

Reed College Strategic Plan

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Reed College Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee

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Introduction

The Reed College Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee (AHSPC or "the committee") completed a set of strategic recommendations for consideration by the college's governing bodies—the board of trustees, CAT and CAPP, and the college vice presidents and deans—between October 2021 and May 2022. The committee began its work considering the extensive work already done by existing committees and the strategic planning reports completed by working groups of faculty, staff, students, and trustees active in 2012–16. Committee members also conducted formal and informal discussions with individuals and with groups on campus, including the Committee on Academic Policy and Planning (CAPP), the Committee on Advancement and Tenure (CAT), the Faculty Committee on Diversity, the Student Senate, college vice presidents and deans, and the board of trustees.

The recommendations identify a set of opportunities closely tied to Reed's historic educational strengths. We also want to point beyond these items to encourage efforts to elevate the college's growing focus on the foremost human challenge of our time, environmental sustainability. With the addition of Reed's first professional staff member devoted to this issue, we urge future planning to develop and implement actions to advance the college's commitment to responsible stewardship of its campus environment.

We recognize that these strategic recommendations pose challenging issues in their implementation, and we are eager to be helpful as individual community members in supporting necessary discussions and work. It is likely that these activities to bring broad vision statements into actionable plans will unearth new strategic considerations as well.

For this reason, we recommend that the college adopt processes to continue to update this plan in light of the experiences and new ideas that emerge in coming years. We have all found that the structure of this committee works well, and we recommend a similar approach in future years.

We are mindful that we write this report during a pandemic that has interrupted life and study in significant ways. The negative impacts of this are still not fully understood. Nonetheless, the community's response to these challenges is instructive, with the college and community members responding with compassion, competence, generosity, and resilience—exactly the kinds of qualities that will bolster our collective work in the future.

I: Context: Reed's Strengths and Future Constraints

We enter the second decade of Reed's second century in a strong position. At the same time, we must continue to make thoughtful choices about our operations, building on Reed's historic educational mission. The work of the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee has been to identify and advance a limited set of strategic goals and to recognize that achieving these goals requires that we bridge the interests of students, faculty, and administration.

We assess that Reed's position has changed. For the period between 1970 and 2000, Reed's

strategic necessity was to create a sustainable financial model, one that could rely on strong applicant pools, donations, and an endowment capable of supporting a substantial portion of the operating budget. With good fundraising and management, the college has grown in strength, amassing an endowment of nearly \$800 million and receiving close to 9,000 applications from prospective students in 2022. Over the past twenty years, this success has allowed Reed to increase the size of its faculty and staff to improve and increase its academic offerings and to augment support for students through an expanded staff.

Reed's strategic priority now is different and emerges from a tension between the costs of our programs and our desire to attract a talented and diverse student body. For now and for the foreseeable future, Reed will depend on tuition for the majority of its revenue. Like other colleges with similar endowments per student, Reed's financial model forecasts increasing the price of tuition to balance revenues with expenditures. These tuition price increases will occur in an economic environment where families' ability—and willingness—to pay the tuition that selective liberal arts colleges are charging is declining. In addition, Reed aspires to enroll more talented students without financial resources.

Our planning seeks to address this tension between revenue and enrollment. Prior planning efforts at Reed and at similar colleges tended to identify areas of growth. This growth was then supported by tuition increases and fundraising. The outcome of this strategic planning process will need to be different in three ways. First, growth and change will need to be supported by revenues not sourced from tuition increases. Second, the changes we implement should be better informed, though not solely guided, by understanding of current and prospective

students' needs and aspirations. Finally and ideally, changes should make the college more flexible financially: able to respond to new aspirations or challenges while sustaining our core academic strengths.

As President Bilger wrote to the faculty in fall 2021, echoing other higher education leaders, we should not assume that we can address all challenges by continuing to add teaching faculty or supporting personnel:

“As you understand from recent presentations by our treasurer, the college’s predominant costs are personnel, both salary and benefits. And that is appropriate, as it is these investments in the right people doing the right things that allow us to offer an outstanding educational program. As news outlets and government officials are fond of pointing out, our costs in higher education have increased above the rate of inflation, although we have come closer to matching that increase in recent years Even when we raise financial aid at the same or slightly higher rate as we increase tuition, our current pricing structure will limit access to our educational offerings. It is this calculation in particular that drives my efforts to monitor and contain our costs even as we engage in collaborative strategic planning to imagine Reed’s most vibrant and inclusive future.”

