REED COLLEGE
Strategic Planning Partners

Filling the table: supporting student success through community, well-being, and learning

This document aims to provide context for a discussion of student support at Reed College at the first meeting of Strategic Planning Partners (SP2).

The Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning and Working Groups with Related Questions

Reed has established an ad hoc committee on strategic planning. This committee has been defining working groups and outlining the questions that they will address. The committee has suggested 11 working groups. Six relate to this topic:

Foundational Curriculum
What learning and skills (such as writing, rhetoric, collaboration, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, creativity or problem-solving) should students gain in foundational or first-year courses (including Hum 110, introductory science classes and first-year foreign language classes) in order to flourish in their subsequent years at Reed and their lives after Reed? What academic requirements, institutional structures and pedagogical approaches will further these goals? How do we understand the first-year curriculum within our broader model of liberal arts education?

Intermediate and Advanced Curriculum
What learning and skills do we want students to gain in later courses, whether in preparation for their theses or, more broadly, as part of an advanced liberal arts education or in preparation for life after Reed? What kind of graduates do we want to produce? What does it mean for them to thrive beyond Reed? What academic requirements, institutional structures and pedagogical approaches will further those goals? Are the students well served by the current divisional structure, for example? Or, what is the best arrangement for majors? Should we consider more majors organized by area or theme, create minors or enable frequent double majors? What new fields or programs of study should we consider to augment our curriculum? How might we best use our consortial arrangements to share curricular resources?

The Arts at Reed
What are our goals with respect to the fine and performing arts? Given that we are at a watershed moment in the Arts at Reed, in terms of facilities, faculty and academic support staff, what changes, if any, should we make to encourage

greater participation in the performing arts? What should be our goals with regard to curricular requirements, relations to other departments, institutional structures, relations with the Portland Arts community, or student recruitment? Beyond student productions, should Reed aspire to a more active role as a presenter of performing arts programming? What is the place of the performing arts within the context of Reed's "life of the mind" academic culture, and vice versa?

Education Outside the Classroom
Should Reed do more to encourage students to be involved in activities off-campus? What are the goals of such programs, and what are their results? How do they relate to the academic program? Specific questions include, should Reed require or support more involvement in community service? Should Reed do more to facilitate study abroad? What more should Reed do to help students prepare for careers after graduation? What changes, if any, should Reed make to its relations to Portland and the world?

Summer and January Term
What role do the summer and winter breaks play in a Reed education? To what extent should we concern ourselves with providing opportunities for students in these periods, and what sort of opportunities should they be? What opportunities do we offer already and how do they relate to the academic program? Should we continue to have a long winter break, and if so, do we need to offer more possibilities to the students during January? Should we offer more opportunities during fall and spring break, whether externships, workshops, or field trips?

Student Success
Are we satisfied with current student life and quality of life? Are we doing what we need to do to help students thrive personally and intellectually? Do we need to do more to build a greater sense of community on campus, and if so what should we do? What place should sports and outdoor programs play in a Reed education? What would we do to increase retention? Do we want to set a retention goal? Do want to increase the number of students living on campus, and if so, how would this be accomplished?

Your Task

We invite you to reflect on a related question:

How can we fill the table at Reed and support student success through changes or enhancements to the community, the support systems for student well-being, and the educational program?

