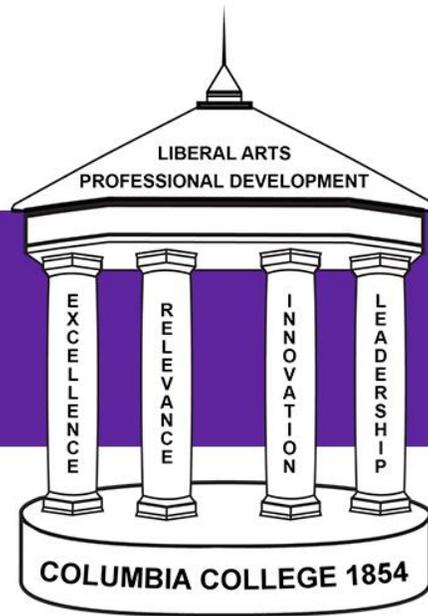


“Envisioning the Future” Executive Summary from 73 Survey Responses



Background Information about the Envisioning Process and the Survey

As President and CEO of Proactive Transition Management (PTM), Peter Mitchell developed a unique process for strategic planning. Effective planning or “envisioning the future,” should answer three basic questions: (1) who are we; (2) what do we aspire to become; (3) how do we get there? The first question examines history, core values, ethos, traditions, and key data. The second question assesses strengths, dreams, and opportunities with the goal of articulating a vision for the future direction of the College. The third question identifies the strategic initiatives that best align with the mission, vision and ethos of the College and translates them into a plan of action. The strategic initiatives must be embedded in the unique ethos, heritage and mission of the organization and must be realistic and achievable.

Central to answering these three questions and to developing a vision statement and strategic plan is the gathering and interpreting of the answers to the online survey. This survey was completed by 73 people, which is an adequate sample to draw conclusions and inferences about Columbia College. Equally important, all major constituencies were appropriately represented (faculty, staff, students, parents, retired faculty and staff, alumnae/alumni, trustees and community leaders). The five questions were:

1. List the five (5) most important strengths of Columbia College that will guide the College as it transitions to becoming coeducational – in priority order with greatest strength first.
2. Identify up to five (5) opportunities or strategic initiatives that Columbia College could pursue as a coeducational college (for example: academic programs where students could graduate in three years or require all students to participate in an internship experience. **Please be creative as if we are redesigning from scratch a coed liberal arts college in 2020.**
3. Share up to three (3) dreams you have for Columbia College as a coeducational college.
4. Colleges like people have distinct personalities. To describe the ethos or culture of Columbia College, pretend you are telling a friend about what is special by describing CC as a person. What personality traits or qualities of character would you use to describe CC as a person? (Remember: people are complex with positive personality traits and not-so-positive or quirky traits so be honest in your description)
5. Suggest ways to promote and market Columbia College as a coeducational institution

The answers, suggestions, observations, and dreams were remarkable in their consistency, creativity, passion, and reasonableness. In short, these 73 people have charted a dynamic vision and strategic direction for Columbia College to become an outstanding coed liberal arts college. Below is an Executive Summary that not only summarizes the data, but provides context and interpretation. At the beginning of each section is an explanation/interpretation of the data, followed by a summary of the survey responses, clustered in ways that highlight their importance and relevance.

Strengths

Everyone associated with Columbia College (students, alumnae/alumni, faculty, staff, retired faculty and staff, trustees, donors, community leaders, and friends of the College) should be proud and excited about the consistency, relevance, optimism, and passion the 73 survey respondents wrote about the strengths. You will see that almost everyone identified the personalized and intimate sense of community that permeates the College as THE core strengths. While most liberal arts college list this strength, in my experience, the passion and intensity of belief in the power of this strength was as strong as I have witnessed during an envisioning process.

Second to the spirit of the college is the profound appreciation for the faculty and staff. They were frequently described as talented, caring and most important, dedicated to students achieving success. The third strength is a perfect complement to the first two. While it's important to foster an ethos of caring by dedicated faculty and staff, this is an institution of higher learning. The overwhelming acknowledgment of a rigorous and relevant curriculum channels the sense of community and caring into the bottom line of preparing students for career and lives of meaning and purpose.