The question as to whether the college should enlarge the student body serves as an example of the trade-offs and changes that this strategic planning effort addresses. The committee spent time considering the size of the college. The size of the student body impacts all aspects of the college’s structure. Reed is small relative to most

peers and has also grown more slowly than our peers in the past decade. Historically, we have valued our small size because it encourages community and supports the kind of direct democratic governance processes that we prefer. Increasing enrollments would support additional teaching personnel and a wider range of academic disciplines. Increasing enrollments would also put pressure on all aspects of the college, particularly facilities.

To increase enrollments many things would need to change. Overall, we believe there is reason to have greater confidence that the college will attract strong applications from a wider group of prospective students. Experience in enrollment in recent years also suggests that both diversity and tuition revenues improve with larger classes. Our experience this year with 1,500 students also begins to show the limits and possibilities of additional growth in a tangible way.

The college’s strength allows us to make choices about our future. This is a luxury available to few of our peers. We recommend five initiatives below that enact these choices. These initiatives renew and strengthen research and discovery as a core promise the college makes to students and faculty. The central challenge in implementing these initiatives is our ability to work collaboratively and effectively across our governing structures internally and inclusively with external constituencies.

II. Strategic Opportunity: Inspire Discovery

Reed has emerged from a challenging set of decades for higher education, having

both strengthened its distinctive reputation and enhanced its educational program and operational and financial position. Everyone at the college has contributed to these successes, and we want to begin by celebrating and recognizing this progress. It has been hard-won.

The opportunity the committee identifies for the college is to build on these accomplishments and reinforce the college's distinction by further emphasizing and supporting its commitment to inquiry, research, and discovery and to clarify the connection between our academic work and contributions to the greater good.

Reed advances into its second century at a time when even corporate entities wrestle to expand their missions to consider questions of broad human welfare as well as profit. So too colleges, and particularly college students, seek educational programs that can positively impact a set of societal problems that have resisted change, notably health and welfare, equity, and climate change.

Reed has historic and growing strengths in asking academic study to reach conclusions, whether in a fully articulated and defended thesis, an artistic performance, a published research paper, or recommendations to professionals and policy makers. Both discovery and solution appear frequently throughout the Reed curriculum and in the community life of the college. The pairing of discovery and solution has its origins in Reed's core strength in teaching. This pairing is welded together in laboratories, computational and field work, performance, and in settings beyond campus where Reed students and expert practitioners work alongside each other.

These commitments at the college have been strengthened over the past two decades with a major expansion of the sabbatical program

for faculty, increased funding for both faculty and student research, and the expansion of performative discovery throughout the campus. This process has been enhanced by the development of new facilities, such as the performing arts building. Further, the college has long traditions of engaging in challenges of the day, from the [SEEDS program](#) to [Science Outreach](#) to the [McGill Lawrence fellowships](#) to new programs that are closely tied to current societal challenges, such as [Comparative Race and Ethnicity Studies](#), [Environmental Studies](#), and [Computer Science](#). Seeking justice also looms large in the college's aspirations currently and historically. This is evidenced by the aspiration that students, faculty, and staff demonstrate "honorable" behaviors and an abiding belief that the academic work of the college makes particular and valuable contributions to welfare, truth, beauty, and equity. Seeking justice, the college has always prioritized supporting students who aspire to attend Reed but who lack financial resources to pay tuition. This has been the college's longest and deepest commitment to societal change.

In recommending this focus, we recognize that successful explorations by Reed scholars, whether faculty or students, often involve complicated paths of learning and changing ideas, with initial hypotheses revised by careful research. Reed has long celebrated this process of inquiry and the spirit of curiosity that motivates such work. The phrase "comrades of the quest" was used by Reed's first president to describe this partnership in intellectual journeys as the essential basis for the college.

