

## **Part II: Goals and Recommendations**

- 1. We need to communicate our commitment to responsibility and community in everything we do, and to hold transgressors responsible for actions that violate our community standards.**

If we are serious about wanting to create a community of engaged citizens who care for one another and treat each other with respect, we must be sure we make clear the sorts of behaviors we expect and the sorts of people we hope to attract. We must signal our seriousness of purpose, and also remind ourselves of these commitments at every opportunity. We must make sure that our policies are egalitarian and apply to all of us, rather than promoting hierarchies of expectation or responsibility. We must make sure that every member of our community knows about those policies and those commitments. And we must learn to ask about each new program or decision, “how will this strengthen our community, our sense of mutual responsibility, our commitment to creating a safe space for everyone and to welcoming different perspectives?”

There must be oversight of this process. We are convinced that the only effective way to monitor and assess the efficacy of these initiatives is through the creation of a presidential-level task force whose members have the legitimacy and power to see that it is done. We believe the committee should model our own in its broad representation of our multiple campus constituencies (faculty, high level administrators, staff, students), and in its regular communication with the Trinity community, and with the Trustees through the President. Its breadth of membership will also help establish both credibility and power. We call for the chair of the committee to be a tenured member of the faculty. That person should have a seat on the Planning and Budget Council to ensure that its proposals receive adequate attention.

This committee should be charged with overseeing the implementation of this report's recommendations. For some proposals specific details of implementation still need to be worked out. Many of them are complex and require organizational leadership, coordination, and support. Once these new programs are in place, the oversight group must ensure that they are adequately maintained and there has been appropriate follow-through. We must also be sure that our new programs are effective, which requires some mechanism for assessment. The new committee must also keep the community informed as to both the progress of the recommendations and the challenges to their fulfillment.

The oversight committee should also address explicitly the question of a single non-discrimination policy that applies to all campus organizations. In the Charter Committee, our discussions returned again and again to questions of inclusion and exclusion, whether real or perceived, in various social organizations on campus. We were unanimous in our desire for a non-discrimination policy for all College-recognized groups, and the necessity for all organizations and programs to consider whether any of their practices and policies might (even inadvertently) signal exclusion. However, we recognized the complexity inherent in creating any such policy. For example, we divided over the question of whether certain performance or tradition-oriented groups, like singing ensembles, should be permitted to exclude members on the basis of sex. Recognizing the nuances involved, and unwilling to pass judgment without fuller engagement with all parties involved, we call for the oversight committee to consider how best to craft a fair and consistent non-discrimination policy that ensures inclusive practices by all campus organizations.

There are as many ways of accomplishing these goals as there are means of communication. Among those are the following:

- a. The immediate creation of a “President’s Special Council on Diversity and Campus Community” to be drawn from Trinity’s multiple campus constituencies.

This council will assign responsibility for implementing each of these recommendations to the appropriate person or office, monitor new programs and assess their effectiveness, provide a clearinghouse for new ideas and proposals and serve as pool of advisors if specific issues arise. Its chair, a member of the tenured faculty, should also sit on the Planning and Budget Council. The committee must communicate regularly with campus members and with the Trustees through the President.

- b. Strengthen the campus Code of Conduct regarding hate speech, acts of harassment, and the like, and disseminate this information broadly in the community.

These codes must demonstrate the uncompromising stance of the administration against acts of harassment, assault, intolerance, or intimidation, and make it clear that such incidents will be followed up with action.

- c. Rework the Student Integrity Contract and its enforcement, maintaining student control over its processes and making it more central in student life.

Communicate our expectations more clearly in the Contract, and emphasize its relationship to the core mission of the school. Promote more frequent and widespread discussion of the Contract to incorporate greater student buy-in, and encourage greater community responsibility. As part of that reconsideration, examine Trinity’s student judicial processes including the student Honor Council, to make sure that, as a community, we are responding effectively and consistently to incidents of bigotry and intolerance, and communicating effectively with members of the campus community while preserving confidentiality.

