

*Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts
January 1998*

Report of the 1997
Self-Study
Steering Committee





Envisioning Our Future:
The Report of The 1997 Self-Study Steering Committee
was presented to the Smith College community
in January 1998.

For More Information

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Envisioning our Future: The Report of
The 1997 Self-Study Steering Committee, contact:

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Alumnae and Friends of the College,

I am pleased to provide you with the final Report of the Steering Committee of Smith College's 1997 institutional self-study. Completed in conjunction with the decennial reaccreditation of the College, it attempts to answer a question that I put to the campus when I arrived: "What should Smith aim to be in the coming decades?" Inevitably, there were hundreds of different responses to that question. The report represents directions that the Steering Committee found most promising with respect to initiatives that would, taken together, raise the College to a new level of academic excellence.

It is important to note that, for the most part, the initiatives and directions included in this report remain subject to the approval of various campus standing committees, the faculty, and, of course, the Board of Trustees. However, although this report does not represent an approved blueprint for Smith's future, it is representative of many of the stated needs and interests of the campus. To be sure, not every College priority is represented in this document. Moderation in tuition growth, improved scholarship programs, renovation of various campus facilities, student recruitment, campus climate issues, and so many other ongoing concerns not addressed here remain at the forefront of our planning. The set of programs identified in the report is thought by the Steering Committee to offer one means to add substantial value to the education we offer our students.

Over the next several months, this report will be discussed with faculty, staff, student and alumnae groups around the country. We expect also that some specific proposals will be considered by standing committees over the coming months. By the end of the current academic year, we expect to develop a more extensive and inclusive list of priorities for the coming years.

I encourage you to read this report and share with us your comments and questions. We can be reached by conventional mail (Smith 2020, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063) or e-mail (2020@smith.edu).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

RUTH J. SIMMONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

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The 2020 Study began in fall 1996 as an effort to examine the quality of education offered at Smith College. This process was a prologue to answering long-standing questions about which of many desirable projects and directions the College should undertake in the coming decades. Like most healthy colleges of the first rank, Smith has a faculty of acknowledged strength, a student body and alumnae of great accomplishment, and the varied human, financial and physical resources to support the best liberal arts education. Nevertheless, prudent choices must be made if we are to preserve the strength of the College. In making choices, we need to be cognizant of all that we now do and how well we do it; we also need to understand fully those areas which should be developed in the future in order to sustain our unparalleled service as the largest women's college in the United States.

We conducted our study in the context of a comprehensive review for decennial reaffirmation of our accreditation. Though a helpful context, the reaccreditation process might not have gone as far as we wished. As a consequence, we sought a deeper analysis, not so much in relation to whether we had adequately fulfilled our mission, but with regard to whether we were in the right position to consider a number of bold moves to reinvigorate and strengthen our programs. We were seeking, too, a scale of campus community involvement that would permit the broadest base of inquiry and analysis, communication and debate. We saw this process as an important means of orienting the campus toward its future, helping reveal to us the ways in which we might seize new educational opportunities and dedicate ourselves to shaping a new liberal arts education for the twenty-first century. While using the traditional teams mandated by the accreditation process to carry out much of the self-study, we created a Staff Team charged with examining the future needs of the work environment, an all-Student Team brought together to reexamine student life issues and proposals, an Outcomes and Assessment Team to consider new institutional assessment mechanisms, and a Steering Committee to synthesize all ideas which came forward. The Steering Committee was charged with reviewing findings and ideas and developing a cohesive set of goals for the next decade or more.

The Steering Committee brought together faculty from the major academic divisions of the College: from the sciences, Malgorzata Pfabe, Professor of Physics, and Joseph O'Rourke, Professor of Computer Science; from the social sciences and history, Lester Little, Professor of History, and Don Baumer, Professor of Government; from the arts and humanities, Ann Jones, Professor of Comparative Literature. The Chair of the Accreditation Self-Study, Howard Nenner, Professor of History, and two members of Faculty Council, Martha Ackelsberg, Professor of Government, and Sue Freeman, Professor of Education and Child Study, also served on the Committee. Two students, Amanda Gilman, President of the Student Government Association, and Marilyn Metzler, Ada Comstock Scholars Co-President, were student representatives to the Committee, and Marilyn Woodman, Chair of Staff Council, represented the staff. A number of administrators also served on the Committee: the Deans of the Faculty, John Connolly and Susan Bourque; Dean of the College, Maureen Mahoney; and Chief Financial Officer, Ruth Constantine. David Greene, Assistant to the President, served as staff to the Commit-

tee, and Chris Forgey, Administrative Assistant in the Self-Study Office, was recorder. President Ruth Simmons chaired the group.

Aware that a recent broad-based budget realignment had led to the imposition of severe limitations on faculty, staff, and curricular growth and a perception among faculty and staff that no new programs could be developed, the Steering Committee sought first to communicate to the campus the need for continued vitality in the development of programs. Believing that institutional vitality could not exist without an ongoing commitment to review and renewal, the Committee pointed out that one aspect of that renewal is the consideration both of how we can improve what we do and how we can address new areas of need. To communicate the importance of new ideas, we encouraged the faculty, students and staff to submit statements and proposals concerning Smith's future. We invited the campus to answer the question "What should Smith be in the year 2020?"

Proposals were directed initially to the self-study teams, and those teams, after considering and prioritizing the proposals, forwarded them to the Steering Committee. Later in the process, many proposals were sent directly to the Steering Committee without prior review by a self-study team. Acknowledging that it remains the responsibility of standing committees and/or the faculty as a whole to recommend curricular changes, budget allocations and major new directions for the College, the Steering Committee took its charge to be very narrow: to identify, from the myriad proposals submitted and its knowledge of previously identified opportunities, a coherent set of initiatives which, when taken together, would lead the College in an important, singular and positive direction for the future. After determining the directions it thought desirable, the Committee would present these ideas to the College Planning and Resources Committee (CP&R), which would review those initiatives in the context of overall institutional resources. The CP&R would then forward its input and recommendations to the Board of Trustees.¹

Throughout its deliberations, the Steering Committee has taken care to inform the campus of the progress of its work. Interim reports were made at faculty meetings on April 23 and May 7. The Committee also presented an interim report to the staff at a Community Forum on May 6. Updates to students were made through the Senate of the Student Government Association. The winter and spring 1997 meetings of the Board of Trustees included reports on the progress of the Steering Committee. In addition, all

proposals were kept on reserve at Neilson Library, and all members of the College community were encouraged to review the full set of proposals.