Recommendations

Deepening our commitment to discovery requires continued evolution in the five areas outlined immediately below and expanded in greater detail in subsequent pages:

- 1 INCREASE** Reed's capacity for growth and change in the academic program as we seek to engage each new generation of students with the important challenges of the day. Students and faculty will participate together in research, performance, and discovery characterized by community outreach and engagement in and beyond the academic program.
 - 2 INVEST** in areas of growing intellectual interest and excellence in the form of new staffing and facilities.
 - 3 DEVELOP** new competencies in supporting students' development. We will make an enhanced set of commitments that will equip almost all students to complete their undergraduate educations in their expected timeline, generally four years. These commitments include completing the work of creating a vibrant residential community on campus. This is an aspiration that Reed has worked steadily to achieve over the past five decades.
 - 4 DEEPEN** our commitment to belonging in order to encourage and support the college's growing diversity. Inspiring discovery requires that we enable students to welcome and engage with professors and peers with different views, backgrounds, and perspectives in an environment of belonging, equity, and trust.
 - 5 EXTEND** our promise to prepare students for careers in a wide variety of fields where Reed graduates have long made important contributions: from finance to health, from the academy to public policy, and from research to leadership.
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III. Proposed Steps and Challenges to Make these Changes

A. Support Innovation in Curricular Planning and Design

From its origins, Reed sought to distinguish itself as an intellectual college, one dedicated to a broad engagement in human thought. The college's mission statement emphasizes the importance of breadth—the understanding of a range of disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and quantitative disciplines—as well as depth—the demonstrated grasp of a field and the ability to begin to offer an independent contribution.

The college has believed that such training is purposeful—broadly useful in a wide variety of endeavors. This belief has come to life in the diverse careers of Reed's graduates. In a world that moves increasingly fast, training in a particular skill may become obsolete; an education in the methods of learning can adapt.

Against this sturdy foundation, the college faces new opportunities as outlined in our introduction and expanded in more detail here:

- Students and families make significant investments of time and money to attend Reed, and they want to emerge from college with skills and connections to begin work, to make contributions soon after graduation, and to live meaningful and rewarding lives.
- In a knowledge-based economy, the skills Reed students learn are immediately valuable to engaging in purposeful work, and Reed students are eager to use these skills to advance society. This interest is reflected in faculty and curricular developments, with

the growth of a number of academic areas, including neuroscience, computer science, statistics, and political science and the [early voting center](#).

- In a number of areas, curricular developments are tied to pressing societal issues and opportunities. In addition to affirming its position against racism, the college has dedicated resources to addressing climate change, with its most substantial investments used to establish a new program in environmental studies. More recently, the college has launched a new program in comparative race and ethnicity studies, recognizing the foment across disciplines to include race and ethnicity in the study of a wide range of fields. Interest in international studies continues to grow, with strong enrollments of foreign students and continued and unmet interest in study abroad, which remains a small program at Reed.
- Both faculty and students are eager to bring their ideas into local, professional, and scholarly associations beyond the college and to intersect directly with pressing issues. Research programs have expanded across the college and frequently include joint student-faculty collaborative work to engage issues of global warming, pollution, hunger, the tyranny of the U.S. News' college rankings, and voting.
- There is growing interest in interdisciplinary programs, including comparative literature and neuroscience, and interest is coalescing around a film and media studies program.

At least five challenges have emerged in managing and supporting these developments:

- **ENROLLMENT AND TEACHING:**
We do not have good alignment between student interest and enrollments and faculty

resources, and we lack flexibility for faculty to accommodate their and their students' interests in interdisciplinary programs. With growth of departments and changes in interests, enrollment challenges have emerged, with a number of departments that attract the strongest student interest facing shortages of faculty and related resources. In addition, students seeking entry into these oversubscribed programs may face delays in taking courses required for their advancement. Relatedly, faculty in oversubscribed programs have faced overwhelming enrollments in both introductory courses and in advising majors and senior theses. With a longterm objective of a 10:1 student to faculty ratio achieved and enrollment approaching our facilities' capacities, faculty for new programs need to be drawn from existing programs in addition to some potential new faculty lines.

- **CURRICULAR STRUCTURE:**
Some identify our curricular structure as exacerbating these challenges, from major investments in required and year-long introductory courses and a year-long thesis to extensive requirements in majors. Over time, we have had discussions about changes to our structures that would support greater flexibility in students' journeys through the college. Summer courses (rejected by the 2013–15 Summer and January Term committee) could help students either compress or expand the time in which they take courses and make the best possible use of campus facilities while expanding the number of students enrolled without requiring additional space. Supporting the large numbers of students who would like to study abroad (recommended by the 2013–15 Education Outside the Classroom committee) would provide invaluable educational opportunities

and also allow the college to manage somewhat larger enrollments without requiring expensive new investments.