The fourth strength is particularly interesting. The reputation for developing women leaders is a defining quality of Columbia College. That focus is regarded as a bedrock strength going forward as a coed college. Key to leadership in the future is that it continues to emphasize empowering women, while celebrating diversity and inclusiveness. Admitting men will not diminish Columbia College remaining a champion of women's leadership. Likewise, the traditions, heritage, history and legacy of 166 years as a women's college are a fifth strength that must be maintained as a coed institution. History and heritage ground an organization and provide guiding principles as the College evolves to meet the needs and expectations for higher education in 2020.

Over one-third identified the fact that Columbia College will be the only coed liberal arts college in the State Capital that is not either an Historically Black College or University (HBCU) or a religious-oriented college/university. This strength needs to be translated into academic programs, internships, community service, and economic development related to the City of Columbia and the Midlands. This strength is augmented by the seventh strength of a passionate network of those who love Columbia College who are ready, willing and eager to support the College in its role as a major partner in the future of the Capital City. This group of advocates will be organized and inspired by the sense of confidence and commitment engendered by new and renewed leadership.

Finally, our heritage as a faith-based college with a reputation in the arts, our affordability and the potential of athletics were other strengths recognized by the respondents. The summary below has attempted to use direct statements or paraphrases of several statement to capture the fact that Columbia College is alive and well, and very strong.

- Small class sizes allow for more engagement, effective learning, individual attention, confidence and leadership building, personal relationships among students, faculty, and staff, students are known to

- and mentored by faculty and staff throughout their college careers, sense of community, loyalty, allows for building deep and lasting friendships, Campus activities and clubs to help foster connections and friendships, Community, spirit, comradery (60)
- Unwavering commitment by the faculty and staff to ensure the students have all they need to be successful, Caring and talented faculty who focus on teaching and provide the most well-rounded education and college experience to all students, academically-strong and caring faculty members who want students to be successful, engaged learning, student-centered, lifelong support (55)
 - Curriculum and excellent course offerings, innovative programs, excellent blend of liberal arts with career preparation plus preparing graduates to find purpose in life, excellent Education Dept, strong in sciences and humanities, strong sense of community, “Columbia College Spirit,” community service, and service learning, the liberal arts as the base for professional education: more than ever we need "workers" who are articulate thinkers, problem solvers, and visionary guided by compassion and a commitment to service beyond the "job," honors program, entrepreneurship, Holistic experience (intellectual, spiritual, personal), Existence of several strong core-focus curricula, i.e. *Perf Arts*, *Leadership*, *Social Justice*, to be continued, expanded and perhaps adapted to the coed structure under consideration, focus on service, Innovative, industry based multidisciplinary academic programs, Strong academics, Reputable and diverse degree programs, creative (51)
 - Leadership: Continue to build strong women although it’s coed, a sisterhood that won’t be completely forsaken, maintain and even enhance empowerment of women, been preparing women leaders for 166 years, CC has a long history of producing leaders in business, education, the arts, and community service, leadership with students not for students, providing a superior and intimate educational experience for women from diverse backgrounds, Leadership: Also encouraging the young men that attend to be respectful of women’s authority & for them to be impactful leaders to unify all! sustain leadership opportunities & encouraging our women to be strong leaders & use their voice, cultural diversity and opportunities for students of all backgrounds to learn and grow, not elitist, active inclusion and seek to eradicate marginalization, Breed Center focus of leadership programming (40)
 - Legacy, rich heritage, tradition and positive history in the State, long, strong and durable connections to the cultures of South Carolina, commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, social justice, known for campus atmosphere of kindness, thoughtfulness, and caring, meaningful traditions, passion, and reputation as a top Southeastern college (35)
 - Campus and Location. The campus is easy to navigate, safe and secure, close proximity to downtown Columbia, a home away from home, service to Eau Claire and North Columbia, unique position in Columbia as THE small, liberal arts college in the Capital City, Established campus located close to up and coming neighborhoods (Cottontown and Bull Street Development), attractive campus with academic buildings and residence halls, location in state's capital--at the center of SC, college town, feel at home (26)
 - Active community of stakeholders including funders, current students, alumni, faculty & staff, local community members, trustees, committed alumnae who remain eager to help, strong alumnae base that are supportive of programs and want Columbia College to continue to succeed and grow, Identity- Alumni have pride when it comes to CC. We are rooted together in shared experience, alumnae, retired faculty and staff, and other supporters of the College, (22)
 - New leadership with transparency, vision, unity, innovation, positivity, able to adapt and pivot, integrity, to take us into the next phase of the College now, collaboration (19)
 - Our grounding/heritage in the UMC service, emphasis on faith and social justice through works, (11)
 - Reputation for visual and especially performing arts – dance, music, theatre, going coed should expand potential in the arts, must keep (7)
 - Student financial aid, and beneficial, Under \$20,000 price tag (5)
 - Athletics (2)
 - Plus 10 specific strengths that did not fall into these categories