The meetings of the Steering Committee were numerous and, often, lengthy. Members took seriously their duty to the College, and they understood the amplitude and burden of their task. For well over a century, the College has been one of the leading educational institutions in the country. Having educated some of the most prominent and admired women in the nation, Smith remains in a position of enviable strength, despite the extraordinary social changes that have occurred over the past several decades.² The continuing prominence of the College is the consequence of careful stewardship, a strong commitment to academic excellence, an insistence on intellectual rigor, and a steadfast dedication to its mission. Given this continuing strength, the Committee saw as its first duty to protect that strength. The escalating speed of economic and political change, the manifestly more competitive environment for those seeking employment, and the rapidly changing modes of communication and methods of inquiry all suggest a need to be adaptable to these changing circumstances. However, mere adaptation is insufficient to maintain the College's position at the forefront of undergraduate education. The issue was, therefore, not merely how to survive in this changing environment but, rather, how to take maximum advantage of some of these changes so that the College could become stronger and achieve even greater prominence.

The question of where to take the College in the future was a matter of such consequence that the Committee spent many hours debating how it might best understand the needs of the College. That debate was facilitated by the fact that the Steering Committee formally represented no specific interests, areas, or constituencies. The Committee set criteria for the discussion and review of ideas on the basis of its narrow mandate — those ideas that might move the College to a new level of excellence. Principal among these criteria were the potential for lasting excellence, the potential to develop the skills our students will need in the next century, and the potential to meet global and national needs. Although it was by no means

1. The CP&R, of course, has Trustee representation.

2. One such change, the impact of co-education at Ivy League institutions, has necessarily led to a change in the opportunities for college-age women of high ability and focus.

its primary consideration, the Committee did weigh the general cost of programs in relation to their perceived benefit. Submitting each idea or direction to the same set of tests, the Committee was struck by the emergence of a number of strong leitmotifs from faculty, students, and staff proposals. Proposers from various fields and with different priorities had expressed deeply resonant views about future directions for the College.

In the course of many weeks of meeting, the Committee began to focus on these recurrent themes:

- expanded internship opportunities for students
- a renewed emphasis on the role of Smith in educating scientists
- the advantages of additional visiting scholar programs as a means of reinvigorating academic life
- greater and more effective use of technology in the service of teaching and research
- attention to faculty excellence and renewal
- improvement of athletic and co-curricular life
- emphasis on leadership development
- international dimensions in recruiting and in the curriculum
- improved residential and student life
- an emphasis on community and public service
- consideration of new and expanded graduate programs
- continued strong emphasis on diversity

Almost all of the proposals received related to these categories. From these desiderata, then, the Steering Committee directed its attention to a smaller subset that seemed to offer significant promise and the greatest potential for success.

The Steering Committee sees the future of the College as one of immense promise. With a physical setting that affords unique assets, a location in Western Massachusetts that is accessible and desirable, several nationally ranked programs, an outstanding financial position, exceptional library and technological resources, and membership in an excellent consortium, the College stands in an enviable position. The Committee could find no present or imminent danger that fundamentally threatens the future well-being of the College. As a consequence, the Committee was able to focus its attention on areas of promise and potential that could be built on the substantial strengths already in place.

The Committee found that several directions, taken together, could achieve this purpose. These are grouped below under three major headings: a curriculum for the twenty-first century, faculty excellence and breadth, and a residential community of scholars.

One of the great strengths of the College is its broad and demanding curriculum. As the nation's largest women's college, Smith has had the resources to offer courses of study in areas rarely available at competitor institutions. The depth of these offerings is augmented by the College's participation in the Five College Consortium, an arrangement whereby Smith students can take advantage of the varied curricular offerings of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst College, Mount Holyoke College, and Hampshire College. While the Steering Committee believes that the College should seek to maintain the breadth of its curriculum, we also think it is imperative that the curriculum have focus, that it build specific skills, that it connect the liberal arts to the world beyond the College, and that it remain flexible enough to integrate emerging disciplines and new ways of producing knowledge.

A. Women in Science and Technology

In keeping with our mission to provide "the finest liberal arts education for women" and to "produce graduates distinguished by their intellectual abilities . . . and their readiness to contribute to the betterment of the world," Smith College must provide a first-rate education for its students in the sciences. This means both training superb women scientists and ensuring that all our students are scientifically literate upon graduation. We are convinced that a renewed focus on the sciences at Smith will serve the needs of society in the coming decades and will continue to distinguish the College as an institution where women's minds and prospects for achievement know no boundaries.

Smith College has a strong science program that compares favorably with the sciences at similar colleges. Thus, we are well situated to make significant advancements in our science program, vaulting us to a position of greater excellence. We believe that this can best be achieved by:

- refocusing energies on emerging fields of importance;
- providing a strong general science program for non-majors that focuses on skill-building;
- providing improved instructional facilities and support services for teaching and research.

1. Emerging Fields of Science

A number of proposals submitted to the self-study showed interest in moving into newly emerging subfields of science, often of an interdisciplinary nature: cognitive science, biomolecular structure, neuroscience, biophysics, landscape studies, and engineering were among the proposed areas endorsed by individual faculty or by departments. We believe these interests of the faculty should be encouraged and facilitated, but largely within the confines of the total faculty staffing structure. The College should make it as easy as possible for departments to explore new areas, but movement into new areas requiring new resources should come through modest increases in combination with the refocusing of available resources.³

Two fields offer particular promise for enriching our science curriculum in new directions in the near term: environmental science and studies and engineering. A program focusing on the environment would foster interdisciplinary, collaborative study and research for students and faculty, and has the potential to reach a great number of students. Also, it is clear that in the twenty-first century the nations of the world will be increasingly interdependent, and we will have to work together to use natural resources wisely. A program in environmental science and studies will appeal to the scientist and non-scientist alike, and it builds upon the proposed general science initiative (below). It should, therefore, be nurtured, with additional staff if necessary.

Smith also has an important role to play in encouraging and supporting women who are interested in careers in engineering. We think we can be most effective by establishing 3-2 dual-degree programs, strengthening our ties with the engineering program at UMass, and identifying faculty to serve as mentors for potential engineering students. In order to determine an important role for Smith in helping to develop the strongest possible national pipeline in engineering, we recommend that an outside team of engineering deans, knowledgeable about women in engineering, be invited to advise the College on the development of engineering at Smith. Such a team would be commissioned in fall of 1997 and report its recommendations by March, 1998.

