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Planning at Bates, 12-08-2008

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Dear Members of the Bates Community,

It is a real pleasure to preview this issue of *Planning at Bates* and tell you about all we have accomplished this fall. In recent weeks, the campus teams that are charged with advancing our three strategic initiatives have begun their work. This issue of the bulletin is designed to let you know about the overall goals and questions they have embraced, the processes they are adopting, and the progress they anticipate for the coming weeks.

I have particularly enjoyed this phase of the planning process because it has given me the opportunity to meet with each team and experience the energy and enthusiasm the members are bringing to this important effort. Although each team has its distinct goals and ways of working, the three groups share the charge to develop concrete plans for the College and the Board to consider. They know that some recommendations will lead to major fundraising, while others may lead to innovation through the reallocation of funds, attention, or time. Even (or perhaps especially) in this time of economic uncertainty, it has never been more

important for us to agree on priorities and make the investments that will keep Bates strong and growing. I am confident that we will do more to define those investments in the coming weeks.

Each team has been charged to consult with relevant departments and members of the College community in this next phase of our work. I invite and urge you to accept the invitations the teams will offer, share your expertise and points of view, and let your colleagues know about your questions and your good ideas. Although I know how busy we all are, please do take time to help shape the plans that are evolving now.

In closing, I hope each and every member of the community enjoyed a restful and joyous Thanksgiving break, and I wish you the best of luck as the semester draws to a close.

With warm regards,



Three Strategic Initiatives: Learning at Bates, Natural Sciences and Mathematics in the Liberal Arts, and The Arts in the College and the Community

As outlined in the President's September letter to the Bates community, three initiatives have been identified that we are pursuing this year. For each, we have drafted a specific set of objectives based on the Working Groups Report (June 2008) as well as work in each area that is already underway. Fuller descriptions of these objectives are included in this bulletin. In addition, following discussions with the Steering Group, Senior Staff, and the President's Institutional Planning and Advisory Committee (PIPAC), criteria, overall goals, and suggestions for process have been developed and shared with all teams.

Overall Goal and Process

The goal of each initiative is to develop concrete plans for the College and the Board to consider, keeping in mind the twin needs of articulating an ambitious vision for the College and also offering action steps that are realistic and practical. Using the report of the Working Groups as a foundation, this will be an iterative process of consulting with the community and specific departments where appropriate, drawing on the best thinking of the team members, and determining a plan to recommend. Although it is up to each team to determine a timetable for action, each group is asked to report on progress periodically and to complete its work or at least make considerable progress during this academic year.

The Trustees support this work enthusiastically and look forward to acting on the recommendations they receive. The teams will report on progress before each Board meeting. Using those reports, we can keep the Board abreast of the work as it unfolds and prepare the way for productive fundraising and other resource support.

Working from its charge, each team is responsible for developing a plan of action to achieve significant progress on its initiative—progress that will have wide ranging effect on the College. The teams might recommend improvements to academic programs, propose new practices in important areas of community life, and offer ideas about related space needs, for example.



Each team will determine its own process; one possibility is to develop its plan in three phases:

- **Design** of the team’s process including identifying the information they need, assigning information-gathering tasks, determining a timeline for the team’s work through this academic year, and setting the meetings for the year
- **Discovery**, or sharing information, ideas, possibilities, and cautions; and
- **Decision making** about the action steps they will recommend to the College. These action steps will compose the plan.

It may be helpful for each team to have a long meeting as it enters each phase—design, discovery, and decision-making—and accomplish most of the group work during those meetings. If the team favors this process, the President’s office will provide support for the meeting, including consultation on process, facilitation, and funds to cover the cost of the meetings.

In addition, the President’s office will support other team needs, including data gathering and other issues arising.

Criteria for the Plan

Ideally, each plan will offer a strong balance of an innovative vision for the future and a practical, reasonable plan of action. Each should contain ideas that are exciting, cutting edge, and consistent with Bates mission even as they update and extend the scope of that mission. The plan should reflect best practice at the same time that it advances thinking in new directions. To achieve this, each team may:

- Present ideas that can be accomplished in phases, with recommendations for the near term and for a longer term of achievement. For example, some of the elements might be achieved in this year or the next, with others taking three to five years or even longer to realize.
- Consider its plan in relation to (1) Bates’ traditional values and (2) the special contribution a liberal arts education can offer in the 21st century. In other words, the plan might act on the team’s insight about what traditions we at Bates ought to preserve and what we ought to transform as we move into the future.
- Consult with the involved departments and members of the College community, and then represent the real best advice and choices of the team. Rather than offering a wide array of options with no priority, real priorities and choices will be most helpful to the College and the Board.



The following may be a useful frame for the plan each team will develop:

- **What** are the specific action steps that we recommend to advance this initiative? For each step:
 - How** can it be accomplished at Bates? What is needed to insure that this step is successful? With whom do we need to meet and consult?
 - When** should this action step be accomplished? Is it reasonable to expect to achieve it in the near term, or is a longer term required?
 - Who** is responsible for taking this step forward? Does responsibility lie with the Board and the President, for example, or is this a step for the College or for certain departments or offices to take internally?

Questions to inform the discovery phase

In addition to these overall suggestions about goals, process and criteria, we developed specific objectives and questions for each team to consider. The teams have been encouraged to consider these as preliminary materials to be modified, researched, and supplemented as appropriate.

In the following sections, you will find for each initiative a list of team members, a set of objectives, the preliminary questions they have been asked to consider, and an update on their work to date.

