

Year Five Progress Summary
Planning Priorities for Lake Forest College 2013-2018

To the Lake Forest College Community:

As the 2018-19 academic year gets underway, I am pleased to provide this summary of our recent progress toward major goals in “Planning Priorities for Lake Forest College 2013-2018.”

That progress has been significant. Headlines start with the successful recruitment by our Office of Admissions – with great help from faculty, coaches and the entire campus – of 393 students in the Class of 2022 and 79 transfer students. Development and Alumni Relations, in turn, has secured capital campaign commitments – including current and deferred gifts – totaling more than \$115 million toward our \$125 million goal. The new Lillard Science Center is an inspiring campus showcase, with its grand opening scheduled at Homecoming on October 12. Successful national searches have yielded wonderful new faculty and key administrative leaders in Andrea Conner, Vice President and Dean of Students, and Sean Riedel, Chief Information Officer. First-to-second year student retention is strong and encouraging at 86%. And the College has just been informed that the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s Higher Education Office will recommend an exciting new \$1.1 million grant to support work by our humanities and social science faculty and students – with key Chicago institutional partners – on contemporary issues of race in the city.

I am also delighted to announce a transformative development for Young Hall. Trustee William G. Brown and his wife Solange Brown have agreed to provide a lead gift of \$9 million: one-half of the estimated \$18 million that will be required to renovate and expand the building. As a happy result, project planning is now actively underway, as is fundraising for the remaining sums required. If fundraising moves quickly, as we hope, the College would like to begin construction next summer and finish by the start of the 2020-21 academic year. The project will include the renovation of Young Hall – 140 years old this year – and the construction of a significant rear addition. The combined, expanded facility will feature new classrooms designed and sized for the 21st Century, attractive student gathering spaces, new quarters for the Career Advancement Center, contemporary faculty offices, and central HVAC. When the project is completed, I will recommend to the Board of Trustees that the College rename the facility Brown Hall, in recognition of the Browns’ remarkable generosity.

There is still important work to be done in more than one area in “Planning Priorities.” As College Council emphasized last fall in minutes published on September 15, 2017, “it is likely that the College will stick with the framework of [our current five-year plan] into the next few years. The principal goal – attract, enroll, retain, and graduate an academically-qualified and diverse student body willing and able to pay an increasing share of our tuition – remains unchanged . . . Strategies [in “Planning Priorities”] are still sound methods to achieve our goals.”

Note: the full text of “Planning Priorities for Lake Forest College 2013-2018” remains available for your reference at: www.lakeforest.edu/aboutus/administration/strategicplanning.

Invest in Key Academic Programs that Match Student Interests and Offer Sound Employment Prospects

Sciences and Mathematics

- The \$45 million Lillard Science Center is complete except for finishing touches and the greenhouse, which will be completed by late fall.
- A new major in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BMB) has been launched, and Assistant Professor Will Conrad has joined the College to help strengthen the program.
- Our Math and Computer Science Department is developing a data science program that will respond to the national need for well-educated data science professionals. New Assistant Professor Arthur Bousquet is contributing to this program development.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

- Recognized last year as one of the nation's "best emerging entrepreneurial studies programs," our E&I Program has benefited from the energetic leadership of Trish Thomas since her appointment last fall as Director of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. More than 40 students in our 2018 graduating class, boasting a range of different majors, completed our six-course entrepreneurship minor, now the College's most popular minor. Several generous alumni are now providing annual support for the program, as are local entrepreneurs in our Entrepreneurship Advisory Council.

Humanities and Creative Arts

- The \$800,000 Mellon-funded "Digital Chicago" program will conclude its main work this December, having supported a broad range of initiatives by more than 20 faculty and 38 student research assistants, and enhancing the educational experiences of more than 400 students in new and augmented courses. Digital Chicago inspired Mellon to invite the College to propose the exciting new program mentioned at the start of this report.
- Our choral music program received new funding from a generous alumnus – and the redirection of other available funds – to support an annual choral concert trip under the direction of Assistant Professor of Music Anne Barry.
- To support our Studio Art faculty, the College converted a groundskeeper shed on Middle Campus into three new work studios with full electrical power and access to natural light.

Chicago Connections

- Under the new leadership of Director Jennifer Larsen, the Center for Chicago Programs remains very active. Last year it facilitated some 240 class events benefiting students and faculty in 24 departments or programs, including First-Year Studies and "In the Loop."
- 45 students participated in the "In the Loop" residential program housed in "The Flats," the beautiful facility near Lake Michigan in which the College holds an entire floor.
- Students continue to benefit from free admission to the Chicago History Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago, thanks to our productive partnerships with both institutions.
- Assistant Professor of Anthropology Rebecca Graff and her students received substantial media coverage last month of their archeological dig at a possible Underground Railroad site in the Irving Park neighborhood: a great example of work amplified by the Mellon Foundation's "Digital Chicago" grant.

