I. Minutes for the January faculty meeting were accepted.

II. Reports from College Officers

President Greene

Pres. Greene welcomed everyone back to spring semester and continued, by recalling the subject of the first faculty meeting over which he presided, in September 2014. During that meeting, he outlined the state of liberal arts education and the difficulties ahead. In today’s meeting, he wanted to bring us up-to-date on where Colby stands in relationship to our peers - some colleges are stronger (a smaller group), while others are struggling (a larger group, and growing in number). Greene then presented an outline of Colby’s progress and aspirations.

He asked, how do we ensure that our programs are as strong as they can be? Much of this evaluation was shaped by the priorities identified by faculty responses to questionnaires. At the Board of Trustees retreat in 2014, we identified intermediate 5-10 year goals:

- For Colby to become a top 10 liberal arts college
- To clearly articulate Colby’s values and goals
- To ensure distinctive student experiences that connect liberal arts education to the wider world.

Greene then asked, how are we doing? And how have we compared to our peers?

Recruitment Strength

- In the past, we had lagged behind the top 10 schools in the US News & World Reports.
- We’d seen a decline in domestic applications (3667 - down from 4014). Some colleges depended on full-pay foreign students, but we wanted a broad array of students with different intellectual interests. However, we were often taking all eligible students that we could. This led to an uneven preparation of students across academic fields. We were equivalent to good schools but not top-10 schools.
- In 8 of the last 9 years, we were ranked at 20 or higher.
- A ranking in the mid 20s or higher may prove to represent the breaking point in terms of determining which colleges will survive the difficulties.

Operating Budget

- Our operating budget is $30 million dollars smaller than, for example, Bowdoin.
- We have fewer faculty and significantly fewer staff then our peers. (i.e. Bowden has 160 more staff people than Colby), resulting in many more faculty hours devoted to the completion of administrative tasks.
- Bowdoin has a four-course teaching load.
- Our physical plant is roughly 1/3 smaller then Bowdoin, and many of our peers.
Clayton Christianson is quoted as saying, “50% of the 4000 colleges and universities in the US, will be bankrupt in 10 to 15 years.” He’s incorrect but directionally accurate. It’s unusual to see colleges closing during such a relatively strong economy.

- New international student enrollment in U.S. institutions is declining.
- Overall higher-ed enrollments are declining.
- Northeast high school graduates are declining. (our traditional majority pool).
- Nationally, the U.S. is shifting to a majority minority high-school graduation population.

There is simultaneously a declining opinion of higher education’s positive affect on the country.

- A majority of 18–34 yr.-olds now question whether college is “worth it” versus “not worth it”.
- These views break down along partisan political divides as well.

What does the bubble look like?

**Midwest/ Oberlin**

- Inability to enroll sufficient number of students has led to greater financial aid expenditures.
- Fundraising is flat or down by a little, expenses are up, so revenue is flat.
- Once a college is in this declining mode it is difficult to turn it around.

**Southern New England/ Conn.**

- Here too there is a decline in enrollment with more students receiving aid.
- They are unable to attract and yield most talented students.
- Revenues are flat (no change in four years with the expenses going up).

August 2016 Board of Trustees Retreat clarified our intentions

- Preeminent Colby is reliant on two key factors:
  - Creating a vibrant Central Maine
  - Given the disrupted liberal arts context, we must be more assertive, innovative, and relevant to the wider world, in order to achieve our goals.

How are we achieving this and what are the results?

We invested in Admissions and Financial Aid

- Demand for Colby education has never been higher (12,307 applications this year). This allows us to shape the class to meet our goals.
- The applicant pool is increasingly national in reach:
  - From New England: changed from 36% to 26%
  - From the South: changed from 4% to 11%
- Changing profile of the student body (2012 vs. 2021)
  - Number of applications: 4835 vs. 11,190
  - Selectivity: 31% vs. 16%
  - Total enrolled: 482 vs. 552
  - SAT median: 1360 vs.1420
- ACT median: 30 vs. 32
- Top 10%: 60% vs. 78%
- % on financial aid: 39% vs. 47%
- % receiving Pell Grant: 8 vs.14
- Students of Color: 14% vs. 28%
- 1st Generation: 8% vs. 12%

- Academic programs anchored to world challenges
  - Colby Labs, Jackson Lab, Bigelow Lab, Lunder Institute
  - Possibilities within the Humanities
  - Arts and Innovation Center
    - Flexible performance Hall
    - Smaller performance studios/ labs
    - Hope to have a design concept by this spring
  - DavisConnects

- Revitalizing downtown Waterville and Civic Engagement
  - Bill and Joan Alfond Main St. Commons w/ Chase Community Forum
  - Waterville Arts Center
    - To include a contemporary art gallery
    - The Maine Film Center
    - Common Street Arts
    - Rehearsal space for the opera house

- New Athletic Center and fields
- Work in progress
  - Raising the visibility of Colby
  - People are moving to Waterville again and property values are up
  - This should improve the quality of area school systems as well
  - Colby is currently ranked 12 (tied with several others) in USNWR
  - Now raising more revenue than any of our peers (up from raising ½ the amount).

Comments:
Dan Shea (GOV) – what is our commitment to Maine students?
  Greene - percentage has been up the last few years. We’ve worked hard to reach out to every school in Maine and it’s going very well. Important to consider that high school graduates in the state are declining by a lot. We should worry about this. We typically enroll around 200 Maine resident students, but it will be tough to maintain this number.

Joe Reisert (GOV) – Regarding size of the faculty how do we look now compared to others?
  Greene - we are currently closer to 200, so we are better, but we’ll need to continue to grow. Every good place grows over time and we must keep pace.

