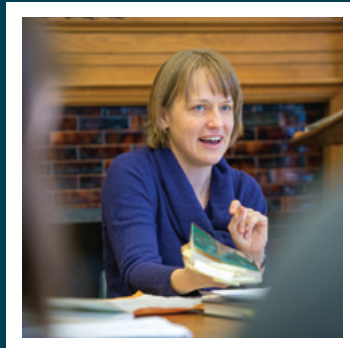
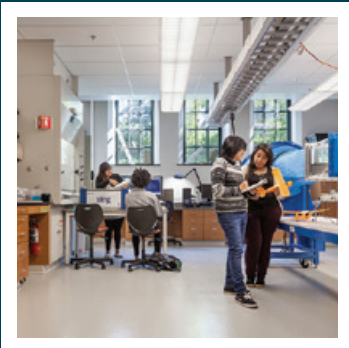




Lives of Distinction and Purpose A Plan for Smith



From the President

In February 2015, Smith College embarked on an ambitious strategic planning process. In partnership with the Committee on Mission and Priorities (CMP), I issued an open call inviting every student, staff member and faculty member to offer their best ideas to position Smith for strength in the coming decades. The resulting plan, the product of 18 months of refinement and widespread, inclusive engagement, represents the collective aspirations of a community that cares deeply about Smith and envisions a bold future for women's education.

Our planning work took place in the context of significant changes in higher education, particularly in modes of teaching and learning. Inclusion, diversity and equity, in all aspects of the educational experience, are recognized as fundamental to excellence. Faculty and students seek to move flexibly among learning contexts: large group and small, paper and screen, face-to-face and online. Institutions are building capacity for innovation and making. Pedagogy framed around complex, urgent problems—high-stakes global challenges that often lie at the heart of global inequities—holds the promise of transformative learning.

Around the world, as the costs of higher education continue to rise, there is heightened focus on the value of a college education and the capacities and opportunities with which our graduates enter the postcollege world. Institutions like Smith must respond strategically to a number of challenges, including global competition, demographic shifts in college-going populations and growing economic pressure on the four-year residential college model.

The initial call for strategic planning ideas elicited nearly 200 proposals. In reviewing them, CMP was informed by a number of principles. First among these was a commitment to Smith as a women's college that produces women leaders. We favored initiatives that built on Smith's distinctive history of integrating the curriculum and cocurricular experiences. We committed to investing not only in the new but also in what we already do well. We were drawn to proposals that strengthened essential student capacities. And we resonated to the idea of engaging alumnae as exemplars, models and resources, notably in the context of experiential education.



As planning progressed, CMP convened six working groups to align and refine proposals. We tested ideas at planning retreats in September 2015 and January 2016, and in two days of playback sessions in February 2016 in which more than 80 staff members, students and faculty members assessed emerging initiatives. Along the way our work was informed by a number of ongoing and concurrent initiatives, including the Global Working Group, Neilson Library Program Committee, Student Leadership Visioning Committee, Financial Aid Study, Study Group on Climate Change, Inclusion Strategic Plan, and the Committee on Academic Priorities' Five-Year Framework.

This plan builds on the achievements of The Smith Design for Learning (2007), the vision of The Futures Initiative (2011) and the momentum of the Women for the World campaign. It calls not only for creating new initiatives but for investing in programs that are showing promise and refining those that need better alignment with our mission and priorities. The plan will play an important role in Smith's decennial accreditation review by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges in fall 2017.

The publication of this plan is an important milestone but not an end in itself. As we implement the initiatives encompassed in the plan, I am committed to piloting and evaluating ideas before committing to ongoing funding of programs. Perhaps most important, I intend this plan to reflect an ethic of continuous improvement; as it is a living document, it will evolve over time, incorporating new opportunities as they emerge.

I am grateful to the Smith community for your generous engagement with the planning process and look forward to your partnership as we shape Smith's future.

Kathleen McCartney
President of Smith College



Mission

Smith College educates women of promise for lives of distinction and purpose. A college of and for the world, Smith links the power of the liberal arts to excellence in research and scholarship, thereby developing engaged global citizens and leaders to address society's challenges.

Values

Smith is a community dedicated to learning, teaching, scholarship, discovery, creativity and critical thought.

Smith is committed to creating an inclusive, equitable and accessible educational community founded on the free and open exchange of ideas.

Smith educates women to understand the complexity of human experience and world cultures through engagement with humanistic, social and scientific ideas.

Smith creates global citizens, committed to participating in the communities in which they live and to stewarding the resources that sustain them.

Essential Student Capacities

Every student, during her time at Smith, is encouraged to reflect on her development in a number of essential capacities that should guide her education, both in and beyond the classroom.