- d. Make a single set of rules regarding harassment, assault, and other types of injurious behavior that applies to faculty, staff, administrators, as well as students. Make sure that faculty and staff judicial processes are effective and consistent in their responses to infractions.
- e. The Dean of Students should instruct Campus Safety to expand its Campus Safety Alerts to include crimes committed by students as well as by non-students, while preserving confidentiality.
- f. Add a question regarding community/diversity to Trinity’s application to signal the centrality of this issue to our community. (E.g. a question that would ask applicants how they might respond to a specific act of bias).

- g. The newly established President's Council should articulate a clear, consistent and fair non-discrimination policy for all organizations seeking College recognition.
- h. The President should organize and fund campus-wide meetings at least once a semester engaging a theme related to some aspect of community, diversity, or cosmopolitanism.  
  
Because the goal of these meetings is to foster communication and dialogue, each must have top administrators present, and all must include time with an open mike.
- i. The Trustees should hold regular meetings with faculty on issues of concern similar to the student forums already being held at trustee meetings.

## **2. We need greater economic, racial and ethnic diversity in our student body, faculty and staff.**

If we are serious about exposing our students to a diversity of viewpoints, cultures, and ways of living, to equip them to be more engaged and humane global citizens, we must provide as economically, racially, ethnically, religiously, culturally and internationally diverse a community as possible, and we must work to retain this diverse group once they have arrived.

We consider diversity a worthy goal in itself, but we also considered how we do compared with other liberal arts colleges. Trinity is certainly not the worst in regard to diversity, but we aspire to be among the best. Although we have done well in several categories, in others we have actually slipped slightly in recent years. One crucial example has been our failure to recruit and retain African American tenured or tenure-track faculty at the levels we had achieved in the late 1990s. (See Appendix C for more, and more specific, data.) We must protect the progress we have made in recruiting and retaining students of color and continue to move forward, not just in our relative position

vis a vis other schools but in pursuit of the broader vision we hold. Similarly we must reinstate and strengthen programs for increasing diversity among faculty at all ranks.

This goal of increasing diversity among students, faculty, administration and staff will require greater funding so that we can recruit such individuals for our faculty and our student body (and woo them from other schools), and enable those who might not otherwise be able to attend Trinity the opportunity to do so. We make special note of the fact that this includes middle-class students as well. Our limited current financial aid budget skews our student body into well-off full payers and those from lower income brackets, which often creates a false and dispiriting dichotomy among students.

We also believe achieving this goal requires greater attention to other indications of academic merit beyond test scores in our scholarship selection processes. Every study of academic success suggests that indicators such as test scores are not always good predictors across the range of students. Other indicators, such as high grades, achievement and persistence in adverse circumstances, are in many cases better predictors of academic strengths crucial for success in college and beyond.

Finally, we must retain this diversity by providing mentoring and social support for newcomers, academic support to those who need it, and a wide array of opportunities for those who seek greater academic challenges. This includes making sure our existing programs and rules provide a safe and welcoming environment for all, including people of differing sexual orientations or physical abilities.

In light of these considerations we put forward the following recommendations:

- a. More money for financial aid for students of color and first generation, low-income, and middle-class students. Meanwhile, the committee determining financial aid should revisit its current allocation decisions to make sure we

are making the best trade-offs we can in terms of encouraging a diverse student population to attend Trinity.

- b. Look beyond test scores for other evidence of academic excellence and high achievement when recruiting for merit scholarships.
- c. Expand current outreach and community-building programs like Quest and QuestBridge.
- d. Restore funding for the faculty-hiring opportunity program for members of under-represented racial groups and expand it to include the recruitment of such faculty across all ranks.
- e. Establish a more professional and effective process to advance affirmative action for faculty, staff and administrative hires, including creating job responsibilities explicitly dedicated to such activities.
- f. Increase funding and support for student retention programs especially for first generation and other students who may be struggling to find their footing, and for those students seeking new academic challenges.
- g. Establish ongoing mentoring and other support programs for new staff and faculty members.
- h. Continue to improve policies for family leave, anti-harassment, and sex and gender equality to insure that our workplace is welcoming to diverse members and to signal our commitment to providing equal treatment for all.
- i. Increase resources for programming, training, and peer education around issues of sexual assault and harassment, including prevention programs.

