

REPORT TO THE HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE COMMUNITY

July 19, 2017

To the Hampden-Sydney College Community:

This was a year of accomplishment for Hampden-Sydney College. Our students represented us proudly, winning another VFIC Ethics Bowl team championship, performing at Carnegie Hall, and presenting their research at academic conferences. Our lacrosse team won the ODAC championship and other sports teams saw post-conference play. Junior Parker Smith was named the ODAC's player of the year in men's golf. These student accomplishments reflect the mentoring and leadership of devoted teacher-scholars and talented staff members who spend countless hours transforming lives and "forming good men and good citizens." What a privilege we have to carry forward this 242-year old mission authored in the year of our founding by Samuel Stanhope Smith, the College's first president.

The College's Trustees began this past academic year by affirming Hampden-Sydney's identity as a liberal arts college for men and committing the College to improve in every way so that over the next decade it joins the ranks of the best national liberal arts colleges and universities in the country. The Trustees came to these decisions not because they are sentimentally attached to the College's past and its history as a college for men. Instead, these decisions came after carefully analyzing our competitive situation and concluding that our identity as a college for men distinguishes us in a crowded and highly competitive higher education landscape. At the same time, the Trustees acknowledged that being a college for men is insufficiently differentiating to assure the College's long-run viability. That is why the College's Trustees and senior leadership team are committed to improving every aspect of Hampden-Sydney, so that we offer young men a coming-of-age experience that is sufficiently attractive and differentiated to guarantee we can recruit the young men who will benefit most from the extraordinary educational experience we provide.

Thus, we have been improving our communications, strengthening our recruiting and admissions efforts, enhancing alumni engagement, and growing our fundraising capacity. We are pleased to report progress on all of these fronts.

We are improving our communications with alumni, prospective students and their parents, and the general public. And what a story we have to tell. The world needs—as never before—a college that integrates learning and character development, teaches young men to express themselves eloquently, passes along our Western tradition, and ensures that its students understand fundamental aspects of our country's history and government, while expecting its young men to live and learn together honorably. We will soon have a new website that highlights the educational opportunities we offer young men. Through changes to *The Record of Hampden-Sydney College*, we are highlighting the vitality of academic and student life at the College, as well as the accomplishments of our alumni. *The New York Times* [published an article](#) co-authored by the leaders of our College Democrats and College Republicans that highlighted the value we place on civil discourse. And, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Bret Stephens, our commencement speaker, also [published his address](#) in the *Times*. In

addition to gaining more national media exposure, we also plan to raise Hampden-Sydney's profile in the communities where our alumni live and our prospective students reside.

We had a very good recruiting year, and now have commitments from 322 new freshmen. We had a lot going for our recruiting efforts this year—all of our admissions staff members were talented veterans, we were able to get prospective students and their families inside the new Brown Student Center for tours during the peak yielding season, we had better coordination between our coaches and admissions staff, we had two new academic majors (Biochemistry and Engineering Physics) to offer, and we focused as never before on outcomes in our messaging (e.g., 94 percent of our graduates finish in four years, our graduates are among the top 20 percent of wage earners throughout their careers, etc.). We are grateful that many of you made important contributions to our admissions efforts, encouraging students to apply, meeting with or calling prospective students and their families, and often opening your homes to host recruiting events.

We also had a very good fundraising year. We not only met our annual fund goal, but we also set a new record for annual fund giving, raising over \$2.5 million dollars. Total cash contributions to the College were \$10.7 million, representing a 30 percent increase over last year's total giving and making this past year our fifth-best fundraising year ever, a remarkable accomplishment given that we aren't yet in a financial campaign.

Looking ahead, we will build on the success we enjoyed this year. On the recruiting front, we are adding another admissions representative to focus on the Northeast, as well as on digital media. We will also double-down on major markets throughout the South, and we are going to be targeting key cities in the West. And, we are addressing the important issues of affordability and access by working to control costs, increasing the cost of attendance for this new academic year by less than two percent, and directing more of our financial aid resources to need-based aid. We are also laying the groundwork for a very focused campaign to get our endowment over \$200 million before 2020-21 by raising \$25 million for financial aid and another \$25 million for key academic and co-curricular priorities. We then plan to move directly into a much more ambitious campaign as we prepare for the College's 250th anniversary in 2025-26.

Our communications, admissions, and fundraising efforts all ultimately depend on the strength of the college experience we offer, so we are working hard to enhance every aspect of our educational program. Faculty members spent the past year developing ambitious plans for strengthening our rhetoric program; introducing new majors; revising our academic calendar so that students have more opportunities for field work and service learning; and incorporating more opportunities for "learning by doing," including greater emphasis on internships and cooperative learning opportunities, service learning, off-campus study, and student-faculty research. Student life plans emphasize living more fully into the ideals of our Honor Code and Code of Conduct, enhancing character and leadership development, strengthening fraternity life, emphasizing fitness and health, and implementing an ambitious outdoor education program. Many campus staff are participating in a data-driven effort to understand why some of our students leave before graduating. This study will inform what we must do to move our retention and graduation rates to levels that are consistent with the finest colleges in the country. All of these initiatives will contribute in tangible ways to a distinctiveness and differentiation that will set us apart from other colleges and universities.

Of course, our success in all these areas depends on our people. On that front, this past year we hired new tenure-track faculty in Music, Religion, and Rhetoric. Professors Guy Burnett and Matt

Dubroff received tenure and were promoted to Associate Professor. John Coombs was promoted to the rank of Professor. On the staff side, Robert Sabbatini was appointed Dean of Students; Gordon Neal '09 was hired to fill the big shoes of Tommy Shomo as Director of Communications; Sue Carter was appointed Director of Human Resources, and will also retain her Title IX duties; Aaron Van Allen '12 was appointed Director of Alumni Relations; Chad Eisele was named Athletic Director; and Stephanie Joynes was hired as the new Director of the Ferguson Career Education Center. We congratulate these individuals, and value the contributions of all our talented faculty and staff members.

In highlighting this year's most important accomplishments, we must also include the completion of two major building projects—the new Brown Student Center and the renovation of Winston, now Brinkley Hall, housing the Viar-Christ Center for the Arts. The latter represents a total transformation of Winston Hall, and it will give our fine arts programs a first-rate facility. These projects are noteworthy not only for what they will mean for our students and our educational program, but also for the fundraising successes that made them possible: The largest single gift in the history of the College, pledges and contributions of at least \$1 million from nine other individuals or organizations, and the support of many other individuals and friends allowed us to complete and fully fund these projects.

Our most important work is to encourage all of you not only to embrace the mission of Hampden-Sydney, but also to participate in imagining and pursuing a more ambitious future for the College. This has been a year of progress on many fronts. The College's leadership team is committed to creating a highly distinctive college experience for young men here. The plans of our faculty and staff are consistent with this vision. We are starting to tell our story more effectively. We had a solid recruiting year. And, we set a new fundraising record. Most important, Hampden-Sydney—your College—is doing great and noble work, transforming the lives of young men and preparing them for positions of responsibility and leadership. This work is worthy of your commitment and investment.

Please know that we welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Peebles Harrison

Larry Stimpert