Strategic Opportunities and Initiatives

The most impressive aspect of the strategic opportunities and initiatives is how they align so perfectly with the strengths. The most prevalent suggestion was to take advantage of our location in the State Capital as the premier coeducational liberal arts college. Moreover, the second most popular strategic initiative of a more empowering career/profession curriculum also aligns with our location in the Midlands. Even the third most frequent suggestion, expanded community service, is linked to being in Columbia and especially as a champion of Eau Claire and North Columbia.

The fourth strategic opportunity is an intriguing one because it translates elements of the first three into unique and powerful competencies for every graduate. Certainly, the faculty and staff will need to discern which competencies are most relevant, but Columbia College can position itself as preparing exactly the kind of graduates that business, industry, government, health care, and nonprofit organizations have been telling higher education they want and need for years. In short, the reinvented and reinvigorated Columbia College will be the liberal arts college of the future – today! And leadership will continue to be a centerpiece.

Innovation is at the heart of all the strategic opportunities and initiatives and that is the case for including a robust and rigorous program that will enable highly motivated and academically accomplished students to graduate in three years. Not only will these students and their parents save 25% of the cost of a four-year degree, they will be working or in graduate or professional school a year earlier. The same concept applies to online and evening programs. The other initiatives deserve careful attention, but Columbia College must be selective in the number and scope of strategic initiatives to ensure that the ones chosen can be implemented effectively and efficiently.

- Internships in State Capital – broaden internships maybe require all students to participate in an internship experience and include professional development in internship, consider coop, Build stronger relationships with the Columbia area... government, Fort Jackson, Riverbanks Zoo, State Museum, business, health care, nonprofits, etc. for internships and teaching opportunities, as well as partnering with Eau Claire and North Columbia neighborhoods (31)
- Greater focus on preparing students for careers, but within the context of a liberal arts college and NOT a technical college, offer new degree programs – Cyber Security, Environmental Science, Veterinary Science, Interior Design, Film, Health Care, and other hot career areas, stronger focus on liberal arts + career preparation, Partner with industry such as the life sciences, focus on programs the industry needs for their employees, Entrepreneurship and starting a family business, beef up current strong programs in areas that CC has great reputation in (education, speech path, science, humanities, etc.), remove academic programs that don't align with mission or are not a good fit for CC (23)
- Community service requirement, but do this on the basis of a culture of being of service. Suboptimal to mandate compassion, so build culture around it and make it intrinsically compelling so the requirement is not a chore but a joy, focus on social justice and helping those in need in Columbia, more community outreach programs like Health clinics or Social workers for lock-ins or Habitat for humanity, strengthen sense of community on campus by reaching out to help City of Columbia (15).
- Redesign curriculum to as Liberal Arts of 2020, integrate competencies into graduation requirements such as wellness, financial literacy (budgeting, banking, mortgages, savings, investment), presentational literacy (communicating effectively in public speaking, group projects, and social media), Create a short list of clear, easily-understood competencies which ALL students will demonstrate for graduation, and then build the curriculum around them. Should include writing, speaking, critical and strategic thinking, strong emphasis on social and emotional learning and critical thinking--these skills are necessary for leadership and more important than simply knowing one subject in depth, add graduation competencies such as tech savvy for a digital age, change management