3. In the section of this report entitled, "Balancing Continuing and Emerging Needs" (page 13), the Steering Committee recommends the establishment of a committee that would determine curricular priorities. Such a committee would be the appropriate body to consider the allocation of resources across the disciplines.

2. General Science Education

As the nation moves into an increasingly technological era, it becomes ever more important for the “non-science,” college-educated public to achieve a degree of science literacy that will allow it to participate in debates about scientific issues that affect society, to experience the richness and excitement of understanding the natural world, and to use scientific processes and quantitative thinking in decision-making. Because it has been traditional for women to be steered away from science, it is particularly incumbent on an institution devoted to the education of women to lead other colleges in ensuring that all of its graduates are prepared to enter the twenty-first century as scientifically literate citizens. We believe that the College will make great strides in preparing scientifically literate citizens if it focuses its resources on four areas: quantitative skills and computer literacy; science literacy courses; a scientific visualization laboratory; and a program to enhance technological competency. We also believe that the history of science program presents an immediate opportunity for strengthening interdisciplinary ties, because it offers new avenues of science exploration for non-science majors.

a. Quantitative Skills and Computer Literacy

Within the first two years at Smith, every student should be expected to achieve quantitative and computer literacy. A subcommittee of CAP should be constituted to decide which courses would meet this expectation. We assume that satisfactory completion of some combination of the following could be a starting point:

- ▶ a course that carries the quantitative reasoning designation in the *Catalogue*
- ▶ the basic course in computer literacy
- ▶ one or more 2-credit interterm courses on computing
- ▶ successful completion of a self-paced computer-based course on basic mathematical reasoning and techniques.

We would expect students to complete these courses early in their college years so that they can gain the mastery necessary to qualify for other courses where basic mathematical interpretation or computer literacy are presupposed.

b. Science Literacy

Faculty or department incentives should be offered to develop a new genre of “science-literacy” courses that transcend the boundaries of any specific scientific discipline, and include cross-disciplinary content integrated with mathematical concepts. These courses should be distinct from discipline-based introductory science courses and provide students with challenging intellectual questions that require honing their quantitative, oral, and written reasoning abilities. Some should maintain a focus on scientific themes and be taught by science faculty; others should reach beyond the explicit confines of scientific topics and focus on social and political problems that require scientific reasoning as only one component of their solution. These classes might best be team-taught by faculty in two divisions. First-year seminars may provide a vehicle for some such courses.

c. Scientific Visualization Technology

Several proposals to the self-study called for graphical information systems that will assist faculty and students in visualizing complex problems and simulations in geology, computer science, and environmental science. Smith already is on the leading edge of this important tool for understanding science, which well suits its scientific expertise and interest in pedagogy. Creation of an interdisciplinary scientific visualization laboratory, coupled with development of science-literacy courses employing visualization, could make Smith a national leader in general science education. The impact could extend beyond college students, to high school girls attending the Smith Summer Science Program (furthering our goal of bringing girls into the science pipeline) and to alumnae learning the latest advances in science through distance learning. Therefore, we recommend the development of an interdisciplinary scientific visualization laboratory as part of an overall renovation of McConnell Hall.

d. Technological Competence

Sophia Smith’s will and the mission statement of the College commit us to “provide studies as coming times may develop or demand for the education of women.” In keeping with this goal, and drawing upon ideas from several proposals, Smith should develop a collection of curricular

resources to enable our students to leave Smith as masters of the current technology, with the understanding necessary to master the technology of the future, and the knowledge and confidence to lead others in developing, managing, and employing that technology. We envision course offerings and resources that could ensure the technological competency of our students. These might include:

- ▶ *Multi-media courses* beyond those currently offered, and equipment and organization to support them.
- ▶ *Computer courses* similar to the proposed 2-credit Computer Science courses, offered both during interterm and in the regular semesters.
- ▶ *Courses in educational technology*, most of which we envision to be undergraduate courses, although some might be at the graduate level.
- ▶ An *engineering design course* that could serve those students who want to delve deeper into the technology.
- ▶ The development of our capabilities in *distance learning*, possibly including courses designed for entering students, undergraduates, and alumnae.

3. Science Facilities

The renovation of McConnell auditorium and classrooms is central to all efforts to maintain and enhance the teaching of science at Smith. Presently, the science classrooms are not adequately equipped, so science faculty are scheduling their courses in Seelye Hall, thereby displacing humanities and social science classes. Upgrading McConnell teaching spaces will allow the faculty to use multi-media and computer technologies that are increasingly routine features of their teaching. We therefore endorse the proposed renovation of McConnell auditorium and other science center classrooms.

4. Technical Support

Faculty have pointed out that much of their time is being directed in inefficient ways. For example, some faculty, especially in the sciences, find that they are committing substantial time to maintaining equipment that is used in teaching and research. We recommend that the College provide more adequate technical support to alleviate faculty time spent on equipment repairs and other duties that detract from teaching and research.

B. A World College

The closing decades of the twentieth century have demonstrated the power of technology and transportation to “shrink the globe,” paving the way for new immigration and emigration patterns that greatly increase the opportunities for interacting regularly with persons who speak languages and who are embedded in cultural traditions different from our own; advancing new opportunities for scholarship and curricular development; and creating an international economy that demands the participation of any growth-oriented industry. We believe that Smith graduates will thrive personally in an increasingly multicultural world and will be well prepared to succeed in a global economy if we provide new opportunities for the study of foreign languages and cultures, for interaction with international scholars and American-born faculty who have had extensive international experiences study and work abroad, for on-campus interaction with peers and faculty from countries other than the U.S., and for study and work abroad.

1. The Study of Foreign Languages and Literatures

For those who wish to participate in international realities and to compete in a global economy, it is becoming imperative to have serious training in foreign languages and an understanding of many cultures. The study of foreign languages also allows one to gain control of language as a tool that can be manipulated in a rich variety of ways, enabling one to engage deeply with the differences between American-language society and other cultures. These benefits accrue to those students who take advantage of the exceptional offerings provided by the foreign language and literature departments, historically very strong departments at Smith that deserve our continued commitment.

We recommend that the Deans of the Faculty work with the various language and literatures departments to consider new ways that we might use the interterm and the summer for intensive language training. We further recommend appropriate support of term-time efforts to maintain strong language departments at Smith.

