Report
of
The Charter Committee for Building Social Community at Trinity College
Prepared by the Trustees of the Charter Committee and including an Amendment by the Board of Trustees

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I. Executive Summary

The primary goal of our Committee was to offer recommendations for consideration by the Board of Trustees that might transform the social landscape of Trinity College and engender a more robust intellectual climate on campus. Trinity lacks satisfactory definition as a community. Social options are limited, and the purposes of those we have do not always align with the underlying mission of the College. We seek to build community and promote the intellectual life of the College by:

1. Developing a House System that would provide a new residential, intellectual, and social center to our students' lives and shape our students' sense of identity within the College. Our residence halls would be clustered around six Houses, each led by a designated House Dean and an Academic Adviser. These houses would be small, comprising 375 students each, and students would remain affiliated with their Houses throughout their Trinity years. The House experience would feature regular shared dining opportunities and specific programming such as lectures, special speakers and extra-curricular events;

2. Strengthening the first-year experience by extending orientation, expanding pre-orientation Quest–type programs, and adding rigor and discernment as each student undertakes their intellectual journey at Trinity;

3. Improving the quality and quantity of social spaces by investing in better lounges for each of the new Houses; opening a reconfigured and refurbished Vernon Social with new hours of operation and purposes that appeal to students and faculty alike; and designating other College properties for social spaces based on the organic input of students themselves;

4. Instituting a clear and transparent Social Code that outlines the standards, principles, and expectations of the College and provides directives for appropriate behavior among our students. A designated committee will oversee the implementation of this Social Code and diligently monitor and support social organizations with a facility, selective membership comprised predominantly of Trinity students, and/or an initiation process. New GPA standards, community service requirements and the Trustee amendment to abolish pledging are principal features. Failure of an organization to abide by all aspects of the Social Code would result in the inability of that organization to continue to operate;

5. Restoring staff positions and program funding cut over the last decade in order to support the new House System and oversee the new Social Code and create vibrant cultural and social options for the campus community;

6. Reinvigorating the co-education mandate, initially approved by the Board of Trustees in 1992, to ensure that all social organizations with access to facilities, and particularly the fraternities and sororities, have gender parity.

We believe that this set of recommendations constitutes the makings for significant change at Trinity College. Their implementation will promote Trinity as a student-centered community of scholars whose engagement both inside and outside the classroom

will attract and retain the smart, curious, capable student we seek to enrich our community.

II. Introduction

In October 2011 the Board of Trustees called for the appointment of a charter committee in response to President Jones's ideas for what the College might look like at its 200th birthday and after receiving a report from Mark Neustadt, a consultant hired by the Board to conduct extensive research on the current image of the College. Our charge was to understand better our current social situation, identify what we thought would be a social structure that would best support the students, and reinforce the purposes of the College and, finally, to make recommendations that were within the College's means to achieve. We were aided tremendously by Mark Neustadt's research, previous College reports and committee work, visits to and conversations with officials at peer institutions, but most of all by spending time listening to students, alumni, alumnae, faculty, staff, and parents. We have included a further description of our methodology, timeline and an inventory of our information-collecting in Appendix A: Committee Membership and Methodology.

Every college across the nation is grappling with the same types of social issues this report is intended to cover. Questions are being asked about the future of a liberal arts education, building community and maintaining personal relationships in the digital age, the unique characteristics of this Millennial generation, and the deeply disturbing increase in alcohol and drug use on college campuses. Most of our NESCAC peers as well as many prominent liberal arts colleges have also undertaken reviews of their social climate, as part of the ongoing efforts to constantly improve upon the liberal arts experience. We viewed the task of our Committee as an opportunity to take a complete inventory of the strengths and challenges of our living-learning environment and, building off our past reviews, to look forward to our bicentennial by asking how can we be the best Trinity we can be? We are fortunate to have the most important components in place—strong faculty, capable leadership, a caring administration, quality students, and broad curricular and civic opportunities, combined with the best in liberal arts traditions. Our plan builds on these assets and seeks to enhance the social environment at Trinity by placing student engagement, personal development, and community building at the top of our student-centric strategy.

At the outset of our report, the Committee felt it important that we acknowledge, celebrate, and recognize all that is good at Trinity. Trinity has long been known for our academic excellence and motivated and highly credentialed faculty. Our students are bright, passionate, creative, and independent. With limited College resources, the students have essentially provided for their own social life on campus. However, we have determined that this development has resulted in an unbalanced social structure that has not adequately provided an enriching, varied, and vibrant campus life consistent with our College mission. We seek to support an intellectual environment where social and academic dimensions are fused within the best liberal arts tradition. The College has the opportunity, with careful investment and attentive leadership, to transform the social ethos to match the quality of our academic character.

During our exhaustive process of review, we have had the opportunity to hear from hundreds of engaged, curious students; loyal, passionate alumni/ae; and dedicated, talented faculty and staff. We are indeed fortunate that the College enjoys so many constituents who care so deeply about the College and were so willing to share both their concerns as well as their hopes and dreams for Trinity. While our task is to address several disturbing trends and challenges which we fear undermine Trinity's current and long-term mission, we wanted to be sure to take this moment to recognize the many talented students the College attracts, together with their achievements and the extraordinary faculty and administrators who, over the four years they spend with our students, positively influence our graduates for a lifetime.

We recognized early on that committees had been formed historically on the subject of social change here at Trinity including, most notably, the Trustee-sponsored committee in 1992 that offered many recommendations on reforming Greek Life, including the requirement for co-education of the fraternities and sororities. The most recent previous endeavor to study and foster social change in support of our liberal arts mission was the creation of the President's Council on Campus Climate in 2008. This College council, which grew out of the recommendation of a previous Trustee charter committee, made substantial progress in improving the overall campus climate, particularly by sensitizing the campus community to issues of racism and homophobia by recognizing the increased marginalization of students which has served to move students into silos that have little interaction with one another. Further, the Council on Campus Climate sponsored the development of theme houses to support organic efforts by the students to associate around areas of extracurricular interests. Acknowledging the direction of these previous studies as our guide, the Committee began its examination in January of this year.

III. What We Have Learned

In his White Paper, President Jones speaks of re-weaving the helices of the academic and social spheres of the campus, and that remained a constant in our inquiry. The more we came to understand the various sentiments and forces that shape the culture of the campus, the more we came to see that we needed not only to erase the artificial boundary between the classroom and extracurricular life, we also needed to look at the forces and misunderstandings that divide groups on campus that may have led to the creation of silo-ed constituencies that rarely interact.

The current generation has often been labeled the "Millennials" and characterized as having been more managed by their parents than was true of previous generations. They are the generation of highly organized social calendars and adult-run activities. Parents accompany them on Halloween, and it is not uncommon to hear a parent describing the college admissions process by saying, "We are applying to …" Millennials are said to be more likely to seek and actually follow advice from adults and, with the current technology, more likely to be in daily contact with a parent. The generation gaps and varying degrees of commitment to intellectual life have always been evident in collegiate life, but are they out of proportion at Trinity?

Another tension exists between the purpose of the liberal arts experience and both cultural shifts in parenting and changes in perceived norms among adolescents. Consider the father of an incoming first-year woman who asked, "Why don't you require attendance? I went to Amherst and got in trouble in a class and if they had taken attendance, my parents would have found out and it wouldn't have happened." It would be easy to dismiss the father in this illustration, but the principles behind his question are more common than some might believe and growing more common with each passing year. Simply put, adolescence has a longer lifespan than it did thirty years ago, and parents increasingly want their sons and daughters managed, while colleges want them to learn self-reliance and act like adults.

Finally, and perhaps most indicative of the state of the current social environment, we found in our discussions many references to the lack of a sense of community. Trinity is not seen as a unified community with shared goals and interests but as many interests sharing a familiar campus. We discovered fewer points of engagement than desired when we asked students to define the common Trinity experience. While many students are very happy, others reported that many peers are aloof on the Long Walk and that established "cliques" are the norm. When student leaders from all aspects of student life were gathered together on campus, very few recognized one another. Student governance and the administrative apparatus responsible for student programming is highly decentralized. They do not coordinate and do not focus so much on building community as they do on creating events.

We found a keen desire on the part of students and faculty to increase opportunities for interaction, to focus on good citizenship and regain pride in belonging to the College. All were quick to point to serious social issues but just as quickly they remarked on the underlying excellence of the majority of students and the highly credentialed and capable

faculty.

A. The Current Social Scene

Historically, the social scene at Trinity revolved around the fraternity system. Trinity has had fraternities since 1850 when St. Anthony Hall (Delta Psi) established itself here. Over the years the fraternities provided not only extracurricular enrichment, sources of lifelong friendships, and opportunities for leadership, but they also served as dining halls for the vast majority of students. The buildings that housed some members and provided a sense of home for more were mostly on Vernon Street, which was the periphery of campus in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1963, which some would argue was the peak of fraternity popularity, Trinity had fewer than one thousand men, most of whom were Caucasian. Tuition, room, and board were $2,300, and our endowment was in league with Amherst and Williams.

Vernon Social Center
An alternative to the fraternity scene had a short-lived but successful existence in the late nineties and the early 2000s. Vernon Social Center ("VSC") was created to offer a space where large numbers of the campus could convene to socialize. An upscale auditorium space, VSC offered a stage and also had the capacity to be a high-volume alcohol dispensary with two bars serving from eight kegs simultaneously, eventually earning it the "party barn" nickname. There was an event nearly every Friday and Saturday night in VSC and many of them included alcohol at no charge to the attendees. Initially, it was easy for underage students to get alcohol, which was usually passed from a 21+ student on the dance floor. Around 2006/7, the College began to increase the controls around alcohol service as a result of risk management concerns, an increase in troubling behavior, and a 2006 Connecticut law regarding underage possession. These changes made it almost impossible for underage students to drink at the event, and the students of age didn't like the restriction of having to drink in a cordoned-off section. The fraternity houses became the only places where students could drink freely in the setting of a large party. Once the alcohol policies began to change, given the Center's one-dimensional purpose and lack of ambiance, furnishings, or food, the Center soon fell into a period of prolonged underutilization. Further complicated by the changes in funding described below, only a few multicultural groups continued to hold events at VSC. Ironically, it was reported to our Committee that when VSC was open and programming budgets were robust, student life had fewer of the challenges it currently faces. Today, VSC hosts a minimal number of large events and sits locked and idle on prime Trinity real estate the majority of the time.

Realizing there was no way their events could compete with the fraternities and sororities, the event organizers from the Entertainment Activities Council (formerly the Trinity College Activities Council or "TCAC") of the Student Government Association ("SGA") became discouraged and decided to drop all but the most successful of their events like the 80s Party, Spring Weekend, etc. Funding from the SGA remained about the same so they injected more money into this smaller set of remaining events and further developed their taste for more elaborate and expensive setups, with a

disproportionate amount being spent on Spring Weekend. The combination of the unavailability of alcohol had as much of an effect on the late-night social life scene as did budget cuts to the Student Activities Office, especially because many of the former VSC events were funded by student organizations through the SGA.