In addition to the achievements in the areas noted above, a total of 12 new tenure-track faculty or fulltime faculty on term appointments joined the College this fall, bringing impressive scholarship and teaching experience. In an organizational change designed to better serve the needs of faculty and students, the Learning and Teaching Center has been divided in two. The new Center for Academic Success – in beautiful, renovated quarters in Hotchkiss Hall – features our Writing Center, Quantitative Resource Center, and Disability Services. The Office of Faculty Development in North Hall will provide enhanced services for faculty, as well.

Prepare students for productive and rewarding careers

Enhance the Career Advancement Center (CAC)

- In a 2017 article, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* featured our Career Advancement Center, along with counterparts at Rutgers and Stanford, as a “national model.” The article highlighted our Career Pathways: five intentional communities of students, faculty, CAC staff, alumni, and employers in which students can explore potential careers, clarify their interests and directions, benefit from mentorship and advice, and develop meaningful networking connections. The five Pathways include Business and Finance, Law and Public Service, Creative Arts, Science and Healthcare, and “Build Your Own.” Students are now encouraged to join one or more pathways in their first semester on campus, and are also assigned career advisors at the same time.
- Each Pathway features a professional Career Pathway Leader and a leadership team eager to help students succeed.
- This summer CAC installed Handshake, an online career portal that efficiently and effectively connects students, potential employers and CAC staff. Career offices nationwide deem Handshake to be state-of-the-art and a best practice portal.
- More than a dozen students participated this summer in the “Activate” program in Chicago. Residing at The Flats, our “In the Loop” location, each student completed a guaranteed 8-week or 10-week career-building internship.
- With strong leadership from Jackie Slaats, Senior Advisor to the President, and Colleen Monks, Interim Director, CAC intends to provide a superior level of student service, and to be recognized in the vanguard of higher education.

Student Success: Improve Retention and Graduation Rates

- First-to-second-year student retention reached 86%, as noted previously.
- Increasing our graduation rate remains imperative in today’s hyper-competitive higher education environment. We still have distance to cover, but we are making progress: our anticipated six-year graduation rate next spring may reach 76% for the class that matriculated in 2013.
- The Student Success Committee will expand its focus on the sophomore year and initiatives that could increase sophomore-to-junior year retention, with ongoing leadership from Davis Schneiderman, Interim Provost and Dean of the Faculty; Andrea Conner, Vice President and Dean of Students; and Dawn Abt-Perkins, Associate Dean of Faculty for Student Success.

Invest in Strategic Campus Facilities

- The wonderful new Lillard Science Center is virtually finished, as noted previously.
- Plans for the renovation and expansion of Young Hall – the second major facility priority featured in “Planning Priorities” – are actively underway, as also previously noted.
- Inviting new quarters for our Writing Center, Quantitative Resource Center, and other student success offices, have been completed on the lower level of Hotchkiss Hall.

Support Faculty and Staff While Continuing to Optimize Resources

- At a time of declining net tuition revenue and plateaued enrollments nationwide, the College was pleased to be able to maintain a 2% pool for 2018-19 salary increases. The Trustee Committee on Faculty-Staff Compensation is committed to maintaining a competitive compensation package for faculty and staff at or above the ACM-GLCA median: the goal established in the Compensation Philosophy published in 2017. Consistent with that philosophy, faculty-staff compensation will remain the first expense item considered in the College’s annual budgeting, and the Trustee Committee will maintain vigilant oversight.
- The Flexible Work Options Policy that the College instituted last year has been beneficial for several administrative staff, and the College looks forward to continuing it.

Improve Lake Forest College Marketing

- Irene Ratliff recently began serving as Interim Associate Vice President of College Marketing, and the College will be fortunate to have her leadership in the coming year.
- The adoption of the Slate CRM is integrating the external communications and marketing platform for Admissions, Athletics, the Career Advancement Center, and the College’s Alumni, Parents, and Friends.
- The College will be showcased in a variety of digital and traditional media platforms in association with the grand opening of the new Lillard Science Center. Digital advertising has been secured throughout Chicago and other strategic admissions markets around the country. The College will also be promoted on WBEZ public radio and in local print publications such as Forest & Bluff and The Daily North Shore.
- The College is a new member of the Illinois Science and Technology Coalition, which among other features gains us immediate and regular exposure to more than 2,500 employers across the state. We will be featured in the October edition of their monthly e-newsletter, Catalyst.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone for your many, ongoing contributions. The College continues to make impressive progress, and I am very grateful. Best wishes for the year ahead.

Stephen D. Schutt
President
Lake Forest College