- **FACULTY EMPLOYMENT:** A third challenge is related to the structures of employment for faculty, an issue mentioned in many reports from the 2013–15 strategic planning. Reed is unusual in its reliance on full-time or tenure or tenure-track faculty. Visiting faculty are also hired on the same pay and benefit scale as tenure-track faculty. While Reed has long avoided the exploitation of teachers in adjunct positions seen in many parts of higher education, some faculty are interested in colleagues who might choose part-time engagements at the college as they step away from their regular professional obligations, and we have good evidence of the effectiveness of visiting instructors of many kinds.
- **FACULTY COMPENSATION:** Our current systems of faculty compensation have failed to recruit and retain faculty in high-demand fields that face competition from industry, notably economics, computer science, and statistics. All Reed faculty are paid on the same scale at this time, an issue of equity long valued in governance of the college. Failed searches in these fields and departures of faculty have left these departments short of teaching staff, raising these issues to new levels of urgency.
- **GOVERNANCE:** Most importantly, our governance structures struggle to address issues, make desired changes, and seize new opportunities. (Some of these issues have been taken up previously by an [Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Governance](#). Everyone praises the service of generations of faculty serving on the two principal faculty governance committees, CAPP and CAT. These committees have taken on challenging faculty governance issues

successfully, bringing recommendations to the faculty floor for discussion, making changes based on those discussions, and having final recommendations passed. It is also the case that recommendations from these committees on the most long-standing issues, particularly those regarding faculty workload and course enrollments, often face insurmountable scrutiny. In this atmosphere, the committees' understandable desire is to move forward with change only when consensus is achieved. Relatedly, the college has less well-developed roles and responsibilities for department and division chairs, positions that at other institutions make many of the decisions that now roll up to either CAT or CAPP, further slowing the work of these two committees.

Recommendations

CAPP's Responsibilities

- 1 Affirm CAPP's authority to make decisions about the curriculum, including development, evaluation and support of new programs, assignment of faculty lines to programs, and recommendations on related resources, e.g. staff positions supporting the academic program.
- 2 While financial considerations cannot be the first element of academic planning, CAPP should define the budgetary impacts of new programs, including the impacts on new and continuing student enrollments and faculty workload. Such activity could be supported by an expanded CAPP Budget Advisory Subcommittee (CBAS), amply supported by administrative staff or delegated to the dean of the faculty.
- 3 Evaluate and support students' ability to navigate the academic program so as to graduate on their desired schedule in a way that is informed by student surveys

and retention evaluations conducted by institutional research and the enrollment management group, among others.

- 4 CAPP should continue the practice of giving regular reports to and having discussion with the faculty as a whole and with individual departments on all matters related to the academic program.
- 5 CAPP should delegate authority on routine matters to the dean of the faculty or the chair of CAPP, including approval of new courses and bookkeeping changes to the faculty code. These changes can be reviewed by CAPP and the faculty under a consent agenda.
- 6 CAPP should have authority to recommend academic staffing to the president supported by different types of teaching resources, including visiting faculty and part-time faculty.
- 7 CAPP will typically hold open meetings as has long been the practice, and we believe that CAPP would benefit from having time as a committee in executive session to come to a point of view on difficult issues.

CAT's Responsibilities

- 1 CAT's authority should include recommendations to the president in two areas:
 - A CAT should establish guidelines that allow for the approval of salaries needed to recruit and retain faculty, an expansion of authority to address recruitment issues faced by some departments.
 - B Approval of salaries and work arrangements for part-time faculty as well as visiting faculty.

Governance Committees Structure and Operations

- 1 Members of CAT and CAPP should receive compensation, including the possibility of course-release, for their work, as they will increasingly be required to develop broad

expertise about the shape of the educational program.

- 2 The faculty should have continued discussion about the ways CAPP and CAT members are elected, a subject of discussion in the 2015 report on faculty governance. The faculty members of ad hoc strategic planning did not agree on the need for changes at this time, and some saw strength in our current processes.

Departmental and Division Chairs

- 1 The college should continue work to strengthen and define these roles. Ideally, some decisions that come to CAPP could be delegated to departmental or division leadership, and such informed leadership could help evaluate the impacts of proposed programmatic changes.

B. Invest in the Academic Program

We hope that it will be possible to increase revenues through planning and fundraising that can deepen strengths in the academic program, and we identify the list below based on prior recommendations and current discussions. We also know that the college will need to balance these investments with other important recommendations we are making in subsequent sections.