- Ability to draw upon and convey knowledge
- Ability to engage across difference in place, culture and time
- Creativity, curiosity and innovation
- Critical and analytical thinking
- Resilience and resourcefulness
- Self-awareness as a learner



Planning Timeline

February 2015	Call for strategic planning proposals
Spring–Summer 2015	Proposals reviewed and coded by Committee on Mission and Priorities (CMP)
September 2015	Strategic Planning retreat
January 2016	Preliminary draft of strategic themes presented at all-faculty retreat
February 2016	Campuswide strategic plan “playback” sessions
Spring 2016	Strategic plan draft reviewed and refined by CMP and cabinet
May 2016	Plan presented to board of trustees Plan circulated for campus comment
October 2016	Endorsement of the plan by the board of trustees

Concurrent Initiatives

- Global Working Group (spring 2015)
- New Neilson Library Program Planning (spring 2016)
- Student Leadership Visioning Committee (spring 2016)
- Financial Aid Study (spring 2016)
- Study Group on Climate Change (forthcoming 2017)
- Inclusion Strategic Plan (forthcoming 2017)
- Committee on Academic Priorities five-year framework (ongoing)
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation self-study (ongoing through fall 2017)



Strategic Themes

- 1 Face-to-Face Education
- 2 Inclusion, Diversity and Equity
- 3 Experiential and Applied Opportunities
- 4 Emerging Methods, Fields and Pedagogies
- 5 Complex, Urgent Problems



Strategic Theme 1

Face-to-Face Education

Face-to-face education provides powerful preparation for learning, living and leading. The capacities developed through a liberal arts education—critical and analytical thinking; creativity, curiosity and innovation; the ability to draw upon and convey knowledge; resilience and resourcefulness; self-awareness as a learner; and the ability to engage with communities and ideas across difference—are honed in face-to-face engagement. Smith will support faculty-led experiments in technology and learning while continuing to invest in its residential model and remarkable campus resources—classrooms, libraries and collections—to continue attracting top students and faculty as well as precollege and adult/executive learners.

The Smith faculty, a remarkable community of teacher-scholars, values faculty-student partnerships, peer-to-peer learning and creative collaboration. A theme that emerged strongly in the planning process was the desire of faculty and students for formal and informal spaces, including classrooms, that match the dynamism of their teaching and learning. Classroom renovations, and the new Neilson Library, will provide the variety of co-located formal and informal spaces the Smith community seeks; new spaces will incorporate new technologies and be versatile in configuration, supporting a range of teaching styles, the need for reflection and deep attention, and a culture of experimentation and making.

Learning through direct engagement has been a hallmark of a Smith education since the college's earliest days. Original works of art, a curated collection of plants and trees, a sustainable field station, rare books and archives, and a campus laboratory school are all invaluable assets that distinguish Smith from most liberal arts colleges. We will strengthen investment in these teaching and research resources, as well as in coordination among them, to maximize the use of our campus facilities. A new Office for the Arts, for example, will engage students, faculty and staff across the college around themed course clusters, art making and artists in residence, as well as coordinate grant seeking and administration to support such opportunities.

Smith's campus also holds opportunities for expanding our visibility, reputation and revenue to constituencies outside the traditional college age. Under this plan, we will analyze the potential for expanded programming in pre- and postcollege nondegree programs, including executive education for women.



INITIATIVES

Create state-of-the-art, technology-rich learning spaces

- Innovation and creative collaboration spaces
- Case study classrooms
- Co-located formal and informal spaces
- Maker space
- A reimagined Neilson Library
- Study spaces in houses

Strengthen investment in unique teaching resources

- Botanic Garden
- Museum of Art
- Special Collections in the libraries
- MacLeish Field Station
- Smith College Campus School

Create an Office for the Arts, providing coordinated

- Arts programming
- Grant seeking

Optimize nondegree programs, in areas such as

- Precollege programs for girls
- Executive education for women
- Alumnae programming

Strategic Theme 2

Inclusion, Diversity and Equity

Sophia Smith believed that education creates “the most good for the greatest number.” Smith College was founded on the premise of access to education and has expanded that commitment throughout its history: by recruiting women of promise from across the United States and around the world; by evaluating every applicant in the context of her circumstances, including her race and ethnicity, geography, educational experience, diversity of thought, religion, extracurricular experience and socioeconomic status; and by committing to meet the full demonstrated financial need of every admitted student. This holistic approach has contributed to making the Smith community more diverse in myriad ways.

Powerful learning happens by engaging with those whose experiences expand and challenge our own. Students today seek a college that excels in preparing them for leadership and understanding in diverse, multicultural contexts. In addition to expanding diversity in faculty and staff, Smith must make its classrooms and discourse more inclusive and reduce barriers to full participation in its academic and cocurricular offerings. The college must develop community practices to prevent bias. And it must expand its focus on cohort-based student success programs, such as AEMES, Bridge, Posse, Mellon Mays, ISP, disability services, and supports for first-gen students.