- proficiency to manage and even shape change, strategic thinking skills, entrepreneurial and risk-taking mindset, aesthetic appreciation and creativity, consider having all graduates develop these skills as part of liberally educated person of 2020 – philosophical spiritual grounding, equipping them with a credo and world view that anchors them and enables them to flourish in these tempestuous times. (14)
- Leadership must remain as an integral component, a required course for every student regardless of major, strengthen the minor, consider a major, maintain focus on women in leadership even as coed, leadership is at the core of CC, (9)
 - Invent a coeducational curriculum (not just add on courses) - design the curriculum top to bottom is without gender bias. Strengthen the liberal arts curriculum focusing real life applications of a liberal arts degree, assess what's best about today's Coed colleges and what needs to improve, then reinvent the ideal liberal arts college for 2020 as CC's version of Coed, Require a course in the history of Columbia College uniting the college community in the common values of the College (9)
 - Move to 'fast-track' degrees (3 years) by streamlining gen ed requirements and increasing course offerings (sections/term), Create strong academic programs which a significant number of highly motivated students would complete in three years, thereby saving 25% of the cost and be working a year earlier, especially for day but also evening and online (9)
 - Expand online and evening college courses for working adults, especially following Covid-19 (9)
 - Engage students in experiences that help them to expand their connection to the global community, as well as those that strengthen their understanding of themselves, increase study abroad (7)
 - Recruit top HS students, make CC more rigorous, expand and enhance the Honors Program including a residence hall, doing original scholarship with professors, presenting at national conferences, (7)
 - Strengthen sports slowly at first (6)
 - Bring back music, theater and dance - hire full time professors, recruit performers and get them performing, having men will expand opportunities in the arts (6)
 - Alumni mentorship program to connect current students with alumni in related fields - leverage skills and capacity of alumni in meaningful ways (6)
 - Improve transfer connections with Midlands Tech and other technical colleges in SC (5)
 - Plus 133 (yes 133) clever ideas suggested by one or two individuals that will be addressed when appropriate or are already being addressed. However, to implement effectively the major strategic initiatives above, we will need to postpone good ideas until we have the resources (money and people).

Dreams for the Columbia College of the Future

The dreams, like the strategic initiatives, are beautifully aligned with the strengths of the College. Norman Cousins, Editor of Saturday Review and the only member of the U.C.L.A School of Medicine faculty with only a B.A. degree, described dreams in a way that gives hope and confidence to a place like Columbia College at this pivotal time in her history. “Dreams put human beings into motion and if the dream is good enough, it can overcome happenstance and paradox and is far more powerful than the practical designs of men and women with no poetry in their soul.” The time is right for Columbia College to dream big and to draw upon the poetry in her soul to make those dreams a reality.

The dreams articulated by the 73 survey respondents are indeed, big dreams. But the dreams are also reasonable and logical extensions of our strengths, vision and strategic direction. The two most compelling dreams align with our two greatest strengths. First is to offer academic programs marked by excellence and relevance, that combine the best of the liberal arts tradition with innovative ways to prepare our graduates for fulfilling careers and lives of purpose, and that educate the whole person. And the ideal environment for this type of rigorous and respected academic experience is in a culture or ethos of equality, diversity, mutual respect, faith, and integrity. An academic community like the one Parker Palmer describes where “the love of learning is only exceeded by the love of learners.”

The practical, albeit challenging third dream is to increase enrollment. But, interestingly, increasing enrollment is only the means to an end where more students provide the financial resources to be a much stronger and healthier institution that pays its talented faculty and staff salaries they deserve and offers enough financial aid so that every student who is bright and motivated will be able to afford a high-quality education.

The fourth dream is one that has motivated the Columbia College family for 166 years, preparing women leaders. The addition of men will provide an opportunity to continue to focus on women's leadership, but now in and for a coed world. There are few, if any, coed colleges or universities that concentrate on empowering women and give voice to women's issues. Columbia College will be that college, that women-centric place where the ideas, dreams and plans of women are heralded and heeded.

The fifth dream is the most ironic. For 166 years, Columbia College has been located in the Capital City. For most of that time, the College played a modest at best role in the life of the City. No longer. Columbia College needs Columbia and Columbia needs Columbia College. Just as we have a moral and educational obligation to educate graduates for careers and lives of service, so do we have a moral and educational obligation to capitalize (pun intended) on being a major resource for our community.

