



# CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2014



# A YEAR OF MILESTONES

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2014

**I**t was in January last year that I first took office as your president. I made a commitment to spend this first year at Connecticut College with open eyes and ears, listening to the community and learning as much as I could. The experience of getting to know students, faculty, staff, trustees, parents, alumnae, and alumni over the past 12 months has been remarkable. Our conversations have taught me about the College's distinctive history and culture, and offered perspective on how we should address the challenges that are affecting both higher education and the world our graduates will encounter.

As we begin a new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on 2014. In this report I summarize what I have learned, review the accomplishments of the past 12 months, and look ahead to the opportunities that are before us.

### **CULTURAL VALUES**

To begin, let me say: I am very optimistic about the future of this College. In the fall we welcomed our 100th entering class, and on that occasion I spoke about three qualities that characterized Connecticut College at its founding: openness, progressivism, and grit. There was the openness not just of the landscape but also of the community, offering access to higher education for a previously excluded demographic in Connecticut. There was the progressive nature of the original curriculum, designed to lead a modern generation of women toward both academic and professional success. And there was the audacity and tenacity, the strong work ethic and even stronger will — in short, the grit — that helped the first students, faculty, and staff realize the College's ambitions even in the face of inevitable constraints and setbacks.

These values are with us to this day. Our campus is still characterized by openness and inclusivity. Our curriculum is still known for its progressive blend of intellectual and practical skills, of academic and professional development. Our community is still defined by a singular capacity for hard work and the kind of quiet determination that produces long-term change.

In my conversations on campus and off, I have learned that Connecticut College is a place where all things are possible, where people find support to carry out their best ideas, where initiative is rewarded and hard work valued. I have seen for myself that Connecticut College is a place that refuses to be complacent, where faculty, students, and staff are always striving to do better. That, I would argue, is the true meaning of "excellence," and it's one of the reasons why I am so optimistic about where we are today, and where we are going.

In the following pages, I want to offer some highlights from the past 12 months that will put these values into context.

### **THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

It was in many ways a year of milestones. In January, we opened the beautiful Zachs Hillel house as the first space wholly dedicated to the support of Jewish life on this campus. In June, the College's endowment neared \$280 million, the highest in our history and an 18 percent increase over 2013. In the summer, our 80-year-old Power House underwent a complete modernization, and we literally raised the roof on Shain Library as part of an ambitious renovation that will be complete in March — five months ahead of schedule. In the fall, the 503 students we welcomed as our 100th entering class, the Class of 2018, were admitted from a record 5,397 applicants. And the Princeton Review ranked Connecticut College among the top 20 colleges in North America for career preparation — the only liberal arts college in New England to achieve this recognition.

### **Faculty**

Our faculty continues to be recognized for teaching excellence. In November, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education bestowed the Connecticut Professor of the Year award on yet another member of our faculty. Connecticut College has been

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honored with this award a total of four times in the past 15 years — a record we share with only two of our NESCAC peers.

Equally impressive is the scholarship this College continues to produce. Last year alone, the 180 full-time members of our faculty completed 218 articles, 28 books, and 114 exhibitions and performances. They acquired over \$3 million in grants and fellowships from the NIH, NSF, Fulbright, Mellon, and other public and private foundations to pursue their research. They presented hundreds of papers at national and international conferences.

### **Students**

That our students often appear with faculty as co-presenters or co-authors in scholarly and creative projects signals their importance to the research enterprise. But they have also stood out in their own right. In the past year, Connecticut College students took home five Fulbright fellowships, one Fulbright-Hays award, and two Davis Projects for Peace. In other competitive venues, the Camels, too, had wonderful spring and fall seasons. Individual athletes walked away with two NCAA titles — one in swimming, the other in track and field. The women's water polo team won their second consecutive league championship in April. And in November, women's soccer brought home the very first NESCAC championship in the College's history, beating top-ranked Williams in overtime and picking up awards for NESCAC player of the year, rookie of the year, and coach of the year. To top it off, 52 Connecticut College students were selected for the NESCAC All-Academic team in the fall.

### **Staff**

Our exceptional staff is responsible for enabling this success, and for empowering faculty and students to strive ever higher. To recognize their commitment, we established in 2014 the Presidential Staff Recognition Program. Four outstanding staff members were honored at a special ceremony in May.