To uphold the college’s values of inclusion, diversity and equity, we must ensure that education is not limited to those who can afford it. Continued progress toward need-blind admission should be a goal, whether it takes 20 or 50 years. Financial aid must remain a fundraising priority so that Smith can be accessible to every qualified woman of promise who seeks the transformative education Sophia Smith sought to provide.

In its broadest sense, Smith’s mission calls us to do the sustained work of building—and modeling—a just and inclusive campus community founded in respect and trust. Informed by the findings of the 2016–17 Pathways Campus Climate Survey, which seeks to reflect the experiences of all members of our community, we will invest in strengthening community well-being, including the physical and mental health and wellness of our students.



INITIATIVES

Create sustained education by learning, living and working in an intercultural context

- Community campaign to prevent and address conflict, including microaffirmations and bystander intervention
- Opportunities to develop inclusive community practices to prevent bias
- Programs on inclusive teaching practices via the Sherrerd Center
- Opportunities for connecting students and alumnae through the Office of Alumnae Relations
- Speakers who represent diversity of thought and opinion
- Incentives for developing inclusive curricula and pedagogy

- Bridge preorientation program for multicultural students
- Posse (cohort program aimed at increasing diversity and equity in STEM fields)
- Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship
- International Student Program
- First-generation student orientation
- Office of Disability Services

Strengthen educational access and success with financial supports

- Equitable access to Smith opportunities regardless of financial means
- Improved aid packages across all income tiers
- Continued progress toward need-blind financial aid decisions

Strengthen recruitment, retention and support of students, staff and faculty to ensure diversity

- Best practices in inclusive recruitment and selection
- Mentorship programs
- Expanded focus on student success through programs including
 - AEMES (Achieving Excellence in Mathematics, Engineering and Sciences)

Support student health and well-being

- Opportunities for healthy exercise and recreation, including varsity and club sports
- Curricular and cocurricular mental health programming

Strategic Theme 3

Experiential and Applied Opportunities

A Smith education has long been distinguished by its connection to real-world experience. An intentional and powerful link between the curriculum and cocurricular activities offers significant comparative advantages, enabling students to test their classroom learning in real-world contexts. As we educate the next generation of women leaders, Smith will invest in programs that connect students' academic experiences with creative and practical opportunities.

On campus, the new Jill Ker Conway Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center, named for Smith's first woman president and a pioneer for women in business, will support the development of business and entrepreneurial skills. The Conway Center, in concert with the newly formed Smith Alumnae Business Network and partnerships like the Smith-Tuck business preparation program, reflects Smith's intentional and proud investments in helping more Smith women start and lead businesses and nonprofits.

Professional preparation across all fields will be strengthened by an integrated leadership development program open to every Smith student; the program's sequenced curriculum will draw on programs and centers across the college to teach such critical skills as public speaking, financial literacy, negotiation and conflict resolution.

Off campus, Smith's distinctive Praxis internship program, unparalleled among peer institutions, and its pioneering study abroad program, complemented by community-based learning through the Jandon Center, will continue to provide powerful experiential and applied opportunities. The plan seeks to optimize Praxis and Smith Programs Abroad by expanding funding for internships abroad and creating pathways for students from more majors—and more institutions—to take advantage of study abroad and study away.





INITIATIVES

Create an integrated leadership development program

- Workshops in a sequenced curriculum available to all Smith students
- Coursework connected to campus leadership roles in Residence Life, Athletics, the Office of Student Engagement, the Jandon Center and other sites
- Connecting alumnae with students for mentoring and networking opportunities via the Office of Alumnae Relations

Create entrepreneurship-focused opportunities, engaging alumnae as mentors

- Jill Ker Conway Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center
- Smith Alumnae Business Network
- Smith-Tuck business preparation program for women liberal arts students

Optimize Praxis internship program, especially international opportunities

Strengthen student access to research experiences

- Course-based research experiences across academic divisions
- Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships across divisions

Strengthen opportunities for community-based learning via centers such as the Jandon Center for Community Engagement; the Center for the Environment, Ecological Design and Sustainability; and the Lewis Global Studies Center

Optimize study-abroad options to enhance flexible opportunities, pathways to language study and off-campus research opportunities

Strategic Theme 4

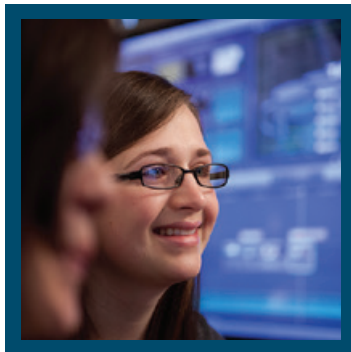
Emerging Methods, Fields and Pedagogies

In her will, Sophia Smith wisely provided that the curriculum of the college that bore her name would evolve to encompass “such other studies as coming time may develop or demand for the education of women.” From a focus on the arts and humanities, Smith developed a tradition of educating women in science and mathematics, and later in engineering and technology, thereby opening doors to new fields of endeavor and achievement. Upholding its leadership role among liberal arts colleges, the Smith faculty recently approved two new majors with global reach and relevance: in statistical and data sciences, the first such major at a liberal arts college, and in Middle East studies.