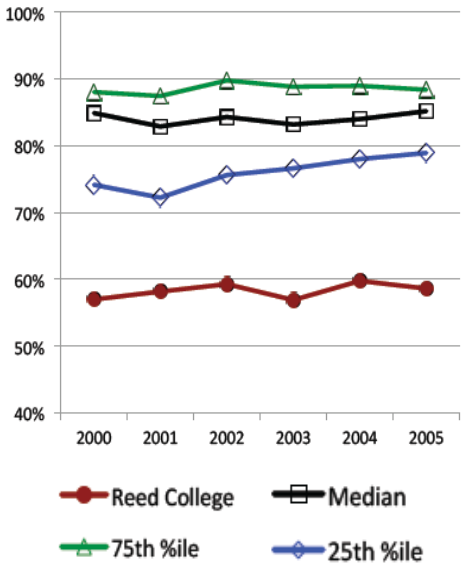
History and Current Status

Reed has been likened to a graduate school for undergraduates. For some, this characterization accurately describes the demanding nature of the academic program and the motivation required for students to succeed. At the same time, it is important to recognize that since most Reed students are 18 to 22 years old, and increasingly from many different backgrounds, they require support beyond the classroom to help them mature as intellectuals and individuals. During Reed's first century, icons such as Ann Shepard '23 and mathematics professor Jack Dudman '42 recognized this need for additional support and provided it through their own personal efforts. During a period of dramatic change at Reed, Ann and Jack served as counselors, academic advisors, friends, and surrogate parents for many Reed students. Ann particularly recognized the value of community and was thrilled when she saw seniors organize the first thesis parade in 1961.

The Reed student body has grown substantially since the days when Ann Shepard and Jack Dudman served as dean of students. At the time of Ann's retirement, the college enrolled 900 students; in 1985, when Jack retired, the college enrolled 1,000 students. Today, Reed has about 1,400 undergraduates enrolled. In addition, the student body has become much more diverse; in 2012–13, 22 percent of students self-identified as Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, or Pacific Islander, and six percent were international students.

In response to this larger and more diverse student body, and increasing interest from Reed students, the college has moved away from the single-person approach of Shepard and Dudman, and toward a vigorous and specialized student support system. This system includes: academic support and tutoring; career services; disability services; support for international students; programming and resources to promote inclusion, engagement, and success, including a new multicultural resource center; student activities; health and counseling resources, and opportunities to participate in community service. The college has also enhanced longstanding programs like health and counseling services and the physical education program by adding community wellness and outdoor programs. With more robust student services, the college has observed a rise in retention and graduation rates. For students who entered in 1982–83, the four-year graduation rate was 28 percent, the five-year graduation rate was 47 percent, and the six-year graduation rate was 54 percent. In contrast, preliminary figures show that the cohort that began in fall 2007 has a four-year graduation rate of 70 percent, a five-year graduation rate of 79 percent, and a six-year graduation rate of 82 percent. While the college is pleased with the steady progress that has been made in retaining students through graduation, Reed's four- and six-year graduation rates remain lower than peers with whom the college would like to be compared. (See chart below.)

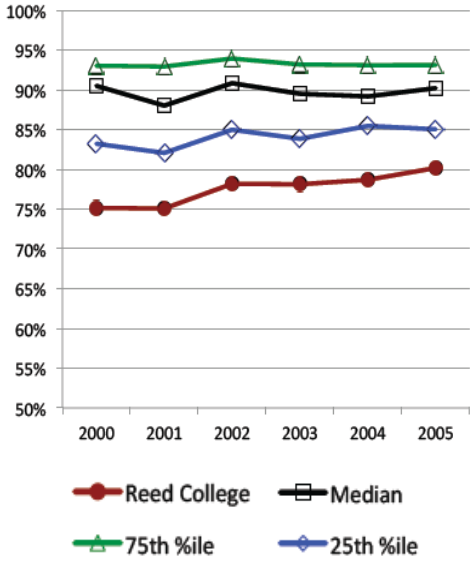
4-Yr Graduation Rate



	Cohort entered fall of:					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Pomona College	87%	86%	90%	89%	91%	91%
Swarthmore College	86%	91%	88%	86%	89%	91%
Haverford College	91%	86%	91%	88%	55%	91%
Williams College	91%	91%	91%	93%	91%	89%
Bowdoin College	84%	83%	84%	89%	90%	88%
Carleton College	88%	91%	90%	89%	89%	88%
Amherst College	88%	84%	85%	85%	90%	87%
Davidson College	89%	90%	92%	89%	89%	87%
Wellesley College	88%	85%	84%	84%	84%	86%
Hamilton College	83%	83%	85%	83%	84%	84%
Grinnell College	86%	82%	81%	78%	84%	83%
Colorado College	77%	74%	78%	78%	81%	83%
Occidental College	75%	76%	82%	78%	80%	81%
Whitman College	80%	80%	85%	81%	80%	80%
Oberlin College	70%	65%	70%	73%	73%	76%
Lewis & Clark College	59%	67%	67%	71%	68%	66%
Reed College	57%	58%	59%	57%	60%	59%
Hampshire College	47%	57%	53%	55%	55%	51%
Mills College	59%	52%	54%	54%	50%	51%
75th Percentile	88%	87%	90%	89%	89%	88%
Median	85%	83%	84%	83%	84%	85%
25th Percentile	74%	72%	76%	77%	78%	79%