Administrative Changes
During this same period, the College's larger financial realities also impacted social life as systematic budget reductions to those offices that generate and support student social programming have changed the character and limited the availability of options for our students. The Office of Campus Life, which comprises both residential life and student activities staff, has seen dramatic cuts over the last ten years. The residential life staff has been reduced by half, and the residential programming budget has been reduced by three-quarters since 2002. The more than 100 officially registered student organizations on campus are all administered by the Office of Student Activities, with funding approved and provided from the budget of the SGA, and supported by faculty and staff from many offices and departments. This office is also responsible for such important College programs as first-year orientation. Like its residential counterpart, the Student Activities Office has seen reductions. Even the Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement has seen a decrease in its total budget since 2005, despite the "Urban/Global" focus of the College. While underfunded and understaffed, we note that these offices have done an admirable job in attempting to respond to the growing concern for diverse student programs and various social venues on campus.

The reduction of the Student Activities Office budget has also resulted in a shift in control of programming funds and a change in the character of programming efforts. Social funding primarily comes from two sources: the Student Activities Office and the SGA, which receives the proceeds of the Student Activities Fee. While the combined activities spending per student (SGA + Student Activities Office) has actually increased slightly from 2001, the significant difference is in the allocation of those funds: the SGA's budget per student increased by almost two-fold since 2001 while the (non-compensation) budget of the Student Activities Office has decreased by half over the same period. Consequently, the proportions of the total spending have been reversed: the SGA now controls 77%, up from 46%, and the Student Activities Office 23%, down from 54%. The Student Activities Office generally prioritized holding a greater number and variety of events with wider appeal to all students and, as discussed above, now the SGA holds fewer events at a higher cost with decisions made by a small group of students. We note that a recent change in the composition of the SGA committee structure may result in a reexamination of its entertainment priorities and the inclusion of other student input. We urge this direction and joint effort in light of our recommendations.

As the administration evolved to accommodate the changes in funding and staffing, the organization of those offices, departments, and personnel with a role in student life has become decentralized. Three direct reports to the President oversee the various student life programs: the Dean of Students, the Dean of Multicultural Affairs, and the Chaplain. Each of their respective divisions oversees social houses with varying rules, budgets,

funding sources, and levels of staffing. These inconsistencies have contributed to a social system that can be difficult for student leaders to navigate.

Faculty-student interaction outside the classroom has also suffered as a result of budget and staffing reductions. At a faculty forum, one member recalled how evenings used to be filled with exciting activities that kept faculty members on campus long after classes ended. Programs that funded performances, lectures by well-known speakers, and trips to downtown venues, like the Bushnell, were reduced or eliminated in the recent rounds of budget cuts. In addition, current social organizations reported to the Committee that there is little faculty involvement with their groups. The unintended consequences of budget and headcount reductions have clearly taken a toll on the quality of the student experience.

Current Social Organizations
Today there is a mix of fraternities and sororities associated with the College. Five (St. Anthony Hall ("St. A's"), Cleo Literary Society ("Cleo"), Alpha Delta Phi ("AD"), Pi Kappa Alpha ("Pike"), and Psi Upsilon ("Psi U")) own buildings on Vernon St. where they can host parties, but three of them (St. A's, AD, and Psi U) seem to have the broadest appeal among the larger student body and host the most people the most frequently. There are two fraternities (Alpha Chi Rho ("Crow") and Kappa Sigma) and two sororities (Ivy Society ("Ivy") and Kappa Kappa Gamma ("Kappa")) that rent houses off campus. There is one sorority, Zeta Omega Eta ("Zeta"), that functions without a home of its own. Zeta, St. A's and Cleo are nominally co-ed, with gender parity varying among them. Finally, there are students of color who join regional chapters of historically Black and Latino fraternities and sororities, but the numbers are few. Approximately 18% of the student body is a member of a fraternity or sorority, but their parties serve a majority of the campus as they are the "only game in town" in the absence of College-sponsored facilities with regular access after mid-night.

To view the social life as consisting only of fraternity parties is a disservice to both students and staff who work hard to run clubs and organizations, organize events, and engage in service projects, and to those who are perfectly capable of organizing an informal social life that bears a different character. While there is no accurate census, common sense and observation would tell us that, with the exceptions of the large parties like Tropical, fewer than half the students are moving about Vernon Street on a given weekend night, and not all students go to parties held by the fraternities and sororities, despite their disproportionate influence. The majority of students are scattered among other events, studying, or with friends in a residence hall or off at a restaurant or cultural event.

In addition to the fraternity and sorority houses, two other sets of houses exist on Vernon Street: three cultural houses overseen by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and a set of four theme houses that now operate under the auspices of the Dean of Students Office through the Office of Campus Life. The cultural houses were established as centers for the celebration of Black, Latino and Asian history and culture; and they still play a

critical role in promoting a diverse campus culture —Umoja House, La Eracra (La Voz Latina), and AASA (Asian American Student Association). The theme houses were established in 2009 through an initiative of the President's Council on Campus Climate and include The Mill, a student-run venue for studio and performing arts; the International House (iHouse); the T.R.E.E.House, which focuses student activity on environmental and sustainability issues; and Bayt al Salaam ("House of Peace"), which explores and promotes a variety of Middle Eastern cultures.

Additionally, the Zachs Hillel House and the Interfaith House, both located on Allen Place but accessible to Vernon Street, are overseen by staff in Spiritual and Religious Life. Hillel offers a well-developed program not only for members of the Jewish community but also the broader campus community, while the Interfaith House, established in 1991 as a center for dialogue and used for religious life staff offices, is now undergoing a transformation to become a space for student-led programs and activities. PRAXIS, a community service program based in a residence hall on Vernon Street, is organized by the Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement, as is The Fred Pfeil Community Project ("The Fred"), located within the Summit Suites East residence hall. With its genesis in the former Tutorial College, The Fred is a residential community that promotes creative intellectual engagement and student leadership on campus. Also, a house on Crescent Street has been designated the Queer Resource Center (QRC)/EROS house, and its coordinator reports to the Dean of Multicultural Affairs. Student programming takes place within all of these facilities, and each makes its contribution to the social and cultural landscape of the College. However, the resources, policies, and popularity of these venues and organizations vary considerably. Additionally, while The Fred, the Mill, and the iHouse attract crowds to their events and have added new dimension to the social life on campus, they alone do not have the capacity or resources to significantly impact the social scene after midnight.

Trinity students engage in artistic productions as well as musical and other creative programming offered and supported by the Austin Arts Center, Cinestudio, and various College offices and facilities on campus. Likewise, the Athletic Department occupies the time and energies of a significant portion of our student body, and its new director is eager to further develop programming and resources to engage more students in recreational sports and activities on campus. We note that in both athletics and the arts, budgets have also been trimmed, but we are very excited to endorse a restructured recreation program that will provide numerous opportunities for all members of the campus community under the leadership of a newly-hired recreation coordinator. But again, none of these offices, facilities, or departments provides outlets for late night student events.

Current State of the Social Climate
Prior to the spring of 2012, when the administration introduced the College-wide Social Host Policy, there were few guidelines in place for parties, and those rules were most often addressed in the breach rather than the observance. The administration historically took the position that fraternities and sororities were private organizations in non-College buildings with their own insurance and that the College should offer advice, assistance in

times of trouble, and discipline when the activities were in clear violation of College rules.

Having a social host liability policy was required to host a private party with alcohol, and only the fraternities had this coverage. In addition, their dues structure, offset somewhat by the fact many did not have to participate in the College meal plan, provided the funding for the parties. Between the College regulations and the law, the College had in fact allowed the popular, late-night social life to become the responsibility of the fraternities, and St. A's, Psi U, and AD were carrying a big part of the load. On the one hand, the arrangement conferred mutual benefits: the College got a social outlet that did not come from the College budget and which existed at a small remove; and the fraternities got the attention and mystique accorded by peers. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the allure of fraternity parties wanes as one advances through the class years, but students from all classes still attend.

It is clear that the social life at Trinity is uneven. Students, alumni, faculty, staff, and parents all told us that there simply are not enough social options and outlets on campus to support the growing size and interests of the student body. As their parties have become more popular, the student leaders of fraternities and sororities have struggled to keep up with the demand because their facilities frequently reach capacity, leaving a long line of students outside waiting to get in. Fraternity and sorority leaders feel as if they are unfairly bearing the burden of supporting the social life while they, in fact, prefer to hold smaller, more formal parties "upstairs" instead of the large, crowded parties in their basements. Meanwhile, other social organizations deal with a different struggle: trying to compete on an uneven playing field. The structural inconsistencies identified in the sections above, regulations for alcohol service on College property, the unequal access to facilities and resources, and even the geography of social houses on Vernon Street are all contributing factors to the sense of inequality. The Social Host Policy began to address some of these issues, but further progress is needed.

The 2011-2012 academic year was troubling for the Trinity campus. Safety concerns were paramount, peaking in March with the late-night violent assault on a student just off the campus border. The administration noted with alarm the spike in drinking and drug-related hospital transports, a trend that is occurring across college campuses. It seemed the party culture was threatening to take over as an unwelcome defining characteristic of the Trinity experience. Since that time, Campus Safety has been reorganized and by all reports has gained greater confidence from most constituencies. While more improvements are needed and are forthcoming in this area, we felt the energies of this Committee should be focused on examining the erosion of the College's community. We believe Trinity will not continue to attract those smart, curious, and capable students we desire without reestablishing a community that shares a sense of purpose and pride in its mission.

B. Campus Culture

Drug and alcohol abuse continues to dominate the agenda of college deans across the country and our NESCAC peers. Data we gathered from Trinity's Office of Institutional Research underscore these concerns. Trinity students appear to drink more and use more drugs than in the past and to have started drinking at an earlier age. This problem is far more severe among members of fraternities and sororities. The average member of a fraternity or sorority is disproportionately more likely to drink and use drugs than the average Trinity student.

High levels of drinking, not surprisingly, have led to high rates of risky behaviors among our students, including both members of fraternities and sororities and unaffiliated students, such as blacking out (i.e., being unable to remember what they were doing), drunk driving, assaults, fights, harassment, ambulance transports, and sexual assault.

Along with higher levels of drinking come lower grades. In an analysis of the spring 2012 GPAs comparing all students with fraternity and sorority members, the average GPA of these organizations was lower than the all-student average. Moreover, fraternity members' grades declined during their sophomore year, when they pledge, and never catch up with other students' GPAs before graduation. (See Appendix B: GPA Analysis)

Evidence from our Admissions Office suggests there is a link between Trinity which is represented in the social media as having a party school reputation, and the decline in the quality of our applicants and corresponding yield especially among women applicants. Not surprisingly, Trinity's student body has a lower proportion of females than comparison schools. With respect to quality, the proportion of applicants given the highest ratings by the Admissions Office has declined over the past ten years. Finally, the highest-rated students who do come to Trinity are more likely to transfer out than other students. The most frequently mentioned reasons for doing so are the lack of academic seriousness among other students and an uninspired social scene. (Source: Progress Report of the Retention Working Groups, 2012)

Both the President's White Paper as well as Neustadt's research offer a perspective on the social and cultural life of the College that is consistent with trends and observations that members of the Trinity community have been making. Indeed, this very Charter Committee brings forward in its work the analysis and recommendations made by the Board's Charter Committee on Campus Climate launched in 2006 and its successor, the President's Council on Campus Climate. The College's most recent fundraising campaign prioritized student scholarship through a focus on increasing financial aid to further diversify our student body; and for several years the Board of Trustees, as well as the faculty and administration, have been paying greater attention to retention issues and related concerns about student apathy and entitlement. The Board, the administration, faculty, and staff all seek in various ways to advance intellectual life with and among students and to promote more boldly a culture of acceptance and inclusion in our community. With continued slippage in our standing among NESCAC schools and

despite very difficult economic times, the College must, we believe, designate a substantial investment in the social landscape and its integration with academic life.

