

REPORT TO THE HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE COMMUNITY

September 29, 2021

To the Hampden-Sydney College Community:

As I do each year, I write to share an assessment of the state of the College. This year's report takes on special meaning as we have transitioned from an especially challenging year for Hampden-Sydney and our world to a more promising new one even as the pandemic continues. Times like these underscore the need for leaders. Hampden-Sydney was established to form good men and good citizens who would be the leaders of an emerging Republic, and for 246 years we have continued to provide the world with men who go on to become leaders in every field of endeavor as well as in their communities and their families.

We fulfill our distinctive and important mission by providing students with an exceptional educational foundation, an emphasis on character development that matches our commitment to their intellectual development, and a remarkable brotherhood that seeks to bring out the best in every student while also connecting them with a loyal and devoted alumni network. This is work we do well, and work we must continue to do, because our families, communities, country, and world need Hampden-Sydney graduates.



A Review of the Past Year

For those of us who have the privilege of working at Hampden-Sydney, the best part of our jobs is getting to know our students and witnessing how our collective contributions transform them during their four years here. It was gratifying to see the results of our efforts this past spring when we hosted commencement ceremonies for the Classes of 2020 and 2021. I am grateful to everyone who made it possible for us to continue our work in person last year. It was a heroic undertaking fueled by the good will and commitment that characterize the Hampden-Sydney community, and it was done with even greater resolve to hold ourselves and our students accountable for living more fully into and up to our College's high ideas.

I cannot overstate how much was required of our campus community. Teaching and learning continued in person, though often in unfamiliar settings and configurations. Several uplifting memories stand out for me, such as Professor Helena von Rueden leading a socially distanced, but grateful group of students and other community members in singing holiday music at the Everett Stadium on a chilly December evening. Already busy staff members never imagined taking on the "other duties" that were required, including the donning of protective gear to clean quarantine spaces, testing wastewater, testing students, leading contact tracing efforts, and delivering meals to quarantining students. In addition to preparing our athletes for spring competition, our coaches and athletics staff conducted countless COVID tests for athletes and non-athletes alike. Our students, too, stepped up to volunteer at testing sites in Farmville and vaccination clinics hosted on campus. And despite the many challenges, our students appreciated the opportunity to be on campus, living and learning with their professors, other mentors, and peers, masking up and helping the College complete the academic year with no documented cases of in-class transmission of COVID-19.



In addition to the efforts of our campus community, our College's alumni, parents, and friends rallied to play a significant role in supporting Hampden-Sydney during a challenging year. Even

though we could not hold our usual campus and regional alumni events, financial support increased significantly. Cash from last year's fundraising efforts exceeded \$31 million, besting the prior year's record \$24 million. And, as in the prior year, we recorded many additional gift commitments that bode well for the College's future. On behalf of a grateful campus community, thank you for your support when it was needed most—support that allowed us to operate without the furloughs and program cuts many colleges and universities had to make.

Reports from our investment managers indicate that the College's endowment now exceeds \$250 million, up from \$146 million just five years ago. This remarkable growth in the endowment was the result of an unprecedented level of financial support from alumni and friends of the College, outstanding stewardship by the Investment Subcommittee of our Board of Trustees, and a favorable market environment.

Despite COVID's limitations, our admission team hosted many grateful families on campus and continued recruiting young men from across the country and from all backgrounds. Efforts to recruit resilient students who are likely to persist to graduation resulted in retaining 90 percent of last year's freshmen, the highest level of retention that we know of in the College's history and a significant improvement from the 80 percent retention rate we have seen over the last several decades. This level of retention—especially for men—is consistent with that of the very best liberal arts colleges. Better retention not only boosts enrollment, but also demonstrates that our students are generally thriving, happy, and engaged. And, keeping our students here for all four years is an essential first step in fulfilling our mission of forming good men and good citizens.