2. International Scholarship and Curricula

Since at least the 1930s, when the College welcomed émigré scholars, the campus community has been strengthened by the presence of international scholars and by the experiences of American-born faculty who have studied, traveled, and conducted research abroad. We should seek new opportunities for faculty to engage in international scholarship and develop the international content of relevant courses. Many Smith faculty have had considerable success in competing for international fellowships. The Deans of the Faculty should provide assistance to faculty seeking international scholarship opportunities, and adequate support systems should be implemented to aid faculty in applying for international grants and fellowships. Finally, we believe that the intellectual life of the College would be enriched by initiating a visiting international scholars program. The Liberal Arts Institute (discussed below) would be an ideal vehicle through which to facilitate visits by international scholars.

3. International Students

The College has been very successful in attracting talented students from foreign countries. International students, comprising approximately seven percent of the current student body, bring to Smith cultural traditions from many parts of the world and provide an intellectual and social richness that adds significantly to the academic climate. Recent efforts to recruit outstanding international students have been aided greatly by the lure of Jean Picker International Fellowships, a generous scholarship program intended to allow us to compete for the very best students from individual countries. We recommend that the College increase substantially the number of international students by gradually increasing the size of the international student body until it is approximately double its current size. This is an expensive proposition, insofar as international students are not eligible for federal financial aid programs. Therefore, we recommend that scholarship funds for international students be sought in upcoming fundraising efforts. We also advise ACRA to recommend additional funding to the Office of Admission for increased international recruitment travel.

Even in our current situation, with a relatively small international student population, there is room for improvement in the support services we offer students who are from foreign countries and domestic students who

study abroad. As the number of international students increases, the College will need to pay attention to the need for increased academic support for international students. We believe that the development of an office for international programs has the potential to greatly improve the environment for international students and for domestic students studying abroad. There should be a clear link between the International Students Office and the Office of International Study, and this link would be most secure if both offices were to be consolidated in one office. This office would provide a physical space for resources and staffing and would signify the commitment of the College to international students and study. We expect that there would need to be modest staffing augmentation if we are to provide richer programming and advising both for international students coming to Smith and for domestic students studying abroad. Since these services would directly support the international study of our students, they could appropriately be funded through the home-school tuition revenues (see “Study Abroad Opportunities,” below).

4. Study Abroad Opportunities

Smith College has a long tradition of providing opportunities for students to study abroad. In the decade following World War I, President Neilson was among the first to institute junior-year abroad programs in response to a national trend toward isolationism. Currently, about twenty-seven percent of all Smith students study abroad by the time they graduate; of these, nearly all are away during their junior year. In contrast to similar institutions, the vast majority of Smith students who study abroad do so for a full year. Those students who study abroad gain important new perspectives on themselves, their language, and their society. In addition, students with international experiences are more competitive for graduate fellowships and for obtaining employment upon graduation.

The Dean of the College, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Committee on Study Abroad should investigate new opportunities for students to study abroad. This might include summer programs and one-semester programs, especially for science students who otherwise might be excluded from study-abroad opportunities. It might also include an expansion of study-travel courses, including new courses that could be designed for interterm. We recommend that CFCF provide curriculum development support for new study-travel courses.

The Steering Committee is also persuaded that the Col-

lege needs to address the quality and accessibility of international study programs. We support the recommendation of the Committee on Study Abroad that the College move to a “home-school tuition” policy that would make Smith grants as well as federal student aid available to all aid-eligible students who wish to study abroad. This would eliminate our current practice of providing aid only to students who study in non-English speaking countries. We also believe that the Dean of the College should offer systematic orientation and re-entry programming to students going on Independent Study Abroad, in the same way that such programming is offered to students who participate in Smith’s own JYA and consortial programs. Finally, we recommend that a more systematic oversight process for Independent Study Abroad curricula be established, that the list of approved programs be pared when appropriate, and that funding be allocated for faculty visits to independent programs for the purpose of evaluating curricula.

5. International Internship Program

We believe that we must improve the preparation of students to function effectively and productively in a global society. One proven way to facilitate this is to provide international work experiences that are tied closely to an academic program. At present, we have very successful internship programs in Geneva, Hamburg, and Paris. These programs should be expanded to include more areas of the world and to accommodate a greater number of students. Further, we should augment our current summer offerings and develop internship opportunities that take advantage of interterm, that combine study abroad opportunities with work experiences, and that provide for research assistantships for students working with faculty who are on exchange programs abroad, or who are conducting research abroad.

C. Practical Learning in the Liberal Arts Setting

1. An Internship for Every Student

We are persuaded that the educational experiences of Smith students are greatly enhanced when theoretical learning is tied to practical experience. Experiences that contextualize the classroom experience deepen students’ understanding and increase their motivation for learning.

Further, such experiences can allow students to explore academic disciplines in depth, providing the impetus for higher graduate school and career aspirations.

These internship experiences can be thought of as apprenticeships—to a faculty member, administrator, or organization (whether on or off the campus)—that make a significant contribution to the student’s education. Indeed, as we read through the self-study proposals, we were struck by the number of internships proposed by faculty and the diversity of experiences envisioned for various internships. The goals for internships proposed in the self-study included: a) working closely with a faculty member; b) working on a scholarly research project (in all three divisions); c) gaining broader exposure to opportunities beyond Smith and beyond the classroom; d) preparing students for the next stage in a chosen career; e) providing firsthand access for students to the institutions, problems, and conditions that they are studying; f) providing students with opportunities for “service learning” and community service. We expect that some of these internships will be credit-bearing and others will not. All, however, will be linked closely to the student’s academic program.

We recommend that every Smith student be afforded at least one funded internship. The internship would normally be available to the student any time after the end of her sophomore year. This increases the chances of the internship being used in an educationally sound way, and it would improve retention by providing the attraction of an enriched experience during the upper-class years at the College. We recommend that future fundraising efforts aim to establish an endowment for this internship program.

We also recommend that the responsibility remain with the student to define what sort of internship might interest her, to research various possibilities, and to make the necessary contacts. Considerable support services would need to be available, of course, but the original impetus would normally come from the student. This format would attenuate the need for a complex administrative structure for overseeing this program. Having said that, we still believe that additional resources must be committed to the Career Development Office for staffing and technology upgrades to accommodate the dramatically increased number of student interns.

This approach would address most or all of the desires represented in proposals submitted to the Steering Committee. It could enhance our international efforts and might make the Smith JYA programs more attractive, since it would offer the possibility to students to enrich their

junior year experience by, for example, apprenticing, perhaps during the summer before their senior year, for newspapers, publishing houses, international organizations, etc., in the country where they spend the junior year. It would also make it possible for more students to take part in summer science at Smith. Finally, it would help our students participate in activism/leadership/social service activities, many of which are unable to offer students any compensation.