IV. Recommendations

Trinity has much already in place to recommend it to the smart, curious, and capable student who seeks stimulation in the classroom, intellectual formation with top-in-class teaching and advising, as well as strong and dedicated alumni that support its students post-graduation. However, we have determined that to truly achieve best in class, the College must confront those factors that have now placed the institution at a competitive disadvantage in attracting and retaining quality students:

- an anemic social programming budget and diminished student life staff,
- the lack of non-exclusive social spaces, especially after midnight,
- a social structure of discrete groups who are not integrated into the life of the full campus community,
- the advantaged standing of the fraternities and sororities and the lack of performance standards,
- and the absence of an ingrained social philosophy that provides guidance for our students and encourages the healthy development of social groups and peer interaction.

We recognize that the ability of Trinity to attract and keep those students for whom a liberal arts education is paramount, especially within the league of our NESCAC peer group, is now diminished. Retention statistics bear out this development. Our average transfer application rate of first-year students has consistently risen over the last decade relative to our peer group. We strongly urge an immediate investment in supporting the social fabric of this institution to stem the loss of students and avoid further slippage in our reputational standing.   This prospect threatens our mission to offer a liberal arts education that "fosters critical thinking, frees the mind of parochialism and prejudice, and prepares students to lead examined lives that are personally satisfying, civically responsible, and socially useful."

1. College House System

A shared Trinity experience marked by the integration of social and intellectual life as well as a strong sense of community is a paramount concern for the Committee. We are proposing that the College be organized into six groups of 375 students. These groups, designed for their manageable size that allows for ideal personal attention, would give every student an automatic affiliation with a representative group of fellow students, help organize the way the College provides services and support to students, and increase the opportunities and expectations for students to get engaged and contribute to the vibrancy of campus life. These smaller groups would also allow us to address community issues face to face. For example, in recent years we have increasing numbers of students being transported to the hospital for alcohol abuse and too many disturbing incidents of social narrow-mindedness. We respond with e-mails and rallies, but the former is impersonal and the latter attracts only those who are sympathetic. These are issues that could be addressed in a House meeting and reinforced by the dean, faculty, and upperclass students associated with the house. Most important, these groups would ensure that each student is encouraged and challenged by people who know them and believe in them.

This is happening now for many students, but too many others are living in a world where they have too little accountability.

Affiliation with a house would begin with first-year housing and carry through four years as one of the primary centers of a student's experience. These student communities would be formed from a multiplicity of criteria intended to promote diversity and including geography, interests, and educational backgrounds. Charter Committee members have remarked on their experiences in graduate institutions that divide the classes into formal cohorts. Most famously, Harvard Business School breaks down its incoming class into "sections" of 90 students from diverse backgrounds. These students take courses with their section mates, form study groups, and often socialize together outside of the classroom. The section is seen as a safe and intimate haven where, under the encouragement of mutual support, students can form bonds with others who offer a diversity of experience and background. We see the House System providing many of these same benefits. First-year seminars would be in common first-year houses and the faculty teaching them would become affiliates of those houses. The concentrated first-year housing clusters would also be a vehicle for many of the enhanced and extended Orientation activities we recommend later in this document.

House Deans and Faculty Advisers
Social funding, academic support systems, routine discipline, and registration would be re-organized to make the house the central and primary locus of a student's world. Each house would be led by a senior faculty member who would assemble a team of colleagues and work closely with a dean who would serve as the primary shepherd, advocate, and scold for each cohort. Houses would comprise three to five residence halls and a social facility where members could host social events, pursue hobbies, or hang out. (We urge development of these spaces as a priority as buildings open up with the construction of new housing in the Crescent Street corridor and revitalization of currently empty buildings.) Each house would hold weekly meals and bi-weekly house meetings to conduct business, address problems, and celebrate accomplishments ranging from a thesis defense to a soccer victory or a birthday. Each house would take on its own traditions and would, over time, build up the means to support arts, fitness, sustainability, scholarship, social events by dint of how they chose to spend their discretionary money. Houses might march together to Convocation and Commencement and be the site of receptions at Homecoming, Family Weekend, or Reunion. We imagine that the House System could become a basis for electing representatives to the SGA and that discretionary funds from the SGA would help support social programs run by the houses.

The senior faculty member would be responsible for setting the tone of community life among house members and for creating frequent and varied forms of interaction between students and faculty. He or she would lead bi-weekly house meetings, attend dinners, and get to know most of the 375 house members. Faculty would serve for three-year terms and would continue to teach.

The house dean would be a permanent member of the staff and a student would maintain a relationship with the same dean for four years. House deans would be available for

advising and would track the academic progress of house members and intervene with those who were underachieving. House deans would handle routine disciplinary matters in the house and refer more serious allegations to the College disciplinary system. The deans would be the primary contact with parents and would serve as an advocate, troubleshooter, and mentor for house members in all aspects of their collegiate lives.

Timing
We believe the House System could begin with the Class of 2018 and be phased in as that class progresses through the ranks. Based on what we have learned from Middlebury's Commons System, we suggest that students be required to be residents of the houses in their first and second years and upperclass students would be affliated although not required to physically reside in House System residence halls. It is expected that upperclass students still would take on leadership roles and participate in intramurals, common meals and house meetings. As stated earlier, upperclass students will continue their relationship with the house deans.

We recognize that what we have presented will require significant planning and detail work and recommend that the Dean of Students take the lead in organizing broad discussion on campus and visits to peer schools who have already put college-wide living-learning communities in place to look at best practices. We anticipate that training on an on-going basis will be required for faculty and staff who support the House system. This is a critical element to ensuring that students are properly supported and that their adult mentors have the resources to offer that support.

2. Social Spaces

No one comment was heard more often from all constituencies of the College than the resounding call to diversify and expand the number of social options on campus. We wholeheartedly agree and strongly believe it is essential that we increase both the number and type of social outlets to support our recommended programming reforms and the varied interests of the student body and to encourage students to explore a healthy social life. Although Hartford and West Hartford are vibrant areas, students have few entertainment and shopping choices within walking distance of campus. This fact makes it all the more important that Trinity create more options for students on campus. The success of the new late-night hours and food options of the Underground Coffeehouse and the Bistro prove that there is a tremendous demand for alternatives, and we must provide more social spaces. Our Committee has three primary recommendations:

Need for a Student Social Center
In addition to supporting the many smaller communities within the College, it is our strong recommendation that we must also have a place that brings together all students, as members of the larger Trinity community, regardless of their class year, major, group affiliation, or special interest, to name a few. As recommended by the Charter Committee on Campus Climate, the College would invest in constructing a comprehensive student center as many of our peer colleges have done. However, our need is too immediate and our financial resources remain limited. A renovated Vernon

Social Center, that could be called simply Vernon Social, would serve as a vital and otherwise profoundly absent crossroads for our student community.

Students have expressed the need for a neutral social space that unites the campus and that every student feels welcome to visit at any time, day or night. Vernon Social is positioned in an ideal location to fill this need – in the heart of Vernon Street – however, its current configuration is not. We seek to transform Vernon Social into a vibrant hub for student life. Our Committee was so enthusiastic about this concept that a separate design committee was formed. This group met weekly throughout the summer and will seek broader student input this fall as plans crystallize. (See below for more discussion related to Vernon Social.)

Improvements to Social Spaces in Residence Halls and "College Houses"
In order to reestablish a stronger sense of community within the halls of the proposed College Houses and in all of our residence halls, we believe it is important to continue improving the existing common spaces and to commit to maintaining them through regular upgrade cycles. As part of our inquiry, the Committee was presented with a full review and tour of existing common spaces in residence halls, including the investment and improvements that have been made in the last two years. As a result, we recommend, wherever feasible, adding kitchenettes and pantries to residence hall lounges located within buildings that lack kitchen units. The planned Crescent Street Student Housing will include townhouse-style units, and we see each of its living rooms hosting smaller gatherings. We urge that the planned Crescent Street development incorporate common areas and retail spaces to foster student gatherings.

Opportunistic Investments in Additional Social Spaces
Available space on the Trinity campus is in short supply. As program locations and real estate are evaluated by the College on an ongoing basis, we recommend that the College take an active approach to finding, acquiring, and renovating spaces that could be used to support student life and faculty-student interaction. New spaces could take the form of Social Houses that support the College Houses, additional theme or cultural houses, or other student initiatives such as a center for entrepreneurship. (Please see Theme House discussion below.) We also note that investments should continue to be made in the Hamlin Hall, Washington Room, and Smith House venues, all of which will serve more central roles in the House meals and programming.

Each of these physical spaces outlined above is home to the work of many student organizations and programs, and we discuss our recommendations related to social programming efforts and staffing in the next section.

A New Vernon Social Center
Currently, the Vernon Social Center houses several important student social events, an occasional party, administrative meeting, or campus event. Otherwise, Vernon Social Center sits empty and locked much of the time, while occupying prime Trinity real estate. The Vernon Social Center is underutilized, and students have reported that its existing configuration as a large, imposing, empty shell is a contributing factor to its lack of use. The facility was built primarily to host large events and therefore it lacks atmosphere,

good acoustics, and warmth. Our vision includes transforming it into a dynamic, welcoming, and flexible space that would attract a diversity of students throughout the day and night. We envision an inviting, cozy décor with a variety of comfortable seating options; smaller spaces within the Great Room; and a diner-style food service operation as well as a convenience store. By day, the space will serve as a casual lounge with a "Starbucks" feel, conducive to group study, faculty-student lunches, and simply hanging out with friends. Plenty of plugs and Wi-Fi will be available for use while students enjoy food from outside vendors. As evening approaches, the main space will transition to accommodate an assortment of entertainment possibilities, from regular live music and dances to comedy and talent nights. The space will also be conducive to faculty lectures, career development events, and forums as the new design allows for maximum flexibility. Vernon Social would also stay open until 2:00 AM every night absorbing both late-night studiers as well as those looking for late-night food, seven days a week. Hungry students will no longer have to leave campus late in their cars, and the central location allows for relatively easy monitoring by Campus Safety. The transformation of Vernon Social may give us the opportunity to take an important and immediate first step in expanding on-campus social alternatives for students, while continuing to explore other ideas on Vernon and in the development of Crescent Street.

While the proposed renovation of Vernon Social Center will require the relocation of some currently recurring events with attendance greater than 250, we believe this new venue will spawn many new event ideas, and we encourage the current event organizers to think creatively about using other venues if necessary. The Office of Campus Life has provided the Charter and Vernon Social Design Committees an analysis that demonstrates how other spaces, such as the Washington Room and Hamlin Hall, could hold events supported by contracted services on a rental basis without the need for any capital improvements.

We also note that in the first few weeks of operation as a late-night venue, the Bistro has become a popular and already overcrowded destination on Vernon Street. While we recognize that the late-night food service will transition from the Bistro to Vernon Social once the renovation is complete, we encourage the continued use of the Bistro for additional late-night social options.