Investments

- 1 The college administration should continue to invest in facilities for the academic programs that face heavy enrollment pressures and the need for specialized teaching spaces, including the following:
 - A Complete the expansion of office and teaching space for math, computer science, and statistics

- B** Consider expansions of space for biology, neuroscience, and studio art
- 2** CAPP and CAT, with the college administration, should undertake evaluations of and investments in expanding and new programs, including CRES, computer science, environmental studies, film and media studies, neuroscience, and statistics, as well as the impacts of supporting senior thesis.
- 3** Evaluate and equalize funding for programs in research and discovery to support joint student-faculty research. With expanded support and funding for internships in the Center for Life Beyond Reed, we hope to promise every student a rich summer opportunity that would advance understanding of their field of interest. Support growth of study abroad programs with the goal of growing student participation, including setting targets for engagement in this area.
- 4** Building on long traditions of field work at the college, CAPP and the college administration should evaluate and support the development of co-curricular programs that connect classroom learning and experimentation.

C. Nurture Student Success

With strong and growing applicant pools, we can be confident that the students enrolled are both capable of and eager to complete their education at Reed, an expectation that we share with these students and their families.

As was noted in the 2012–16 planning documents and many earlier studies, Reed lags behind comparable schools in the percentage of students who earn their bachelor's degree at the college. Reed's graduation gap cannot be explained by

demographic characteristics or differences in academic preparation between Reed's students and those at other colleges. We also hear and witness strong desires by faculty, staff, and students to help those around them succeed.

The positive impacts of increased retention are many, including more consistent enrollments and revenues and improved demonstration of the college's value and impact. The greatest impact of graduation lies in having students complete the college's educational program, as we believe that this preparation will provide an excellent foundation for their chosen career, particularly since we know that the greatest opportunities for making a personal statement or discovery come late in the Reed curriculum.

The range of systemic issues cited for lower retention is broad and under exploration, but we do know that the bulk of departures from the college happen quickly after enrollment, during the first or second year, largely between semesters. This is one of the most complex issues facing the college, one that requires all parts of the college to collaborate in understanding the challenges students face in completing Reed's program and the multiple steps that need to be taken to address these challenges.

Student Success Recommendations

- **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT** a first- and second-year student co-curricular experience, identifying a signature sophomore initiative that increases student belonging and community. Such programs would include some of the following elements:
 - Pre-matriculation support services and bridge programs that assist students' ability to succeed at Reed.
 - Provision of study abroad experiences and related learning pathways for all students to enable students to develop global perspectives and competencies.

- Expansion of student leadership opportunities to build competencies that position students to make societal impacts.
- **ESTABLISH AND SUSTAIN** community partnerships that advance research, experiential learning, and application of knowledge to serve the needs of underserved communities.
- **EXPAND, MAINTAIN, AND RENOVATE** student life facilities, including residential living spaces, to cultivate student belonging and enhance community with faculty, staff, and students. Strong community connections with faculty, staff, and students are indicators of success.
- **EXPAND** investments in core professional functions in the office of student life: student conduct, Title IX, health & counseling services, and academic support.
- Together with the faculty, **DESIGN** an academic advising program that supports student navigation of the academic program, particularly in the first two years and during the summer prior to arrival at the college.
- **ELEVATE** a holistic, culturally responsive, and evidence-based approach to student health that connects successfully and equitably with all students, building on increased conversations about health developed during the pandemic.
 - In the renovated sports center, develop a comprehensive fitness program, including active student teams, individual fitness activities, and informal competitions and games.
 - Develop a comprehensive community wellness outreach program.
 - Develop a campus-wide interpersonal violence prevention plan in alignment with the Clery Act and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

- Identify and leverage financial resources for students to access on/off campus support for their mental and physical health in alignment with the equity in mental health framework.

D. Embrace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Faculty, students, and staff are drawn to the college to find comradeship and support on the one hand and difference and challenge on the other. Research confirms that groups make better decisions when they are diverse, and when participants have skills to navigate differences between group members.

This diversity relies on many factors, beginning with the range of people represented in and supported at the college. Achievement of a state of both diversity and inclusion requires specific actions and the engagement of the entire college and all parts of this plan.