Going forward, in concert with the faculty and the leadership of the Committee on Academic Priorities, Smith will strengthen capacity in emerging areas of curricular priority, seeking to build expertise across the divisions in umbrella areas such as the critical analysis of data, sustainability and climate change, the creative arts, and new media methodologies.

The concentrations program, an innovative structure linking applied and academic learning through course work, practical experience and research, has distinguished itself as a model, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, achieving notable post-graduate placements for students in such fields as museum studies and archives. As the program evolves, it will explore such new topics as creative writing, international law and public policy, and public and community health.

Informed by the philosophy that there are many ways to teach and all teaching is improvable, the Sherrerd Center for Teaching and Learning will be a key partner in testing emerging pedagogies. Having recently launched its first MOOC, an online global seminar on women’s activism anchored in the college’s distinctive Sophia Smith collection of women’s history, Smith will continue to support experiments in teaching, including blended learning inside and outside the classroom.





INITIATIVES

Strengthen faculty capacity in emerging areas of curricular priority

- Faculty development funding for new directions
- Faculty expertise across divisions in emerging umbrella areas
 - Critical analysis of data
 - Sustainability and climate change
 - New media methodologies
- Staff support for emerging curricular programs

Strengthen experiments in emerging pedagogies

- Blended learning, inside and outside the classroom
- Sherrerd Center programs engaging students and faculty as partners
- Open online learning

Optimize concentrations

Emerging topics might include:

- Creative writing
- International law and public policy
- Public health/community health

Strategic Theme 5

Complex, Urgent Problems

A spirit of progressivism has animated Smith College from its earliest days. The birthplace of considerable social change, Smith prepares women through active learning and societal engagement to foster and lead sustainable, just communities and to make significant and lasting contributions to address the critical issues of the times. “Whatever the question,” Gloria Steinem ’56 has said, “women are part of the answer.”

The challenges today are complex, urgent and seemingly intractable. They include global climate change; education access; the status of women; infectious diseases; and the path toward racial inclusion, diversity and equity. This plan recommits Smith to using its campus as a classroom, modeling ideas in its curriculum, cocurricular options and campus operations to address these and other emerging high-stakes challenges that often lie at the heart of global inequities.

We will follow several paths in addressing complex, urgent problems. An institutional approach—as modeled by the Study Group on Climate Change—marshals the collective resources of our community in a formal process, making recommendations to the leadership of the college. The fall 2016 Inclusion Grants program—in which individuals and groups were invited to seek venture funds to support research, teaching, learning and activism around issues of inclusion, diversity and equity—reflects a more grassroots approach. We expect other approaches will emerge as this initiative evolves.

With regard to sustainability, this plan envisions a distinctive interplay between campus operations and student learning. As a residential college, Smith has significant obligations and opportunities to mitigate climate change on its campus and contribute to broader climate change solutions. Student research, such as recent projects to move sediment out of Paradise Pond and reduce stormwater runoff in campus parking lots using permeable pavement, reflects ways that Smith will educate coming generations of climate change leaders.





INITIATIVES

Create funding opportunities for cross-institutional learning and problem solving where there is community interest

- Inclusion, diversity and equity
- Climate change
- Education access
- The status of women worldwide, including in STEM fields
- Infectious diseases
- New complex problems as they emerge

Strengthen campus operations

- Innovative practices in landscape management
- Vibrant and efficient use of space
- Sustainable food and dining practices
- Progress toward carbon neutrality



Enabling Principles

Enabling the plan will require

Incentivizing change via

- Venture funds
- Curricular and cocurricular innovation funds

Investing through

- Existing funds
- Reallocation/sunsetting
- Fundraising
- Strategic partnerships

Adapting behaviors, systems and practices via

- Initiatives in administrative excellence
- Initiatives in technological excellence

Engaging the talents of our alumnae community

Staying nimble, open to continuous learning

Strategic Planning Leadership, Participants and Contributors

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Smith College is committed to maintaining a diverse community in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation of differences. Smith College does not discriminate in its educational and employment policies on the bases of race, color, creed, religion, national/ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or with regard to the bases outlined in the Veterans Readjustment Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Smith's admission policies and practices are guided by the same principle, concerning women applying to the undergraduate program and all applicants to the graduate programs. For more information, please contact the adviser for equity complaints, College Hall 302, 413-585-2141, or visit www.smith.edu/diversity.