**3. We need better social and academic spaces that would foster a wider diversity of communities and facilitate active engagement between and among different Trinity constituencies.**

We can neither provide social alternatives nor can we encourage students to create their own social activities without spaces in which those activities can occur. Simply calling on the community to make closer links among residential, social and academic life is insufficient if we do not provide physical places where such links can be made. Yet Trinity has no student center, and community spaces both in dormitories and in social or academic buildings have increasingly been given over to other functions. Nor are our classrooms well-equipped for a variety of education programs and styles. And too much of our academic life is physically separate from student social space.

We must restore social spaces to students, make them attractive and versatile, and allow students to take charge of their use. This both broadens the scope of possible social opportunities and provides community-building opportunities as such usage decisions are made collectively. And we believe we should integrate academic, residential and social life to the extent possible, to blur the distinctions between living and learning. Living in a liberal arts college is integrally related to learning and the way we use space should foster rather than inhibit such linkages. Therefore we call for the creation of academic spaces within social, residential and cultural buildings, and include those spaces on the list of available classrooms for teaching. (Here we envision spaces like Summit Suites, which offers faculty offices, classroom, lounge and student residential spaces combined or in proximity.) Likewise, flexible classroom space provides alternatives for social programming also linked to learning.

We also recognize that much of student socializing revolves around alcohol. We seek two different approaches to this. While we appreciate our legal responsibilities to enforce current drinking laws, we call on the College to find ways to provide alcohol to legal adults. This minimizes the chance that these students might drive after drinking, and also allows the College to provide locations where adults can model moderate and responsible drinking. Second, we call for more social spaces and social activities that do not center around alcohol.

Trinity has also lost space that encouraged socializing and community among faculty and staff. The paucity of dedicated faculty and staff space, the loss of an academic bookstore, and similar recent changes mean fewer opportunities for faculty, administrators and staff to engage with each other and with students. Such engagement

has been an important source of a sense of community among those who work for the College and a venue for creating or fostering new ideas. The recent limitations on such opportunities have meant a real loss to Trinity, reflected not only in lower morale but also in reduced opportunities for such engagement.

Without question, having more faculty, staff and administrators living close to campus could play a positive and important role in this expanded landscape of social, cultural and intellectual life that we envision. Thus we strongly advocate creating housing options, supporting home buying programs, or other incentives that would encourage more Trinity employees to make such a choice.

With these concerns and ideas in mind we offer the following recommendations:

- a. Restore and refurbish dorm lounges and other residential spaces so they are attractive and inviting, and allow residents to determine their use
- b. Create (or free up) more functional, flexible and well-equipped spaces like Gallows Hill whose uses are to be controlled by students. As new spaces become available for permanent use, set aside some as dedicated spaces for new student groups. Dean of Students must establish fair and open process by which students make those determinations.
- c. Create (or refit) more and better quality spaces for arts and cultural programming, exhibitions, and accessible studio and practice spaces.
- d. Create flexible academic (teaching and learning) spaces within some residential and social halls (including Greek and cultural houses) and include them in the set of formal classroom options offered by the Registrar and the Calendar office.
- e. Build a student center (and meanwhile retool Mather to provide more spaces where students and student organizations can interact).
- f. Investigate the possibility of a “pub” or other on-campus alternative with alcohol and find ways to serve alcohol legally in other social spaces where appropriate.
- g. Restore and improve spaces for staff, administrators and faculty to gather, as well as for students and faculty.
- h. Offer various incentives to encourage faculty, staff and administrators to live closer to campus.

**4. We need a residential and social life for students, faculty and staff that fosters a stronger sense of community and mutual responsibility, as well as one that encourages an open-minded embrace of diverse opinions and styles.**

While providing physical spaces is crucial, so too is creating the opportunities to build community and to better coordinate, expand, and diversify our intellectual, cultural and social offerings. How do we use our spaces to best advantage to provide such experiences? What sorts of programming structures would most encourage broad intellectual, cultural and social engagement? How do we best set the stage for encouraging the broadest exchange of ideas and perspectives?