LEARNING AT BATES

Bates College is committed to creative, adventurous, and rigorous inquiry in a mutually supportive community of teaching, learning, and scholarship across the entire academic spectrum. Because the quality of learning and the learning experience has always been a top priority at Bates, the need for a broad and deep look at the learning agenda has come to the front during the current College-wide planning process. Based on their work last year, the Steering Group and the Working Groups have recommended that learning be at the center of this year's work.

A goal of this initiative is to recognize a broad range of aspirations and needs related to learning, teaching, scholarship and tracking progress in those critical areas. Of the 39 issues and 88 recommendations in the Working Groups' report, this initiative addresses 20 issues and 41 recommendations in whole or in part. It is also designed to embrace other ideas that may emerge in the future.

In addition, the initiative draws on current work to improve the environment for learning, including a sustained effort to develop a Learning Commons. Designed to add even more vigor to one of the College's core strengths, the initiative includes the following objectives. They are to:

- Establish a Center for Teaching and Learning
- Intensify the Community of Learning at Bates
- Enhance the capacity to support learning College-wide
- Deepen the Commitment to Faculty Scholarship
- Track effectiveness, conduct further study of relevant topics, and report on the initiative's progress to the community

Objective One: Establish a Center for Teaching and Learning (or Learning Commons)

One major element of this initiative is to establish a Teaching and Learning Center at the College. This center would be charged to coordinate our many and sometimes disconnected efforts to support student learning, including the Peer Assisted Learning Group (PALG) program, departmental peer tutor programs, peer writing tutor programs, and study skill and time management assistance.

One important component of the center might be an Office of Diversity and Academic Excellence to assess and learn more about those campus experiences that promote or hinder the achievement of academic potential by all. The office and the center might also be charged to help faculty and staff learn more about inclusive pedagogies, be a resource for each other, and work together to help individual students find ways to succeed.

Other goals are to promote awareness of the interplay between diversity of learning styles and cultural diversity, and of our own biases in how we choose people we think will be successful. The center might work with the Office of Career Services to strengthen its efforts and to hire staff from underrepresented groups.

Another charge might be to create a structurally and financially sustainable system of mentoring and advising. Such a system could promote early and honest appraisal of student progress in a course, encourage the faculty and staff who work with each student to also work together to help students develop strategies for success, enhance advising for summer opportunities and graduate school, and engage alumni as career mentors.

The center might also lead a consideration of grid modifications that accommodate untimed exams.

Objective Two: Intensify the Community of Learning at Bates

This objective includes actions that are designed to strengthen or multiply out-of-class learning experiences and address related space needs.

Out-of-Class Learning Experiences

Over and over, research has shown that out of class experiences are powerful learning venues on a campus. This initiative supports excellent and varied informal learning opportunities including events that invite students, faculty, staff, and alumni into discussion of Bates' core values and identity. Examples include the annual rituals of Martin Luther King Day, Convocation, Commencement, alumni

Team Members

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Joseph Hall, Associate Professor of History

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Andrew White, Director of Academic Technology Services

events, and other even more informal times for students, faculty, and staff to gather in social and recreational activities that invite them to step out of their institutional roles.

For example, there might be regular Thursday noon discussions open to all students, faculty, and staff addressing topics proposed by any member of the College community or issues in the news of the week. It would be necessary to provide support (both financial and logistical) for a variety of formats. Ideally, for example, lunch in Commons would be free to Thursday noon attendees.

Student housing is one prime venue to support the College's mission as a community of learners. As we work to meet the substantial needs identified in the Campus Facilities Master Plan for upgrading student housing, we have every opportunity to create a residential environment that fully supports and enhances learning. One approach might be to reconvene the Extracurricular Activities and Residential Life Committee and charge it with anchoring a partnership of staff, faculty, and students to seek to understand and enhance the character of Bates as a learning environment that extends beyond the classroom. The committee might consider the value of other forms of residential organization such as the house systems found at some colleges.

Through the Harvard Center for Community Partnerships (HCCP), students, faculty, and staff have access to excellent opportunities for engagement in the community through service learning, research, partnerships in the community, and other occasions for out-of-class learning. With such a strong and well supported center in place, HCCP might become a more central location for other types of community engagement including connecting community members more directly with the College through events, lectureships, and student-led research; offering multi-year community engagement scholarships supporting student leadership in service and research community partnerships; and engaging in collaborations in developing new programs that would benefit diverse areas in the arts and humanities and natural sciences, for example. When appropriate, faculty should be associated with these efforts.

Another element is to extend the Bates education into a lifelong experience for many communities including prospective students, current students, alumni, faculty, and staff. By bringing together people from across the Bates lifespan, academic, research, professional, social, and community perspectives on important topics could be explored.

Across this entire initiative, leaders need to consider current levels and intensity of out-of-class activity at the College. To date, students have many obligations to clubs and other organizations and faculty and staff have family commitments and other components of their lives. Before moving forward, questions about interest and participation need to be addressed.

Those who are charged with implementing this initiative might learn more about the interest and participation they anticipate and balance that information against budget considerations as they proceed. Another effective leadership practice in this area is to include members of the Dean of Students office on faculty committees that consider educational policy, curriculum and calendar, First Year seminar and writing. The goal is to achieve the optimal integration across the many venues for learning at Bates.

Space

As the report recognizes, space is an important element of campus community. Recommendations include providing more places where people can meet and converse in informal ways, sometimes in hallways, outdoors, or over food and drink. These spaces encourage important encounters that knit people together and make substantive connections.

Although some of these recommendations are in progress, this initiative encourages the College to include in the design of renovated or new academic buildings spaces that serve as a hub of student and faculty interaction (the successful lounges in Pettengill are one example). These spaces might combine in various ways the functions of studies/computer rooms/lounges/coffee break rooms.