Finally, our dreams for a vibrant campus life, more engaging athletics, and revitalization of our performing arts, affirm the importance of the social, physical, and aesthetic dimensions of a well-rounded educational experience. As we read the summary of our dreams, let it activate the poetry in our soul.

- Academic programs highly respected for academic rigor, strong liberal arts + career preparation, preparing graduates who think for themselves, deal positively with adversity and are leaders, internships, community oriented co-educational institution where students and faculty will generate and disseminate knowledge, discuss theories and practices, academic excellence, relevant majors, every graduate exhibits confidence in themselves, personal accountability in every area of their lives, a strong desire to make the world better and to serve people selflessly, CC is admired for educating the whole person: intellect, character, career, and spiritual and as a place that empowers all students to achieve a life of meaning and purpose. (42)
- Equality, respect of each other and fulfillment of shared community, known for social justice, diversity, inclusiveness, community of learners characterized by mutual respect for all, strong values, integrity, important traditions and Spirit of Columbia College maintained, faith-based, recognition in SC as a socially responsible organization that is vocal and acts for social good, recognition as the epitome of ethics and kindness; (41)
- Healthy enrollment of high-quality students in day, evening, online and graduate programs to enable CC to have resources to be even better (26)
- Reputation for leadership, especially women's leadership is strengthened with admitting men, continue to empower women –this is what makes the college so important, women maintain and strengthen their voice and impact (24)
- Columbia College is known as "Columbia's College" because academic programs, internships, and community service are focused on the Capital City of South Carolina. CC is respected across the state for being entrepreneurial and innovative, be a community-based institution both Columbia and neighborhoods of Eau Claire and North Columbia, assist the local community and industry, develop effective partnerships and become a true player in the local community, Successfully blend strategic location in SC , the ethnicity of SC, the proximity of advanced professional career education, the imperative for Higher Education to be more affordable and Columbia's need for core revitalization to redefine the College's focus and goals creating a win-win outcome for Columbia College and Columbia (15)
- Campus life is vibrant, artsy, inclusive and safe, more students stay for the weekend, men are accepted as students and active participants in campus life (9)

- To become more involved with creating sports opportunities that would attract an array of students and faculty, expand or create a new and expansive athletic complex off campus with all fields – softball, a track, soccer/lacrosse field, new tennis courts (6)
- Stay a center of excellence in the Fine and Performing Arts especially with influx of men (5)
- Plus 36 Dreams suggested by one or two individuals that will be addressed when appropriate or are already being addressed. However, to implement effectively the major strategic initiatives above, we will need to postpone good ideas until we have the resources (money and people).

Personality – Ethos and Culture

Each college, like each person, has a unique personality – a complex mix of personality traits, qualities of character, habits, values, and ways of behaving. The descriptions offered by the 73 survey respondents describe a personality that is endearing and inspiring. The ethos or culture of Columbia College is reassuring; it “wears well,” stands the test of time, and has just enough quirkiness to be enjoyable. Like everyone else, Columbia College has its flaw and shortcomings, but as a person who doesn’t know her experiences her personality through the eyes of those who know and love her, we believe that new person will want to become a new friend. Welcome to Columbia College, up close and personal – where personality traits that appear more than once are noted.