Whitney King (CHEM) - there’s been a huge increase in gifts, is this sustainable or a bubble?
  Greene - it’s a bit of a bubble. We’re doing very well right now, but we’ll need to sustain it over the next several years. The tax cut will benefit many people who were able to make gifts. The pattern of giving is usually that we do well at first, then a dip, and then well again at the end. There’s a lot of excitement about what’s going on at a Colby.
need to reconnect with our graduates - there are a lot of people with the capacity to give, but with very little connection to the institution.

Provost Margaret McFadden
- Welcomed Jack Cosgrove, Colby’s new football coach.
- Working on a report from the Dean of the College about students transferring out of Colby. A survey that will be coming, to find out faculty experience of students who transfer.
- We are making progress on the movement to a 4.5 teaching load.
  - We have plans from nearly all departments and programs.
  - Good news for IDS: electives for IDS programs are being retained/preserved.
  - Next Chairs and Directors meeting will be looking at it.
  - Will go then to the Division Chairs for prioritization.
Laurie Osborne: when does the curriculum have to be in? March - coming up fast.

Conversation about the Capital Campaign
Ankeney Weitz (ART) - I serve on Mission and Priorities and the campaign was explained to us earlier and it makes sense. “Northward” is interesting. The campus logo is a compass, and communicates that students are “finding their way”. I found the idea very compelling - students finding an orientation, their true North.
Martha Arterberry (PHYC) – if people have great ideas for the campaign they are wondering where they should send them. If you have ideas, send them to Margaret. We’ll be coming to you soon, to ask what you would be willing to do for the campaign (talk with parents, give a talk etc.)
Sandy Maisel (GOV) – the donors are really impressed with the work that our students are doing. It would help if you could highlight the work of individual students.
Patrice Franco (GS) - while in Washington this January traveling with the Hill to Hill group, an alum remarked that the group we were traveling with looks like the catalog image from the past, that we used to use to highlight diversity. I was so proud that we were that much closer to reaching our goals for diversity. Fully half of the group was funded - terrific!
Bruce Maxwell (CS) - I’m available to talk with donors anytime. The $ really makes a difference for students and for my own work. The campaign sometimes misses this – the teaching of small classes, the close interaction with students. We should highlight the importance of this, it allows us to do our best work in both arenas.
Margaret - Let me also state clearly, that Dare Northward does not mean we are anti-Global South.

III. New Business - none

IV. Committee Report
College Affairs Committee: Burrell-McRae
- The committee has met several times.
• The group wanted to address campus climate and culture, and started with small actionable topics.
• There were two main emphases this fall
  o Facilities - students were concerned about:
    ▪ Forced triples
    ▪ Fewer common spaces
    ▪ Mina and her team met with students to explore what students we’re looking for.
    ▪ Staff and faculty are helping to expand intellectual and social programming.
    ▪ Common spaces are coming back
    ▪ The Heights is being renovated.
    ▪ This was all informed by the Climate Survey.
  o 1st-year Experience
    ▪ We wanted to think more creatively about how to use orientation.
    ▪ 4 to 6 days is not enough
    ▪ How might we infuse it with the wellness credit?
    ▪ How might we stretch it out?
    ▪ Should its timing be adjusted?
  o More conversation about conduct, title IX, and other concerns will be coming.

Distribution Requirements Task Force: Johnson
• To review: it was created by a vote of the faculty to review the requirements - are they still the best/appropriate requirements?
• Faculty Retreat explored Modes of Inquiry - a way to structure general education, less about particular disciplines, more about framing strategies for learning and reasoning.
• We’ve conducted lots of background research and several of the committee members will be attending a conference on general education later this month.
• We are consulting with different groups: Chairs and Directors; the survey just sent out which we invite you to complete until February 19th.
• When will this be implemented? Depends on progress and faculty response, but you should assume requirements will remain the same for the next academic year (’18-’19).
• How will it be implemented? The task force will come up with a recommendation which will come to the faculty in a faculty meeting. It will layover till the next meeting, when it will be voted upon by the faculty.
• We’ll be coming to your departments asking for feedback so please send along your invitations to the task force.

Chris Soto (PSYCH) – I want to make a plug for the survey - there’re only two questions but it’s very important. This survey is the way to provide feedback at this early stage.

Judy Stone (BIO) – when will we be seeking student input?
• That’s a very good point. SGA can help with this. Will need to get a little further along I think before we seek that input.
V. Announcements

- Cohen: Noontime faculty forum—opportunity to showcase your work. Schedule is on the agenda.
- Hatch: Events: Next Wednesday at 7pm Oak Foundation will be showing *Taste of Cement* in Ostrove. Will also show *A Personal Matter* (Japanese Internment Camps)
- Brunetaux: New Humanities Theme—The Presence of the Past—Humanities Labs. Deadline: February 26. This coming Friday, there is a workshop on building a Humanities Lab from 2-4pm (Smith/Hurd room).
- Gilkes: Task Force on Free Expression. The members of our task force invite you to Friday at Noon—town hall—opportunity for community. What should we do? Lunch available at 11:30. In Page Commons.
  - Come learn about community.
  - We’ll review some scenarios that have occurred here and elsewhere pertaining to free expression.
- Sheriff: Writing Committee—ask questions about the Departmental Writing Grants. Proposals coming next month. All-department initiative.
- Angelini: Funding for public events. Cultural Events Committee: Target deadline is March 1. I’ll be sending an announcement.

Sandy Maisel moved to adjourn.
Meeting adjourned 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bevin Engman
Faculty Secretary