The initiative also supports spaces that weave together formal and informal learning for the on-campus community as well as for neighbors and other visitors. Offering space for study groups to work; intellectual affinity groups to grow and thrive; and all members of the community to engage in stimulating dialogue, leisure and entertainment, and thoughtful reflection is an important aim of Learning at Bates.

Objective Three: Enhance support for learning College-wide

This objective includes actions that are designed to improve the environment for learning overall; encourage innovation related to teaching, learning, and inquiry; and pose ideas about endowing special related activities.

Improving the Environment for Learning

The Working Groups have offered many ideas about how to strengthen support for the learning environment overall. Those include insuring that Bates students continue to have access to small courses throughout their undergraduate career while at the same time reducing the size of the largest introductory courses. Another strategy is to use course enrollment data from the NIFTE group to target specific large enrollment classes and take steps to ease those situations.

The College might also support ongoing experimentation with programs that are designed to help students learn through conversation across differences. To this end, the College could create multiple opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to hear one another's stories systematically and routinely. The annual Multi-Faith Dinner is a model of storytelling that students praise. Other activities like it would be a plus.

Another idea is to expand the Parents' Weekend student presentations into an event that compares favorably to the Mount David Summit by focusing on learning during JYA and JSA and on the results of summer research, whether on-campus or off-campus. We believe that emphasizing support for student scholars and celebrating their work should be a college-wide goal.

Questions of space are also essential to address. There is need for more flexible classroom space—whether in the traditional lecture format or in smaller groups—and places for groups to study out of class. Recent additions are welcomed, but they do not meet our full need.

There is another kind of space the College needs to improve as well. Bates could reinforce the core features of the Bates experience and extend our academic model worldwide by investing an excellent online environment. This would include Internet access, web and network design, web spaces, and electronic media. We need, for example, greater capacity to blog and to integrate our facilities with social networks and other online services. The goal is to create and maintain a flexible, responsive structure that adapts to technological changes and incorporates new information and ideas regularly.

Encouraging Innovation

To ensure that our learning environment reaches and stays on the cutting edge, Bates should offer top programs of development to faculty and the staff. Those might include a faculty development grants for innovation in technology and new media and other programs to help faculty and staff accommodate varied learning styles, for example. The aim is to develop broad-based pedagogical approaches across the curriculum, further support or commitment to diversity, and provide professional development as well as research opportunities.

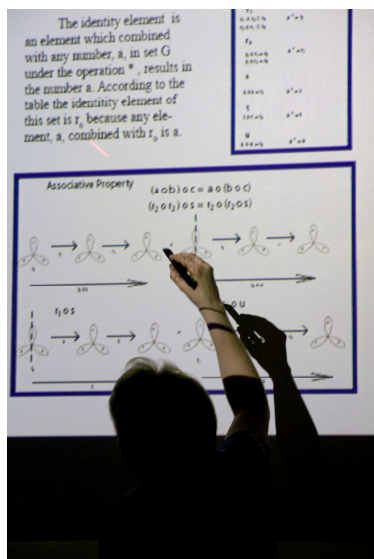
Special funds for this area might allow faculty and academic support staff (including technologists) to propose projects and receive grants in the form of teaching reductions, direct compensation, and expense reimbursement to initiate projects, test and refine the projects, and report on their success or failure. Where possible, these projects should apply across the curriculum and enrich the entire Bates pedagogical community.

Endowing Special Programs

We recognize and endorse the power of endowing certain efforts that recognize the development of our students as independent learners and scholars. As an overall strategic objective, we recommend that Bates' continue to seek gifts to increase support for need-based financial aid and to meet the inclusion goals outlined in the Benjamin Mays Initiative.

In addition, we support special efforts in this category. Those include the Summer Scholars Program to boost the College's efforts to recruit and retain science and math students from underrepresented groups and to focus on writing and research skills. Additional help would include Student Scholar grants of \$5000 to students for a summer stipend, room and board; stipends for faculty unless they are receiving teaching credit; and other funds for travel to students whose work has been formally recognized

As grant programs of this type become a more prominent signature of the Bates experience, we could study the various forms and use the findings to tailor other programs for greatest impact and success. We might also encourage each academic area to propose programs in this category to advance student work in each of the disciplines.



Objective Four: Deepen the commitment to faculty scholarship

Unique to liberal arts colleges is the scholar's ability to integrate teaching and scholarship in creative and innovative ways. Bates has long recognized that transformative teaching is accomplished by faculty who are dedicated to their own intellectual pursuits while also engaged with students in and out of the classroom. Both students and faculty refashion themselves and the world through the interplay of these two forms of academic work.

Recognizing that scholarly engagement comes in various traditional and nontraditional forms—including published articles and books, community outreach, service learning, social justice, performance—campus-wide discussions of the many and changing definitions of scholarship are a necessary part of understanding these different forms of scholarship. Examining how we should acknowledge, support, and assess scholarly contributions is essential to supporting faculty in their engagement.

Fostering a community of engaged scholars, where faculty, staff, and students can come together to discuss, connect, and celebrate each other's work, is key. Developing an online college-wide system for compiling information about scholarly and creative work could be one powerful form of support.

To further boost scholarship, we may need to make more time for this form of work. Those who take up this initiative might consult the results of a survey by the Committee on Faculty Scholarship. Suggestions might include increasing in the availability of replacement courses as an enhancement of the sabbatical program and help for grant writing in the Office of Corporate and Foundations Relations. Engagement in research and scholarly pursuits is not limited to faculty and student. Many staff members are interested in opportunities for their work as scholars.



Objective Five: Track effectiveness, conduct further study of relevant topics, and report progress to the community systematically

Throughout their report, the Working Groups refer to the need for more internal study of Bates' practices and procedures and for more robust comparison with peer institutions and others on the cutting edge of various new developments. The College could charge a cross-campus group with overseeing and supporting this work on an ongoing basis. One first step could be for the group to develop guidelines to manage this category of effort.