D. Connections Across the Disciplines

Some of the most provocative and engaging research and teaching today is being conducted across the traditional boundaries of academic disciplines. Questions that have long demanded our attention are being investigated with renewed vigor as new methodologies are being developed that incorporate tools from several research traditions. Many are even suggesting that the academy's traditional way of categorizing scholarship and of organizing academic departments is outdated and unnecessarily limiting. At Smith, we have committed considerable resources to interdisciplinary programs, yet we remain a great distance from meeting the identified demand for faculty and support positions in such programs. We believe that two initiatives will help to address this problem. First, we recommend the development of an interdisciplinary institute that would bring leading scholars to Smith on a visiting basis. Second, we recommend that a curriculum priority committee advise the Dean of the Faculty as to which interdisciplinary programs deserve the College's most immediate support and which courses are essential to be covered in their curricula. We also support the development of a series of first-year seminars to introduce beginning college students to the tools of the disciplines and the power of investigatory learning. Finally, we recommend a plan be enacted to ensure that students obtain a broad liberal arts education, through coursework across the disciplines. These recommendations are explained in further detail below.

1. The Louise B. and Edmund J. Kahn Liberal Arts Institute

Louise Kahn was a devoted alumna who embraced the strong liberal arts tradition of the College. In the largest bequest to date in the College's history, she left a substantial endowment to protect the excellence of the

faculty and its liberal arts tradition. We believe that an interdisciplinary institute in her and her husband's names would help to foster the development of new curricular fields, seminars and topics for undergraduate and faculty research, and new pedagogy. The Louise B. and Edmund J. Kahn Liberal Arts Institute would bring together visiting scholars, public figures, critics, writers, performers, and scientists in interdisciplinary fields. The presence of these individuals would expose advanced students to cutting-edge work in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, would reinvigorate the work of faculty, and bring the lively exploration of problems and issues to the attention of the entire campus. Envisioned as an institute, this yearly collection of individuals would include visiting senior scholars, Smith faculty, and student interns with the aptitude to benefit from this kind of involvement.

The interaction of these scholars and students could be further enriched by the establishment of a physical site for the institute that would provide faculty and student work space, seminar rooms, and staff support. All departments and programs would be able to recommend visitors for the Institute and participate in its activities. Annual topics would be determined by an Institute steering committee and its director.

The Institute would bring new ideas and new methodologies to the faculty and students in a setting of intensive collaboration. It would also ensure that Smith students would be exposed to a great variety of leaders and scholars of note.

2. The Sophia Smith Collection

The Committee is also convinced that the Sophia Smith Collection has unrealized potential as a center for scholarship. Historically, Smith women have been at the forefront of movements to improve the status of women and, through that improvement, to make the world a better place. The Sophia Smith Collection stands as a monument to the activities of women (predominantly in the U.S., but also in other countries) in these areas over the past two centuries. We must build an endowment to support and highlight the holdings of the Sophia Smith Collection and its place in the history of the continuing struggle for women's equality. Smith would benefit from the increased visibility of the Collection and the bringing of scholars of the history of women and related fields to the Smith campus. Drawing further on that history and tradition, we can support programs and activities in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences that

allow our students to connect scholarship and activism, and specifically, to link the resources of the Collection to contemporary projects in such a way as to continue the work that Sophia Smith began.

3. First-Year Seminars

There is a growing body of research literature that demonstrates that first-year seminars are an effective way to introduce students to the tools of scholarship and to demonstrate to students the power of answering questions systematically and expressing oneself cogently. Interestingly, the research also suggests that first-year seminars can be an effective retention device. We recommend that the College pilot a series of first-year seminars, some that are interdisciplinary and others that take place within the disciplines. Faculty members teaching in any of these limited enrollment courses for first-year students would be given special funds to develop the courses and the requisite opportunities to learn about the proven best ways to design and conduct such courses. We recommend that the Committee on Academic Policy move forward to develop ten to fifteen first-year seminars.

4. Distribution Across the Curriculum

New distribution requirements were instituted (beginning with the Class of 1998) for students interested in pursuing Latin Honors. This action reflected a consensus in the faculty to signal clearly to our students the importance of distributing their courses across the curriculum. That decision gives us the opportunity to assess quantitatively, by the year 2000, the adequacy of our policy by examining the results of the actual distribution patterns of a number of graduating classes. If this voluntary system has not achieved the desired level of distribution across the curriculum, then we might move to a stronger “expectation” of this minimum distribution for all students, in which students who did not wish to fulfill the distribution would have to convince the Dean of the College that they ought not be required to do so (of course, without Latin Honors eligibility).

E. Skills for the Next Century

We expect that many of the skills that are most useful today will continue to be in high demand in the future. These include the ability to communicate persuasively, both verbally and in writing. We believe that the “writing across the curriculum” initiative approved by the faculty is an excellent model that can be modified to support a “speaking across the curriculum” program. While we recognize that the development of such a program would demand considerable thought, our preliminary thinking is that a “speaking across the curriculum” program would enable students to hone their public presentation skills through small group presentations, more emphasis on discussion and reporting, and increased opportunities for classroom and workshop activities that develop persuasive oral communication skills. This proposed program is linked to our commitment to enhancing the leadership capacities of our students, as expressed in the mission statement. Similar to our efforts in the area of writing, our route to this curricular goal should begin with extensive and energetic efforts in the area of faculty development.

We have discussed above our support for quantitative skills and technological skills initiatives.

F. Graduate Education at Smith

Several of our graduate programs are currently demonstrating the professional excellence that gives us national visibility and prestige. Most conspicuous is the School for Social Work, which is acknowledged by many to be the best clinical social work program in the nation. As a further example, the Master of Science in Exercise and Sport Studies has been extraordinarily successful in placing its graduates as coaches in colleges throughout the country, and the long-established Master of Education programs have had a strong history. Following those models, some members of the Steering Committee felt that there is good reason to suppose that the College could create other innovative, high-quality masters’ programs. The Committee reviewed intriguing and worthwhile proposals for graduate programs in public policy and education.

Committee members who supported the development of new graduate programs felt that it was possible to design programs that would appeal to Smith undergraduates, allowing for the creation of dual degree programs that would provide select students with a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree in five years. Some felt that excep-

tionally high quality graduate programs would enhance the reputation of the College, thereby raising the quality of the undergraduate program. Finally, supporters of these programs felt that a highly qualified and diverse graduate student population had the potential to enhance the intellectual climate of the College.