The College's senior leadership has undergone a period of renewal as well. Ann Goodwin became the new vice president for advancement in July. In September, Pamela Dumas Serfes was named vice president for communications and Abby Van Slyck was appointed dean of the faculty. In November,

Sean Martin became the new director of financial aid. And in December, Andrew Strickler was selected to become the next dean of admission and financial aid, succeeding Martha Merrill '84, who will take up a new position at the College in July. Also in December, Marc Zimmer was appointed interim dean of the college, after the departure of Carolyn Denard. We will begin searches for a new dean of the college, as well as a new chief diversity officer, in the coming weeks.

### **Integrative education**

Perhaps the most ambitious work of the past year, however, has been the complete rebuilding of our liberal arts curriculum — from the ground up — a project we call reVision. The vision is to create a special learning experience for every student, integrating work in and out of the classroom over four years. A vibrant series of meetings in the spring allowed faculty, students, and staff to share ideas and map out the critical terrain. In the fall, the faculty approved the new four-year framework. By the end of the coming semester, the remaining elements of the design will be largely worked out. This includes an innovative approach to advising that will help our students succeed not only in college but also in their lives after college.

In concert with this curricular renewal, we have also been rethinking the professional training we offer our students. Connecticut College's innovative career program has received significant acclaim in the past year, including a laudatory op-ed in *The New York Times* in September. But in these challenging times we know we must do much more. And so a team of committed students, faculty, and staff has been at work over the past months discussing how we can take our already excellent career program to the next level.

These are important efforts. At a moment when the national conversation about higher education has raised questions about the liberal arts, our campus is designing new programs that redefine their value for our time. Taken together, a new curriculum and a new professional education program will fulfill the promise of a truly integrative education — where critical problem-solving across the disciplines, practical work in the world, and a deepened commitment to equity and inclusion will combine to produce a new generation of thinkers, doers, and leaders, prepared for the challenges of an ever more complex and dynamic future.

## THE WAY FORWARD

As we look ahead to 2015, the College, too, must prepare for a complex future. It is no secret that Connecticut College, along with many institutions of higher education, will face continuing challenges in the coming decade. The number of high school graduates in many areas of the country is declining. There is increasing public pressure to deliver a higher quality education at lower cost. Technological innovation is placing new demands on our methods of instruction and delivery. New forms of oversight at the state and federal levels are changing how we manage student conduct and measure success. And one of our most precious assets — our faculty — is changing as well. Over the next 10 years, an estimated 30 percent of the Connecticut College faculty will have reached retirement, which means that we will face the added challenge of having to renew our faculty ranks with colleagues of the same high quality.

Addressing these challenges will require fresh ideas and fresh strategies. In the spring, we will launch a strategic planning process to chart the best way forward. In anticipation of this launch, I want to share three priorities for the future that have emerged through my discussions with the community and especially through the important work we have been doing over the past 12 months:

1. **Sustaining the excellence of teaching, research, and creative work at Connecticut College.** The work we are doing on the reVision curriculum will transform the educational experience of every student. In the coming decade, we need to expand this vision of integrative education toward new audiences and new degree offerings. This means leveraging our existing strengths in a number of fields, and especially in environmental studies, international studies, public policy, and the arts.
2. **Strengthening the outcomes and impact of a Connecticut College education.** Our strong career preparation programs have helped us fulfill our mission of educating students to put the “liberal arts into action.” In the next few years we need to build on this foundation to

become the leading liberal arts career program in the country. We need to heighten the impact of our mission by exploring the creative use of technology. And we need to forge new and mutually beneficial relationships with the city and the surrounding region.

3. **Affirming our institutional commitment to access, equity, and inclusion.** An elite college education is inherently expensive. In the next decade we will need to expand our financial resources in order to make a Connecticut College education available to an even broader range of talented students. We will also need to rethink our educational programs not only to foster a truly inclusive community capable of building understanding across difference, but also to develop future leaders with the ability to effect positive change in an ever more complex world.

In short, we must enlarge our capacity, as an institution, to **think and do and lead**. This is what will make our already great college even greater. I will discuss strategic planning with the Board of Trustees at the end of February. You can expect to hear more about the process in early March.

We stand before so much opportunity. The demand for a college degree has never been greater — nor has there ever been a time when the world needed our creative and idealistic graduates more. We are educating a new generation of students increasingly committed to a just, equitable, and sustainable world, on a campus that has long held these values dear. The striking renovation of Shain Library offers a useful symbol for the promise of the next decade: to build on the strong foundation of the past, to lift our sights even higher, and to look into the future for new solutions, in order to nurture a new generation of students with the knowledge, creativity, and skill to lead. I look forward to working with you on this most worthy task.