Studies of Practices and Bates

As an example of work that is needed, the College could study trends in the assessment of student work. The following questions might be addressed:

- Are we holding students and faculty to the high academic standards we set?
- Have implicit assumptions about the meaning of letter grades (A, B, C...) evolved?
- If so, do trends reflect improvements in the real performance of our students?
- Do students now have more opportunities to rewrite papers, for example, and as a result achieve higher grades?

We also recommend a careful review of the place of short term in our curriculum. We encourage this group to consider options for modifying or eliminating Short Term, including the idea of making it a 3-week unit before the fall semester to focus on first year students and on seniors embarking on thesis research.

The College might also look at increasing the flexibility in the calculation of faculty workload to reflect more accurately time spent in all types of teaching. For example, could we enhance the way thesis supervision is counted and develop a way to grant teaching credit for summer pedagogical work with students? One outcome might be to increase academic support staff for thesis and summer research.

Another worthy area is the feasibility of a Community Fellows Program that helps students, faculty, and staff initiate community engagement programs on and off campus. We anticipate that access to funding and/or release time would need to be considered.

Comparing to Others as a Matter of Course

Another category of analytical work includes studies that would benefit from comparison to peers or others who are developing or refreshing their strategic practices. We might consider, for example, whether the credit hour system used by most universities, and by roughly

half of our peer colleges, might offer finer credit gradations and therefore be more flexible. Would adopting such a system erode the sense that all courses at Bates are of equal value?

We recommend that Bates continue our involvement in the Consortium for High Achievement and Success (CHAS) and continue financial support for faculty and staff to attend the meetings of that group.

Depending on the intensity of this work, we recognize that additional professional or support staff might be required.

QUESTIONS TO INFORM THE DISCOVERY PHASE

The Learning at Bates team is encouraged to consider, modify, research, and supplement the following questions about both the current situation and our future hopes.

The Current Situation: Strengths and Limitations

What is the status of planning for a Learning Commons? Does more planning need to be done? What is needed to move the plans forward?

What is the state of planning for other space that contributes to the learning environment? Are our practices consistent with our goals for this important component of the facilities plan?

What are our current efforts to support student learning, including the Peer Assisted Learning Group (PLAG) program, departmental peer tutor programs, peer writing tutor programs, and study skill and time management assistance? How are we assessing the needs of these and similar programs?

How do we support the strongest students and inspire them to even higher accomplishment?

What is the current status of mentoring and advising? What peer colleges might have programs to study?

What are the strongest examples of out-of-class learning at Bates? What do we know about our students' out-of-class activities? Are there typical patterns that can inform this work?

What does research say about the power of out-of-class learning? What can we learn from studies and examples elsewhere?

What more specifically is the latest thinking about out-of-class learning and the residential environment? Are there forms of residence life we should investigate?

How do campus-wide events such as Parents and Family Weekend or Homecoming or Reunion currently contribute to Bates' learning community? How can programs like this be expanded to deepen the focus on learning?

At Bates, how do students engage across differences? What current activities, such as the Multi-Faith dinner, encourage students to learn through conversations across differences?

What are the benefits and drawbacks of the short term? What information do we need to help us determine how short term could be reconstituted to further benefit students in their scholarly interests?

At Bates, what types of innovative programs assist faculty and students in their research and scholarship interests? How can Bates continue to encourage research engagement among faculty, staff, and students?

How do we draw on and integrate the life experiences of an ever more diverse student body in order to use diversity as a resource to improve all students' learning and to ensure the benefits of inclusiveness?

How do we and how might we build on our capacity and flexibility as faculty and staff members to respond to the range of student learning styles and give all of our students the opportunity to learn from each other, and to develop new paths to knowledge together?



The Future: Hopes and Promise

What are our highest aspirations for learning at Bates? How can our practices, policies, habits, and investments advance those practices in the next year? In the next five years?

What unique opportunities does Bates' specific learning environment offer students? How can we deepen the impact of that environment?

What are our highest aspirations for faculty scholarship? How can we do more to help faculty achieve their full potential as scholars? How can we track this work and use it to advance Bates?

How can the learning environment be extended and deepened? What unique opportunities does Bates offer? How can our practices, policies, habits, and investments advance those practices in the next year? In the next five years?

UPDATE FROM THE TEAM

The Learning Initiative Team has met several times this semester. We have used our time to review the work of last year's working groups and to discuss the different objectives for the Learning Initiative and the processes by which we can best plan to achieve them. Our challenge is an interesting one – much work has already been done on the objectives of establishing a Center for Teaching and Learning (whose current rubric is the "Learning Commons") and on deepening the College's commitment to faculty research. In pursuing these objectives we hope to work closely with the members of the Bates College community who have already spent considerable time and effort analyzing the issues at hand. With these objectives our plan is to oversee a process that defines an operational plan with near, medium and long-term goals for creating institutional structures at Bates College to support excellence and innovation in learning, teaching and research.

In contrast, two other of our planning objectives arose out of the work of last year's working groups and have yet to receive the kind of comprehensive attention that the objectives for the Learning Commons and Faculty Research have already enjoyed. These objectives are defined as efforts to "intensify the community of learning at Bates" and "to enhance the capacity to support learning College-wide." We have begun to think of the various items raised in the working groups that fall under these rubrics as a single objective to "review, reform and renew the learning environment at Bates." It is clear that the working groups discovered a strong and increasingly well-articulated

desire among members of the Bates College community for a review of a wide range of specific features relating to college life (e.g., academic calendar, the grid, residential life structures) whose present operation in the eyes of many do not support the environment for learning at Bates as well as they might.