For example, the college's financial model has been designed to include significant funds for financial aid support. Since its founding, the college has aspired to admit talented students without regard to their ability to pay tuition, an aspiration that is now called need-blind. Beginning in 2004, the college met the first part of this definition, fully funding the financial need of all admitted students. A second step was taken in 2014 when financial aid awards were increased for all students, allowing more families to accept the college's offer of admission.

A small number of liberal arts colleges have recently announced more generous policies, such as awarding packages that do not include any student loans. A much larger group offers true discounts to selected students, whether through

academic awards or athletic scholarships, regardless of the student's demonstrated financial need. A very small group of colleges have policies to admit students without regard to financial need; even at these wealthier colleges, about 50 percent of students will pay full tuition, resulting in a student body more affluent than the country as a whole. Policies also differ for international students. Reed offers some financial aid for international students, a more generous policy than most colleges can afford. Since 2000, Reed donors have contributed \$118 million for financial aid (with just over \$100 million added to the endowment), allowing these more generous policies to continue and to expand.

While the college has long dedicated resources to increasing Reed's diversity, we remain early in our work in enrolling students and hiring staff and faculty from historically marginalized groups and developing programs to support their engagement. In the past five years, a number of steps have been taken to increase the diversity of both faculty and staff on campus, and entering classes have included larger numbers of students from a range of backgrounds. [The Office for Institutional Diversity](#) provides information on our progress to date and future plans.

In recent years, the college has also put its weight against racism, adopting statements on both diversity and anti-racism. Reed has changed campus operations to meet these goals, speaking against policies and practices that disproportionately impact historically marginalized groups and supporting research and activities that promote justice. These activities build on legacies of such work by the college, from SEEDS to the Science Outreach Program. In a cooperative venture between OID and CLBR, the college now offers opportunities for social justice research, a program funded by a growing group of [supportive alumni and friends](#).

The steps outlined below aim to accelerate this work across many axes, increasing accountability

for change. As is the case throughout this document, these broad items require more detailed plans to outline necessary steps, develop timelines, and identify necessary resources.

Recommendations

Informed by discussions with the Faculty Committee on Diversity, we make the following recommendations in this space:

- **ELEVATE** anti-racism as a central part of the college's work and mission on par with other defining characteristics. This stance will push various structures of the college to consider change, including fundamental issues such as college size and faculty compensation practices, and such change will present challenges for our current and desirable methods of governance. Elevating anti-racism requires a commitment to the well-being of students, faculty, and staff, especially those from historically marginalized groups. Recommendations from the Faculty Committee on Diversity include the following:
 - Create a greater sense of safety on campus, especially addressing the fear of being wrongly identified as an outsider and clear processes for addressing racial profiling.
 - Support programs in the Multicultural Resource Center and SEEDS and identify spaces that allow for intimate gatherings of ethnic and racial groups.
 - Build academic programs and practices that recognize and engage race, including CRES, study abroad programs, and introductory courses, without relying exclusively on diverse faculty.
 - Continue work to build cultures of belonging for all students and each stage of the academic program, beginning with introductory courses and continuing through into academic majors.

- **BRING AND SUPPORT** more students, faculty, and staff to campus from backgrounds historically excluded from higher education in the U.S., especially those from non-white ethnic groups living in the U.S. and also students from these groups irrespective of their citizenship.
- **DEVELOP** plans that support the distinct needs for international students beyond their arrival to the U.S. In particular, address the challenges international students face in finding paid employment, especially internships, and their expanded need for housing in between semesters. Recognizing that anti-immigrant sentiments have particularly grave impacts on this group, seek to involve these students in addressing such expressions on campus and beyond and in developing policies that support Reed's growing community of international students.
- **SUSTAIN AND EXPAND** the college's financial aid program with a focus on students from the lowest income bands in the United States. The college should also seek funds that would support more international students, as we see evidence of tremendous talent and diversity in this area.

E. Extend our Promise Beyond Graduation

Reed's rigorous education in the liberal arts and sciences was best understood as preparation for further study and work in the academy even as Reed alumni pursued work in many fields. It is important for the college to develop a point of view and resources to support the placement of graduates who do not pursue academic careers.