Source: IPEDS Graduation Rate survey

6-Yr Graduation Rate



	Cohort entered fall of:					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Amherst College	96%	96%	95%	94%	95%	96%
Williams College	96%	95%	96%	96%	95%	95%
Pomona College	93%	94%	95%	95%	94%	95%
Swarthmore College	92%	94%	92%	93%	93%	95%
Carleton College	93%	93%	93%	92%	93%	93%
Haverford College	94%	91%	94%	92%	92%	92%
Wellesley College	93%	92%	91%	90%	90%	92%
Bowdoin College	92%	88%	91%	94%	93%	92%
Davidson College	91%	93%	94%	91%	91%	92%
Hamilton College	88%	88%	91%	86%	88%	89%
Oberlin College	85%	82%	84%	86%	88%	88%
Grinnell College	90%	87%	85%	84%	88%	88%
Colorado College	84%	83%	87%	83%	87%	88%
Whitman College	88%	86%	92%	89%	86%	86%
Occidental College	82%	81%	86%	85%	85%	83%
Reed College	75%	75%	78%	78%	79%	80%
Lewis & Clark College	70%	71%	71%	78%	76%	73%
Hampshire College	63%	71%	67%	64%	69%	61%
Mills College	68%	57%	61%	62%	61%	57%
75th Percentile	93%	93%	94%	93%	93%	93%
Median	90%	88%	91%	90%	89%	90%
25th Percentile	83%	82%	85%	84%	85%	85%

Source: IPEDS Graduation Rate survey

Strengths

1) The Reed Academic Program

Reed enjoys a number of strengths, as it strives to foster community spirit, advance learning, and encourage student well-being in its second century. The college has a low student to faculty ratio of 10.29 to 1 and a highly accessible faculty. Motivated and academically qualified students are the norm at Reed. The campus is small, making it easier for students to connect with faculty, and with each other. Because of the thesis requirement, faculty members from disparate departments have a shared pedagogical goal, namely, how can they help students develop sophisticated writing and analytical skills in preparation for the thesis.

2) Increased Residentiality

Virtually all Reed freshmen choose to live on campus. Many students are interested in living on campus for ease of access to resources. Now, as a result of the five residence halls built during the campaign, the college has been able to increase the percentage of students living on campus from 57 percent in 2003–04 to 66 percent in 2012–13. National research has demonstrated a direct correlation between living on campus and graduating on time.[1]

3) Technology

Reed has excellent technology infrastructure and knowledgeable staff members available to work on academic and administrative computing needs. The campus is connected to the Internet via redundant fiber pathways with Internet access bandwidth (as of June 2011) of 200mb. The campus network includes both wired and wireless access in all buildings with wireless access at many outdoor locations. General-purpose student computer labs in the Educational Technology Center (ETC) and the Hauser Library provide approximately 80 computers supporting the use of both Macintosh (OSX) and Windows software. ETC labs are open to students 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, when school is in session. In addition, Reed has approximately 15 departmental and special purpose computer labs on campus. Nearly 500 computers are available for student use in general purpose labs, special purpose labs, classrooms, and other academic resource facilities. Reed has a learning management system called moodle, which can be used to create interactive course websites. The college has an online student information system that is used by student services and other offices called the Integrated Reed Information System, or IRIS.

4) Location

Reed's location is an asset. Students have access to Portland, whose reputation continues to rise, and the Pacific Northwest's diversity of natural environments, including the coast, the Columbia River Gorge, and the Cascade mountain range.

