

**State of the College**  
**Donal O'Shea**  
**September 14, 2019**

Never have I felt more optimistic about the prospects and future of New College of Florida. We begin the year in the best financial position in our history. We have added almost two dozen faculty with an extraordinarily broad and deep range of expertise, and about the same number of talented staff committed to preparing intellectually curious students for lives of great achievement.

We weathered difficult times last year and have emerged stronger. We have significant opportunities in the coming year that will require us to make wise, strategic choices in a more expedited time frame than in the past. Thankfully we are guided by the Strategic Plan we developed, and the Board of Trustees approved, last October. My five institutional priorities for 2019-20 – summarized in a separate attachment – align with our strategic plan and flow from the need to address the opportunities and the challenges we will face.

**Priority #1: Increase the number of matriculants.**

Beginning with the 2018 admissions cycle, we experienced a decrease in the number of completed applications which led to a decline in the number of students we were able to admit. In August 2018, eighteen fewer students matriculated than we had planned. This year even fewer students matriculated due to another decline in completed applications and the fact that the College awarded degrees to its largest ever class. In addition, an external investigation into our admissions practices found that a preponderance of the evidence suggested that that our now-former Dean of Enrollment Management instructed staff to flag students who revealed disabilities or a history of mental illness or abuse, which in turn may have resulted in the college's admissions process discriminating against students with disabilities or mental illness.

Sonia Wu, a highly respected veteran of New College, served as Acting Dean until we were able to hire David Rhodes as Interim Dean of Enrollment Management to help us through the year. David has a distinguished record of accomplishment helping institutions improve enrollment processes and outcomes during times of transition. With David, Sonia, and our enrollment staff, we now have a good team in place to move forward. We have also engaged an external consultant group to review any applications that may have been subject to discrimination in the last two enrolment cycles. We will conduct a search for a permanent Dean of Enrollment Management beginning in January 2020.

To explore strategies that will increase student recruitment, enrollment and retention, we have been working since May 2018 with the [Art & Science Group](#), a consulting firm with deep expertise in the higher education and liberal arts space. We have been working with them since May 2018 to explore strategies that would increase student recruitment, enrollment, and retention. Over the past 15 months, Art & Science met with faculty, staff, students and administrators to design and administer research instruments to: potential students who

inquired about New College, potential students who applied and were admitted to New College, current students, and students who have withdrawn from New College. Through this research, the Art & Science Group was able to measure: 1) factors that influence a student's decision to attend New College, 2) perceptions of how New College compares to our top competitors on each of those factors, and 3) the effects potential initiatives/strategies could have on student recruitment and retention. They have just visited campus to discuss their research results which will identify strategies that we may employ to increase our applications and admissions yield. This year, we will need to evaluate these strategies and decide how to quickly and effectively implement the strategies we choose to pursue.

Our ultimate aim, of course, is increasing enrollment. A stretch target for this coming cycle is 300 matriculants, which is more than a 50% year-over-year increase. (I've been cautioned that 250 students are already an aggressive target.)

### **Priority #2: Secure facilities to house growth.**

Although we successfully received the last instalment of recurring funds to grow, we have not yet obtained the one-time funding needed to add to our physical facilities to accommodate new faculty, staff, and students. This is a high priority for this year, and by the time you have read this, I will have presented our legislative budget request in Sarasota to local legislators requesting planning money. I plan to lobby strenuously on multiple fronts for these funds.

Student housing remains a challenge. Some of our current stock, notably the Pei dorms, badly need renovation. By statute, we can't use state funds for residence halls. In response, the Foundation Board has made raising money to renew the Pei dorms their top priority. This means raising 20 million, which in turn means substantially increasing the amount the Foundation raises annually. We have already increased the amount raised annually by the Foundation from just under \$2 million to \$5 million. We would like to double it again, while increasing the Foundation's capacity to raise funds. Priorities this year will not only be to increase annual giving by 20%, but to increase the Foundation's ability to raise funds by adding front line staff to secure major gifts.

Renovation isn't enough; we need to add new residence halls to meet student expectations and attract more students. We are exploring several options. The two most realistic options are a public-private partnership to build a new 200 room residence on 58<sup>th</sup> street and/or an agreement with USF-SM to share a USF-funded residence hall near the waterfront on the Crosley estate.