Role of Theme Houses
We acknowledge the inspired proposal of the Theme House Committee, whose work was funded by the Mellon grant. Of the newest four theme houses, two are particularly vibrant: The Mill and the iHouse. The T.R.E.E.House and the House of Peace have small but loyal followings. The Theme House Committee has put forth a plan to expand the theme house system as a means of offering more social options on campus, promoting increased student-faculty interaction outside the classroom, and reshaping the social and intellectual life of our student body. At the time of their deliberations, the notion of a College-wide "House" System inclusive of focused faculty and administrative engagement opportunities had not yet emerged. This House System incorporates several key elements of the Theme House proposal while broadening their impact on the full student population.

The kind and degree of faculty involvement in student life that is outlined in the Theme House Proposal translates into the very kind of faculty contributions and leadership that will allow the College-wide House System to transform our College culture. In their report, an oversight committee has been recommended to better manage the theme house system, and we not only support this recommendation, but have adopted and further developed it not only for theme houses, but for all social houses (see Section 5: A New Social Code). This is an important first step to improving what we currently have and we welcome this structure. A review of the current inventory of remaining houses on campus leads us to consider carefully any costly renovations of these facilities. We recommend that before additional resources are spent to expand the theme house system, we strengthen and improve the current system through the kinds of faculty involvement described in the Theme House Proposal. As buildings become available, we expect there will be opportunities for incremental additions to the count of social houses. For example, upon completion of the Crescent Street Student Housing, we might look at how we can reconfigure buildings such as Boardwalk and Park Place into residential theme houses. We would promote all efforts to support organic movements by the students to develop houses that are currently vacant on Vernon Street and elsewhere on campus, and we encourage the College to be proactive and creative in identifying, purchasing, and upgrading such spaces to accommodate an increased number of theme houses and social organizations. We will continue to look to the Theme House Committee members and other concerned faculty to work in partnership with us and lend their time and creativity to the central initiative of a college-wide House System as well as the strengthening of the theme house system.

3. Staffing and Social Programming

A review of current student-life staffing led us to some insights about focusing our efforts in some particular ways and to the realization that we may need more staff in key areas that would maximize existing College assets; bring together the academic, social, and residential experiences of students; make more meaningful the opportunities students have to engage in activities and communities in Hartford; and strengthen our ability to attract and retain student communities currently underrepresented on campus.

The House System we propose calls for six house deans. Implementing this central initiative will require both redefining current staff job descriptions as well as adding personnel to the Dean of Students Office. In addition to the full portfolio of responsibility already carried by this office, key areas of responsibility going forward will also include central oversight of all social houses and coordination of the First-Year Program with residential life and the new House System.

Additionally, we see a number of areas we think offer the greatest potential to serve both the academic and social goals of the College: arts, athletics, and community service. Likewise, we perceive a need to strengthen the College's commitment to women's leadership and to the needs and interests of LGBT students. The College has already hired a coordinator of intramurals and recreation to great acclaim; therefore, we consider

the following student life staffing additions just as essential to supporting a coordinated and robust social environment.

Being mindful of the renewed sense of campus community and engagement this report advocates, we will seek to assure that our staffing efforts and realignment around the initiatives outlined encourage integrated and well-coordinated programming across campus life:

1. Coordinator of Social Houses - This person would take the lead in advising all social organizations that have facilities—theme, cultural, as well as Greek houses—and would work most closely with the fraternities and sororities in the transition years to assist them in reaching the standards for co-education and grade-point averages. He or she would monitor the Social Host Policy, oversee the evaluation system, and help organizations meet the "quality of life" standards described in the Social Code section later in this document. The Coordinator would be the College liaison to alumni officers and national organizations and a member of the Implementation Team referenced in this report.

2. Associate Director of Community Service and Civic Engagement – This person would report to the Director of Community Service and Civic Engagement to develop and coordinate activities within and through the House System, with special attention to the House System, academic department initiatives, and the First-Year Program.

3. Coordinator, Queer Resource Center (QRC) – This position should be made full-time in order for the College to develop greater support, advocacy, and leadership around LGBTQIA life among students and within the College. This institutional commitment is a critical piece in the transformation of our campus culture.

4. Director of the Women and Gender Resource Action Center ("WGRAC") – This position should be full- rather than a part-time position in order that the College adequately address the real problem of gender-based violence on campus. Programs to raise student awareness of violence and discrimination and to develop students' skills for intervention are time and labor intensive, and the primary means the College has to increase the Center's capacity to fulfill its mission is to increase staff hours and program budgets.

Program Funding
An important piece in all of this is program dollars. Over the past decade, the program budgets for the Office of Campus Life have decreased and we believe are now set at a level too low to allow this office to effectively shape student life. Currently, the Director of Community Service and Civic Engagement as well as the Director of the WGRAC, along with other professional program staff, spend an inordinate amount of time and energy applying to the SGA for program funding. We recommend the College increase funding in these key areas—student life, community service, WGRAC, QRC, and the arts—so that these offices can do their work as fully and effectively as they can.

4. Enhanced First-Year Program

Our observation is that acculturation into the Trinity community happens within days of first-year students setting foot on campus. We find it problematic that the present system may encourage an early introduction to an upperclassmen party atmosphere by mixing veteran students with incoming students over a long holiday weekend. As evidenced by our lowered retention rates, we are turning off our intellectually curious students at a concerning rate. This proposal seeks to positively influence the climate into which our students are introduced. The first year is critical to producing undergraduates who are thoughtful, self-aware, and proactive in taking full advantage of an educational program based predominantly on the Trinity mission.

Introduction to the First-Year Experience

Our focus in developing the first-year experience centers on the central academic mission of the College as well as three core human needs: safety and security, human relationships, and personal growth. To lead thoughtful, purposeful and engaged lives, incoming students should be given the tools to maximize their Trinity experience, ensuring that the preceding core needs are met. We want to prepare young men and women to be worldly and knowledgeable, since much of their success in whatever path they chose will flow from their social interactions in the broadest sense. This begins with orientation.

Extending Orientation

Noting the existing problems with the current academic calendar, which encourage Labor Day partying over a long weekend, we recommend moving the arrival of new students and orientation to the full week before the Labor Day holiday. In essence, the M/T/W slot would serve as a meaningful and active orientation period that would focus on personal skills and city exploration by including some version of the following:

a. Alcohol training module, which is not self-taught, and not something that is perfunctorily completed on the computer over the summer. We embrace the upperclass mentors who have volunteered to help lead sessions on this topic.

b. Sexual assault awareness and prevention training. Recent orientation programs have included very successful dramatic scenes plus discussions, developed and presented by Trinity faculty and students. We endorse this emphasis and hope it will remain a centerpiece of all students' first hours on campus.

c. Discussion of the social code and guiding principles (see below for further explanation) with a commitment to sign after the first semester.

d. An "urban living" module which focuses on how to navigate and maximize one's experience of the urban environment.

e. Community involvement, with city trips either to explore and/or to promote community service.

f. A "Taste of Hartford" on-campus festival with samples from the many local restaurants: Trinity Restaurant, Piolin, El Serape, possibly others.

g. A clubs fair where representatives from fraternities and sororities, theme houses, cultural houses, intramurals, etc. set up their booths to promote their organizations.

h. A personal and career development module to introduce the Career Development Center and to encourage students to begin future graduate or career planning so as to be actionable throughout their undergraduate years.
i. Health education that covers proper nutrition and drug abuse.
j. Introduction to outlining the "Trinity Plan" (see below) for each student's course of study.

These are simply a few suggestions. We encourage creative thinking around a sophisticated program that creatively introduces the importance of being open and involved in developing life skills that are critical to a student's future success in whatever path will flow from their intellectual and social interactions while at Trinity.

Thursday and Friday of the "first" week on campus would be dedicated to a "soft" introduction to the student's class schedule, unfettered by the presence of any upperclassmen. Upperclass students would begin their classes as usual the following week. Note: This proposal is described in greater detail in Appendix C: First-Year Jump Start. The holiday weekend would not simply be free for mixing with the upperclass students but would also include a continuation of some orientation activities centered upon the first-year's assigned cohort, which is further described below. Also, first-year students would presumably already have academic work due the following week.

Expanding Pre-Orientation "Quest" Programs
Incoming students have found optional pre-orientation programs to be especially valuable as they form new friendships and establish a new identity as Trinity students. One of these, Quest, takes students off campus for something of a wilderness adventure and promotes team-building, leadership training, and fun. We recommend an expansion of programs like this (for example, an urban based Quest) to accommodate more students and to be conducted over the weekend before the start of regular orientation. We also recommend exploring an array of locales and themes for pre-orientation programs, taking advantage of Hartford and regional opportunities.

Developing a Trinity Plan
Beginning with orientation and continuing through the first semester, all new students would be required to develop a written articulation of the goals they want from a Trinity education that would be filed with their respective house deans and become part of a student's portfolio. House deans would assign first-year students an upperclass "mentor" in addition to their first-year seminar instructors who serve as their academic adviser.

This should be seen as an opportunity for growth and reflection, a process to understand oneself and a conversation model for discussions with the mentor, house deans, affiliated house faculty, the Career Development Center, academic advisers, and, eventually, employers. Study abroad, internships, volunteer experiences, leadership opportunities (through teams, organizations, and clubs), classes, research and grant possibilities and other academic areas would all be fodder for guided exploration. The document would remain a part of the student's record, possibly a component of an electronic portfolio. We expect students to revisit their plans often. The plan should also incorporate measures of student outcomes to ensure that the Trinity Plan is a living and oft revisited document throughout the student's course of study.

One crucial role for the plan is to ensure a reflective and wise choice of major during the sophomore year. We endorse a discernment process that carries over from the first-year experience. Students will have begun to investigate through the creation of their customized Trinity Plan those areas of academic pursuit that resonate with them. In the sophomore year, we expect an intensive period of reflection that could become a proposal to be presented to the department chairs and/or selected faculty members by the end of that year. At its most ambitious, this would be a two-part presentation, written and oral, that details why they are attracted to the major and how this concentration fits within their plan, along with an understanding of how they would structure their undergraduate years both within and beyond the established curriculum to accomplish these goals. At a minimum, we expect our sophomores to be able to state in public their rationale for their chosen major.

Conclusion

Improved integration of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to support improved student engagement and faculty/student interaction is the ultimate goal of these programs. We acknowledge that our faculty members do not live in neighborhoods directly adjacent to the College, which will continue to hinder outside-the-classroom interactions. This necessitates that the College creatively use existing facilities in new ways and develop more structured programs to allow for these relationships to develop. We would even encourage house deans and/or faculty advisors to live in a residence hall within their house by building out spaces in appropriate dorms. We are aware that the breadth of what has been described above will require a capital investment in the rehabilitation and reconfiguration of whole buildings and regions around the campus. Additional staffing will be required to oversee and direct many of these initiatives. We recognize that this proposal will place further strain on an already lean College budget and necessitate cutbacks in the absence of full donor support for other critical and pressing initiatives before the College. However, we believe the investment in an enhanced and robust first-year experience will allow Trinity to validate its mission by attracting motivated, engaged, and intellectually curious students who will improve immeasurably the intellectual ethos of Trinity.

