

Burlington College Shared Vision: 2010

Jane O'Meara Sanders, President

By 2010, Burlington College will have grown substantially in size and reputation. Recognized as a respected partner in Vermont and in regional higher education, our programs and approach will be reflective of the standing and the values of the city of Burlington and the state of Vermont.

We will be regarded as Burlington's College and all that that entails: a strong sense of community; an intellectually-engaged population of students, staff, and faculty; progressive principles of inclusion, tolerance, diversity, and integrity; creativity in the arts and an understanding and support of their role in our spiritual, intellectual and economic well-being; experimentation and innovation in our program design and curricular offerings; sustainable development policies and practices; and environmentally sound and technologically current facilities. Every aspect of the institution will be actively carrying out the community-based mission of the College.

Burlington College will establish a reputation as an innovative leader providing the individualized educational opportunities that people need, when they need them, in a form that is accessible to them. We will be known for our rigorous academic programs and their relevance to, and integration with, the local and global community, for our focus on teaching and learning, and for our student-centered, supportive environment that facilitates both independent study and a rich community of learners.

We will provide our students with the opportunity to contribute to, benefit from, and be fully engaged with, the broader community. Burlington will be our campus and students will design their education by integrating their strengths, interests, and skills with the needs, concerns, and opportunities of the community of their choice. A liberal arts college with a humanistic curriculum that emphasizes responsible citizenship and stewardship of the environment, Burlington College will offer a transformational experience for students, encouraging each of them to determine his or her own unique path to a meaningful livelihood and an empowered life.

We will maintain a commitment to small seminar-style classes that encourage the discussional dialectic and a critical analysis of issues. Our students will have access to a wide breadth of academic disciplines and a diversity of perspectives through an expanded community faculty made up of practitioners in the fields they teach. Our faculty will be advisors and mentors first, working with students to understand their *raison d'être* at that stage of their lives, and assisting them to determine what and how they want to learn and to design their most beneficial program of study. This could include organized classes, mentors, community resources, internships, and/or independent study.

We will continue to strengthen our interdisciplinary approach to the academic program, and that will be reflected in our structure, hiring, and degree offerings. In keeping with our community-based mission and civic-engagement goals, we will be broadening our existing curriculum in the academic disciplines of the social sciences, particularly sociology, political science, history, economics, labor history, peace and justice studies, and anthropology. By hosting public lectures and discussions, and participating fully in the life of the city, our Institute for Civic Engagement will be an influential conduit in public discourse and will foster the participation of our students in the community and our community's participation in the College.

We will review, appraise, and where appropriate, strengthen or re-evaluate existing programs. We will develop new majors organically through an interdisciplinary approach, and will thread film throughout the curriculum. We will continue our development of Media & Documentary Studies, and begin to design a certificate program and a B.F.A. in Screenwriting, expanding the reputation of "The Film School at Burlington College." We will explore a new major in Health and Wellness. As we design courses in each and every major, we will strive to reflect and to utilize Burlington's and Vermont's natural and human resources. A revitalized arts curriculum, for instance, will be reflective of the strong contribution that our many and varied Vermont artists make to our quality of life and the creative economy.

We will establish a new program in Sustainable Community Development that will draw on the wealth of local resources in all the fields that contribute to those studies. Subject matter will include, but not be limited to, social ecology, urban and rural planning, energy efficient design and construction, organic agriculture, environmental studies, and community revitalization. We will also offer global studies courses that educate our students about the global economy, trade issues and environmental concerns.

We will revitalize our Inter-American Studies Program, ensuring an understanding of the history, arts, culture and people of the western

hemisphere. We will internationalize the campus through student exchanges and articulation agreements with other colleges and organizations. We will begin by establishing a Cuba Study-Abroad Program and working with Burlington's Sister Cities to form partnerships.

We will respond to the city's, the state's, and the nation's need for life-long learning opportunities grounded in the real world economy. We will offer more professional certificates that provide mid-career workers the opportunity to keep current in, or broaden, their areas of expertise. These may include psychology (e.g., adolescent psychology), law (elder, real estate), financial literacy (succeeding in the creative economy, entrepreneurship), graphic design, or child development, among others.

We will begin offering Masters degrees by 2010, if not before, possibly in Transpersonal Psychology, Health and Wellness, and/or an Interdisciplinary M.F.A. in Screenwriting. We will explore other potential graduate degrees. This move to graduate level will require our adherence to high academic standards—terminal degrees and/or demonstrated excellence for all faculty hires, including community faculty—if we are to cultivate a standing faculty of the caliber we desire. It will also necessitate more extensive library resources.

Our entire academic program, graduate, undergraduate, and professional certificates, will be supported by community partnerships—with city government, nonprofit agencies, businesses, arts organizations, and neighborhood groups. For instance, we may collaborate with a theater on performing arts, with a sailing center or snowboard company on fitness, with the city on community planning and development, with the hospital or a health club on wellness, with the broadcast and print media on media studies and the film community on film projects, and with environmentally sound companies and contractors on campus projects. We are Burlington's College, and as such, have all the resources of our progressive state and generous people to draw upon.

Enrollment management initiatives and strengthened student recruitment will contribute to significant improvements in the quality, quantity, and diversity of applicants, improve their experience at the college, and increase our retention and graduation rates. We will set a goal of 500 students on campus and 200 in the Independent Degree Program in FY 2011. This will require a commitment to enrollment management principles throughout the College.