With respect to these initiatives, our goal is to define a process by which (a) the learning environment at Bates can be considered comprehensively, and (b) the different aspects of college life that many have commented on can be evaluated within the context of that comprehensive vision. Finally, woven throughout the work of the working groups and throughout our planning objectives is a strong desire to clearly manifest the College's support for diversity and inclusion at Bates. We believe that part of our work this year will be to provide forums to continue conversations at Bates about what the College's commitment to diversity and inclusion means in the context of the learning environment at Bates and within the institutional structures that will support learning, teaching and research at the College.

Out of these discussions, we hope to achieve a consensus that will allow us to prioritize our objectives with specific planning goals for medium and long term steps to be taken at Bates. Additionally, our group is beginning to prioritize the many recommendations that came out of the working groups that touch on these objectives, and will establish which of these can be advanced and implemented through our group in the coming year.

Our process objectives are two-fold. First, we wish to design and implement a process by which we finalize the Learning Initiative by the month of May. This process should be open and transparent to the Bates College community and should communicate with members of the community in an iterative and self-reflexive fashion. Second, we wish to incorporate within the Learning Initiative processes by which we can (a) track the effectiveness of the Learning Initiative in achieving the objectives we define for it, (b) communicate with the Bates College community about the Learning Initiative as we pursue these objectives, and (c) respond meaningfully and in an informed way to new information and needs that arise in the course of pursuing the Learning Initiative objectives.

To achieve these process goals we plan to hold open meetings throughout the winter semester in which we describe the state of our work and ask for response and feedback from the community. We would also like to encourage anyone with opinions and ideas about our objectives and plans to contact any member of the Learning Initiative Team and let us know you think.

NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

Bates College is committed to creative, adventurous, and rigorous inquiry in a mutually supportive community of teaching, learning, and scholarship across the entire academic spectrum. In the current College-wide planning process, the Steering Group and the Working Groups have recognized the central role of the natural sciences and mathematics in any comprehensive liberal arts educational program and we underscore the need to improve the conditions for learning and investigation in all aspects of scientific and mathematical work.

Recognizing that the natural sciences and mathematics play an ever-increasing role in our world today and that scientific reasoning, laboratory experience, and quantitative literacy are critical components of any comprehensive liberal arts education, the purpose of this initiative is to build on the strength of learning and inquiry in the sciences and mathematics at Bates. Other factors contribute to the urgency of this work as well. For example, the traditional scientific disciplines are increasingly intertwined. Now collaborative and cross-disciplinary work arises naturally from a focus on solving complex real-world problems that typically cannot be addressed fully with the approaches and tools of a single discipline. This reality boosts motivation and encouragement for our multidisciplinary work in these fields at Bates.

In their recent report to the President, the Working Groups identified several issues that support the development of an initiative in the sciences and mathematics and the Steering Group ratified the idea that this initiative be prioritized. Of the 39 issues and 88 recommendations in the Working Groups' report, this initiative could directly and indirectly address 22 issues and 45 recommendations.

In addition, the initiative reflects the work of a group that has already been considering how to improve facilities for science and math at Bates. Members of the faculty have attended a Project Kaleidoscope workshop and initiated early division-wide discussions of their collective vision for excellence in the sciences and math as part of the liberal arts mission of the College.

Now the President has named a campus team to take the next steps to celebrate the sciences and mathematics, to encourage non-scientists to enjoy science, to promote interaction between faculty and students in the natural sciences and math and other divisions, and to sustain a campus culture that values science. The following objectives will be pursued:

- Further develop an innovative science and math curriculum at all levels: within the traditional majors, in interdisciplinary programs, in introductory courses, and in light of the new General Education requirements. Intensify support for this program of study across the campus.
- In collaboration with the program planning team, plan a major construction and renovation project for science and math facilities.

- Enhance the infrastructure that promotes and supports faculty scholarship and faculty-student research in the natural sciences and math.
- Take steps to ensure that as we replace a number of distinguished colleagues who have retired in recent years, we capture the full advantage of our current opportunity to recruit a significant number of young faculty members in the natural sciences division. These scholars will join our strong cadre of ongoing faculty in implementing this major effort to encourage and facilitate cutting-edge teaching and research.

Objective One: Further develop an innovative science and math curriculum at all levels: within the traditional majors, in interdisciplinary programs, in introductory courses, and in light of the new General Education requirements. Intensify support for this program of study across the campus.

In light of the new General Education requirements and Bates' commitment to supporting faculty and students in exploring new ways of understanding the world through innovative programs and guided risks that open the possibility of transformative experiences, this objective calls for program and curriculum developments within the traditional majors, interdisciplinary programs, and introductory courses.

As the faculty have recognized, Bates can enhance science and math by supporting programs of study across the campus, beginning by exploring possibilities such as teaching science courses that are integrated; developing an integrated introductory physics and chemistry course; and/or increasing those areas of existing overlap, including biology, geology, and mathematics. Further goals are to research, explore and experiment with a number of different models for integrating scientific disciplines within courses in effective ways and to strengthen the role of inquiry-based learning in the science and math curriculum.

Recently the faculty and staff in the natural sciences and mathematics have affirmed their inspiration to do more to make visible how knowledge in their fields is generated. At the introductory level, they want to create innovative courses that are interesting to students who lack previous interest in science or math as well as new courses that better prepare prospective majors to work in a world in which scientific knowledge is increasingly integrated. They also want to bring more students into their research laboratories where students can help make new knowledge. The faculty members recognize that one institutional strength is the research opportunity Bates offers to students. This objective is designed to build on that strength to maintain our position as a national leader in liberal arts education. What kind of program and curriculum will meet these aspirations as well as address our needs?