Part and parcel of such discussions is the role of fraternities and sororities, an issue that surfaced regularly in our conversations. We were mindful of the fact that the faculty voted four times in the past two decades, each one overwhelmingly, to call for the abolition of fraternities on campus. We were also mindful of the greater support Greeks received from many students and alumni, and the repeated efforts of the Trustees to reform the existing system. We concluded therefore that the future of the Greek system will depend in large measure on other issues not yet resolved, and which we hope our report begins to address. Nevertheless, although we recognize that there may be disagreement both within the Charter Committee and in the broader Trinity community about the current values and drawbacks of Greek life or about its future, our committee did agree that the fraternities and sororities hold disproportionate sway over the social life by dint of having control of much of the social space, and indeed the only social spaces that accommodate parties with alcohol. After much discussion, therefore, we agreed that it would be unwise to resolve the future of the Greek system until there was an alternative

social life available. It is for these reasons that we believe our immediate goal must be to create the spaces and opportunities to create such alternative social options.

Of course offering greater residential, social and cultural options requires money to fund new programs, social gatherings, technology to coordinate activities and communication, and safe and reliable transportation options into the Hartford area. But it also requires creating new organizational structures that encourage creativity and a sense of community both within Trinity and between Trinity and the broader world. Therefore we call for the creation of a coordinating body to facilitate planning for artistic, cultural and intellectual events on campus. We call as well for a restoration of the funding such programs previously enjoyed.

We believe students have an important leadership role to play. We seek to empower them to define their own social life and to create structures for themselves to do this. At the same time, we also seek to encourage collaboration among a number of constituencies wherever possible. This not only helps maximize resources, but also brings together groups of people who might not otherwise encounter each other and provides opportunities for leadership, cooperation and problem-solving.

But cultural programming is not sufficient to strengthen a sense of community. We call for stronger institutional support for community building when students first arrive on campus, and then within each residence hall. We urge a longer student orientation that extends into the academic year, allowing students to spend more time interacting in smaller groups and getting to know different parts of the community. We also call for a second year orientation more focused on engagement with the Hartford community.

Community building must begin at home, in residence halls. The Resident Advisors balance two goals sometimes at odds: fostering community and policing that community. We call on the Dean of Students office to help RAs achieve that balance more comfortably and remain effective at both tasks. We also hope to foster the RAs' ability to create community as common spaces are restored to residence halls and by providing modest amounts of programming money. We ask RAs to organize and coordinate their students into social planning groups that would decide how to allocate that money and those spaces. That is, the RA would become an organizer rather than a social events planner, building community by bringing residents together to make decisions. If First Year students live separately, the Mentor could fulfill this role in addition to providing academic support, which would require that Mentors return to their earlier practice of living in First Year halls. We note that expanding the expectations and duties of RAs (and possibly Mentors) might also require altering their compensation.

Other campus student leaders, including PRIDE (Promoting Respect of Inclusive Diversity in Education) members and heads of student organizations and athletic teams, must also be empowered to play a greater role in fostering community and raising the level of expectation regarding student behavior. We therefore call on these leaders, as well as on RAs and mentors, to hold discussions with their groups on questions of community building, social inclusiveness, and the individual's responsibility to the community. Do their own policies and practices promote or inhibit inclusivity?

Similarly, student government has tremendous potential to foster social alternatives by thoughtful and deliberate policies regarding the disbursement of student

activity funds. No student organizations should be denied basic funding solely due to lack of available money.

Given these considerations we offer the following recommendations:

- a. Launch a College-wide competition to propose alternative residential structures – houses, more theme dorms, or other configurations – and implement best feasible idea(s) that nurture community and responsibility.
- b. Create a collaborative umbrella committee for events; provide sufficient funds to support a wide variety of cultural, intellectual and artistic programs on campus and to subsidize tickets for such programs off campus. This committee's work must be coordinated with new means of transportation for students so they can attend off campus events.

