CONNECTING LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION
AND EXPERIENCE TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

THE STRATEGIC PLAN (2012-2017) for HOLLINS UNIVERSITY

Executive Summary

Hollins cherishes its heritage as a small, residential, liberal arts college for women that prepares undergraduates for lives of leadership, learning, fulfilling work, personal growth, achievement and service. Since our earliest days, we have dedicated ourselves to academic excellence and high standards of achievement with the goal of attracting and graduating talented women leaders.

As we embarked on this strategic planning process, the Board of Trustees challenged the campus community to “advance the university in allegiance to its mission.” This plan is designed to respond to that challenge. A critical success factor will be our ability to demonstrate the connection between the strong foundation of a liberal arts education at Hollins and our students’ ability to translate their education into successful careers. We are positioned to be a leader in demonstrating how liberal arts is a springboard to life success as exemplified by our strong network of accomplished Hollins graduates—one of our greatest assets and key differentiators. This network has already provided significant experiential educational opportunities to our students. Expanding ways the alumnae network supports the career objective of our students is a key component of the strategic plan. Over the next five years, it is our vision for Hollins to:

• Become nationally recognized as the women’s liberal arts college that best unites excellence in liberal arts education with experiential learning opportunities and strong career preparation.
• Create an educational competitive advantage for its students by utilizing its alumnae network to connect students with hands-on experiences and mentoring that will enable professional and life success.
• Strive continually to ensure the sustainability of its financial model and support the goal of making Hollins attractive, accessible, and affordable to qualified students.

To support this vision, over the next five years we will accomplish the following new initiatives:

• Create the “best in class” program of career preparation and leadership training beginning in the first semester. This program will draw on the remarkable network of Hollins alumnae and include an unparalleled array of signature Short Term internships across Fortune 500 companies, government, philanthropy, and the arts, and other experiential learning opportunities that will be attractive to our students and lead to career paths, pursuit of graduate and professional programs, and service to society.
• Launch a signature alumnae engagement campaign that will be the catalyst for accomplishing the distinctive student career and leadership initiatives described above. This will entail a major marketing effort to highlight alumnae accomplishments and
special efforts to connect students with alumnae as a lifelong network for their personal achievement and societal advantage.

- Capitalize on our location in Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains by expanding the Hollins Outdoor Program (HOP) and other offerings to attract students who enjoy abundant outdoor opportunities in a beautiful setting.

In addition to these initiatives, we will strengthen curricular and co-curricular offerings including the following:

- Improve the quality of students’ experiences in the sciences by updating equipment, technology, and teaching spaces in the Dana Science Building.
- Enhance teaching and learning in the digital world by helping faculty integrate technology more fully in their classes.
- Increase the vibrancy of student and residential life.
- Create a student engagement campaign designed to connect new and upper-class students.
- Continue to improve health and fitness opportunities for students.

To support these initiatives, we will:

- Increase revenue by offering new programs to non-traditional students, which in turn will provide stronger support for the core undergraduate program.
- Enhance the visibility and reputation of Hollins through exceptional student recruitment and marketing programs, including a program of alumnae engagement in admissions.
- Operate with a sustainable financial model.

Our success will be measured by increased enrollment, enhanced revenue from new programs, and greater institutional visibility over the next five years.

Core Values and Commitments

Hollins’ historic commitment to academic excellence and its mission to educate women for lives of professional achievement and personal fulfillment remain as vital as ever. Our undergraduate program has a track record of success, and through the plan, we will take it to an even higher level of accomplishment. We have also succeeded in offering quality graduate programs that have garnered public recognition for Hollins and simultaneously contributed revenue that supports the health of the university.

While this plan introduces new initiatives, they are consistent with our long-held core values and commitments. There is no better preparation for life than a quality liberal arts education provided within an environment of academic rigor, teaching excellence, engaged student learning, and recognition that the life of the mind is central to all we do. Our commitment to that tradition will not waiver. We are also committed to reinforcing the four hallmarks of a Hollins education outlined in the 2006 strategic plan: leadership development, global and intercultural understanding, creativity, and environmental and cultural sustainability. We will sustain our efforts to build and nurture an inclusive community. We will continue to preserve and protect the beauty, operational effectiveness, and sustainability of our historic campus, and adhere to the
financial discipline required by the Board of Trustees. Finally, we will honor the commitment made in 2010 to invest in faculty and staff salaries to uphold outstanding teaching standards and high quality administration of the Hollins community. The new initiatives in this plan are designed to advance the university in other ways that are consistent with our core values and commitments and to propel the university forward in the years ahead.