Objective Two: In collaboration with the program planning team, plan a major construction and renovation project for science and math facilities.

The new facilities should reflect and enhance an innovative college-wide vision for developing scientific and quantitative capacities that is at the leading edge among liberal arts colleges. They should also promote the robust collaborative and cross-disciplinary work that is an integral part of an excellent and inclusive liberal arts education. This building project will replace Dana Chemistry, renovate or replace Carnegie and realize the efficiency and excitement of faculty and students working together across traditional boundaries and taking advantage of opportunities for intellectual collaboration.

How can better research facilities promote existing and new faculty research, including the collaborations that many of us value within and across our scholarly communities? How can we do more to build on these robust examples of work that is an integral part of an excellent and inclusive liberal arts education? How can we encourage and support an increase in the quality and quantity of funded work where that is desired?

Additionally how can a new space facilitate outreach and provide places for students who are engaged as research partners with community organizations? Some such projects, in public and environmental health, for example, are already underway.

Objective Three: Enhance the culture and infrastructure that promotes and supports faculty scholarship and faculty-student research in the natural sciences and mathematics.

Scholarship is vital to our mission as educators. Questions this initiative might consider include: What is our model for scholarship, a model that celebrates our strengths but does not undermine our teaching? What models of scholarship allow us to acknowledge and value the wide range of scholarly and creative work that goes on at Bates? How do we communicate, to ourselves and others, the positive aspects of scholarship and research within the context of the liberal arts and sciences? The outward focus demanded by scholarship and creative work, and their requirements for external dissemination and peer review, can strengthen Bates and be a model for students.

These questions emphasize the value of the sciences and mathematics to the entire college community. What more can Bates do to knit the sciences and mathematics into our intellectual profile and reject the “two cultures” tendency that most of us came to a liberal arts college to escape?

Across the board, excellent work in science and math depends on strong infrastructure support. What enhancements and improvements do we need? What are specific steps towards achieving those aims?

Objective Four Take steps to ensure that as we replace a number of distinguished colleagues who have retired in recent years, we capture the full advantage of our current opportunity to recruit a significant number of young faculty members in the natural sciences division.

These scholars will join our strong cadre of ongoing faculty in implementing this major effort to encourage and facilitate cutting-edge teaching and research. The unusual timing of these retirements affords us a hiring opportunity strengthened by our institutional dedication to excellence, diversity and inclusion. One key to this strength is Bates’ ability to compete globally for students, faculty, and professional staff. We can also benefit from the experiences of peer institutions that have designed and implemented stronger science programs recently. What are best practices that should guide this part of our work?

One advantage as we set out to attract the best younger scholars is the imminent prospect of a new science and math building, which will serve as a recruiting tool in an aggressive hiring phase. How can we attract an even stronger cadre of science and math faculty to help design and then use the innovative space we are planning? How can this space increase excellence in teaching and research and also help us boost diversity, inclusion, and cross disciplinary work, and display our values of academic excellence?



QUESTIONS TO INFORM THE DISCOVERY PHASE

The Natural Sciences and Mathematics in the Liberal Arts team is encouraged to consider, modify, research, and supplement the following questions about both the current situation and our future hopes.

The Current Situation: Strengths and Limitations



What contributions does the natural science and mathematics curriculum make to the liberal arts mission at Bates? (How) has this mission changed in the last few years? What is the optimal contribution?

How have the new General Education requirements had an impact on the natural sciences and mathematics curriculum? How can these changes boost support and interest in natural science and math courses, research, and majors among students?

At Bates and other institutions, what are examples of current innovative courses in natural sciences and mathematics? Are there evaluations of these practices from which we can learn?

In what ways do peer institutions support integrated science courses and research? How can Bates continue to build upon its strengths in science and math research?

How can this process inform planning for science facilities? What features of a new science building would enhance the integrated curriculum and research proposed in this initiative?

What are the strengths and weaknesses in faculty and student recruitment and retention in the natural sciences and mathematics at Bates?

How do we draw on and integrate the life experiences of an ever more diverse student body in order to use diversity as a resource to improve all students' learning and to ensure the benefits of inclusiveness?

How do we and how might we build on our capacity and flexibility as faculty and staff members to respond to the range of student learning styles and give all of our students the opportunity to learn from each other, and to develop new paths to knowledge together?

The Future: Hopes and Promise

What are our highest aspirations for the natural sciences and math at Bates? How can our practices, policies, habits, and investments advance those practices in the next year? In the next five years?

What unique opportunities do Bates' programs in the sciences and math offer students? How can we deepen the impact of those programs?

What are our highest aspirations for faculty scholarship in the natural sciences and math? How can we do more to help faculty achieve their full potential as scientists and scholars? How can we track this work and use it to advance Bates?

How can science and math programs be extended and deepened? What unique opportunities does Bates offer? How can our practices, policies, habits, and investments advance those practices in the next year? In the next five years?

Team Members

Matt Côté (Co-chair), Associate Professor of Chemistry and
Associate Dean of the Faculty

Hong Lin (Co-chair), Professor of Physics

Pallavi Jayawant, Assistant Professor of Mathematics

Rebecca Sommer, Associate Professor of Biology

UPDATE FROM THE TEAM

The team charged to oversee the initiative entitled *Natural Sciences and Mathematics in the Liberal Arts* has had several team meetings and conducted its first meeting of the Division of the Natural Sciences and Mathematics. The team meetings have been used to organize, set initial goals, and discuss options for concrete actions to begin our work. The divisional meeting was a brainstorming session during which ideas, projects, and issues that might be included as part of the initiative were identified and tentatively organized into three categories: Science & Math Curriculum in the Liberal Arts, Faculty-Student Scholarship, and Building & Infrastructure. Many of the identified topics spanned two or more of the categories which is not surprising given the strong coupling between curricular and scholarly work among science and math faculty at Bates. In fact, this was noted as one of the division's defining characteristics and one of its strongest features. Faculty in attendance discussed ways in which the division's location within a liberal arts college shapes its curricula, the research programs of its faculty, and its goals for the students it educates—both those majoring in science and mathematics and those focusing on other fields.