By the end of this fiscal year, I want to have secured planning funds for academic and support facilities and a place of assembly (that is, our inelegantly titled "multipurpose facility"), together with a clearly articulated path for renovating and building new residences.

**Priority #3: Secure University of Distinction status, increase PBF score, and improve campus climate.**

In the final minutes of the August 29 Board of Governors (BOG) meeting, the incoming BOG chair, Sidney Kitson, unveiled a proposal to create a new funding stream, and very strongly encouraged the nine non-preeminent institutions (each school except UF, FSU, and USF) to develop a proposal to become a "University of Distinction." To fund these proposals, the BOG will request \$100M in recurring funds (in addition to base funding) to share among the distinguished universities. As is often the case, they need our response almost immediately. This, however, represents a real opportunity for New College and, despite the short timeline, I believe that our faculty, supported by staff, can envisage something together that will break new ground for liberal arts colleges. I believe that a very successful proposal will emerge from our current QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan), recommendations from the Art & Science Group, and investments that we have already made in new programs.

Performance Based Funding (PBF) is here to stay and central to the State University System. Doing well on the metrics is critical to sustaining an important funding stream for the college. Next year, we must improve our score and find ways to consistently earn a score of at least 70 moving forward.

Improving the way we interact with one another and the general campus climate are also critical to retention of students and staff. This year, Bill Woodson and Loretta Shields will roll out initiatives to help New College become more welcoming and truly inclusive.

**Priority #4: Secure SACSCOC reaffirmation.**

Without a successful reaffirmation of our accreditation, New College cannot operate. The uniqueness of the New College program often raises questions for accreditors accustomed to more scripted and inflexible processes. It falls to us to carefully justify nearly everything we do. Through the coordinated effort of nearly every campus office, we have submitted our 500-page Compliance Certification Report to a SACSCOC review team. We will receive feedback by the end of 2019, submit our QEP plan in February, and host an on-site review team in April. We will need to respond to SACSCOC requests throughout the year and be prepared to act on any recommendations made by the external review team. Our ultimate goal is to receive a successful reaffirmation decision at the 2020 SACSCOC annual meeting.

**Priority #5: Rebuild institutional leadership.**

Everything we intend to do depends on leadership. This year, we need to hire and orient a Dean of Student Affairs, a Dean of Enrollment Management and a Vice-President of Finance and Administration. My goal is to have these positions filled by April, 2020 and to develop robust succession plans by the end of the academic year.

## 2019-20 Presidential Goals

### Goal #1: Increase the number of matriculants

Strategic Plan Alignment	<b>1. Recruit more students who will thrive at New College</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Tell the New College story</li><li>b) Target intellectually curious, high-ability students</li><li>c) Enroll students who reflect Florida's racial and economic diversity</li></ul>
Target	At least 300 entering deposited students by June 30, 2020
Actions, Milestones, and Indicators	<b>Rebuild Enrollment Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>9/1: Select and hire Interim Dean of Enrollment Management</li><li>9/30: Review and revise admissions procedures</li></ul> Indicators: Number of applications, admits, and deposits compared to annual targets
	<b>Launch new marketing campaign</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>9/30: Revise marketing materials</li><li>10/31: Launch campaign</li></ul> Indicators: Increased number of inquiries, website impressions
	<b>Evaluate and implement Art &amp; Science recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>9/14: Recommendations presented to the campus community and Board of Trustees</li><li>11/15: List of targeted applied academic programs (minors) developed</li><li>1/31: New academic programs evaluated and approved</li></ul> Indicators: Applied academic programs in Catalog for 2020-21; Campus Climate perceptions

### Goal #2: Obtain resources and facilities for growth

Strategic Plan Alignment	<b>2. Keep them here four years</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Make campus a place where students want to be</li><li>b) Immerse students in curricula that inspires</li><li>c) Work with students to help each knit together a superlative education</li></ul>
Target	Raise \$6 million by June '20; secure '20-21 funding for multi-use facility and program of distinction
Actions, Milestones, and Indicators	<b>Increase fundraising for growth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1/31: Increase fundraising capacity, reinvigorate Four Winds Society, establish annuity program</li><li>3/31: Raise funds for the Pei dorms</li></ul> Indicators: Number of potential donors presented proposals; total ask amount
	<b>Get planning phase funds for multi-use facility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>10/31: Project listed near the top of the BOG list</li><li>12/31: Legislative visits</li></ul> Indicators: BOG PECO point total; project listed on the legislative list in May
	<b>Begin development of long-term housing plan to accommodate 1200 students in 2024</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>6/30: Housing options evaluated; decision made to move forward</li></ul> Indicators: Clearly articulated path for renovating and building new residences

