

Bicentennial Strategic Planning Commission

February 2017

Executive Summary of Partnering with Hartford Planning Process

The PWH subcommittee aimed to identify what distinguishes Trinity as a small liberal arts college in an urban setting and committed to sustained, long-term community partnerships. We started with an inventory and assessment of Trinity's current myriad programs and partnerships as well as previous work (i.e. reports, retreats, surveys, applications). We formed internally focused (campus community) and externally focused subcommittees within PWH. Our goal was to set the stage to strengthen Trinity's engagement with the broader community in a mutually beneficial and respectful way that reinforces the College's values and points of pride. Critical questions (abridged and edited) included:

What should be the relative focus: immediate neighborhood vs. beyond?

How do faculty, staff, and student expertise and interests support and sustain partnerships?

How do we support and grow community service activities among students, faculty and staff?

How can we envision for our campus as a broader community asset that welcomes our neighbors?

Which partnerships should be supported and which new partnerships will advance our mission?

Are there ways to further enhance the global/urban connection?

Toward these goals, we recognized the long history of engagement Trinity has had with community and we reviewed previous documents and the work of previous planning and evaluation committees. After writing our report we re-reviewed these documents to ensure essential ideas were not overlooked.

We assembled a comprehensive list of partnerships with the community and a repository of helpful documents noted above. This repository of partners and information must be updated and maintained.

We mobilized three customized on-line surveys. Responses were gathered from PWH members, faculty/staff/students, and community partners in Hartford and nearby. We hosted four open forums to engage key stakeholders: three for the campus (one focused on students) and one for community partners.

Our core beliefs, as aligned with the Mission of Trinity College:

Opportunities abound across the liberal arts curriculum. We have much to offer and even more to gain by the College better **connecting** with and integrating into Hartford.

Community **engagement** needs to be early and often, practical and sustained, and reciprocal. In recent decades efforts have been intermittent and fractured.

We can **transform** our College's culture and our city with meaningful long-term relationships. Opportunities abound for small, short-term inexpensive adjustments and systemic long-term changes.

Our primary recommendations:

- Establish and support a Committee on Engagement, comprised of all current community-focused entities, that interfaces directly with the President. Establish a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees.
- Dedicate infrastructure and incentives to support faculty and staff engagement. Gain resources via reallocation, streamlining, and internal and external partnering. Set realistic community expectations.
- Welcome the community to campus and showcase Hartford to our students early and often. Develop regular opportunities to do both and leverage better regular channels of communication.
- Solve transportation and other logistical issues to remove barriers and facilitate engagement.
- Establish and maintain repositories and dashboards for data, reports, metrics, assessment, etc.
- Ensure that Community Engagement is sustainable and transcends changes in leadership and personnel.