

REPORT TO THE HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE COMMUNITY

August 14, 2020

To the Hampden-Sydney College Community:

Having concluded one academic year and now preparing for another during a global health crisis, I write to share my annual report on the state of Hampden-Sydney College. This is an epic moment, one of several in our nation's history that our resilient College has weathered, and not likely the last. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our nation's continuing struggle to eradicate racism and to make the American dream an inclusive endeavor, and a contentious political climate make this a challenging time for each of us, and for our organizations, communities, and our country. Earlier this summer, I read *Rubicon*, Tom Holland's captivating book about the last decades of the Roman Republic. While the book offers readers much to contemplate, one particularly salient lesson is that we can never take our own republic for granted. The Republic of Rome existed for 500 years before succumbing to dictatorship, and no preordained order guarantees us the freedoms we enjoy in our own representative democracy. Instead it falls to every generation to recommit itself to securing "the blessings of liberty."

Moments like this underscore how much our country and society need Hampden-Sydney men. For 244 years, Hampden-Sydney has produced good men and good citizens who have gone on to serve their families, communities, organizations, and their country. Their impacts are seen in the arts, business, journalism, medicine, science, sports, and in our local, state, and national governments. Their effectiveness is due in part to an educational foundation premised on proven principles that are our College's defining characteristics: Nothing is more important than being able to think and communicate well. Character development is as essential as intellectual growth. Tomorrow's leaders must understand the history, traditions, and beliefs that are the bedrock of a democratic society. The finest form of higher education consists of full-time faculty members working closely with students, teaching them in small classes, getting to know their aspirations, and opening doors of opportunity. And the bonds of brotherhood that bring out the best in our students on campus transform into a deeply devoted, lifelong alumni network after graduation.

The College does an exceptional job of delivering on our promise to uphold these principles. Every year, well over 90 percent of our graduating seniors are completing their degrees within four years. They secure good jobs and placements into outstanding graduate programs. And, perhaps even more importantly, they report (in higher percentages than the seniors at other colleges and universities) that Hampden-Sydney prepared them to write and speak effectively, helped them develop and clarify their ethical values, and made them more informed and active citizens.

While we are rightly proud of these impressive outcomes, this is a time that we—and every organization in our country—must aspire to be even better. As we approach the start of the College's 245th academic year, let us commit to living more fully into the College's principles, to bringing out the best in every one of our students, to modeling the ideals of our democratic republic,

to stamping out vestiges of racism and discrimination, and contributing even more to building and strengthening our country's democracy.

Beyond asking you to join me in pursuit of these worthy goals, I also want to provide an overview of our plans for reopening the College this fall, review the progress the College has made over the last academic year, and share again our vision for the College's future.

Our Resilient Community and Our Plans to Reopen the College

Over the last five months, I have been inspired every day by the selfless and dedicated efforts of those in our community. Our faculty members quickly adapted their courses and teaching methods to deliver our academic program remotely last spring, and they are now preparing to return to an altered schedule and educational landscape—all while continuing to show incomparable devotion to our students. Members of the Class of 2020 finished their college years away from each other and far from those who have taught and mentored them, and they have yet to be honored with our traditional celebration of their accomplishments. Several students of color have worked with me and other senior leaders throughout the spring and summer on efforts to make Hampden-Sydney a better, safer, more diverse and welcoming community. Our student life and admissions colleagues safely provided on-campus summer orientation sessions that were well attended and well received by our newest students and their families. All the while, dedicated buildings and grounds crews have continued to care for our campus, and our human resources team has supported our workforce in difficult and changing circumstances and provided accommodations for our vulnerable employees. Employees both on and off campus have labored throughout the summer amidst constantly evolving circumstances. Our trustees have—in the face of their own personal and professional challenges—prioritized the College and generously provided their support and dedication. Hampden-Sydney alumni have contributed significantly to their communities and to our health care system during the pandemic, and many supported their newest alumni brothers by helping them enter the workforce. Many alumni and friends generously contributed to making this Hampden-Sydney's most successful fundraising year ever. All told, the entire Hampden-Sydney community has showcased what it means to be good citizens.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we believe we must have our students on campus, learning, studying, and living together as a community if we are to achieve the full potential of the educational experiences the College offers our young men. With the support of a dedicated campus community, we can, together, realize the benefits of face-to-face instruction while mitigating and minimizing the risks associated with reopening. As we prepare to welcome our students back to campus, health and safety are paramount. Considerable evidence indicates that healthy college-age individuals are at low risk of serious illness from the coronavirus, though we know that healthy asymptomatic people can spread the virus to those who do face serious consequences if they contract the coronavirus. We will accommodate any students and faculty and staff members who are at higher risk and also those who live with others who have chronic illnesses and work to normalize the behaviors that have been effective in minimizing the spread of the virus (mask wearing, social distancing, handwashing, and self-isolating if ill).

Our reopening plan, which will be continually updated as we receive additional guidance from the CDC, the Virginia Department of Health, and regional health authorities, can be found on the College's COVID-19 webpage. The plan details the many steps we are taking to minimize risk and to contain the spread of the coronavirus on campus, including modifications to instruction and

student life. To keep the College open and to minimize risk to the health and wellbeing of those who learn, live, and work at Hampden-Sydney, we will need the full dedication and participation of every member of our campus community. Compliance with safety practices and protocols will be just one more way our employees and students demonstrate their commitment to our mission of forming good men and good citizens.