The Challenges of the Environment in Higher Education

We acknowledge there is widespread public discussion of the spiraling costs of higher education and concern that college is becoming inaccessible to more and more families. There is general agreement that existing financial models are unsustainable, but there is no consensus on how to correct the problem. Academic institutions are struggling with how to institute changes that will balance financial viability with preserving their academic mission. Some are taking small steps, but groundbreaking change is not in evidence. The environment is volatile and poised for change, but the future direction is unclear. Systemic changes are essential, but they will require consensus and cannot be unilaterally attained. It is difficult to establish specific and measurable goals for transforming the existing higher education financial model paradigms in this environment. Hollins fully appreciates the need to be vigilant in monitoring the environment and exploring opportunities to be on the leading edge of change. To that end, as we implement this plan, we will continue to evaluate our progress and study trends in higher education.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

This plan is designed to advance three overarching strategic imperatives:

1. Increase enrollment and retention of talented young women through delivery of an excellent and highly valued academic program, enriched by distinctive experiential learning opportunities, strong career development preparation, and personal exposure to and relationships with Hollins alumnae.
2. Identify and implement quality programming for non-traditional and graduate students designed to increase revenue.
3. Increase the visibility and reputation of Hollins.

Toward these ends, we will commit to the following strategic goals and objectives (an expanded version is attached to this document as Addendum A).

I. Prepare students for meaningful lives of leadership, service, and lifelong learning.

A. Design an exceptional program of career preparation for every student.

B. Expect, and ideally require, every student to engage in at least one internship, research experience, or a similarly significant service-based or leadership opportunity (including developing internship opportunities abroad).

C. Define and propose revisions to Short Term to give students the choice among the following options: a travel experience, a service experience, mentored research or creative work, an internship, or a career preparation seminar, supported by a cohesive
program that offers opportunities for faculty development and encourages collaboration and student peer mentoring (by December 1, 2012).

D. Improve the quality of students’ experiences in the sciences by updating equipment, technology, classrooms, and labs in the Dana Science Building to improve their functionality and visual appeal and enhance safety.

E. Enhance teaching and learning in the digital world by helping faculty integrate technology more fully in their classes where useful through training and technology upgrades.

F. Define and propose a program to challenge and engage our most talented students (by December 1, 2012).

G. Define and propose a program, which may include expansion of the Center for Learning Excellence, to enhance skills of our first-generation and other students (by December 1, 2012).

II. Launch a distinctive alumnae engagement campaign.

A. Create a comprehensive and distinctive alumnae engagement campaign that can galvanize Hollins graduates to create an unprecedented program of career preparation and array of internships that can become a new signature of the Hollins education.

B. As a key component of this alumnae engagement campaign, recruit alumnae to provide an exceptional array of internships in a wide range of fields and offer housing and planned activities, starting with clusters of internships in targeted cities such as Washington, D.C. and New York.

C. Enlist alumnae to provide career mentoring to students through participation in annual career workshops and individual career advising.

D. Create a comprehensive alumnae admissions recruitment program designed to help increase the number of students enrolling in Hollins.

III. Enliven the student experience on campus.

A. Create a student engagement campaign designed to connect new students and upper-class students to strengthen bonds within the Hollins community.

B. Increase the vibrancy of student and residential life by repurposing the Moody Student Center, improving the dining experience, and renovating and improving residence halls.

C. Continue to improve athletics and health/fitness opportunities for students, including the expansion of the Hollins Outdoor Program (HOP).
IV. Generate additional net revenue.

A. Evaluate the Horizon program and, if appropriate, propose a new delivery model for non-traditional students to earn or complete baccalaureate degrees (by December 1, 2012).

B. Sustain and support existing graduate programs and explore opportunities to expand graduate offerings where feasible, including online and distance learning opportunities and graduate program adjacencies.

C. Pilot certificate programs for populations not traditionally served by Hollins, including options such as paralegal, business essentials, and non-profit management certificates.

D. Explore and implement other programs likely to generate revenue and enhance the university’s visibility.

E. Review and revise current undergraduate and graduate tuition pricing and financial aid leveraging policies to maximize enrollment and net revenue.

V. Increase the visibility and reputation of Hollins.

A. Complete a marketing and brand audit to ascertain how best to incorporate new and continuing strategic priorities into our outreach efforts.

B. Enhance use of social media in the recruitment process and improve Hollins’ web presence.

C. Re-envision opportunities to promote Hollins through summer programs for high school girls and other targeted outreach efforts.