It is noteworthy that while new facilities are widely assumed to be an important part of the future of science and mathematics at Bates College, discussions of the curriculum and scholarship dominated the division's discussion. There was wide agreement among faculty in mathematics and the natural sciences that developing innovative programs that demonstrably improve the science and math education of our students, and creating structures and practices that enhance faculty and student research, will be necessary steps along the path toward new facilities designed specifically to support the work.

THE ARTS IN THE COLLEGE AND THE COMMUNITY

Across all the departments and disciplines, Bates College is committed to creative, adventurous, and rigorous inquiry in a mutually supportive community of teaching, learning, and scholarship. In the current College-wide planning process, the Steering Group and the Working Groups have recognized the role of the arts in implementing Bates' educational mission and in enriching its interface with neighboring communities.



As the planning process and other work has underscored, Bates includes a range of rich and vibrant creative and performing arts educational departments and programs and has several nationally recognized arts/culture/community entities as well. These include the Bates Dance Festival, Bates College Museum of Art, and in some of its work the Harvard Center for Community Partnerships. Through departments and programs, the visual and performing arts serve as part of the curriculum and as part of our presence in the public sphere, locally, nationally, and internationally.

In their recent report to the President, the Working Groups recommended that the College take up an initiative in the arts and the Steering Group ratified the idea. Of the 39 issues and 88 recommendations in the Working Groups' report, this initiative could address more and less

directly 16 issues and 24 recommendations. In addition, the initiative also reflects the work of an arts planning group that began meeting last year and sent a document reporting on their aspirations to the Working Groups in the spring.

Now the President has named a campus team to take the next steps. Its charge is to boost and coordinate support for the arts, better position the departments and programs to infuse the College with ingenuity and experimentation, foster interdisciplinary thought and action, attract gifted students, build a more diverse community, and connect the College to the larger public in meaningful ways. The following objectives are designed to guide this initiative:

- Clarify and explain our educational vision of the role of creative and performing arts in serving the College's core goals.
- Develop a strategy to implement and sustain this shared vision for the place of the arts in a liberal arts education. Plan specific strategies to enhance the College's capacity to support and elevate the visibility of our artistic and cultural programs.
- Invite and strengthen the connection between the arts at Bates and the larger public community and enhance the participation of Lewiston/Auburn community members in Bates arts programs.

In the following sections, some ideas for each objective are offered. Not meant to limit or confine the campus team, these ideas represent some community input and work in the departments so far.

Objective One: Clarify and explain our educational vision for the role of creative and performing arts in serving the College's core goals.

This vision includes our aims to develop individual creative and imaginative capacities as well as to sustain a vibrant intellectual and cultural community. It should expand the platform on which people at Bates from different backgrounds interact and learn.

The platform for this objective is strong, because Bates demonstrates the powers of a creative and strongly interdisciplinary curriculum in a variety of ways. Examples are the self-designed majors and independent study courses that allow students to explore their interests in flexible and novel ways; the new General Education concentrations; the Mt. David Summit, where students present their academic and creative work to the community; the First-Year Seminars, in which no more than 15 students study with a teacher who is also their academic advisor, fostering an early immersion in the world of scholarship; a five-week spring short term where students take only one course and have the flexibility to go into the field, the archives, and the community in ways free from constraints of the traditional schedule; and the senior capstone project, which requires individual determination, dedication, synthesis, and reflection. Our existing capacity for innovation and creativity is poised to support an enhanced educational vision in the arts.

Recognizing that Bates has strong programs in Art and Visual Culture, Music, and Theater and Rhetoric (including the Dance program); creative writing courses in the English department, and broad co-curricular interest and participation in the arts among our faculty, staff, and students; this initiative will explore ways to build on these programs and enhance productive collaborations within the arts programs as well as between the arts and other disciplines.

Another important component of this objective is to learn more about relevant best practices elsewhere. To assist in this process, a consultant could be hired to evaluate the current state of the arts at Bates and make recommendations on further infusing an educational vision for creativity and arts across the disciplines, and/or teams from the Bates campus could visit other institutions with exemplary programs.

Objective Two: Develop a strategy to implement and sustain this shared vision for the place of the arts in a liberal arts education.

Recognizing that an array of departments and programs will always make up the arts at Bates, this objective addresses the need for a mechanism to coordinate the arts and support and encourage collaboration and cross-fertilization over time. Elements of its charge might include planning and coordinating the calendar and use of space; bringing artists, performers, and scholars together to promote collaboration and cross-fertilization; celebrating and making more visible the high quality and rich variety of artistic and cultural activity at the College.

One overall aim is to deepen and expand the impact and reach of the arts at Bates. A coordinating structure could provide the central place and space for formal and informal gatherings focused on the arts. It could coordinate arts programs and communication about campus-wide events and support arts research, scholarship, and performance through external and internal funding opportunities.

In time, this structure could grow in a variety of ways; it might, for example, ask that influential people outside the College form an external advisory board to help guide interface with the public. Such a group could both broaden and strengthen Bates' ties to the community and help build resources to ensure that the arts at Bates remain strong.