▶ SEE TIMELINE NEXT PAGE

# YEAR IN REVIEW

TIMELINE

## JAN 2014

Zachs Hillel House opens  
 "Now Hiring" career prep program launches

College awarded \$700,000 Mellon grant for global education across the curriculum

Prof. Jen Manion named "Top 25 Significant Queer Women"

College welcomes rescued scholar from Syria, Ahmad Alachkar, made possible by a gift from the Johnson Family Foundation, Inc.



## FEB 2014

Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology hosts symposium

Green Dot Week builds awareness of sexual assault prevention

Psychology department wins American Psychological Association's Culture of Service award

College announces Koru partnership to expand career opportunities for students

Curriculum reVision week launches

College received a \$1 million commitment for endowed financial aid to support Posse students



## MAR 2014

College hosts inaugural summit to promote diversity at liberal arts colleges

Swimmer Sam Gill '14 wins NCAA title

President joins Instagram

Princeton Review, Kiplinger name CC a "Best Value"

Prof. Mohamed Diagne selected by Fulbright Scholar Program to teach and conduct research in Senegal



## APR 2014

Women's Water Polo wins national conference

Katherine Bergeron installed as 11th President of Connecticut College

Appointment of Ann Goodwin, College Advancement VP

College hosts CT legislative breakfast

Students produce third annual TEDx event

Documentary filmmaker and Oscar Winner Sean Fine '96 "in residence," made possible by a gift from the Fran and Ray Stark Foundation

College hosts roundtable on sexual assault prevention with U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal



## MAY 2014

Three recent graduates win  
NSF Fellowships

All-American runner Mike LeDuc '14  
wins third NCAA Title

President presents first-ever Staff  
Recognition Awards

Five seniors win Fulbrights

Prof. James Downs named  
"Distinguished Lecturer" by the  
Organization of American Historians

96th Commencement



## JUN 2014

College welcomes alumni for reunion

Shain Library renovation  
project begins

College awarded \$175,000 from the  
George I. Alden Trust to support  
library technology

Prof. Bruce Branchini awarded  
\$225,000 from the Air Force Office of  
Scientific Research for his research on  
novel bioluminescent systems

Darcie Folsom testifies in Washington,  
D.C. on preventing sexual violence

College names three post docs to join  
CC faculty as part of diversity initiative

Endowment reaches all time high of  
\$280 million

College received a \$1.2 million  
commitment for endowed financial aid  
from a family foundation

## JUL 2014

Noel Garrett named Dean of  
Academic Support

Google maps campus

Prof. Bruce Branchini awarded  
\$599,386 from NSF for his  
bioluminescence research

Susan Schein, first Hillel director,  
named

Prof. Marc Zimmer named  
Dean of Studies

## AUG 2014

Princeton Review names College  
"Top 20 Career Services"

Campus Pride names CC  
"Friendliest LGBTQ School"

Welcome Class of 2018

President hosts 100th Convocation

College named to "Best Colleges  
for food in America"

reVision and housing pilots launch

Prof. Timo Ovaska awarded  
\$268,000 from National Institutes  
of Health

## SEP 2014

College lauded in The New York Times for career program

Appointment of Abby Van Slyck, Dean of Faculty

Appointment of Pamela Dumas Serfes, VP for Communications

College partners with Opportunity Network to provide access to high-achieving, underrepresented New York City public school students

College honored for student mental health services



## OCT 2014

Renovated MOBROC Barn opens

College hosts Fall Weekend

Power Plant reopens

Mo Smolskis '15 wins Women in Defense scholarship



## NOV 2014

Connecticut Magazine names College "Great Place to Work"

Women's Soccer wins NESCAC

Faculty approve continued development of new curriculum, including enhancements to first-year seminar and advising programs

College awarded \$300,000 grant from Sherman Fairchild Foundation to establish Science Leaders II program for community college students

Hisae Kobayashi named Connecticut Professor of the Year



College awarded \$200,000 anonymous grant to support summer research for Science Leaders

College awarded \$100,000 grant from Davis United World College Fund for Davis Scholars

SJS Charitable Trust awards College \$100,000 grant to support Posse students



## DEC 2014

President announces Shain Library will open five months early

Astrid Kempainen '15 named All-American soccer player

Prof. Martha Grossel awarded \$412,470 NIH grant for cancer research

Prof. Anne Bernhard awarded \$301,956 grant from British Petroleum Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative for research on Macondo Oil Spill

Appointment of Andrew Strickler, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid

Sunil Bhatia receives International Humanitarian Award from American Psychological Association





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