5. A New Social Code

Improvements to the social landscape at Trinity will come about only with social policies that are transparent, clearly communicated, and properly implemented. And while we seek to provoke change in all of the social organizations on campus, we place particular emphasis on the fraternities and sororities, given their central and unique position on campus.

It may be helpful to begin with some history. This is not the first report to the Board of Trustees in Trinity's history to question the role and existence of fraternities and sororities. Two previous studies were conducted following the co-education era. In 1983, the Board received a report that called for a continued move toward coeducation in all student organizations but that offered an exemption to fraternity and sorority chapters. In 1992, another Trustee committee was formed to extend the co-education mandate to all

social organizations, including the fraternities and sororities. We find that the College failed to adequately implement the 1992 directive and, further, the Board of Trustees failed to demand compliance.   Possible explanations can be found in the turmoil during that era of transitional Presidential leadership the College faced upon the resignation of President Gerety and the resulting higher priorities associated with finding a replacement.

It is clear, however, that 20 years after the College adopted the co-education mandate and, in spite of Board directives, Trinity fails to have true gender diversity in its social organizations and especially within the fraternities and sororities. A review of the Board-approved 1992 Trustee report indicated that the College was directed to mandate co-education of all fraternities and sororities no later than September 1995. Further, it was directed that advisory boards comprising a mix of faculty, administration, alumni, and students would be established to monitor social functions and promote active intellectual engagement. The facilities of fraternities and sororities would be kept up to City and College codes. Alcohol and pledging standards would be created and reviewed regularly. Finally, social life was to be fostered through the growth of "diverse social alternatives to fraternities and sororities." (Source: Report of the Committee to Review the Role of Fraternities and Sororities at Trinity College, September 18, 1992).

The system of fraternities and sororities lacks most of the assurances that were required by the 1992 report. Fraternity co-education is, in the main, currently based on a loose affiliate structure with existing sororities. Fraternities choosing not to have affiliations are simply "unrecognized" by the College and do not face any sanctions as a result of this status. Further, advisory boards inclusive of College faculty and staff do not exist and an open dialogue, while currently being undertaken by this Committee, is hardly established.

The Trinity faculty, in the majority, would like to see the fraternities and sororities abolished as they see these organizations as exclusive and offering social advantages and physical resources that are not available to all students. Indeed, four members of the Committee consistently supported abolition. Surveys of faculty opinion conducted over the last thirty years have supported abolition of fraternities and sororities and the most recent assessment indicated that 76% of Trinity faculty members favored abolition, 17% favored reform, 2% favored "keep as is", and 3% had no opinion. (Source: Social Reform Survey of the Faculty, May 2012). Four of the twelve voting members of our Committee argued strongly for the elimination of fraternities and sororities at Trinity.

A Common Set of Expectations for Social Organizations
The fraternities and sororities of old are gone. Fifty years ago the Medusa, an honor society of highly respected students, many of them fraternity members, monitored and adjudicated student violations on campus. But we are mindful that the fraternity system of 50 years ago was one that engaged 90% of the student body, which was then all male. Today's student landscape includes equal numbers of women and men, and the membership in fraternities and sororities represents 18% of the student body. Even so, the surviving fraternities and sororities serve as the main social outlets for Trinity students, and these houses determine social norms on campus. Unfortunately, some of

these norms have moved in directions away from the original missions of brotherhood and sisterhood.

As we have seen, when we look at the fraternity and sorority population at Trinity in isolation, it is apparent that they stand apart from their Trinity peers. While there are individuals who are outstanding leaders and scholars who belong to fraternities and sororities, the cumulative grade-point average of fraternities and sororities is consistently below the College average, and the data show a demonstrably negative effect on GPA during the sophomore year as a result of pledging. Once an individual pledges and experiences this dip in GPA, on average, they never catch back up to their peer group GPA at Trinity. While fewer than 20% of students are members of fraternities and sororities, they appear to wield a disproportionate influence on campus culture. To further complicate the matter, these are the students who appear to dominate the social life and enjoy privileges not available to other students. As student leaders have reported to our Committee, "Fraternities have a built-in way to get alcohol." The fraternity dues system ensures that an uneven playing field exists for those seeking the resources to fund social functions. If we are to carry out Mark Neustadt's charge to attract more of the smart, capable, and curious students, we must work to change the prevailing culture, values, and options for Trinity students.

The Charter Committee concluded that the current system of fraternities and sororities is not a constructive influence on Trinity's overall social environment. Many of these institutions seem to have grown away from their original missions, which were more compatible with the educational goals of Trinity. These groups are not the sole reason for the issues we have identified in our social climate, and other aspects of the Trinity culture also must be addressed before improvement in such dashboard indicators as retention and reputation will be discernible. Many fraternity and sorority alumni and trustees have a deep-set belief in the benefits of fraternity and sorority life, and these individuals rank as some of the most loyal boosters of the College. Fraternity and sorority affiliated students and alumni are more likely to engage in community service and, anecdotally, report that they feel they have a special home on campus and a sense of family. The unaffiliated alumni and current students are divided in their opinions on retaining fraternities and sororities, but as a rule they seem to care less about the issue than the faculty do. Significantly, women, more often than men, report that their treatment in fraternity and sorority settings is mixed and women surveyed recall incidents of sexual harassment and social denigration. What is clear is that all constituencies believe that considerable improvement must be made in an environment where a system of fraternities and sororities is allowed to continue.

To evaluate various strategies, the Committee had conversations with those schools that have enacted more recent reforms of their fraternity and sorority systems. Members of the Committee consulted the Presidents of Tufts, Wesleyan, and Middlebury as well as the Dean of Student Affairs at Bowdoin and trustees at Hamilton. Each of these peer institutions tackled the fraternity and sorority issue slightly differently. Tufts opted for the status quo but worked closely with fraternities to improve their behavior, imposing severe penalties for rule infringements. It also created new major social events open to

the entire undergraduate population as a way of reducing the influence of fraternities on the school's social life. Middlebury and Bowdoin have adopted the "social house" concept, whereby designated facilities are set aside at those campuses under open membership policies. We also note that Middlebury instituted a "commons system" which would loosely approximate the house system that we have endorsed earlier in this report. Middlebury's and Bowdoin's "Social Houses" are required to abide by college standards for behavior and to receive funding. Wesleyan allows fraternities and sororities to exist but will not allow any new residential fraternities on campus and, further, holds the current houses to a strict code of conduct. Hamilton purchased their fraternity houses but allows fraternities to remain on campus in lounges or as "virtual" entities that exist in name and use college facilities.

Our Committee also considered outright purchase of the fraternity houses along the lines of the Hamilton model. Restructuring fraternities as non-private entities and evolving towards the Hamilton system, whereby fraternities compete for spaces on campus, just as other organizations currently compete for limited resources, would considerably advance equity among student organizations and further promote inclusivity in our living-learning community. Our Committee conducted a considerable debate over this strategy but this initiative failed upon polling with a seven-to-five vote against a systemic purchase of all the privately held houses. The purchasing option is costly and we projected that on a phased five-year basis we would need to set aside well over $5 million to accomplish this transition. Further, purchase would be met with strident alumni resistance that could unduly consume administrative and staff resources.

After considerable debate and with an eleven-to-one vote in favor of the matter, our Committee elected to follow through on the 1992 co-education mandate as a necessary first step toward equal access for men and women to all social organizations on campus and in keeping with the charge of our College mission to prepare students for the world in which they will work and live. The Committee believes that lasting change will result only from active and ongoing intervention by the College to ensure that all social organizations abide by a uniform code of standards. These standards are based on the liberal arts notion that our residential college system must comprise living communities that foster student leadership, engage faculty in meaningful ways, and provide social outlets that function via cooperative efforts of students, faculty, and staff. Enforcing a true co-education mandate by enforcing key outcomes and standards within realistic timelines is, in the opinion of the Committee, the most efficient and sure means available to us to achieve the objective of building social community.

Recommended Social Outcomes

Our recommendation is based on three *outcomes*:

1. All social organizations will have an open, transparent membership and equal and fair access to resources.

- Membership in social organizations must be open, without regard for gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, or any other identification.

- All Trinity students will have equal access to membership in social organizations. Membership will be determined on the basis of student interest alone. Hazing or blackballing will be prohibited and grounds for judicial proceedings.

2. Trinity will take responsibility for all social spaces.

- Trinity will actively oversee and monitor existing social spaces.
- Trinity will seek to renovate additional structures on Vernon Street to allow for additional social spaces to be created based on the interests of the students. To that end, we support the establishment of a fund earmarked for the phased purchase or renovation of vacant facilities that could be used for social spaces and could be known as the Social Diversity Fund ("SDF"). We believe that the SDF will be an attractive giving opportunity for Trinity alumni as it will foster and support development of unique and interesting topical houses that engage students with faculty outside the classroom and attract the curious and capable students that Trinity seeks. We urge the Board to charge our Advancement team with creating giving opportunities to support ways to opportunistically renovate or acquire properties on campus for use as social outlets to support either the House System, possible theme houses, or other social venues that might grow organically from student and faculty input.
- The College will oversee open, transparent, and fair allocation of these and other social spaces across campus.

3. Trinity will be responsible to social organizations on its campus.

- Social organizations whose members are Trinity students shall not be affiliated with national organizations that do not adhere to a co-educational philosophy. Exceptions include academic organizations (e.g., professional and scientific organizations) and athletic and musical organizations.
- Trinity will provide appropriate support and staffing to support its social organizations.

Social Codes and Oversight
It is important to begin this section by making some distinctions between the kinds of organizations at Trinity and differing levels of expectation. Most student-administered organizations are based around a common interest, open to anyone who wants to join, and, with the exception of the officers, have fluid membership. The theme and cultural houses (e.g., Umoja House, the Mill) have similar membership characteristics and dominion over a facility. There are a handful of groups such as singing groups or club sports that require a greater commitment of membership but whose activities are limited

solely to their common activity. The rules and requirements laid out in this report do not apply to such groups (e.g., sports clubs and singing groups); rather, they apply to social organizations with a defined or limited membership. Finally, there are the fraternities and sororities that have facilities (including those they rent off campus), demand a considerable time commitment, are selective, and have an initiation process. Our definition of a student group is any organization whose membership is at least 50% Trinity students. A facility is any space, on or off campus, that is controlled by a student-run organization or has a majority of occupants who are members of the student organization.

Our inquiry has taught us that dominion over a facility is social currency at Trinity and that selectivity and the time and commitment devoted to membership are variables that have significant impact on the nature of the group and the potential effect of membership on a student's experience at the College. While the Committee does not speak with one voice on the matter, at the very least, a rigorous reform of these organizations is in the best interest of the College. Fraternities and sororities must meet a clear set of reform expectations on a reasonable timeline. They will need to seek advisory support such that they reinforce scholarship and good citizenship among their members and use their influence to make significant contributions to the life of the College.

Oversight Committees
The College will apply rules and procedures that are already in place, along with the recommendations outlined below through oversight committees. The first is an Implementation Committee that will be tasked to work with social organizations to develop their plans to support social reform along with providing appropriate support and encouragement. The other equally important committee will be an Assessment Committee that will evaluate each social organization's compliance with the reform requirements and quality of life standards outlined below. A necessary supporting group for the Assessment Committee will be a coordinated social options "spaces" sub-committee. This sub-committee, composed of students, staff, and faculty, will work to ensure there is a clear path and process for gaining access to social space on campus, as well as assuring a coordinated balance of options for all students.