5) Community-Building

a) Community Service Programs

One of the ways in which Reed builds community is through opportunities for service. Reed's Students for Education, Empowerment, and Direct Service program (SEEDS) and the science outreach programs are the two primary programs that provide service opportunities. In 2012–13, SEEDS students taught ESL to adult day laborers through VOZ (a worker's

[1] http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/acuho/journal_vol37no2/index.php?startid=100#/93/OnePage

rights education project), worked with people living on the street though Yellow Brick Road (a Janus Youth Program), mentored youth in Lane Middle School's after school program, and read to kids though the Start Making a Reader Today program (Oregon's largest children's literacy nonprofit). Involvement in SEEDS is strong with an unduplicated count of 210 students, or 15 percent, participating in these programs in 2012–13.

Since 1996, Reed has operated a science outreach program in the public schools that serve low-income students. Reed's outreach coordinator trains Reed students to deliver inquiry-based science units in elementary schools. About 50 Reed students participate each year, teaching science units in the schools in teams with other Reedies. Reed students are paid for this work.

b) Office of Multicultural Affairs

The office of multicultural affairs builds community through campus programming, facilitating constructive dialogues, and supporting all students as they explore the intersection of identities.

The multicultural resource center (MRC) provides programs that enhance leadership skills, enrich the academic experience, explore social and cultural issues, and celebrate cultural traditions. The peer mentor program assists first-year and transfer students with their academic transition by pairing them with a peer mentor who provides guidance and support throughout the first year at Reed. The office of multicultural affairs organizes Tuesday Talks about current events, diversity and inclusion at Reed, and ideas for dealing with issues of privilege and discrimination. Multicultural affairs, the office for institutional diversity, and student activities work together to coordinate an inclusive community orientation session during new student orientation that focuses on Reed's commitment to diversity and inclusion and seeks to raise awareness amongst incoming students about the differences and commonalities represented within our community.

c) Student Activities

Student activities plays a critical role in building community through orientation week, support for student organizations, and the newly launched *Reed Leadership Academy, or* RELAY. This yearlong program is based on the Social Change Model of Leadership Development. The RELAY program provides experiential workshops focused on such topics as identity, values, and group decision-making and is open to students from all class years. Thirty-two students applied for 20 spots in this program. RELAY staff, including the director of student activities, carefully reviewed applications and accepted a group that included different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, first-generation students, and LGBT students. The 2013–14 academic year will be the first one in which students who completed the program will be on campus; these students can now take what they have learned and incorporate it into coursework and life outside the classroom.

Orientation Odysseys continue to be a draw for students. In the past three years, as many as 130 students have applied for about 100 spots. Students now have several options from which to choose, including outdoor trips, a community service project, a program specifically for international students, and a retreat focused on peer mentoring.

6) Enhancing Well-Being

a) Health and Counseling Center

A look at the unduplicated count of visits during the 2012–2013 academic year shows that about 76 percent of the entire student body visited the Health and Counseling Center (HCC) at some point for medical treatment, counseling, or acupuncture. The HCC provided primary care to the majority of enrolled students, seeing almost 65 percent of the student body for this purpose. Visits ranged from routine preventative care and physical assessments to assessment and treatment of complex and/or urgent medical needs. Counseling services, including individual and group counseling and medication management, were provided to 40 percent of the student body. Another 11 percent of students visited the HCC to receive group acupuncture treatments. The high counseling numbers reflect the overall culture of acceptance surrounding students' views of counseling. Students will greet counselors when they see them, or refer another student to them. Reed is quite different from many other campuses in this way.

