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Reaching the World: Capital campaign kicks off with emphasis on ensuring Colby experience is accessible to all qualified students

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Reaching the World

*Capital campaign kicks off with emphasis on ensuring
Colby experience is accessible to all qualified students*

BY STEPHEN COLLINS '74



Convinced of the intrinsic value of the Colby experience, determined to make the institution even better, and committed to expanding access to ever-stronger students regardless of their ability to pay, Colby will kick off Reaching the World: A Campaign for Colby this fall at events in Waterville, Boston, and New York City.

With fanfare.

The Board of Trustees, President William Adams, leaders among the faculty and administration, and a small cadre of loyal alumni and alumnae have been planning the capital campaign over the last several years and have reached the point where the campaign is ready to go public.

Major campaign kickoff events are scheduled at Colby on October 22, in Boston on January 20, and in New York on January 26. At those gala events, specific goals and milestones will be announced, along with progress made during the campaign's pre-kickoff "quiet phase."

The campaign seeks philanthropic support to enhance Colby's academic programs; to make sure the most capable students, regardless of their economic background or financial situation, can attend; to provide support for faculty and teaching; and to provide necessary facilities to keep Mayflower Hill on the list of America's greatest college campuses.

The bottom line is making sure that Colby has in place the resources it needs to develop leaders who will have a positive impact on the world, Adams said.



Reaching the World: A Campaign for Colby seeks to ensure that qualified students have access to the College. Above, students listen as Assistant Professor Otto Bretscher (mathematics) makes a point.

In an informal conversation Adams articulated three main goals for the campaign: “Access, excellence, and competitiveness.”

At the top of the list is ensuring that Colby remains a school of opportunity—one that can help any student who meets the admissions standards meet the cost of attending. “We need to strengthen our resources for need-based financial aid,” Adams said. “We need to up Colby’s commitment to equity and diversity.” Adams noted that the access and equity issue has become the subject of intense national discussion following release of a recent book, *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education*, by William Bowen, president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Addressing Colby’s commitment to excellence, Adams said that resources sought in this campaign will allow the College to sustain and expand its tradition of curricular innovation. While the faculty-student bond remains a hallmark of the Colby experience, Adams said, “Teaching and learning have changed, and the requirements for facilities have changed.” Student research offices and small-group work spaces are needed, reflecting Colby’s broad use of project-based learning and research across the disciplines.

Adams talked about the role of the endowment, which will grow by more than \$100 million as a result of the campaign. He said that changes in the world and changes in American higher education require that colleges like Colby “are continually raising funds for endowment and facilities.” Despite substantial gains in the size of

its endowment over the last decade, Colby was recently solicited to submit a grant proposal as an “under-endowed” institution because its endowment still lags behind many of its peers.

Michael Sinkus, president and CEO of the firm Marts & Lundy, an advisor to the campaign, said Colby’s initiative stands out among hundreds of campaigns underway at various colleges and universities because of how strongly rooted it is in the College’s strategic plan. “At Colby it’s not just, ‘give us money—we know what to do with it,’” Sinkus said. He characterized Colby’s fund-raising effort as an extension of the detailed plan for growth in programs, facilities, and the endowment adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2002.

Richard Ammons, vice president for college relations and Colby’s chief development officer, said that should be helpful in communicating the College’s mission and priorities to prospective donors, who are under pressure to support a widening range of philanthropic causes as more and more nonprofit organizations launch their own fund-raising campaigns. As alumni/ae and other friends of the College decide among competing requests for their support, they will have a pretty good idea of what they’re getting. Ammons imagines the key questions for donors will be: “What will it do for students?” “What will those students do for the world when they get out?” and “What can I do with my money that’s going to make the world better?”

While benefactors can address problems around AIDS or homelessness by supporting clinics and shelters, he said, support for Colby is a



The framework of the new Diamond Building, a major academic initiative that will offer new opportunities in social sciences and interdisciplinary studies. The Diamond Building is part of a dramatic expansion of facilities included in the Strategic Plan for Colby, launched in 2002.

more elemental approach—one that gets to the root of these and other social problems by developing scientists and economists and leaders who can have a broad impact on a wide range of social challenges.

Ammons noted that many alumni/ae will be involved in the campaign by way of their Annual Fund gifts, which count toward the campaign total. But he also acknowledged that the campaign is an opportunity to mobilize donors and to ramp up goals and participation rates and the size of gifts.

Lisa Tessler, director of donor relations and the person coordinating the upcoming kickoff events, said those events are geared toward communicating “how Colby is going to put the strategic plan into action.” She said the events need to convey both the enormous pride that alumni/ae have for the institution and a sense of the impressive directions in which the College is going.

Co-chairing the new campaign will be two members of the Board of Trustees, Larry Pugh ’56 and Bob Diamond ’73.

Pugh stresses the importance of building resources for scholarships and financial aid. He notes that despite generous contributions from alumni/ae and friends that have substantially increased the size of Colby’s endowment in recent years, “we’re still in the bottom third among the NESCAC schools.” Priorities for this campaign, he said, are, “to make Colby an even stronger educational institution for the 1,800 students who attend every year,” and “to keep us among the most highly ranked competition in the world of higher education.”

Diamond, president of Barclays PLC and CEO of Barclays Investment Banking and Investment Management, said he is co-chairing the campaign because, “I believe in what Colby stands for, and I believe in the value of a great liberal arts education.” Calling his service to the College “a labor of love,” Diamond said, “Our competitive position is very strong. This campaign is all about Colby seizing its place in the world.”

Nancy Greer Weiland ’65, a trustee who is vice chair of the campaign, said that meeting higher Annual Fund goals is critical to the overall success of the campaign. Individual Annual Fund gifts are important to Colby’s reputation, she said, because “they are used as an index of how attached and loyal alumni are to the College.” For that reason it is important for this campaign to re-engage non-givers and people who have contributed only sporadically. “Colby needs them,” she said.

The theme of “community,” reflecting both the active community life that endures on Mayflower Hill as well as the strong spirit of affiliation that alumni/ae feel for Colby, will play an important role in the kickoff events. And throughout the upcoming campaign, those communities are expected to energize one another: alumni/ae should be inspired by the remarkable students and programs of Colby in the 21st century, and Colby students and faculty of today will be buoyed by the support from generations of students who went before, Ammons said.