### Goal #3: Increase score on Performance-Based Funding Metrics

Strategic Plan Alignment	<p><b>3. Make their degree more valuable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Build pathways for academic and career success</li> <li>b) Make Sarasota an educational destination</li> <li>c) Intensify links with alumni and communities</li> </ul>
Target	Earn a score of at least 70 for 2020-21 funding (announced in May BOG meeting)
Actions, Milestones, and Indicators	<p><b>Generate, implement, and evaluate targeted strategies to improve performance on each metric</b></p> <p>9/15: PBF working group formed; weekly meeting structure planned 1/31: PBF working group report on implementation</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <p>Metric 1, 2: % of 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students meeting with CEO; internship participation (May) Metric 3, 9: % of students completing 4+ courses per term; % of expected grads with ≤ 136 credits Metric 4: Persistence rates (2<sup>nd</sup>-to-3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>-to-4<sup>th</sup> year) Metric 5: Fall-to-Spring retention rate of at least 95%; evaluation of FYS; MSPR/MSCI reports Metric 6: % of expected graduates in PSEs; # of new PSEs added to Catalog for 2020-21 Metric 7: % of Fall 2018 Pell recipients Metric 8: Success in changing metric (to graduate PSEs or GPA among all SUS FTICs) Metric 10: % of expected graduates completing 2+ HIPS by January</p> <p><b>Secure <i>Universities of Distinction</i> funding for a core academic program</b></p> <p>9/16: Submit proposal to the BOG that identifies a core program, metrics, and requested budget 10/3: Present proposal to the BOG Indicators: Proposal approved by the BOG; Universities of Distinction funding on legislative list</p> <p><b>Improve campus climate</b></p> <p>9/30: Campus Climate Initiative launched 10/31: Consultants hired to guide Campus Climate Initiative Indicators: Campus Climate perceptions (NSSE, MSPR, Climate; BSS surveys); staff retention</p>

### Goal #4: Secure SACSCOC Reaffirmation

Strategic Plan Alignment	<p><b>3. Make their degree more valuable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Build pathways for academic and career success</li> <li>b) Make Sarasota an educational destination</li> <li>c) Intensify links with alumni and communities</li> </ul>
Target	Successful reaffirmation as indicated by on-site evaluation report (no recommendations noted)
Actions, Milestones, and Indicators	<p><b>Use SACSCOC review and feedback to improve New College</b></p> <p>9/15: Submit complete Compliance Certification Report to SACSCOC 10/19: Nominate lead evaluators for our Quality Enhancement Plan 1/31: Respond to any recommendations from SACSCOC Vice President's on-campus visit 2/21: Full Quality Enhancement Plan and Focus Report submitted to SACSCOC 2/25: Trustees, faculty, and staff prepared for on-site review 4/9: Successful on-site review hosted 6/30: Implement improvements based on external peer review Indicators: Number of non-compliance findings – off-site (November); on-site (April)</p> <p><b>Implement Art &amp; Science recommendations (QEP-related integrated post-college planning)</b></p> <p>8/15: Advising team (faculty, staff, peer) identified for each incoming first-year student 9/14: Recommendations presented to the campus community and Board of Trustees 12/31: Plan to integrate post-secondary success (advising teams) developed 12/31: Every first-year student has met face-to-face with CEO staff 4/31: Advising teams assigned to each student in the Fall 2020 incoming cohort Indicators: Number of CEO visits; Handshake usage statistics; increase in 2019-20 internships</p>

## Goal #5: Build institutional leadership to meet strategic plan objectives

Target            **Fill all positions reporting directly to the President by April 2020**

Actions,        **Hire and orient key administrative positions**

Milestones,    12/31: Hire and orient new Dean of Student Affairs

and              1/31: Vice President for Finance & Administration

Indicators      3/31: Dean of Enrollment Management

                    3/31: Associate Vice President for Finance & Administration

Indicators: Number of qualified applicants

**Hire and orient key administrative positions**

6/30: Develop succession plans for all cabinet-level positions

Indicators: Draft succession plans developed by March 2020