develop methods for information- and goal-sharing across constituencies and for fostering a spirit of camaraderie and collegiality both on campus and with our alumni, parents, and friends.
- More visibly honor people from all constituencies who exemplify Trinity's commitment to academic excellence and who contribute to our academic mission and values.

To provide the foundation for excellence in education

Goals

- Perpetuate a culture of planning characterized by (a) *inclusiveness*, recognizing that each person on this campus is an educator and contributes in critical ways to our mission; (b) *responsiveness* both to previous plans and ideas that have not yet emerged; (c) *iteration*, recognizing that persistence and reexamination in planning is as important as any given plan; (d) *linkages* between planning and allocation of resources in time, people, and funds, and (e) evaluation to help us *improve*, not merely to *prove* our success.
- Steward the financial resources of the College and build an efficient and effective infrastructure upon which progress on Cornerstone goals will be sustained.
- Ensure that decisions about capital projects, large and small, are made in a comparative and integrated manner that considers established decision-making principles.
- Ensure that the College's IT operations are first and foremost user-oriented and organized to facilitate and advance innovative uses of technology across campus and in educational partnerships throughout the world.
- Increase funding-raising for endowment and annual gifts, especially to support endowed faculty chairs, scholarships and financial aid, facilities improvements and, more generally, to reduce our dependence upon tuition to finance current operations.

Strategies

- Through collaboration between users and the IT professionals, develop transparent planning and monitoring structures for IT activities and resource allocations and improve communication, data sharing, data storage, and data retrieval systems.
- Assure adequate and consistent funding to support the IT infrastructure, effective information systems, and the portrayal of Trinity's special character through our websites.
- Update the campus master plan, mindful of the Cornerstone planning's priority-setting dimensions and based upon a long-range academic plan.
- Develop an annual budget to fund capital projects and improvements requiring ongoing attention and to respond adequately to emergencies.
- Link planning, evaluation, and budgeting in all that we do.
- Strategically plan and execute an unprecedented, comprehensive fund-raising campaign.

MEASURING AND EVALUATING OUR PROGRESS

Using quantitative and qualitative information from multiple sources, we will systematically track our progress and evaluate how we can improve our institutional effectiveness. As part of the Plan, we list the key progress indicators we will use to monitor our performance. Supporting these key indicators are additional ones that will provide more detail and insight into the reasons behind our successes and challenges. Where possible, we use indicators for which we have comparative data about other liberal-arts colleges. Measuring and evaluating our progress requires an institutional commitment to a systematic and broadly based program for collecting information and for using the information to guide improvement. The progress indicators and targets will be reviewed annually and modified as needed.

Effects on Students

1. Retention rates
2. Student academic engagement
3. Enhancement of critical thinking
4. Enhancement of communication skills
5. Student satisfaction with academic and social climate
6. Admitted students' perceptions of Trinity's academic reputation

Diversity and Access

7. Diversity of students, faculty, and staff
8. Institutional discount rate
9. Enhancement of ability to relate well to diverse people

Global-Urban Engagement

10. Percentage of faculty engaged in global and urban courses
11. Percentage of students participating in curricular and co-curricular activities that distinguish our education from others

Foundation for Excellence

12. Composite Financial Index
13. Endowment
14. Annual-Fund giving for current operations
15. Alumni giving rate
16. IT literacy of students and faculty
17. Faculty and employee satisfaction with Trinity