This umbrella group, which should bring together members of Student Government Association, Trinity College Activities Council, student cultural and affinity groups, and representatives from the faculty, Multicultural Affairs Office and the Dean of Students' Office, will be expected to help coordinate cooperation and resource-sharing among groups planning intellectual and cultural events open to the entire campus, allocate funds to groups proposing events, and organize a number of their own events.

- c. Expand and support the role of student RAs and First Year Mentors in building community.  

The RA, still living in the hall he or she serves, would continue to serve as mediator or informal intercessor between residents regarding behavior, and would also be charged with organizing his or her group into a social planning body.
- d. Call on leaders of all campus organizations and teams to hold discussions about building community with their group at least once per semester.
- e. The Dean of Multicultural Affairs should re-examine the timing and structure of PRIDE orientation to ensure the greatest effectiveness, expand the number of PRIDE leaders and enhance their role in fostering diversity and community on campus.
- f. Provide adequate funding to extend orientation programming into the academic year. Consider a Sophomore orientation, geared toward community building and fostering connections with the Hartford area.
- g. The Office of Communications should work with the Dean of Multicultural Affairs, students, academic departments and others to find multiple, regular mechanisms for providing information regarding events to the Trinity community.

These might include: improve the accessibility of Exchange; consider a rolling scroll of daily events for Mather, the Cave and Bistro; use Facebook for better outreach to students; explore the feasibility of a new website that announces all cultural and intellectual events in a single calendar, provides links to campus and Hartford cultural groups and to nearby cultural and educational locations, posts alerts of bias incidents, offers links to relevant articles and resources and perhaps provides a space for discussion.

- h. Dean of Students' office should increase funding for student-faculty gatherings and other social and intellectual interactions outside of class, and better publicize the availability of such funds.
- i. Provide diversity training for faculty, administrators and staff particularly focused on issues of race, ethnicity, religion, social class, culture, physical ability, sexual orientation and gender identity.
- j. Rethink Vernon Social Center programming to provide for a wider array of activities.

## **5. We need to embed these values into our curriculum.**

Teaching is at the heart of our enterprise and if we do not make community, openness to difference, intellectual flexibility, and cultural literacy central, we are not addressing key elements of our mission. This is not to suggest politicizing our classrooms or altering our high academic expectations for writing, reading, researching, and thinking. Rather it means finding ways to make it clear that to be a truly educated person is to be open to different perspectives, to be willing to explore new ideas and experiences, and to wrestle with different approaches to issues. It means recognizing that we can learn from one another and from our community, and that engagement with real-world examples of our studies enhances our learning and helps us understand academic concepts in a deeper and more meaningful way.

Tied into this broader educational vision are initiatives that link courses and extra-course programming, students and faculty, the College, the community and the world.

We call particular attention to the successful implementation of two “co-curricular initiatives” on decolonization and on migrations in 1997-98 and 1998-99, respectively. Each initiative had a broad intellectual theme, linked several faculty and courses from different departments and programs, outside speakers, films, panel discussions, trips, and more, and engaged students at every level from planning to speaking. The level of participation and engagement was extraordinary and models much of what we seek to accomplish with this report.

Re-conceiving the curriculum in light of these challenges places new expectations on both students and faculty. It also requires us to rethink how and what we teach, to create, reinstate, or expand effective and successful retention programs, and to be creative with our use of technology. We applaud recent faculty decisions to strengthen Trinity’s curricular requirements, and strongly support further discussion of such issues.