Highlights from 2019-20, the College's 244th Year

Despite being forced to cease face-to-face instruction in mid-March, the College had a remarkable academic year. We launched Compass, a transformational curricular emphasis on learning by doing that engages our students in “hands-on” coursework and off-campus learning opportunities that will strengthen their competitiveness for job and graduate program placements. We believe this is Hampden-Sydney’s most important curricular innovation since the Rhetoric Program was formalized in 1978. The [\\$6 million gift announced just last week from Rob '87 and Cindy Citrone](#) for Compass provides the College with the resources to realize our ambitions for this impactful experiential learning program.

As they do every year, our highly dedicated faculty, coaches, and staff members fostered a wide array of student accomplishments and successes, including our fifth Goldwater Scholarship Award winner in the last seven years. It was gratifying to see our students pursuing their summer research projects and providing weekly Zoom presentations on their progress—all tangible examples of our students’ initiative and intellectual curiosity and our faculty’s extraordinary commitment to teaching and mentoring. Our student government leaders made many valuable contributions throughout the year. Our student-athletes also enjoyed much success this year, with highlights including Soccer’s school-record 14-game unbeaten streak and Basketball’s major turnaround season. And before the spring athletic seasons were cut short, Baseball had its best start in six years, Lacrosse earned several strong victories on the way to a 4-2 record, and Golf achieved a ranking of 5th in the nation.

Last September, Hampden-Sydney received the largest financial gift in its history, a \$30 million commitment from Mr. Stanley Pauley that is enabling us to build the state-of-the-art Pauley Science Center. This historic gift and the contributions and commitments from thousands of loyal alumni and benefactors have provided the College its best fundraising year ever—with a record-setting total of \$67 million in both cash receipts and new gift commitments that will benefit Hampden-Sydney in years to come. A record number of alumni, students, parents, employees, and friends participated in the College’s annual Giving Day, with many making significant contributions to a new One Brotherhood Fund that will allow us to assist young men whose families experience job loss or other financial setbacks.

The Board of Trustees, the College’s senior leadership team, and I are committed to Hampden-Sydney’s long-term financial health, and we are hopeful that the College’s financial position will allow us to avoid major cuts to programs, staff, salaries, benefits, and operating budgets that many other institutions are being forced to make. Our financial strength is due to careful management and the generosity of past and current alumni and benefactors. Outstanding stewardship by several trustees has helped our endowment reach an all-time high of more than \$190 million, in spite of last spring’s market downturn. With support from many generous donors, we have been making steady progress on the Carpenter Foundation’s scholarship challenge, adding over \$10 million in need-based financial aid endowment over the last two calendar years.

The opening this fall of our new residential complex adjacent to Chalgrove follows the dedications of the Pannill Center for Rhetoric and Communication, the Brown Student Center, and the Viar-Christ Center for the Arts in the renovated Brinkley Hall. Construction is underway on the Pauley Science Center, and we are committed to upgrading all of our campus residences. We are developing plans for enhancing and renovating our athletics facilities and are working with a landscape architecture firm to enrich our already beautiful campus. Excellent facilities and design not only strengthen the College's ability to offer our students the very best educational experience, but they are also key to enrolling the talented and ambitious young men we want to attract to Hampden-Sydney. We are grateful to all of the donors who have made and are making these enhancements to our College's facilities a reality.

COVID-19 has, of course, impacted our work and created many challenges for Hampden-Sydney and for all other colleges and universities, but we will not lose sight of our important and timeless mission "to form good men and good citizens." The College's senior leadership team, our board, and I are determined to see the College emerge from this crisis as strong and with as much momentum as possible.

Looking Ahead

Our aim is for Hampden-Sydney to offer young men an extraordinary coming-of-age experience—an educational experience so good, well-known, and highly regarded that it will draw ambitious and talented young men from all over the country. To accomplish this vision for the College, we will continue to invest in the outstanding educational program we offer. A highly qualified and devoted faculty, Compass, the Wilson Center for Leadership in the Public Interest, the Flemming Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, the Ferguson Career Center, and many other curricular and co-curricular offerings provide young men with the preparation they need to be tomorrow's leaders in business, medicine, science, engineering, high tech fields, law, public policy, and every other field of endeavor.

The best preparation for the future leaders in all of these fields comes from learning to think and communicate effectively, from developing a character committed to doing what is right, from taking on responsibility and being accountable for one's actions, while benefitting from a brotherhood that encourages the best in every student and the valuable edge that our alumni network provides. So we will continue to strengthen these pillars—rhetoric, character, honor, and brotherhood—that have been essential elements of our educational experience for nearly two and a half centuries.

Our work is important and noble. The impact of the educational experiences we offer young men sets us apart from other colleges and universities. You know the impact Hampden-Sydney has had on your life and the lives of our graduates. I ask you for your devotion and support as we, together, meet the challenges of the ongoing pandemic while we also pursue an even more ambitious future for the College. We look forward to one day resuming the joyful and meaningful alumni and community gatherings that so richly demonstrate the depth, power, and pride of the Hampden-Sydney brotherhood.

Sincerely,
Larry Stimpert