Next Steps

Upon the Board of Trustees’ formal approval of this plan, expected in May 2012, the president will ask members of the Strategic Planning Committee and President’s Cabinet, as well as councils and committees within the governance system, to develop appropriate operating plans and timetables for each component of the plan. Following consultation with the Strategic Planning Committee, the vice president for academic affairs, and the chair of the faculty, the president will also formally assign responsibility for annual monitoring of the university’s progress on achieving the goals of this plan. Because achievement of our goals will require responding to both successful and disappointing outcomes and reacting to ongoing changes in the environment, this group will also be asked to consider revisions to the plan annually. This annual evaluation of the plan should be informed by SACS standards, given that our ten-year accreditation self-study will be due in 2017.

Success in achieving the strategic goals stated in this plan will require the university to align institutional resources with the objectives of the plan. This may require administrative restructuring, assignment of new priorities and responsibilities, and reallocation of budgeted
funds. Because some of these planning initiatives require funding beyond what is now available in the university budget, this plan will also require focused and significant fundraising to attract gift support (see Addendum B). Success will require an investment in development staff as well as significant volunteer involvement beyond current levels. This investment will be made with clear expectations for achieving expected results.

**Measureable Outcomes and Timeline**

Given the challenges inherent in designing bold plans in an uncertain economy and a challenging time for private liberal arts education, ongoing evaluation will be critical to our success. Specific annual and five-year expected outcomes for student recruitment, retention, and revenue have been developed by the President’s Cabinet (Addendum C). In the fall of each year, the president will report on progress in attaining these outcomes as well as progress on accomplishing the stated strategic goals and objectives to the Board of Trustees, faculty, and campus community.

**Strategic Planning Process**

Throughout the planning process, we have been committed to broad-based participation. The Board of Trustees, faculty, administrators, staff, students, and members of the Alumnae Board and Parents Council were engaged in the process through a range of activities including surveys, roundtable discussions, and joint sessions of faculty, alumnae, and trustees.

In October 2011, President Gray appointed the Strategic Planning Committee to review the results of the information gathering process and advance the planning process. In February 2012, the Strategic Planning Committee convened six sub-groups to explore themes that emerged from the fall discussion. Many faculty, administrators, staff, and students participated in these discussions. In late March 2012, the Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the outcomes of the work groups, submitted a draft of this plan to the community for critique and feedback in April 2012, and subsequently revised this document.

The Hollins University Board of Trustees approved this plan on May 19, 2012.

**Strategic Planning Committee**

Gabby Awuma ’14, student  
Tom Barron, trustee  
Dan Derringer, associate professor, chemistry  
Brook Dickson ’95, executive assistant to the president  
Elizabeth Dodd ’12, student  
Kerry Edmonds, vice president for finance and administration  
Michael Gettings, associate professor, philosophy  
Nancy Gray, president  
Judy Lambeth ’73, trustee  
Linda Lorimer ’74, trustee  
Stefanie Niles, vice president for enrollment  
Alison Ridley, associate professor, Spanish  
Jeanine Stewart, vice president for academic affairs  
Suzanne Whitmore ’60, chair, Board of Trustees
Addendum A

Expanded Strategic Goals and Objectives

I. Prepare students for meaningful lives of leadership, service, and lifelong learning through purposeful engagement in liberal arts education, experiential learning, and career preparation.

A. Design an exceptional program of career preparation for every student: (Recruitment, retention and reputation)
   1. Guarantee each student an internship opportunity.
   2. Enhance the Career Center’s staffing, facility, technology, and visibility.
   3. Offer training for faculty to enable them to connect academic programs and the relevance of liberal arts education with career preparation opportunities.
   4. Help students explore career options and prepare for internships, starting in the first year and continuing through graduation.
   5. Develop a plan to fund student expenses associated with the internship program.

B. Expect, and ideally require, every student to engage in at least one internship, research experience, or a similarly significant service-based or leadership opportunity (including developing internship opportunities abroad). (Recruitment and retention)

C. Define and propose revisions to Short Term to give students the choice among the following options: a travel experience, a service experience, mentored research or creative work, an internship, or a career preparation seminar, supported by a cohesive program that offers opportunities for faculty development and encourages collaboration and student peer mentoring (by December 1, 2012). (Recruitment, retention, and reputation)

D. Improve the quality of students’ experiences by updating equipment, technology, classrooms, and labs in the Dana Science Building to improve their functionality and visual appeal and enhance safety. Identify needs, secure cost estimates, and develop fundraising plans (by June 30, 2013). (Recruitment, retention, and reputation)

E. Enhance teaching and learning in the digital world by helping faculty integrate technology more fully in their classes through training and technology upgrades. (Recruitment, retention, and reputation)

F. Define and propose a program to challenge and engage our most talented students (by December 1, 2012). (Recruitment, retention, and reputation)

G. Define and propose a program, which may include expansion of the Center for Learning Excellence, to enhance skills of our first-generation and other students (by December 1, 2012). (Recruitment, retention, and reputation)
II. Launch a distinctive alumnae engagement campaign designed to connect students with alumnae and leverage our alumnae as a lifelong resource and strategic advantage.