Burlington College's location on the edge of the Old North End, a neighborhood rich in history and growing diversity, and overlooking the Lake Champlain waterfront, is an intrinsic strength that has yet to be realized.

We will invest in our campus and physically reorient ourselves toward the waterfront, while academically strengthening our ties with the community.

In 2010, imagine you are approaching the College from North Street. You catch sight of it a few blocks away, restored and repainted, the Burlington College name on the building and logo in the wall of windows. The Adirondacks rise behind it as the sun glistens down. You get closer and see an expanse of greenery and the lake beyond.

If you're driving, you'll turn right, then left onto Haswell, to park. At the site of today's library, you'll find another building with an entrance that provides access to an underground garage where the parking lot used to be. This new structure complements the original building but doesn't reproduce it, expressing contemporary values and appropriate, sustainable, experimental technology, in line with the mission of the College.

The two buildings, the original and the new, stand together like two generations of a family, the first one experienced, deeply embedded in its community, the second one respectful and appreciative but chafing at the bit, eager to explore the world and make its own contribution. Our new library, with a focus on our curricular offerings, the Manchel Film Collection and the Institute for Social Ecology Collection, is housed there, along with our Educational Resource Center.

If you're walking, bicycling, or taking the bus, you'll cross North Avenue and enter through a welcoming gate into a beautifully landscaped and people-friendly green with a dancing fountain. Along the perimeter, a mix of small trees and shrubs hide the buildings on the bank below, and entice the eye to view the horizon featuring the lake and the mountains beyond.

On the point and underneath the existing parking lot, a zero-energy building has been built into the bank. An open, multi-purpose gathering space for receptions, presentations, and performances is in the front just below existing ground level with a wall of windows, a view of the lake, and an outside deck. It holds 750 people and can be sub-divided into three separate spaces. An art gallery is included in this space. Offices, a fitness center and a meditation/yoga room with a solarium also enjoy the view on the next level down. The entire site has been developed to the maximum extent permissible below ground level and is all-weather accessible from the original and new buildings. The back section of this underground space houses the film editing labs, darkrooms and screening rooms that require darkness, along with parking and storage.

Above ground, a series of small-scale individual buildings are along the south and west perimeter of the site. Student housing, a greenhouse, a multigen-

erational daycare center and a café and bookstore might make up the mix. These individual buildings are designed by different architects and express the eclectic nature of the residential environment of Lakeview Terrace and the rest of the Old North End in contemporary, responsible, sustainable terms.

Walking paths with fitness stops, ecological interest, and beautiful landscaping are dotted throughout the property all the way down to the waterfront. We will work with adjoining landowners—the city and the Land Trust—to accomplish this urban retreat.

We have used this building project to take the opportunity to improve our instructional and administrative technology and our environmental integrity—not only in the new building, but also across the campus.

The Campaign for Burlington College, a comprehensive fundraising effort, will begin research and planning initiatives immediately, and will launch its public phase in 2008, with a goal of six million dollars. In keeping with our broad community mission, the campaign will rely on trustees and influential community leaders working on behalf of, and with, the College, sharing the responsibility for the success of the overall campaign. Each individual will be asked to assume responsibility for clearly defined areas and collaborate as a team, enlisting the efforts of dozens of soliciting volunteers.

We will increase our donor base by 300%, double our endowment, and increase our development revenues fivefold (from FY'05) by 2010, exclusive of the capital campaign. We will achieve this by expanding alumni support and involvement, increasing our involvement in and visibility to the local, state, and national community, and soliciting private and public grants.

This vision of growth and expansion represents a dramatic departure from the status quo of the last several years. It must be built on the foundation of a thorough and detailed financial plan that is bold, achievable, and adaptable to changing conditions. It necessitates an evaluation of all academic programs to ensure academic rigor, an interdisciplinary focus and a relevance in today's global environment. It requires the continued attention to, and development and implementation of, the Strategic Plan. That plan will be updated and informed by this vision for the future, with detailed growth in undergraduate enrollments, a stepped expansion to new undergraduate and graduate programs, the building of new facilities and renovations and expansion of existing facilities. The community will perceive the reality that this is a new era for Burlington College, as we strive to create a broadened community of learners and to carry out the initiatives we have designed to strengthen the academic and financial foundations of the College.

This is a moment of opportunity for Burlington College. The success of this vision rests on our recognition of this strategic moment. If we understand who we are, and who we want to be, and we are willing to embrace the momentum of a promising future, albeit with some risk, we will secure a place at the forefront of progressive education in the 21st century.

What I am proposing, while a modest one for most schools, is an extremely ambitious plan for Burlington College. I am asking the Board and the College Community to construct a major new building on this small campus; to address critical academic needs for the undergraduate program and to invest in new graduate initiatives. I am asking you to break with the traditional model of education, to remember when progressive institutions of education paved new ground, and to create innovative opportunities for engaging a new generation of students with a community, and a world, that is counting on their success.

Process

- First Draft submitted by the President at the Board of Trustees Retreat on November 18th, 2005
- Reviewed over the course of 16 meetings involving all constituencies of the College
- Several refinements incorporating input from students, faculty, staff, community faculty and trustees
- Shared Vision approved by the Burlington College Board of Trustees on March 13th, 2006