We note that an existing SGA rule that denies funding to groups that are not open to all seems sufficient to reinforce our preference for open membership. Certainly, individual cases of harassment and discrimination can and should be vetted according to rules and protocols articulated in the Student Handbook. The following rules, expectations, and timelines are meant to address those areas where we want to make a change.

Further, we heartily recommend that the Board adopt a standing committee to be known as the Student Life Committee to replace the existing Student Affairs Committee. This committee would be charged to bring to the attention of the Board refinements and modifications that guarantee Trinity remains true to its liberal arts aspirations and commitment to attracting students who create a multi-dimensional environment both academically and socially along with ensuring that the recommendations of this Committee that are adopted by the Board are actually enacted.

Minimum Standards

The following standards are intended to provide clarity and better direction for our social organizations. The College will seek to work closely with each of the organizations affected to produce a working strategy to aid in this transition process.

For all organizations with a facility:

1. Organizations retain the privilege of having a facility only by satisfying the criteria of the evaluation process described below.

2. Organizations with privately owned or controlled property or off-campus apartments will comply with all reasonable requests from College officials, including granting immediate permission to enter the building when the official has reason to believe there is cause to investigate further.

Finally, while not a specific requirement, in the context of encouraging a sense of community on campus through the House System, we are hopeful that over time we can encourage those organizations, particularly fraternities with dining or residential components, to enjoy more common meals on campus by modifying meal plans and to consider opening up housing options, particularly those in College-owned facilities.

For all social organizations with a facility, selective membership and/or initiation process:

In addition to the rules above,

1. Complying with the co-education mandate is critical to our community building and mission-driven efforts. Therefore, we recommend the following phase in policy:

   a. During Fall of 2012: begin planning for co-education and submit plans to the Implementation Committee
   b. Spring of 2013: begin recruiting co-educational pledge classes
   c. By October 1, 2014: total minority gender membership must be at or exceed 15%
   d. By October 1, 2015: total minority gender membership must be at or exceed 30%: minority gender officership must be at or exceed 20%
   e. By October 1, 2016: total minority gender membership must be at or exceed 45% (roughly 50/50); minority gender officership must be at or exceed 40%

2. As an amendment to this report and upon the casting of a unanimous vote, the Board of Trustees has determined that there is to be no pledging period. Membership should be granted at the time the offer to join a fraternity or sorority is accepted by the new member and no later than the established deadline

for the conclusion of a rush period. Any activity occurring after the offer to join is accepted that is or appears to be a requirement to gain membership will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including prohibition. This is true whether the activity is sanctioned by the officers of the organization or whether it is an individual member exercising real or apparent authority over a prospective member.

3. As of Spring 2013, a prospective member will need to have a GPA of 3.0 or better in the previous semester, and not be on Academic Probation to be allowed to rush.

4. As of Fall 2014, the collective average GPA of the organization will need to be 3.2 or better.

5. Each group must have a dedicated faculty or staff adviser who serves in this capacity for no more than three such organizations.

6. Each group must supply the College with a complete and up-to-date membership list at the beginning of each semester.

Quality of Life Standards
In addition to the minimum standards identified above are a host of "quality of life" initiatives that we know improve the collegiate experience and the sense of community within an organization. The Implementation Committee will be formed by the President of the College immediately to work with fraternity and sorority leadership to establish final parameters and specific expectations to be used in the evaluation process. Among the important components we seek in building community and improving student life, service to others is at the top of our list. Expectations in this area will include ongoing service projects in the community that involve most or all of the membership as well as participation from the broad student body and carrying out projects or events that engage and improve the Trinity community. Another broad area is "engagement." Having members who are truly involved in activities and groups such as the *Tripod*, Student Government, service organizations, academic clubs, intramural or intercollegiate teams, or theme and cultural houses broadens a student's exposure and enriches him or her. The benefits of such engagement increase significantly when that involvement is in a leadership capacity, and fraternities and sororities should also look to add more internal leadership roles in the areas of academics and engagement. Organizations will also be required to develop wisdom and leadership within the membership by attending or organizing programs on alcohol, world events, science, human relations, etc. A further aspect of engagement is reaching out to other social organizations to co-host events and to work within the newly introduced House System by mentoring younger students in the house, sharing common meals, and participating in other house activities. Initiatives in all of these areas will be featured in the evaluation process. The process will be one that challenges organizations to meet and exceed standards and function well. The evaluation process can also lead to suspension, prohibited status, and/or loss of the privilege to occupy a facility.

Support for these Initiatives

Our intention is to see these organizations succeed within a newly reformed and integrated community of social outlets. We recognize that parts of this transition will take time and careful planning, particularly the co-education mandate. The College needs to supply the time and staff to oversee the significant changes we expect to occur. Over the course of the spring 2013 semester, members of the Implementation Committee will need to outline objectives and expectations with each fraternity and sorority and develop with them plans for making the changes necessary to become welcoming to all and attractive to members of both sexes. Those plans would go into effect in the fall of 2013 with oversight by the Assessment Committee. In addition, student life staff and fraternity and sorority leaders would meet with admissions staff to work to ensure that these efforts align with the College's recruitment strategies. (See Appendix H: Proposed Implementation Timeline.)

Finally, the staff and Implementation Committee will see that the Inter-Greek Council ("IGC") will be reinvigorated and asked to function as an effective and integrated governing body. We will look for the IGC and the expanded SGA entertainment group to work together and for members of the IGC to meet regularly with campus-wide committees which influence student life. Regularly held and coordinated meetings among the IGC, presidents, and alumni leaders of fraternities and sororities would also be anticipated.

The current Student Handbook designates some fraternities and sororities as either "recognized" or "unrecognized." Our initiatives will eliminate this structure. During the implementation period, all existing fraternities and sororities will be termed "recognized" and "approved." All fraternities and sororities that exist today will need to work with the College, SGA, and others, toward meeting and achieving the set of initiatives outlined above. As of fall 2012, no new single-sex fraternities or sororities may be formed. The Implementation Committee will create a set of revised guidelines for all new social organizations and going forward, all organizations will either be approved or prohibited.

Consequences of Failure to Meet Standards

While other measurements and indicators will be developed, the following criteria are considered essential:

1. An organization making distinct efforts but failing to meet the co-educational requirement will receive a warning and reasonable College support to overcome its challenges. However, if it has not met our stated goal by October 1, 2014, and continues to function as a closed group with a facility, it will become a prohibited organization and subject to the actions called for in paragraphs 4 and 5 below.

2. An organization making demonstrable progress but failing to meet the GPA requirement will be issued a warning and will have a single semester to correct the problem. If at the end of that semester it has not reached the grade point

minimum, it will be subject to suspension or prohibited status.

3. An organization that is responsible for a serious infraction of College policy such as, but not limited to, endangering someone's life, the sale and distribution of drugs, hazing, or a sex crime will also be subject to prohibited status.

4. Should an organization that privately owns its property and facilities become prohibited at any time in the future, the College will establish a fair sale price for these assets with alumni owners and reassign them to another organization for the betterment of the College. College-owned buildings will simply be reassigned as necessary.

5. Students who participate in prohibited organizations will be subject to separation from the College.

V. Conclusion

Much of what is in place at our College gives us great pride. Our Committee is unified around the belief that Trinity, by placing an investment of College resources toward changing and enhancing the social environment, can attract and retain the best students within this competitive landscape, can reassert its rightful place in the NESCAC and be the best we can be. We firmly recommend completing the co-education mandate originally suggested in 1992, providing clear and transparent outcomes and standards for all social organizations, implementing the House System, building a new Vernon Social, refurbishing other vacant Vernon houses, along with adding the additional staffing and programming that will fortify Trinity as a student-centered residential liberal arts college in accord with its unique mission.

Ultimately, we believe this comprehensive set of recommendations, taken as a whole, will align the College community and its living-learning environment with our mission and guiding principles. We understand the stakes are high and the costs great in an environment where there are financial challenges, but we believe this plan contains the critical components necessary to continue to attract the brightest and most engaged students to Trinity. While the scope of the recommendations relative to the cost is reasonable, it is incumbent on the Board of Trustees to determine how to finance this comprehensive program in the near term through a reallocation of existing budget resources, without damaging the core of our College offerings. Looking ahead, we also envision presenting members of the Trinity community with opportunities to take part in building on what is best about student life at the College through their commitments of personal support for enhanced campus programs and renewed facilities. Failure to act and, most importantly, carry through on these initiatives will not bring us to our bi-centennial having achieved the goals this Board seeks—and should demand—of this great institution.

VII. Appendices

Appendix A: Committee Membership and Methodology

Charter Committee Membership
The Committee comprises trustees (all alumni and some current parents), students, faculty, and administration.   The membership of the Committee is as follows:
- Faculty Members: David Ahlgren '64, the Karl W. Hallden Professor of Engineering; Diana Evans, Professor of Political Science; Dan Lloyd, the Brownell Professor of Philosophy.
- Student Members: Paige Greene '13; Jesse Hunt '13; Shaun Stuer '13.
- Administration: Fred Alford, Dean of Students; Allison Read, College Chaplain.
- Trustees: Sophie Bell Ayres '77, P'12, Philip Khoury '71 (co-chair), Luke Terry '67, Cornie Thornburgh '80 (co-chair), Tim Walsh '85, P'15.
- Staff to the Committee: David Andres '04, Director of Strategic Projects

Our Charter Committee, as with all undertakings within the Trinity community, takes its charge from the College's mission statement and particularly from one of the four foundational elements which calls for a *" … secure campus community that provides students with abundant opportunities for interchange among themselves and with faculty; sustains a full array of cultural, recreational, social and volunteer activities; entrusts undergraduates to regulate their own affairs; and embodies the institution's conviction that students' experiences in the residence halls, dining halls, and extracurricular organizations, on the playing fields, and in the neighboring city are a powerful complement to the formal learning of the classroom, laboratory, and library."*

When regularly scheduled meetings began in the winter of 2012, we acknowledged our College mission as our lodestar and began defining our task. We organized our work around the following questions:
- What do we want students to get from the *extracurriculm*?
- What lessons can we learn from current institutions and programs at Trinity and best practices at peer schools that can help inform our recommendations?
- Do the current rules, practices, and allocation of resources give all students equal access to the benefits of our programs and/or do they best reinforce the goals we have identified?
- Are there space configurations that would promote better more diverse and intellectually satisfying relationships among students?
- What can faculty and administration do to support the transformation of the social culture that will be symbiotic with the academic environment?
- Can our urban environment be used strategically to broaden options for student socialization?
- How can we ensure a safe campus environment that promotes wise decision-making and healthy behaviors?

As we began to compile feedback, however, we came to define our task not as simply examining the infrastructure, policies, and process of social life, but as an exploration of the state of social integrity at Trinity. As a result, we have attempted in this report to share our thoughts not only on immediate changes to the policies that shape the social

landscape, but on how adopting a new philosophy for shaping policies and patterns can best cultivate a thriving culture of social behavior and responsibility.