- Caring 9, supportive 6, traditional 6, resilient 5, warm 5, open minded 5, loving 5, fun 5, welcoming 4, confident 4, diverse 4, inclusive 4, loyal 4, kind 3, honest 3, unique 3, leader 3, empowering 3, friendly 3, warm-hearted 3, proud heritage 2, smart 2, compassionate 2, feisty 2, competent 2, like your favorite Aunt (2) who has no kids so she supports you, thinks you are awesome, and is there to help you win that science project award, inviting 2, clever, joyful, considerate, courageous, committed, intriguing, entrepreneurial, stubborn, steel magnolia, nurturing, eager, talented, passionate, stalled, hardworking, fragile, vulnerable, torn, poor, brave, wise, "CC Spirit", respect for other opinions, insists you spend time with her, constantly reminds you that you are family, helpful, down on her luck, has health issues (internal problems), is willing to try whatever it takes (although some of her problems are tough to change), people are rooting for her, considerate, quiet, understated, average, faculty, staff, and students treat each other with respect and dignity, diversity is a strength, listened to each other and learned from each other, Southern, , Methodist, tight-knit, suitcase college, forward-thinking, relationships are important, we embrace diversity and have many voices speaking one message together, a place where you develop your individual strengths, needs to be more flexible and pragmatic and embrace the future, roots are buried deep in Columbia and cares tremendously about those who live in its neighborhood, empathetic, generous, self-sacrificing, sentimental and values tradition and history, not afraid to try new things, read to learn from the mistakes of her past, success is encouraged, a safe environment to learn things your teacher or mom didn't have time to discuss - like how to command a board room, how to network with someone different than you, faith-based, appears awkward and lacks a sense of clear identity and confidence, some are almost embarrassed when they speak about her, she once possessed poise and control and sharpness, but needs shoring up and restoration to former dignity, a good heart and potential to achieve great things, however she also has a tendency toward self-loathing and self-destructive habits, doesn't take good care of herself and feels helpless when it comes to changing for the better, but once she solves the key few core problems, there's no stopping her, the mentality of a DMV bureaucracy where few take ownership of problems, manage rather than lead, loyal and accepting, definitely unique, but not to the point of being avant garde or weird, traditional but not in a stuffy way, a small-town feel with smart as hell folks who care about education, Southern charm, used to be a great dancer, passionate about mentoring young women into being confident & compassionate professionals & leaders within society, values critical thinking, committed to social justice and service, expensive, frustrating, but she had a heart of gold, and wisdom to share if you gave her a chance, a safe place for women, independent, reliable, capable, humble, and fearless, life-long learner, cozy,

inclusive, a bit shabby in appearance, creative, not sure she knows what she wants to do or be, too traditional in approach, opposed to change and risk averse, she's like that five year old pair of boat shoes-worn, tired, comfortable but about ready to be replaced with a new pair, a little boring, a good friend who is living in the past and coasting on a reputation, a small conservative campus that is historic in nature and devoted to its morals and ethics, the key component was the student-professor relations, workload at CC compared to other institutions is much more intense and time-consuming, a little tattered around the edges but like a person who has lost strength, stamina, and muscle mass, she can bring back all of those strengths, collegial, willing to try new things, embraces those not like themselves, persevere, savvy, cutting edge, risky, not as respected as in the past, laid back but with high standards, willing to get dirty but also likes to dress up, has varied interests, being a Koala means demonstrating the 4 C's of Courage, Commitment, Confidence, and Competence, rebellious, intelligent, sweet, and spicy, insecure, standoffish, and tired, she can inspire but also wallow in her mistakes, she is multicultural and spiritual in the broadest sense, her fears include diversity, outgrowing herself, and disappointing others, if she falls in love with you, she will love you fiercely for the rest of your life, a weird double-personality – on one hand traditional Methodist school with conservative values who requires chapel attendance and on the other hand it teaches you and equips you 100% that you could indeed become the first female president of the United States, or anything else you want to be, expects greatness from you, supportive, encouraging, can be old-fashioned but in a way that is appreciative of the world & the common values we all share, can drive you nuts because she sees your potential before you do and will push you, her outer shell may seem out-of-date, but the more you get to know her, you realize that it is what is inside that really counts, family atmosphere, honesty and integrity are the centerpiece for developing that person to be a productive citizen of his or her community, genuine, timid at times but oh so powerful, a little stuck in her ways, not as open and welcoming as she proclaims she is, has a good heart and the intent is in the right place, a strong and committed leader, but lacks the direction and education to really be the inclusionary being she wants to be, stuck in the past, principle centered, not possessed of a need to be in the limelight, aspires to be innovative, not risk averse, community minded

Marketing Suggestions

The 73 survey respondents generated 92 terrific ideas on how to market Columbia College as a coed institution. The ideas are so good, that we must share them ONLY with our internal marketing team and our external marketing partner. Rest assured, we have enough ideas to make the transition to coeducation a tremendous success! Besides, as implied by the personality traits of the previous question, a Southern woman can keep a secret, at least as long as she needs to. We hope you will enjoy an aggressive, creative, diverse, and ultimately very effective marketing of Columbia College as “The Future of Higher Education Today.”