Our plan seeks to address the following conditions:

- Reed has long celebrated the high percentage of alumni earning PhDs. While significant, PhD earners comprise less than 20% of our alumni community. We need to support this accomplishment and celebrate the accomplishments of the majority of our alumni working outside the academy.
- A similarly high percentage (80%) of students seek work and not school immediately following graduation. While 63% of Reed alumni ultimately seek graduate or professional education, Reed can play an active role in preparing them and helping locate gainful and valued work. Presently, alumni surveys show low percentages of graduates who felt the college prepared them for the reality of their post-baccalaureate lives.
- Our students and their families are drawn to the promise of intellectual exploration, and they and their families also want to apply this work to gainful purposes. These pressures will only rise as the college enrolls more international students and students from families in low socioeconomic situations. Since 2012, the [College Scorecard](#) has provided a misleading picture of Reed's alumni salaries. In February 2022, the Scorecard was updated and correctly positioned Reed as competitive with peers. Reed needs to continue to support our graduates' goals while balancing Reed's educational mission with our graduates' aspirations for socioeconomic advancement.
- Because of Reed students' focus on the senior thesis, Reed seniors generally spend less time than their peers at other schools planning for their futures. Consequently, this work needs to be located earlier in their time at the college, beginning during their first year on campus.
- Because Reed is located in a vibrant metropolitan area, a relatively high percentage

(50%) of our graduates remain near the college immediately after graduation, making local connections and networking valuable. Consequently, students' connections with local employers should begin during their time at college, again most likely before the intense senior year.

- While Reed alumni and Reed students point to the importance and rigor of the senior thesis, 7 out of 10 seniors struggle to translate the value of their thesis to their future aspirations. When the college is able to step in to help, however, the results can be compelling, as illustrated by the [Burn your Draft podcast](#).
- We need to assess our current work in CLBR to ensure that our programs reach all students, including those who are racial and gender minorities.
- For many years, the college has worked with limited success to mitigate the impact of Reed graduates' relatively low GPA on their prospects for employment and continuing education. Because of Reed's unique grading practice, the college has experienced very little grade inflation, and this has had negative impacts on our graduates' prospects in several areas, including professional school admission.
- The Center for Life Beyond Reed (CLBR) has supported our students' success in competing for national fellowships and awards, and we need to sustain this work and ensure that all students are prepared to participate in these opportunities.

When we are successful, we will see the following outcomes of this work:

- By the end of sophomore year, every Reed sophomore will have the opportunity to

explore their chosen field through a project or work experience and will have made a connection within the alumni community.

- Every Reed student will graduate with clarity, skill, competence, connections, and confidence to transfer their Reed education into purposeful work and additional study.
- Reed graduates will desire to help future generations of Reed students identify and succeed in their chosen paths.

Recommendations

Where other areas of our report require complex governmental changes, many improvements in this area of the college are more straightforward:

- **DEVELOP** permanent funding and staffing support for earlier development of leadership, experience, and networking during the sophomore academic year and summer to help jump-start students' exploration.
- **COMMIT** funding and staffing support so that at least two-thirds of the student body have a significant workplace experience during their years at Reed, including a paid or unpaid internship (Reed stipend), fellowship, research, or artistic, socially, or commercially viable entrepreneurial project.
- **EXPAND** CLBR's current advising staff from 3 to 4 to include a grad school/fellowship/career advisor with expertise and connections in the technology sector, a field of historic strength for Reed graduates of all majors.
- **FURTHER** current survey and analysis to better understand for whom Reed's promise is extended post-graduation now, and how we can improve our alumni outcomes.

- **SHOWCASE** Reed's undergraduate thesis research process beyond Reed.
 - **PROMOTE** the contributions of our alumni, regardless of PhD obtainment.
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Conclusion

The committee concludes this report with a sense of optimism for the college's continued success and a renewed belief in the college's valuable contributions. These assessments are linked to changes we recommend, ones that are already in motion around campus, but also ones that require faculty, students, and staff to work collaboratively to achieve these outcomes.

When these items are achieved, Reed and the Reed community will be better known and more readily engaged in addressing significant societal issues. The college's foremost expertise is education, and Reed should be vigilant in protecting such processes. While Reed students will continue to make of their educations and time on campus what they will, the college must also better empower individuals to put their ideas into action and support these aspirations more fully.

These recommendations ask for change, and they also reinforce the college's historic strengths and directions. In particular, we advise continuing to invest in a residential educational model, one that aims for maximum impact not through diplomas issued but through our collective work on a set of human challenges that resist quick solutions, including justice, peace, sustainability, and human welfare.