Committee members who did not support recommending new graduate programs expressed concern that substantial new investments in graduate education would divert resources from the undergraduate program and would move the College away from its mission as an undergraduate college. In the end, no consensus was reached.

However, the Committee does recommend that the campus remain open to establishing new graduate programs or expanding existing programs where a compelling case can be made.

G. An Infrastructure that Supports Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Even the most carefully designed curriculum will fall short without the proper support to maintain an optimal educational environment. Smith is blessed with a talented staff and magnificent physical resources, but there are several areas that demand immediate attention if we are to move the College to the next level of academic excellence. These areas include technical staff support, computing support, and major facilities renovations. In addition, we must continue to support our extraordinary library system, which remains one of the most distinctive features of the College's strength.

1. Technical Support

Acknowledging that the addition of highly sophisticated equipment and technology has greatly aided teaching and research, the Committee learned from the self-study teams and individual departments that attention to these technologies has drawn heavily upon faculty time, thus reducing the time available for scholarship and teaching—often with dramatic effect. In some instances, faculty have not had the expertise necessary to maintain and support this new infrastructure and yet are unable to secure through existing means adequate support for equipment maintenance and use. At the same time, many

departments are calling for extensive additions to professional staff support so that faculty can redirect their efforts to teaching, scholarship, and mentoring students. These issues are, with increasing urgency, in need of resolution.

We recommend that the College organize itself to address the needs for technical and technological support throughout the College, that the need for such staffing be compared with that available at comparable colleges, and that priorities be established for addressing the large number of requests. We also recommend that the most urgent needs be addressed immediately.

2. Computing Technology

Recognizing the growing need for an emphasis on computer technology throughout teaching and research efforts, the Steering Committee was persuaded that this will continue to be one of the most important needs to be addressed by the College. Nevertheless, despite the ongoing expenditure of significant resources and the excellent staff available to the campus, there is continuing concern that we may not be organized in the most efficient or effective way to provide faculty and student access to computing in the service of teaching and learning. The Steering Committee was persuaded that many of the proposals for increased access to and support for educational technology held promise, including increased access to computers for students, the development of an enhanced multi-media center and educational technology center, and the development of a professionally staffed help desk. However, the Steering Committee could not reach agreement on many of the specific proposals submitted to it, nor could it decide what to recommend on how to structure educational technology. There was agreement, however, that outside experts, with knowledge of educational technology, should be brought in to advise the College how to direct its future efforts and resources. The Committee therefore recommends that the President, working with an internal faculty committee and the Director of Information Systems, appoint a small outside visiting committee to advise the College on how to organize and staff its educational computing effort. The Committee recommends that, once the review is completed, an ambitious program of support for educational computing be planned that acknowledges the need for an improved level of technological support across a wide range of endeavors at the College.

3. Academic Facilities Renovation and Repair

The renovation of a number of academic buildings is of paramount concern. Faculty work and student learning cannot be optimally pursued without appropriate attention to the physical spaces in which this work is carried out. The following areas require varying degrees of renovation and repair: the Fine Arts Center, the Center for the Performing Arts, classrooms in the Science Center and Wright Hall. Other facilities are also in need of renovation, including John M. Greene Hall, Josten Library, Alumnae Gym, Neilson Libraries, Scott and Ainsworth Gymnasiums, the Lyman Plant House, and so on.

We urge that attention be paid to each of these facilities and that a financing plan be developed to address the most critical needs. Most importantly, delays in crucial repairs should be eliminated, and a timetable should be established for programmatic changes. Furthermore, inasmuch as a parking structure will be needed before any major renovation or construction is begun, we urge that the planning for the construction of the parking garage be undertaken as soon as possible.

4. The Smith College Library

The Smith College Library is generally recognized as the nation's preeminent college library. The library is a tremendous resource for faculty, students, visiting scholars, and members of neighboring academic communities. But all academic libraries face two important changes in the near future. First, new fields of learning are greatly increasing the amount of information available for scholarship. Second, the growing importance of technology in library research is influencing significantly the way information is produced, delivered, and stored. Both of these changes are driving up the cost of maintaining first-rate collections, and they raise important questions about traditional collections policies. We believe that these are areas that demand our focused attention. A careful review of the library was undertaken by the Library Self-Study Committee. While it is not clear which specific recommendations are appropriate, the Steering Committee believes that the College must continue to support the library so as to maintain a premier collection.

H. Balancing Continuing and Emerging Needs

The Committee recognizes that even as we seek to augment our curricular offerings, we must also remain cognizant of the need to offer existing programs at a growing level of strength. Many departments and programs have identified what they believe to be critical shortages in faculty. The sum of those needs well exceeds the financial capacity of the College. The Committee feels that it is important to review the range of offerings to determine whether the College is over-committed in some areas at the expense of some of the most promising programs. We believe that the College cannot maintain its strength if it is unable to make choices in what it offers. We encourage the establishment of a priority-setting committee that can review curricular commitments and recommend how ongoing as well as new and developing needs can be met.

III. FACULTY EXCELLENCE AND BREADTH

Smith has an abiding commitment to maintaining its identity as a premier liberal arts college. Among those things that will ensure that this identity remains intact is the quality of its faculty. The strength of the faculty of Smith College has been remarked in professional studies, through visiting committee reports, through efforts by research universities to recruit Smith faculty, through the prizes and awards the faculty garner, the leadership positions they have held in professional organizations, and a myriad other ways. However, although many Smith faculty are well known for their scholarship and professional leadership, the most remarkable dimension of the Smith faculty is their ability to blend excellence in scholarship with an unusually strong commitment to teaching and mentoring students. The balance between teaching excellence and scholarly/professional achievement, often lamented as difficult to attain, is acknowledged to be excellent at Smith.

The Steering Committee believes that the single most important aspect of maintaining and building on the strength of the College is continued faculty excellence and breadth. In order to ensure that Smith continues to recruit the best faculty available to liberal arts colleges, Smith should be competitive with the most highly ranked colleges, offering similar compensation, benefits and workload. Smith should never become a less desirable place for a faculty member to begin her career, nor the kind of place that able faculty members feel they must leave in order to attain the measure of professional success they seek. In addition, to ensure continuous intellectual vitality, Smith should maintain a program of faculty renewal and development that is attractive to faculty and ensures that students have access to cutting-edge scholarship. Finally, Smith faculty must have access to appropriate educational technology and other support so that pedagogical innovation and achievement in scholarship can be maintained.