Recent initiatives include special efforts to serve students of color, and ongoing training sessions to improve cultural competence in working with diverse groups.

b) Physical Education Program and Outdoor Experiences

Reed's founders recognized well-being as an integral element of the Reed education, and therefore included a physical education requirement among the graduation requirements. Consequently, the college has a long history of providing students with classes and activities that enable them to meet this requirement. The physical education (PE) program currently offers over 50 well-attended for-credit classes each quarter ranging from bouldering to cross country skiing, squash, and yoga. While Reed does not participate in NCAA Division level athletics, it does provide club sports. Currently 80 to 90 students participate in eight such teams: men's basketball, women's basketball, rowing, men's rugby and women's rugby, men's soccer, and women's ultimate frisbee. Reed has attracted some outstanding athletes, including an All American Greco-Roman Wrestler, a National Collegiate Judo Champion, four All American Women Rugby Players, a Regional Collegiate Sailing Champion, and a Regional Squash Champion.

The Reed Ski Cabin was renovated through support contributed in the Centennial Campaign. Students, individually and in groups, make busy use of the facility that now accommodates 15.

7) Supporting Learning

a) Academic Resource Center

The academic resource center in the Dorothy Johansen House, known as the DoJo, is one example of how Reed is supporting learning. At the DoJo, students can take advantage of the college's drop-in peer tutoring program or meet individually with staff for a personalized approach to achieving academic goals. The academic support staff members also organize and offer workshops on quantitative skills and study skills. Having just completed its sixth year, this resource already seems like an institution.

Academic support attempts to foster an inclusive Reed community and to support the needs of a diverse group of students through programs delivered specifically to underrepresented populations and trainings for students and staff.

For example, academic support has worked collaboratively with the offices of multicultural affairs, international student services, and disability support services, and designed programs for members of diverse communities. Some examples include a workshop on "Deciphering Hum 110" and "Class Discussion" for international students and the Peer Mentor Program, which seeks to support students from underrepresented communities and international students. Academic support also partners with disability support services to provide training to student employees who take notes for other students. The director of academic support attends Peer Mentor Program retreats and checks on the academic progress of those students at the four- and eight-week mark, offering resources as appropriate.

As a result, many of the individual academic coaching meetings provided by academic support staff are with students from racially under-represented groups. Referrals for English as a second language writers, first-generation college students, and students with AD/HD and/or learning disabilities are also quite common, and academic support staff are able to adapt these one-on-one sessions to meet the diverse needs of each student.

b) Tutoring

The college employs about 200 student tutors, with expertise in introductory-level biology, chemistry, physics, economics, statistics, math, Spanish, French, German, Russian, Chinese, and all levels of writing. Students have unlimited access to drop-in tutoring, and up to one hour of individual tutoring per week (per class) in the classes where the professor has recommended a tutor.

To ensure a high-quality program, faculty members recommend students to become tutors, and tutors must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA and receive training and ongoing guidance from the academic support staff. To ensure that tutors are prepared to serve Reed's increasingly diverse community, their training includes discussions about their position as role models, the concept of stereotype threat as documented by Claude Steele, professor at Stanford's graduate school of education, and their own and their tutees' assumptions about what it means to ask for help.

In 2011–12, 411 unique students or 28 percent of the student body visited the DoJo at least once, averaging five visits per tutee. In addition to serving students who are struggling in their courses, high-achieving students also heavily use tutoring services, demonstrating that this program is achieving its goal of ensuring that all students have the tools they need to progress and graduate, and that students do not view use of this resource negatively.

The assistant dean of academic support tracks and assesses use of the DoJo. Data that correlates visits with GPA, shows that regardless of class year, the majority of visitors to the center have GPAs in the 3.0–4.0 range. The average GPA of the students who signed in during 2012–2013 was 3.09, which is slightly lower than the average for all Reed students (3.11).

Annual surveys of tutees regularly indicate high satisfaction with this service, and reveal that tutors understand their role; in response to the phrase, "the tutors coached me on how to find the answer for myself rather than giving me the answer" on the 2011–12 survey, 85 percent said "always" or "most of the time."