We are continuing our efforts to foster an environment in which all students are not only welcome and able to thrive, but are also encouraged to take full advantage of the College's educational opportunities. To prepare and equip them to be good citizens, we want our students' residential experience to model the best aspects of life in a representative democracy. Essential to this work is

an ongoing commitment to help our students build a culture in which students live into and up to the College's mission and longstanding codes of honor and conduct—a culture that holds every student responsible not only for his own actions but also for bringing out the best in his brothers. Dr. Richard Pantele '13, our new dean of students who was hired through a competitive national search this past summer, brings a powerful vision for student life and our campus culture, and we can all look forward to his leadership in the years ahead.

The full roll-out of Compass, our experiential learning emphasis, was somewhat limited by COVID, but we still saw the development of new courses, and many of our students were able to participate in in-person or virtual internships and other off-campus learning opportunities. We hosted a variety of programs via Zoom, and we discovered creative ways to offer theatrical productions and choral concerts. Our research program resumed this past summer, giving more than 30 students the opportunity to work closely with faculty members on independent projects. Relatively new majors in Biochemistry and Engineering Physics are proving popular and are helping us recruit talented young men. We look forward to offering a comprehensive environmental science program thanks to a new endowed professorship established by a generous benefactor.

The Wilson Center for Leadership in the Public Interest welcomed another outstanding class of Leadership Fellows, and we will graduate the first group of students to complete all four years of this program this coming spring. The Flemming Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, in partnership with Longwood University and the Town of Farmville, is developing an entrepreneurship incubator for students who are actively building companies or non-profits. Our High Adventure outdoor education program was able to thrive, and we look forward to expanding our Beyond the Hill service and adventure program and our Before the Hill outdoor opportunities for incoming freshmen. While our fall and winter sports seasons were postponed, all of our coaches kept their athletes in shape and engaged, and all of our teams participated in competition in altered but much anticipated seasons in the spring.



We continue to improve the College's facilities, opening the new Grove apartments behind Lake Chalgrove to much acclaim last fall and making many other improvements to enhance the quality of our student residences. Construction of the Pauley Science Center is progressing rapidly, and we look forward to having this important new facility ready for the start of the 2022-23 academic year.

The College is again among the top 100 national liberal arts colleges as ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*. Given the growth of our endowment, we should expect to move further up in this ranking if we can sustain and translate better retention into a significantly higher graduation rate. Persistence to graduation is the single most important variable in the *U.S. News* ranking, and many other variables are linked to endowment value.

Looking Ahead

As we move boldly into this new academic year, we continue to rely on the goodwill of every member of our College community to advance our mission while the challenges of the pandemic continue. We are offering our students as typical an academic year as possible and are pleased to be resuming regional alumni gatherings and welcoming alumni and parents back to campus to experience and enjoy the camaraderie of the Hampden-Sydney brotherhood. Special weekends this fall include Family Weekend this coming weekend (October 1 and 2) and Homecoming Weekend (October 22 and 23).

As we move into the future, the College's Board of Trustees and leadership team see our College's distinctive mission as an advantage. We see little value in trying to be like other colleges and universities given the quality of the educational experience we offer young men. And, building upon the College's rich history and legacy, we are focused on seeing Hampden-Sydney assume its rightful place among the best colleges in the country. In pursuit of this ambitious future, we are working to raise Hampden-Sydney's profile and stature, to tell its story in more compelling ways, to expand its recruiting footprint, and to strengthen its admissions posture. We are improving the College's facilities, building stronger ties to our alumni and other constituencies, and further strengthening the College's financial foundation so we can offer an even richer educational program for our young men, much needed scholarship support, additional investment in our campus, and higher wages to attract and retain talented faculty and staff members. We are dedicated to seeing Hampden-Sydney well-positioned to thrive for another two and a half centuries.

Our College will never be everything to all people, but we aspire to be so well known that talented young men from across the country consider Hampden-Sydney in their college search. And, for the young men who are attracted by and committed to our College's mission, we will continue to prepare them well for lives of meaning and consequence. Every day offers us new opportunities to fulfill Hampden-Sydney's mission and to advance our work—work that is motivated and sustained by your devotion and support.

Sincerely,
Larry Stimpert