A. Create a comprehensive and distinctive alumnae engagement campaign that can galvanize Hollins graduates to create an unprecedented program of career preparation and array of internships that can become a new signature of the Hollins education.

B. Recruit alumnae to provide an exceptional array of internships in a wide range of fields, and offer housing and planned activities, starting with clusters of internships in targeted cities such as Washington, D.C. and New York. *(Recruitment, retention, and reputation)*
   1. Organize and support a steering committee to oversee the volunteer efforts.
   2. Recruit and support committees in cities where efforts will be focused.

C. Enlist alumnae to provide career mentoring to students through participation in annual career workshops and individual career advising. *(Recruitment and retention)*
   1. Recruit outstanding alumnae to serve on a Council of 100, volunteers who will agree to speak on campus, tell their stories in marketing materials, and be available to students.
   2. Organize annual “career summits” for invited alumnae to speak and meet with students on campus.

D. Create a comprehensive alumnae admission recruitment program designed to help increase the number of students enrolling at Hollins. *(Recruitment)*

III. Enliven the student experience on campus through improved engagement, facilities, and social life.

A. Create a student engagement campaign designed to connect new students and upper-class students to strengthen bonds within the Hollins community.
   1. Develop a social mentoring program and other programs designed to match new students with returning students based on their interests. *(Retention)*
   2. Make changes to current housing practices to increase engagement among new and returning students, including development of a plan for integrated and clustered housing. *(Retention)*

B. Increase the vibrancy of student and residential life.
   1. Repurpose Moody Student Center to foster greater student use and make it a more student-friendly space, including office reconfiguration and venues for student programming. Identify needs, secure cost estimates, and develop fundraising plans (by June 30, 2013). *(Recruitment and retention)*
   2. Improve student satisfaction with the dining experience by exploring ways to create a more inviting atmosphere, provide additional food service options, offer more local food and healthy food options, and create other opportunities to learn about healthy food choices. *(Recruitment and retention)*
3. Complete a comprehensive study of student social life (by December 1, 2012). *(Recruitment and retention)*

4. Renovate and improve residence halls to make them more inviting and functional spaces, including renovation of the Hill House District and construction of new apartments. Identify needs, secure cost estimates, and develop fundraising plans (by June 30, 2013). *(Recruitment and retention)*

C. Continue to improve athletics and health/fitness opportunities for students.
   1. Expand and strategically market the Hollins Outdoor Program, including enhancing the Wilderness Orientation Program, capitalizing on the success of our paddling team and the uniqueness of our outdoor leadership certificate, and maximizing the physical location of our campus. *(Recruitment, retention and reputation)*
   2. Continue to build a thriving intercollegiate athletic program that is competitive with other members of the ODAC. *(Recruitment and retention)*
   3. Increase programming of fitness and wellness activities for students who are not interested in participating in varsity sports. *(Recruitment and retention)*
   4. Improve training and fitness facilities for student-athletes and for those seeking wellness and recreational opportunities. *(Recruitment and retention)*

IV. Identify and develop new programs that will generate additional net revenue.

A. Evaluate the Horizon program and, if appropriate, propose a new delivery model for non-traditional students to earn or complete baccalaureate degrees (by December 1, 2012). *(Recruitment, retention, and revenue)*

B. Sustain and support existing graduate programs and expand graduate offerings where feasible, including exploration and implementation of online and distance learning opportunities and graduate program adjacencies. *(Revenue)*
   1. Explore and implement online opportunities associated with the M.A.L.S. degree.
   2. Explore and implement the special education certificate as part of our degree options in education.
   3. Explore and offer other adjacencies to our current graduate program offerings.