8) Study Abroad Programs

Reed also creates learning opportunities for students interested in off-campus study through its 46 international and 3 domestic programs in 23 different countries. About 25 percent of Reed students participate in semester-long credit-bearing study abroad programs. Reed students seem to enjoy this intensive engagement in another culture, as opposed to a short-term exposure. By comparison, at other small colleges that have specialized in study abroad, 40 to 60 percent of students may participate in these programs, but these figures typically include short-term opportunities, such as a winter break or summer program. Our director of international programs is currently working with the Mellon Northwest Five Consortium (NW5C) colleges to examine the possibility of faculty-led programs that pool our resources and offer educational programs that are integrated into the curriculum and are priced consistently. The NW5C includes Reed, Willamette University, Lewis and Clark College, Whitman College, and the University of Puget Sound.

Challenges

1) History and Culture

Although the benefits of increased investment in supporting students are often praised, current students and alumni are also eager to maintain traditional notions of freer-form life outside the classroom, and ideals of self-organizing student life. Our collective goal is for programs that support students to encourage the growth of community-minded yet independently minded young adults.

2) Changing Expectations

In society at large, students (and the families who support them and remain heavily involved in their lives throughout the college years) often arrive on campus with the expectation and need for increased support. Students whose disabilities once kept them out of colleges like Reed now arrive and thrive when they have appropriate support to manage their disabilities. Society, often as represented by the federal government, requires high levels of counseling and support in areas such as student financial aid, student safety, alcohol and other drugs, and sexual assault. Finally, a growing body of research on the human brain demonstrates the changing and often immature nature of the human mind during the late teens and early twenties. At a school as small as Reed, where economies of scale are rare, it can be difficult to marshal the resources necessary to meet these growing obligations.

3) Curricular Structure, Financial Health, and Study Abroad

The structured nature of the Reed curriculum and perhaps particularly the junior qualifying exam may impede Reed students' ability to take a semester abroad. Unlike many other colleges, Reed charges a student the host country college's tuition, not Reed's tuition, when they take credits abroad. Having more students enroll in study abroad, while desirable from many points of view, would have financial as well as curricular consequences.

4) Resources

a) Professional Staffing in Health and Counseling

The current staffing model for Reed's Health and Counseling Center (HCC) relies on psychology trainees from programs at OHSU and Pacific University in addition to licensed staff in order to meet the demand for counseling services. Trainees can be very good, but their term of service is rarely more than one year. Research is showing that experience plays a role in the effectiveness of counseling. There could be substantial benefit to Reed students if the HCC were to change its model to incorporate more experienced licensed staff positions (psychologist, psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, or licensed clinical social worker).

b) Space in the DoJo

While the current space housing the DoJo works well in many ways—the layout of tables is easy to adapt for different sized groups, the kitchen and fireplace create a friendly environment, and the ample wall space allows for many useful black and white boards, etc.—the space is overcrowded on busy nights and students have reported dissatisfaction in that regard. More quiet space for students taking exams or for students who are distracted by collaborations in the main rooms could improve the DoJo's functions.

c) The Sports Center

Satisfaction surveys for the sports center, while solid, show some room for improvement. On the 2012–13 spring survey of sports center programs, on a scale of 1 to 5, 18% of students rated the sports center as wonderful (5), 60% as good (4), 17% as okay (3), 2% as not so great (2), 0.5% as terrible (1). The mean was 3.9. The college sent the survey to 805 students; 271 responded for a response rate of 34%. The sports center is increasingly heavily utilized, which represents a positive trend in terms of student health and wellness, and also suggests that the resources will continue to be stretched.

d) Outdoor Program Resources

The region's proximity to a wide range of world-class outdoor recreational opportunities represents a meaningful benefit for Reed students whose rigorous academic pursuits place a premium on quality experiences beyond the classroom. However, the outdoor education program faces some substantial resource constraints. In order to increase the number of openings and enable all students who are interested to attend odysseys, for example, we would need additional gear, transport, and instructors, as well as enhanced financial aid for students with financial need to attend these events. This would require about $15,000 annually.

Questions for Further Thought

1) What should the goal of retention to graduation be for Reed College?

2) What are the most important programs to support students' success during and beyond their time at Reed College?

3) How important are the college's residential life programs and how should they be strengthened?

4) How do changing demographics of Reed's prospective student body impact the ways the college supports future students?

5) How could study abroad be better integrated into the curriculum?