Review Process
The Charter Committee began meeting via phone conference on a bi-weekly basis in February 2012 and have maintained a regular meeting schedule either via phone or through on-campus meetings throughout the rest of this year. Our calendar of activities included the following:

- *February/March:* Prepared our Charter and presented to the Board for approval. Letter from President Jones and Board Chair Paul Raether informed the community of our creation; Divided membership of our Committee into three subcommittees to examine current social outlets on campus; to review residential life, health, and safety; and to discuss ways to promote student-faculty engagement (see below).
- *April/May:* Began meeting with various constituencies on campus to invite their feedback. These included: student leaders from all segments of the Trinity community along with the request to complete a student leadership questionnaire, open forum with faculty and sessions with senior administrators in advancement and admissions.
- *Summer:* Sent update to community inviting them to share their concerns with the Committee. Ongoing meetings with Alumni Fraternity Leadership, administration responsible for student life and financial operations, and the Student Government Association (SGA).
- *September:* Preparation of report; meetings with President of College, Dean of Faculty and Board Chair. Additionally Ron Liebowitz, President of Middlebury College, was the principal consultant to the Committee and helped to guide our final on-site discussion forum.
- *October*: Release of written recommendations; preparation for October Board Retreat presentation

Subcommittee on Social Outlets
This committee studied the current configuration of fraternities and sororities, theme and cultural houses, need for common spaces, transportation, how social life is funded, what helps and hinders the planning of events, and identified programs such as recreation and intramurals that could use more support and emphasis or facilities such as a student center or late-night arts facilities that would improve life on campus.

    Chair: Sophie Bell Ayres '77, P'12
    Philip Khoury '71
    Allison Read, College Chaplain
    David Ahlgren '64, Karl W. Hallden Professor of Engineering
    Shaun Stuer '13

Subcommittee on Residential Life, Health, and Safety
This group looked at how we organize our residential and dining programs, the current

state of campus safety, high-risk behavior, and health education initiatives and made recommendations for improving safety and reducing risky activity.

Chair: Luke Terry '67
Fred Alford, Dean of Students
Diana Evans, Professor of Political Science
Jesse Hunt '13

Subcommittee on Engagement
This committee looked at ways to promote faculty-student interaction outside the classroom, encourage and reward high achievement, promote interaction among groups who do not naturally mix, let students put their classroom learning to use in "real world" situations, and academic standards for social groups or athletes and made recommendations for initiatives that will bring the social and academic helices together.
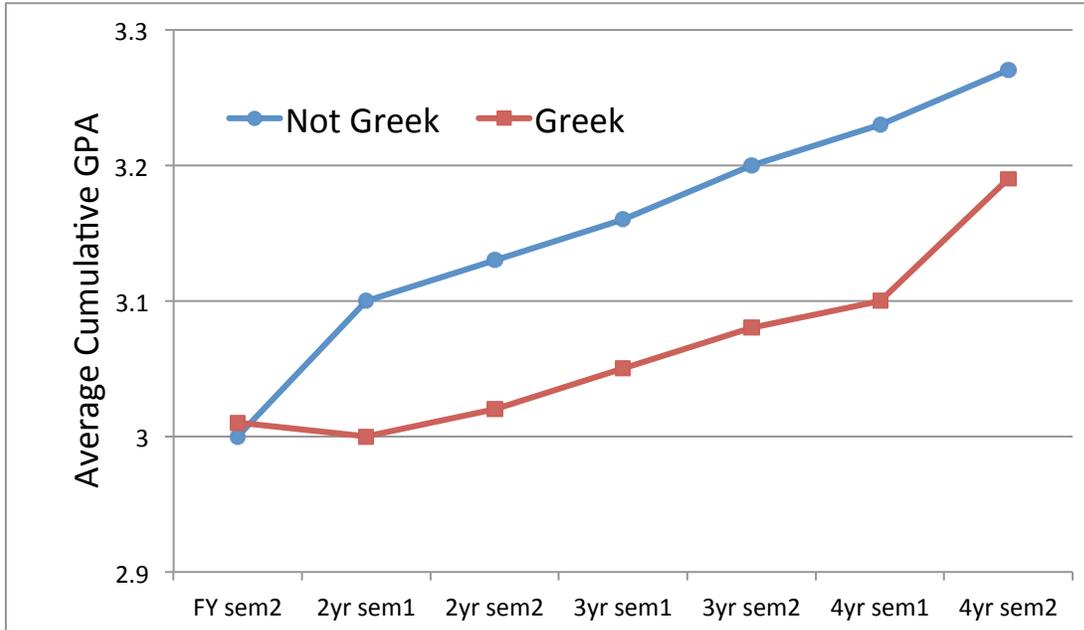
Chair: Cornie Parsons Thornburgh '80
Tim Walsh '85, P'15
Dan Lloyd, Brownell Professor of Philosophy
Paige Greene '13
David Andres '04, *ex officio*

Appendix B: GPA Analysis

Cumulative GPA by Semester and Greek Participation

Fall 2011

Appendix C: First-Year Jump Start

Abstract: We propose to jump start the Fall semester for first-year students: All courses with first-year ("FY") students will meet once prior to the Labor Day weekend. However, these introductory course meetings will be for FY students only, enabling faculty to orient incoming students to the expectations of the course and to academic life. In addition, this first meeting will help FY students establish social ties that may intersect with their academic lives. We also propose intensifying some of the campus-wide FY orientation activities, especially on the themes of alcohol awareness, diversity, and respect.

Introduction: First-Year Orientation has traditionally encountered a standing structural issue: The Labor Day weekend. FY students arrive and engage in two days of mixed activities. The academic activities include a major lecture by an author whom students have read over the summer, small group discussions, and the first meeting of the FY seminar. However, the positive acculturation of these days immediately collides with a three-day weekend and the arrival of the upperclassmen. As we have heard, the returning students have no obligations except to move in. Some of them will party, including those who may arrive whenever they want (such as residents of off-campus houses and members of some fraternities and sororities with residential facilities). Thus, a different set of cultural norms, reflecting the last vacation weekend of the summer, overrides the norms of the first days of classes.

One response is to provide more for FY students in the days prior to the arrival of the upperclassmen. We support this approach in general, with the hope of establishing a more resilient academic climate. (Quest, PRIDE, and other "pre-orientation" programs seem to have been successful.) However, traditional on-campus orientation activities are often seen as lightweight, without consequence or continuity with the semester ahead. We propose instead to jump start the academic year for FY students exclusively, providing them with fast start academically prior to the Labor Day weekend.

Proposals:
1. **FY course jump start**: We propose that FY students get a more extensive foothold on the semester ahead, by attending all their courses during the Thursday and Friday prior to the long weekend. However, we propose that these first course meetings will be held for FY students only. In this way, faculty can provide whatever orientation is important and specific to their courses and disciplines, and immediately launch FY students toward a hard-working semester ahead. In addition, FY students can begin to form social networks based in their academic environment. These messages will be undiluted by upperclass students, who will be allowed to return only later in the long weekend.

> A few specifics:
> Initial year (Fall 2012): As a pilot project, FY course first meetings will be appended to the currently established calendar for Fall 2012. These will be voluntary for involved faculty (i.e., faculty who have FY students in their courses). A special schedule for all courses can be provided for the Thursday and Friday prior to the Labor Day weekend. (TTh, MWF, and WF courses will be on their usual schedule. MW courses will have a Friday meeting. We anticipate very

few conflicts, since MW courses preclude WF courses in the same time slot. Seminar slots (laboratories, for example) can be considered collaboratively by involved faculty).

2. **Returning to an expanded mentorship program**: In the 1990s mentors resided in single occupancy rooms among the FY students, and received academic credit (as TAs in the FY seminars) as well as a stipend (it may have been around $3000 for the year). The close relationship between new students and the best of our juniors and seniors seems like a good idea, which we hope can be studied as a possible program for the years ahead.

Implementation: The academic jumpstart program will need Curriculum Committee approval. It will also need some serious cheerleading, since it is voluntary and perhaps will always remain that way. Strong endorsement from Dean Fraden will be essential as well. The leaders of the Center for Teaching and Learning and other faculty who have been involved in pedagogic discussions over the years can help by suggesting first day exercises designed to introduce students to college life and expectations, while avoiding complete redundancy with the full scale start of classes on the Tuesday after Labor Day.

Appendix D: Guiding Principles

Trinity College is a community united in a quest for excellence in liberal arts education. Our purpose is to foster critical thinking, free the mind of parochialism and prejudice, and prepare students to lead examined lives that are personally satisfying, civically responsible, and socially useful. (From the College Mission Statement)

Consistent with the mission of the College overall, we imagine a social community that welcomes, supports, and motivates our students towards the expression and flourishing of their best selves. We envision a campus society that promotes fun, creativity, new (and old) friendships, open-minded encounters with every outlook, and love. We envision a kaleidoscope of possibilities, the fit home for smart, capable, and curious students at their unique and relaxed best.

With these goals in mind, the Committee has endorsed the standards below as guiding principles for its reconception of the framework for social life at Trinity. The framework for social life is understood as the set of existing social institutions, organizations, and policies, as well as proposed institutions, organization, and policies.

1. Contribute to a positive atmosphere for all.
    a. Every element of the campus social structure should offer and encourage a positive environment for constructive and creative interactions between and among people. Every element should welcome and promote healthy relationships of every sort, from casual conversation to intimate encounters. As an important component and basic necessary condition, every element must be shown not to have a negative effect on the social atmosphere experienced by any particular population on campus – particularly women and minority students.
    b. Every element of the campus social structure should encourage the development of interesting, thoughtful, and considerate adults. Every element should contribute something interesting to students who may choose to be involved. It should offer something that could attract the interest of students who are smart, capable, and curious.

2. Ensure equal access, fairness, and a level playing field.
    a. Student groups should have equal access to the resources to accomplish their social goals and to the benefits various aspects of social life confer to participants. Resources for groups are understood broadly to include space, equipment, money, etc.
    b. Individual students should have equal opportunity to join and/or participate in social organizations and activities without impediments or discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, or any other identification.
3. Do no harm.

a. Every element of the campus social structure must be shown not to have a negative effect on the intellectual life of the campus, as measured by the GPA of students who are involved, or by other indicators of academic engagement or success.

b. Every element of the campus social structure must be shown not to contribute to or increase the incidence of unhealthy, dangerous, or destructive behaviors among students who are involved. Harmful behaviors include physical and psychological harm (including, for example, various forms of harassment or hostile environments).

Appendix E: Sophomore Symposium

Proposal for creation of a Sophomore Symposium program; a project for future consideration

Preamble: The sophomore year is presently a curricular and social "no-man's land." By the end of the first year, our students have completed important first steps in their general education, encountering a wide range of ideas and courses. Some will know their intended major, but others will still be trying on different courses of study. The initial challenges of the first year are behind but the challenges of the major lie ahead. Likewise, the social and advising support of the first year attenuates while the major adviser and community of majors are not yet on the scene. In this vacuum, we believe that students could be better motivated and challenged by their academic life, and that academic life could be harnessed as the basis of new social cohorts. We also believe that the sophomore year is a time where confidence and capability combine, with great potential benefit for the entire campus. Students' sophomore year could be a "second beginning" for them, a time to bond with Trinity and their better selves.