Objective Three: Plan specific strategies to enhance our capacity to support and elevate the visibility of our artistic and cultural programs.

Supporting the arts at Bates over the long term is another important objective of this initiative. How can the College achieve a stronger platform of resources for its wide range of programs and activities in the arts? Strategies might include specific approaches that increase visibility and broad enjoyment. For example, Bates could develop a coherent system for communication about and coordination of all campus arts activities and explore expanded and more creative uses of Bates College radio and television.

We might also consider a national symposium on the "Arts in Liberal Arts" to be held at Bates. This gathering could focus on the contribution of the arts to liberal education and on best practices among liberal arts institutions of similar size. During the event, the full complement of our arts programs could be featured as well.

Objective Four: Invite and strengthen the connection between the arts at Bates and the larger public community and enhance the participation of Lewiston/Auburn community members in Bates arts programs.

The arts offer important opportunities for Bates to connect with the Lewiston/Auburn community. Promoting vibrant partnerships between the Bates' scholarly and residential communities and the increasingly diverse city of Lewiston is one way to strengthen the connection.

Through the Harvard Center for Community Partnership, for example, Bates has innovative community and service learning programs that provide extraordinary support for connecting academic study and the wider world, including engagement with the region's Franco-American and Somali communities. These existing partnerships could serve as a model for how Bates can do more to connect to the community through creativity and arts.

This initiative recognizes that the arts provide important opportunities for College/community joint events. For example, the arts can create opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to gather in social and recreational activities that invite us to step out of our institutional roles, while providing ways for the larger public to step onto campus and participate in the Bates experience. The arts offer important opportunities for Bates to engage in artistic reciprocity with Lewiston/Auburn. We anticipate that this initiative will find new ways to encourage the members of the College community to engage and interact with the Lewiston/Auburn community and Lewiston/Auburn citizens to participate in the arts programs at Bates.

QUESTIONS TO INFORM THE DISCOVERY PHASE

The Arts in the College and the Community team is encouraged to consider, modify, research, and supplement the following questions about both the current situation and our future hopes.

The Current Situation: Strengths and Limitations

What are the strengths of the current arts curriculum, including Art and Visual Culture, Music, Theater, Rhetoric, and Dance? What are the main challenges these programs face? What are the strengths and limitations of efforts to promote collaboration and cross-fertilization across these disciplines? How do the disciplines succeed and fall short of being more than the sum of the parts?

What are the strengths and limitations of the arts in terms of the entire academic program? How well are the arts integrated into general education curriculum, for example? Is this integration strong, or should changes be considered at this time?

(How) do the arts contribute to residence life for students? What existing practices can be strengthened and what should be changed?

What best practices define excellence in the arts at peer institutions? Are there practices we should emulate?

How do Lewiston/Auburn citizens participate in the arts at Bates? What roles does Bates play in the local, regional, national and global arts communities? How can Bates further strengthen its ties to all its constituencies and communities through the arts?

Team Members

Mark Bessire (Co-chair), Director of the Museum of Art and Lecturer in Humanities

Kerry O'Brien (Co-chair), Assistant Dean of Faculty

Rebecca Corrie, Phillips Professor of Art and Visual Culture

Carol Dilley, Assistant Professor of Dance



What are the strengths and weaknesses in faculty and student recruitment and retention in the arts at Bates? How do we draw on and integrate the life experiences of an ever more diverse student body in order to use diversity as a resource to improve all students' learning and to ensure the benefits of inclusiveness?

How do we and how might we build on our capacity and flexibility as faculty and staff members to respond to the range of student learning styles and give all of our students the opportunity to learn from each other, and to develop new paths to knowledge together?

The Future: Hopes and Promise

What are our highest aspirations for the arts at Bates? How can our practices, policies, habits, and investments advance those practices in the next year? In the next five years? What unique opportunities do the arts offer students in their liberal arts education? How can we deepen the impact of the arts in students' experiences at Bates?

What unique opportunities do the arts offer for our interaction with Lewiston/Auburn, and for our presence and visibility in national and international arts communities? How can our practices, policies, habits, and investments advance those practices in the next year? In the next five years? What are our highest aspirations for faculty scholarship and creative work in the arts? How can we do more to help faculty achieve their full potential as scholars, artists, performers? How can we track this work and use it to advance Bates?

UPDATE FROM THE TEAM

The Arts Initiative Team has met to review and edit its charge and the questions that will inform the "discovery phase" of our process. We attempted to broaden and streamline the scope of planning and also clarified what we see as a full range of arts entities at Bates (both academic and co-curricular), and arts communities at Bates (students, faculty, staff, the local community, the broader world). We believe that the state of the arts at Bates is rich and vibrant, but lacks the coordinated visibility to underscore the College's many strengths in the arts.

We plan to collaborate throughout the planning process with a larger ad hoc "Arts Steering Committee," a self-selected group of faculty and staff that has been at work on bringing more visibility to the arts for the last year. (Members of the Arts Initiative team are also all members of the Arts Steering Committee). The Arts Steering Committee represents a range of academic disciplines as well as administrative offices that sponsor arts events. This group has energy, dedication, and collective wisdom that will serve the Arts Initiative Team in our planning process. For example, the Arts Steering Committee will host an informal meeting of faculty and staff on Monday, December 8, called *CurriculArts*. The goal of this meeting is to share information on winter term arts events that will be useful to faculty seeking to infuse their courses with arts as they create syllabi. The committee and the Arts Initiative Team will host a larger gathering on the arts for the entire College community in late January or early February to discuss the role of the arts at Bates. Arts Steering Committee member Heidi Chirayath is working with the committee to develop an "arts at Bates" study that will be undertaken by students in her winter course, SOC 205, *Research Methods for Sociology*.