To accomplish this we offer the following recommendations:

- a. Continue to advocate for a Hartford engagement requirement
- b. Reinstate a program to encourage and fund the organization of year co-curricular initiatives that would build on the best practices demonstrated in the 1997-99 initiatives.
- c. Provide greater structural support, including transportation, for Community Learning Initiative and other courses that link with Hartford.
- d. Restore or expand programs like Human Rights and Tutorial College that foster community, promote retention, and embody in microcosm the values we seek.
- e. Create an E (electronic) transcript, to appear alongside the student’s formal credit transcript, that lists student participation in internships, community and cultural groups, independent work, and so on, to highlight such activities and contributions to intellectual and cultural life.
- f. Work with the First Year Program to find more ways to incorporate issues of community, responsibility, openness, engagement, and respectful speech and behavior, including sexual behavior, into First Year seminars or other programs that First Year students attend. Provide the support necessary to accomplish this.

- g. Establish and support opportunities for Senior exercises or similar projects that use the power of interdisciplinary student collaboration to achieve the result (e.g. a political scientist, chemist, and environmental scientist conducting research on pollution in the Park River), to be identified on a student's E-transcript.
- h. Expand faculty workshops that offer ideas for creating and promoting classroom environments that are welcoming to all in our diverse student body.

**6. We need to draw closer connections between Trinity and Hartford (including the larger Hartford metropolitan area); and to engage with the broader Hartford communities in all their diversity.**

Part of our mandate as a liberal arts college is to help our students become more open-minded and cosmopolitan, to be flexible about change and open to new possibilities. To do this requires exposing students, staff and faculty to the widest array of perspectives and of social and cultural experiences and to encourage interaction with a broad diversity of people.

We also must provide opportunities to build community through the planning and coordinating of such events both among groups within Trinity and between Trinity and community groups. Several campus groups, including Cinestudio, the campus radio station WRTC, the Hartford Studies Project and Temple of Hip Hop offer proven models for success. Such programming also helps the broader Hartford area community by providing venues for their many activities and interests. This creates a related need – to make the campus more friendly and accessible to visitors. We must also expand the programs that bring community members into Trinity not as visitors but as students, including the Academy of Lifelong Learning and Individualized Degree Program for adult students. And finally, we must encourage students to contribute their time and skills

off-campus, to be active in the larger community in which Trinity makes its home, by strengthening outreach and volunteer programs such as the Community Service Office.

How do we maximize our own resources to achieve all of this? How well do we use the resources of the metropolitan area around us? We recognize that this certainly requires money, not only for programming but particularly to hire qualified and professional support staff to coordinate such programs and to do outreach to potential students, performers and cultural communities. We also recognize that fostering such connections requires both top-down structures and personnel, and the space for creativity to percolate from the bottom up.

We therefore offer proposals for both centralized structures and decentralized possibilities:

- a. Enhance Trinity's outreach educational programs that reach into the greater Hartford community, including IDP; and that serve the community, including the Community Service office.
- b. Host more cultural and arts events for and with the community (or more properly, Hartford's many communities). We envision a broad range of events, coordinated with good advertising and communication.
- c. To be effective in such programs Trinity needs a professional arts coordinator independent from any academic department who would be charged with finding performers, working with community groups, coordinating (and encouraging) the events planned by other campus groups, and overseeing performance spaces and scheduling.
- d. Work with the Vice President for Planning on the Master Plan and other campus development projects to consider the possibilities of our location, including the business opportunities on New Britain Ave. and the residential communities that surround us.
- e. Work with Community Relations and Communications to respond to community incidents or issues that involve Trinity or its members.
- f. Provide support for efforts by the SGA and Dean of Students' Office to improve transportation options for students traveling in and around Hartford.

Transportation entails providing cars and/or vans for community learning courses, Community Service programs, internships or

visits to restaurants, museums, or cultural events; and establishing a relationship with a taxi or similar service to transport students to and from community locations if they can't drive themselves. This should be coordinated by an individual or office other than Campus Safety.

- g. Remove the existing fence separating our campus and Broad St., which serves more as a symbol of exclusion than an effective barrier against criminals. Discuss with Campus Safety what should replace this fence to protect against dangers such as traffic accidents causing injury or damage, or criminal activity.
- h. Publicize Hartford area events more widely on campus, including reduced price or free tickets and providing transportation.
- i. Post more (and better) campus maps at more locations on campus, and provide better signage on buildings.