To seize this opportunity, we propose the creation of Sophomore Symposia, small seminars for all sophomores during the Fall of their sophomore year. Structurally, the Sophomore Symposia program will resemble the FY program, but the content and goals of these courses will be different. In content, the courses will form clusters around several common reading lists shared by multiple sections. The goal of the course will be to complete a high quality academic paper of significance, a sophomore project. The project will be posted to each student's e-portfolio page, making it public to the world and the first lasting landmark of the undergraduate career.

While we regard the Sophomore Symposium as a promising idea, we must acknowledge that it entails an annual cost of around $200,000. For this reason, we are not formally including it on our list of priorities for the current round of social reform. But we nonetheless hope to put the idea on the table for future consideration.

Introduction: Three themes emerged from our listening tour that seemed unlikely companions, but which upon reflection informed one another. We heard on multiple occasions that Trinity has a reputation as a place where social life equals its academic counterpart, a source of pride for some and discouragement for others. This indicated to us that the lore is deep and powerful and something we should respect. We also heard from several thoughtful people that lasting changes to the culture have to come from the academic enterprise. Finally we were intrigued by pledging, which was presented as a trial of character. What was it about that enterprise that seemed to instill such a strong sense of pride and attachment to an organization and a group of people and how could we learn from it? We came to believe the upside of pledging comes from a shared, challenging experience.

We began to wonder, what if there was something in the Trinity educational plan that united people in a common intellectual experience, such as President Jones alludes to in his White Paper, that might work its way into the lore of students the way a first-year

graduate student hears and fears terms such "orals" or "dissertation" or a third grader views the thick math text of a fifth grader and thinks, "I'll never be able to do that!" If we could weave together the social and the academic, we might build something that would work organically to raise the intellectual confidence of many of our students, give them a common sense of accomplishment, and change the casual discourse about what occupies their time and imaginations.

Just as pledging dominates the sophomore year for some (with a serious negative impact on GPA), we imagined an academic counterpart with comparable challenges and a comparable sense of social achievement, but with a beneficial effect on learning and academic performance. This is the Sophomore Symposium.

Program overview: A Sophomore Symposium (SS) course will be required of all sophomores. Each SS will comprise no more than 15 students.

Symposia will share reading lists. One model would be a single list for all, but we prefer the idea of several "cores" to this core curriculum. A core might unite eight symposia classes, creating a cohort of about 100 students with a common academic experience. "What's your core?" then becomes a standard conversational opener. Setting an optimal size for a cohort would be an important part of initial planning, as this cohort will persist as a social unit through the remaining undergraduate years.

The reading lists will be intensive and broadly interdisciplinary. Each year the lists will change, set by a joint task force of faculty and students. Faculty are welcome to repeat symposia or to join new cores from year to year. The lists are not designed to be canonical or devoted to Western (or any other) Civilization. Instead, each list establishes a conversation among excellent books. Faculty teaching SS courses will not be expected to be experts on the books in their list. Instead, in class meetings, they and their students will wrestle together over the meanings and import of the readings. Through this leveling of the playing field, students will see modeled the process of scholarly understanding – how curiosity is embodied in smart, capable minds.

Because the courses are both foundational and interdisciplinary, we expect many of them to satisfy at least one distribution requirement. Where a program is especially course-intensive, like Engineering, possibly a symposium might be folded into the major as an elective. (The theme might be "Big data" or "Design: from papyrus to iPad.") The research project that culminates every student's symposium might also be adapted to reflect paths towards various majors.

The seminars will meet for two hours a week. The third hour will be devoted to group lectures, sophomore "common hours," during which programs useful to each cohort will be presented. These might be expert lectures on the book of the week, or a common field exercise, film, or some other activity.

During the SS semester, courses will encourage out-of-class activities to combine learning and social life, to foster an appreciation of the resources of Hartford and the

region, and to provide life and career skills. But the main focus of the course will be resolutely academic, featuring an intense and difficult reading list, and an ultimate academic goal which will be similar in all seminars: completion of a serious and substantial piece of academic writing. With this looming ahead, much of the seminar will be devoted to the research and writing skills required to sustain a significant research project. Some students will fail. Much of the attention of sophomores will accordingly be directed to this challenge; much of the social bonding of the experience will follow from the shared goal of survival.

To suggest the flavor of the symposia, here are possible readings for a notional core. Ideally, each core would draw from excellent books in several disciplines, with international authorship and historically wide ranging. Each list would be proposed by involved faculty (and, eventually, student graduates of the SS experience). These examples are thus more limited, and 50% shorter, than the kinds of lists we can expect. A few more are listed in the appendix (to follow)

Core theme: TIME AND MEMORY
William James, *Principles of Psychology* (selections)
Proust, *Swann's Way* (Book 1 of *Remembrance of Things Past*)
Borges, *Collected Stories*
Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*
Einstein, *Relativity*
Primo Levi, *Survival at Auschwitz*
Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*

Symposium theme: LOVE
Plato, *Symposium*
Sappho, *Poems*
Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*
Bronte, *Jane Eyre*
Freud, *The Ego and the Id*
Marquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*
Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*

Symposium theme: MADNESS
Euripides, *Bacchae*
Plato, *Pheadrus*
Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
Shakespeare, *King Lear*
Bronte, *Jane Eyre*
Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*
Frith, *Neuropsychology of Schizophrenia*
Laffal, *A Source Document on Schizophrenia* (or other patient transcripts)

Other core themes could include: THE QUEST; SELF; FRIENDSHIP; JAZZ; STORY AND META-STORY; JUSTICE; WAR; NATURE; …

Resources: To implement the Sophomore Symposium program, the College will need to staff and administrate around 30 symposia sections, above and beyond the existing curriculum. Departments will be unable to give up already-committed courses and teaching units, so the College will need to commit to full replacement of courses whose faculty will participate in symposia.   As with the FY program, each department will be expected to contribute a proportionate number of symposia each year. (But, unlike the FY program, existing courses will not be displaced.) Except in special cases, only full time faculty will teach these courses.

Discussion: As discussed in the introduction, this proposal reflects our view that social bonds form through shared challenges. The Fraternity and Sorority pledging process seems to harness this. We seek to exploit that energy in a new direction, in the creation of a social *academic* challenge that will create bonding, solidarity, and loyalty at the same time as it leads to intellectual engagement and excellence. We believe the sophomore year is exactly the right moment to provide intellectual opportunity and challenge in a big way.

Our proposal is also informed by the successful experience with the Tutorial College of the early 2000's. TutColl combined small seminars for sophomores only, a huge reading list from around the world and many disciplines, and "common hour" presentations as its core. Importantly, the TutColl faculty were not experts in much of the reading list. This completely changed the classroom dynamic to one of shared exploration, an experience that was energizing to faculty and students alike. TutColl also generated solidarity and enduring group connections (to this day). Students emerged from TutColl with two years to go on campus. Their energy created numerous clubs and other institutions, many of which (Zeta, the Quirks, and others) continue to this day. Finally, TutColl had a demonstrated positive impact on retention.

We expect similar benefits from the Sophomore Symposium program. Unlike TutColl, however, the SS program will use approximately the same faculty resources to reach all sophomores. FY students who worry about the intellectual life of the campus will have this to look toward. Potential students will see something special about Trinity in its two big general education programs, the FY program and this one – two programs where the social and intellectual worlds meet.

The combined FY and sophomore programs could be the "academic side" of the reform process. The combined FY/SS proposals are both entirely positive and very big. They send the signal of rigor and excitement to present and future students, and to the larger academic world. Because of our collective experience with Tutorial College, we know how to do this.

Appendix F: List of Committee Meetings, Interviews and Correspondence

On-Campus Listening Tour for the Campus Community
All members of the campus community were invited to attend four open meetings, graciously hosted by the following social houses:
- The Fred (Summit Suites East)
- The Mill
- Alpha Delta Phi
- Umoja House

On-Campus Group Meetings
- Student leaders
- Student Forum with Board of Trustees
- Women Students
- Student Leaders of Fraternities and Sororities
- Student Leaders of Social Organizations
- Faculty Forum
- Theme House Committee
- Student Government Association (SGA) Executive Board
- SGA Task Force on Social Policy

Student Organization Questionnaires
Invitations to complete a questionnaire were sent to all fraternities and sororities (both recognized and unrecognized), theme houses, cultural houses and the Student Government Association. The Committee received completed responses from eleven fraternities and sororities, four theme houses, three cultural houses and the Student Government Association.

Discussions with Members of the Administration
- Joseph Barber, Director of Community Service and Civic Engagement
- Christopher Card, Associate Dean of Students
- Amy DeBaun, Director of Campus Life
- Larry Dow, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid
- Sheila Fisher, Associate Academic Dean and Professor of English
- John Fracasso, Vice President for College Advancement
- Rena Fraden, Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs and G. Keith Funston Professor of English and American Studies
- Tom Fusciello, Director of Construction, Design and Capital Projects
- Ron Joyce, Vice President for College Advancement

- Mary Jo Keating, Secretary of the College and Vice President for College Relations
- Margaret Lindsey, Dean of the First-Year Program
- Paul Mutone, Vice President for Finance and Operations, and Treasurer
- Ann Reuman, Associate Dean of Students
- Alan Sauer, Director of Business Operations
- Karla Spurlock-Evans, Dean of Multicultural Affairs

Discussions with Alumni
- Doug Tansill '61, Trustee Chair of The Committee to Review the Role of Fraternities and Sororities at Trinity College, 1991-1992
- Women's Leadership Forum, New York City
- Alumni leadership of Alpha Delta Phi, Psi Upsilon, and St. Anthony Hall

Discussions with Peer Institutions
- Bowdoin College – Dean Tim Foster
- Bucknell University – Trustee/alum/parent
- Hamilton College – Trustee/recent parent/Head of Parent Committee
- Middlebury College – President Ronald Liebowitz
- University of Puget Sound – President Ronald Thomas
- Wesleyan University – President Michael Roth

Discussions with Consultants
- Mark Neustadt, Principal, Neustadt Creative Marketing
- Tecton Architects, Inc.
- Kirchhoff-Consigli Construction Management

Feedback from the Trinity College Community
The Committee received 179 written communications from students, faculty, staff, alumni and parents via email, website submissions and postal mail.

Appendix G: Other Documents

To Reweave the Helices: Trinity's DNA by our Two-Hundredth Birthday
A White Paper Written for the Faculty Retreat
President James F. Jones, Jr.
October 2011
http://www.trincoll.edu/AboutTrinity/offices/president/whitepaper

Creating a Theme House System for Trinity College: A Proposal
Theme House Committee
August 2012
http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/dean/faculty/Documents/Proposal for a Theme House System5.pdf

Appendix H: Proposed Implementation Timeline

2012-2017 (six academic years)

FY2012 - 2013

Board approved recommendations

Construction Begins on Vernon Social

House system structure devised

Final comments sought for Vernon Social Development

Social orgs. begin compliance planning

Social orgs. submit plans for review

Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May

Implementation Committee begins meetings with social organizations

FY Experience planning complete

6 Res. Hall lounges designated for refurbishment

Potential facilities identified for new social house use

FY2013 - 2014

FY Experience launches

First assessment of social houses under new code

Vernon Social opens

Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May

Phase I of Crescent Street Project Opens

Residence Hall lounge refurbishments begin (Fall 2013)

New social houses come on line (Spring 2014)