A. An Enhanced Visiting Scholars Program

Described above, the Smith College Louise B. and Edmund J. Kahn Liberal Arts Institute would bring together on the Smith campus diverse sets of visiting scholars and public figures to explore problems and issues of interest to our faculty and students. In addition to enhancing the intellectual climate of the College (as outlined on page 10), we

believe that the Institute will be a source of renewal for the faculty.

B. Review and Reconfiguration of Faculty Work

The Committee has noted that the current definition of faculty workload is overly rigid and inimical to the excellence Smith strives to maintain. Teaching five courses per year, assuming heavy administrative work (at both the departmental and college level), advising students in various capacities (general as well as major advising), mentoring honors students and directing theses, the demands of professional involvement, and the need to maintain their research at a high level have led many faculty members to conclude that they are not able to give the attention to teaching that the students deserve and that the faculty members desire to give. Changes in the many options available to students, the increased writing emphasis, and the demand for additional changes in pedagogy will require even more preparation and individualized instruction.

In view of the future goals of the College and our desire to move to a new level of excellence, a yearly courseload of four courses is more appropriate to the kind of college Smith seeks to become. We recommend a reconfiguration of faculty workload to assure continued excellence in both teaching and research. A review should be undertaken by the Deans of the Faculty to determine appropriate ways to adopt a new workload to meet institutional goals. A report should be made to the President by April 1998.

C. Technical and Technological Support for Teaching and Research

In the section entitled, “An Infrastructure that Supports Excellence in Teaching and Learning” (pages 12–13), we noted the critical need for technical and technological support for teaching and research. The College must address issues of staffing, primarily to ensure that the allocation of human resources meets new demands created by the increased use of technology across campus. In particular, the Committee was concerned that faculty members have available to them the tools and support necessary to develop new teaching strategies and to conduct research at the highest level.

IV. A RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

Smith College is a residential academic community. We believe that the living environment of the College must connect closely with the intellectual life of the College. Our vision is one of students living in a setting that promotes intellectual development and exchange, social awareness, and leadership. We would like to see greater efforts to ensure that students can strike a balance between their lives in the houses and their lives with the wider campus community. We would also like to see the campus residential community linked more closely with the world beyond the Grécourt Gates. Finally, we envision a residential life system that continues to foster independence in students, but also has the support systems in place to guide social and intellectual growth.

A. A Setting that Promotes Intellectual Development and Exchange, Social Awareness and Leadership in Our Students

1. Residential Life

The residential house system, while providing tremendous benefits to campus life, can also promote insularity in students. This is both because small, self-selected living environments inhibit dialogue between students from varying backgrounds and life philosophies and because the houses can easily become refuges from classroom life and the larger community. We seek a greater balance in the commitments students make to life in the houses and to the community at-large. It is essential that students have more opportunities to interact with members of the Smith community outside of their houses as well as with the community beyond Smith.

We believe that many of the initiatives endorsed earlier in this report, including the internship program, will help facilitate these connections for students. The Steering Committee also supports the idea of developing an “alumnae in residence” program, in which alumnae would live in houses for a short period of time, offering workshops and informal counsel in their area of expertise. But even with the implementation of these initiatives, the house system will still not have realized its potential as an educational living environment. We recommend that the Dean of the College review the educational programming currently offered in the houses and develop a plan for

increasing the quantity and quality of this programming. The Steering Committee recognizes that increased programming in the houses would add additional strain to an already overburdened residential life staff, especially those seniors who are head residents. We therefore recommend that the Dean of the College create a plan for a residential life staffing structure that will provide for improved support in the houses.

The importance of technology in learning suggests that the houses will not become true learning environments until computers are easily accessible in student residences. Therefore, we recommend that computers be available in the houses, and a student “computer consultant” be identified in each house.

We would also note that house pianos have been a unique resource of the residential system. However, these pianos are often old and in disrepair, diminishing the possibility of a vibrant musical life in the houses. We recommend that future fundraising efforts include a campaign for alumnae to “buy a piano” for their house.

2. Campus Social Life

The Campus Center Task Force issued a report in April of 1996 in which it suggested that the “quality of a campus life at Smith could be significantly improved” through the establishment of a campus center. A principal finding of the Task Force was that communication and social interaction among students is difficult in the current house system, and that a central gathering place would help alleviate fragmentation and help to build a greater sense of community. The Steering Committee accepts the validity of these findings, but is less clear whether a major new structure must be constructed or if renovating existing structures would meet our needs.

We therefore recommend that a campus center be established, although we make no recommendation regarding the dimensions or siting of such a center. However, the Steering Committee does recognize a great need for additional dining options for students, faculty, and staff, a space where students and faculty can congregate and meet informally, and a designated social space for students.

We acknowledge that a campus center construction or renovation project could take several years to complete. Yet, there is an immediate need for consistent, high quality social programming for students. Therefore, we recommend that the Dean of the College work with the Student Government Association to improve and expand social programs that include both weekend and weeknight programs.

3. Facilities for Nonresident Students

In our current residential system, there is little support for nonresident students and non-traditional students. Ada Comstock Scholars, especially those who are single mothers, face exceptional challenges in procuring affordable housing and child care. We recommend that the College identify apartments for Ada Comstock students and work quickly to increase the number of units available to these students and their families. We also recommend that the College investigate affordable child care for Smith students with children. Finally, we recommend that more additional on-campus dining options be explored for nonresident students.

4. The First-Year Experience

Important components of the first-year experience include orientation, academic advising, and coursework designed to transition students to college-level work (such as the first-year seminars described above and required writing-intensive courses developed through the “writing-across-the-curriculum” program). The orientation program has undergone incremental changes over the past several years, including modifications to the Bridge Program, which is designed for students from underrepresented groups. However, marginal changes to the orientation program have not resulted in as effective a program as many had envisioned. Therefore, we recommend that the Dean of the College review the recommendations of the Orientation Task Force and implement changes where necessary. The academic advising program has adopted more wholesale changes in recent years, having moved to a system of mandatory faculty involvement in pre-major advising. Students still report that this advising system is not functioning as effectively as it might. We recommend that the Dean of the College undertake a thorough review of the pre-major advising system.

5. Student Business Services

Student satisfaction surveys have indicated that students are concerned about the convenience, quality, and accessibility of business and registration services. At the same time, we have committed considerable resources to developing a fiber-optic backbone that could provide students access to financial and course information from their residences. We recommend that the College move toward

offering on-line course registration and begin offering students the opportunity to review on line their billing and financial aid accounts.

