

Our Great Opportunity

It has been easy to embrace Hampden-Sydney College and the school's distinctive mission of forming good men and good citizens, a mission I consider as important and vital today as when the school was founded nearly 250 years ago. My family and I are grateful for the warm embrace we have already received from so many members of the Hampden-Sydney community, and we are looking forward to moving in and getting started at the College this summer.

When the search committee asked me about my goals for Hampden-Sydney, I was able to reply without hesitation that I hoped to do the following: enhance the reputation and stature of Hampden-Sydney across the country; ensure that we have the strongest possible recruiting and admissions program; and increase significantly the school's endowment. These are important and worthy goals. We must always be growing our school's profile and reputation in the competitive higher education landscape. To continue to balance its budget and fund its aspirations, Hampden-Sydney must generate adequate net tuition revenue. And growing our school's endowment will make it possible to enroll talented students whose families cannot afford our tuition and fees, to strengthen our educational program, and to ensure long-term viability.

It is important to recognize, however, that all of these goals are "outcome" goals. They do not just happen, but rather they are reflections of the quality of the educational experience we offer our students. Our stature and reputation depend on having an educational program that is not only distinctive but also outstanding in every dimension. Likewise, prospective students will be drawn to Hampden-Sydney when they are convinced that we offer an educational program that is better than those offered at other schools. Alumni and other benefactors will be enthusiastic about contributing to efforts and initiatives that make Hampden-Sydney an even better College and keep it affordable for all young men who want to attend, regardless of their family circumstances.

So, even as we celebrate Hampden-Sydney's distinctiveness and rich history, we must focus on how we strengthen every aspect of our academic program and our students' experiences. We must make them as unique as the College's identity, and they must be remarkably effective at "forming good men and good citizens." Fortunately, at Hampden-Sydney we have great strengths and a solid foundation on which to build. The College has an outstanding and highly devoted faculty. The curriculum places an emphasis on developing thoughtful, discerning minds capable of insight. The loyalty of the College's alumni is legendary. And we possess a remarkably friendly and hospitable campus culture.

Jonathan Ive, the chief designer at Apple, once said, "It's easy to be different, but very difficult to be better." Our great opportunity is to build on Hampden-Sydney's distinctiveness and its many strengths and to create something quite extraordinary. This will be challenging work, to be sure, but it will also be engaging, fun, and creative work as together we explore the many exciting possibilities for Hampden-Sydney's future.