C. Pilot certificate programs for populations not traditionally served by Hollins, including options such as paralegal, business essentials, and non-profit management certificates. *(Revenue)*

D. Explore and implement other programs likely to generate revenue and enhance the university’s visibility, such as a new continuing education seminar for retirees. *(Revenue and reputation)*

E. Review and revise current undergraduate and graduate tuition pricing and financial aid leveraging policies to maximize enrollment and net revenue. *(Recruitment, retention and revenue)*

V. Increase the visibility and reputation of Hollins through exceptional student
recruitment and marketing programs.

A. Complete a marketing and brand audit to ascertain how best to incorporate new and continuing strategic priorities into our outreach efforts. *(Recruitment and reputation)*
   1. Complete a tuition elasticity study to assess value students/parents place on a Hollins education and the price they are willing to pay.
   2. Complete market research focused on how to market new initiatives to both students and parents.
   3. Complete a brand audit to gain a better understanding of how we are now perceived and how to strengthen that reputation.
   4. Redesign print, web-based materials, and other materials to align messages more closely with the student market from which we seek to recruit.

B. Enhance use of social media in the recruitment process and improve Hollins’ web presence. *(Recruitment and reputation)*
   1. Conduct research of social media sources and determine those used most frequently by high school girls (and their parents) to research colleges.
   2. Examine our current search engine optimization strategies to ensure we are achieving a high level of impact and study new options as needed.
   3. Explore the productivity and feasibility of Facebook advertising.
   4. Enhance website to heighten appeal and ease of use for prospective students.

C. Re-envision opportunities to promote Hollins through summer programs for high school girls and other targeted outreach efforts. *(Recruitment)*
   1. Building on the Hollinsummer brand, restructure summer offerings to highlight academic and extracurricular strengths of Hollins. These program offerings may include Creative writing, Riding, Environmental studies/Outdoor Middle School Science, Theatre, and Hallmarks of Hollins.
   2. Develop aggressive marketing plan to promote the new Hollinsummer programs locally, regionally and nationally for launch in 2013.
   3. Explore opportunities for competitions that give high school girls the chance to connect with Hollins, using the Nancy Thorp poetry contest as a model.
   4. Maximize marketing and recruitment efforts in the local community.

Addendum B
**STRATEGIC PLAN FUNDING***

**URGENT**
- Marketing $750,000
- Alumnae engagement campaign $250,000

**TOP PRIORITIES**
- Housing Stipends for Short Term Internships 2012-13 $30,000
- Housing Stipends for Short Term internships 2013-17 $160,000
- Investment in HOP $100,000
- Staff Career Center $75,000
- Career Center facility enhancement $200,000
- Hill House renovations $1,800,000
- New revenue start-up costs $250,000

**SECONDARY PRIORITIES**
- Dana/sciences $10,000,000
- Technology training and upgrades $300,000
- Academic Support for Students $100,000
- Repurpose Moody Center $400,000
- Raise money for new apartments $10,000,000
- Athletics/fitness $100,000
- Residence halls $1,000,000
- Wellness $100,000

**TOTAL** $25,615,000

*Best GUESSES as of 4.9.12, exclusive of funding already secured; estimates will be revised as additional information is secured.

**PROJECTED TOTAL GIFT INCOME NEEDS 2012-17**

In addition to raising funds for these initiatives, we must raise funds for the Hollins Fund in support of general operations and scholarships and raise new money for the endowment to ensure continued growth. Total gift income needs are projected below.

- Strategic Plan Needs $25,615,000
- Other Needs (Hollins Fund and endowment) $29,085,000
- Total $54,700,000

**Addendum C**
Measureable Outcomes*

New First-Year Student Recruitment Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goals for First-Year to Second-Year Retention

Assuming similar (to past two years) academic and financial profiles of incoming students and same percentage of first-generation students, we should strive for a (realistic) retention rate of just under 70%. This rate may improve by one or two percentage points with improved study skills resources (reading comprehension, study strategies, test-taking, note-taking, time management, etc.) and/or improved support for first-generation students.

As academic and financial profiles of incoming students continue to improve over the next several years, we should expect a (realistic) retention rate in the mid 70’s.

Sample Projected Net Revenue by New Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Net Revenue: First Year</th>
<th>Net Revenue: Second Year</th>
<th>Net Revenue: Third Year</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paralegal</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retiree</td>
<td>$23,000 per session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20 participants @ $3,000 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors Abroad</td>
<td>$25,000 to $200,000</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>London can provide the most growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.T./Special Education Endorsement</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>$31,800</td>
<td>$55,500</td>
<td>12 hours/year, 3 courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$16,000</td>
<td>$42,400</td>
<td>$74,000</td>
<td>16 hours/year, 4 courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Goals will be revised as decisions outlined in this plan are made and programs are implemented.

Strategic Plan approved by Hollins University Board of Trustees
May 19, 2012