6. Spiritual Life at Smith

Many on campus have commented that the structure of the Chapel, as presently configured, is not able to support the diverse religious traditions of our community. Both the diversity and saliency of religion in our society suggest that the Chapel should broaden its ecumenical approach and expand its role in facilitating moral and ethical conversations on campus. This focus would allow the Chapel to connect more effectively with the office of the Dean of the College and to respond to crises on campus when necessary. There are also several facilities questions that must be addressed if we are to create a spiritual center that supports the liturgical and non-liturgical activities of the various religious groups on campus. We recommend that the *ad hoc* committee on the Chapel advise the President and the Dean of the College on how to construct a model of religious life that is supportive of the increasingly diverse spiritual needs of the campus community.

7. Athletics and Fitness

Students currently have a wide variety of opportunities to participate in athletics and fitness, including sixteen intercollegiate teams (fourteen varsity and two junior varsity teams), an intramural athletic program administered through the house system that serves approximately five hundred students, eleven club sport teams under the Smith College Athletic Association and funded primarily through SGA activities fee allocations, performance classes offered through the department of exercise and sport studies, and unstructured recreational use of the athletic facility complex. A report issued by the Committee on Athletics (January, 1997) suggests several needs for the athletic program, including refurbished locker room space in Ainsworth Gym, an expanded swimming and diving facility, redesigned squash courts, resurfaced outdoor track and tennis facilities, and the completion of the stable renovations. We endorse these projects; in addition, we recommend that consultants be hired to consider how Scott Gym might be reconfigured to better meet the needs of our dance and fitness programs. We also think the College should consider operating budget support for the growing trend toward club sports (participation has increased by sixty-five percent in the last five years).

Finally, we feel the College should recognize the benefits of fitness by students, staff, and faculty by creating satellite fitness centers on campus that would increase accessibility to aerobic equipment.

8. An Expanded Leadership Program and Conferences

The current leadership program, which is held during interterm, is highly successful both as a recruitment tool and as an educational experience, yet it serves only forty students per annum. We recommend that future fundraising efforts seek to endow and expand programming in the area of leadership development.

We also recommend that students develop and administer leadership conferences. These conferences would include twice-yearly weekends dedicated to a series of workshops, presentations, and seminars that would provide the opportunity to hear and engage with outstanding women leaders. These women would be nationally or regionally noted activists, scholars, or community leaders. Seminars and workshops would focus on the development of such skills as public speaking, nonacademic writing, team building, decision skills, fiscal management, program implementation tools, preparation for and evaluation of an internship experience, and methods of leading a meeting. Completion of a predetermined number and type of workshops or seminars could lead to the awarding of a certificate of participation.

In addition, we believe that a “speaking across the curriculum” initiative (referenced earlier) could play a key role in developing leadership skills.

9. Diversity of Social and Educational Experiences

We recognize that the quality of the educational and social experiences Smith can offer is dependent, in part, on our ability to expose students to a rich variety of perspectives and experiences. We believe that we must begin by renewing our efforts to diversify our student body. In increasing the members of domestic minority groups among the student ranks, greater outreach is needed that would include broader domestic coverage and specific strategies geared toward minority recruitment. We recommend that the Office of Institutional Diversity work

closely with the Office of Admission and the Ada Comstock Scholars Program to expand outreach programs and to review admission procedures to ensure that they maximize the potential for the attainment of a diverse student body. These offices should also use their combined expertise and resources to cultivate new and existing partnerships with organizations that can expand our pool of applicants from underrepresented ethnic and racial minority groups.

The counseling center can play an important role in serving students who feel alienated from the mainstream culture of the College. Recent reports have suggested that staffing in the counseling office is inadequate to meet the current demands of the community. We recommend that the Dean of the College review the counseling structure to ensure that the current demand and needs of students can be met, including the particular concerns of students of color.

Smith has made considerable strides in recent years in expanding the curriculum to offer courses that address issues of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. We believe this trend should continue and that the College should support the Five College American Cultures effort as a means of increasing the diversity of courses offered under this rubric. We also believe that the curriculum can be further strengthened by internships that provide for the study and research of the various subcultures found within American society.

Finally, we believe that our educational community will be enriched if we are successful in attracting a more diverse faculty and staff to the College. We recommend that new outreach efforts be developed to recruit faculty and staff from racial and ethnic minority groups, including, where appropriate, faculty with senior rank.

V. CONCLUSION

The foregoing recommendations represent the core ideas of the Steering Committee's reaction to over 200 individual proposals. The Committee was fortunate to review so many thoughtful, imaginative, and persuasive proposals. Many excellent suggestions were advanced that could not be treated in this report and many excellent proposals will be implemented that have not been itemized in this summary. The goal of this report was to outline broadly the areas identified by members of the Smith community, which – taken together – the Committee thought offered the greatest promise to enhance the overall quality of education offered at Smith. However, given the breadth of these endeavors, this report can only serve to introduce and outline the rich opportunities that lie ahead.

A number of further considerations will be important to the success of this ambitious program. First, while it is not important for each member of the Smith community to endorse every aspect of this program, it is important for the representative student, faculty, staff and administrative leadership of the campus to endorse the direction in which these steps would take the College. Some major new paths are sketched; these can lead to success only if there is adequate support for these ventures. Second, once endorsed, these recommendations require a strategically designed order of implementation to move the implementation along at an appropriate speed. Many of the programs described could take several years to put into action, but the process will take considerably longer if the proper groundwork is not laid with attention to the full consequences of such proposed change. Finally, the Committee set out to devise a program of change that, taken as a whole, would have a decidedly positive impact on the quality of education afforded our students. We believe, therefore, that while some adjustments in these recommendations would be entirely appropriate, any substantial and broad changes in the mix of programs could well weaken the impact of this ambitious agenda.

We began our work by asking ourselves how strong the College is. We completed our recommendations with the conviction that Smith is strong enough academically and financially to allow us to fix our sights on those measures that will help to move the College to a new level of excellence. Many options presented themselves, but we necessarily present just a subset of those opportunities. Smith will continue to change in the coming century, and other opportunities in the future will call for different paths to be taken and new initiatives to be designed and implemented.

The end of our self-study process presents an opportunity for the College to redouble its efforts to secure its financial position for the challenges of the next century. Our ongoing fundraising and budget processes are well-tuned and ably managed. Numerous unknown trials will present themselves in the coming years, and these challenges will require all of our existing revenues and more. Thus, many of the ideas that we have endorsed will require us to seek new funds and a sustained new level of giving from our many alumnae and supporters. In the past, their assistance has enabled Smith to thrive. Their efforts in the future will determine how high Smith can reach in its effort to become the best liberal arts college in the country.

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