

## 2006-07 PROGRESS

### CONVERGE ON ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE 8 PRIORITIES AND 121 OBJECTIVES

#### STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1

##### *Make Personal Transformation Our Priority*

- **Launch the MBCA<sup>1</sup>**

All 10 components of the MBCA were successfully launched for the Class of 2010. Their orientation theme, “Perfect 10,” and new MBCA banners around campus helped bring to life the two years of work developing each of the 10 experiences.

The first three elements (Threshold Experience, Personalized Learning Plans and Portfolios, and Personalized Wellness Plans) were initiated during an enhanced orientation and the new MBC 101 course. Of the freshman class, 85 percent created an electronic portfolio and 80 percent completed a wellness assessment that identified physical fitness, nutrition and self care as top priority needs to which programming is responding. The MBC 101 class was evaluated extensively and the results are reflected in a refinement of the RCW course for fall, 2007. MBC 101L for adult students, a notable success, will continue in its original format.

Learning communities for honors students, VWIL, Ida B. Wells, and PEG continued and the new “substance free” initiative housed in Spencer is a popular choice for freshmen. Adult students benefited from the introduction of MBC 101L creating a cohort group and spirit of community for this population.

This year all new students in the RCW received a Student Life advisor who was responsible for MBC 101; this ensured the four-touch advising system to include the academic advisor, RA, and peer advisor as well. Community service and community service learning were the focuses for experiential learning with local and Katrina Relief initiatives continuing to attract student participation. The faculty identified international opportunities to be available and supported by all majors as the first step in creating a global scope in all academic programs. Travel to Korea and India laid the foundation for recruiting students from these countries. The expansion of MBC’s participation in the Fulbright program has provided for faculty travel and brought outstanding scholars to us from Lebanon and India this year along with Claudia Bernardi, our Doenges Scholar.

Two graduate interns helped extend the reach of career services, and classroom visits increased 150 percent along with sharp increases in attendance at senior transitions programs. The Advisory Board of Visitors is aligned with student mentoring and career services, and their October meeting proved to be a lively and synergistic time for interaction with students.

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<sup>1</sup>The 10 experiences of the MBCA include: threshold experience, personalized learning plans and portfolios, personalized wellness plans, network of mentors and partners, active learning communities, practical and experiential learning, distinctive academic major or interdisciplinary focus, international and multicultural experiences, capstone experience, and life and career transition program.

Three activities promoted student-centered services in the RCW: a new and more comprehensive Student Life Web site, the development of an administrative practices section for the Student Handbook, and a redesign of the Community Development Team of student leaders aimed at supporting residence life. In the ADP, increased travel to the regions by the director contributed to improved service delivery.

The second annual Capstone Fair was held and, again, was remarkable in the quality and scope of student work displayed. The participation of the ABV provided a wider audience and support for judging the Capstone entries.

We hold great hope for the continued evolution of the MBCA as the framework to personal transformation.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2

### *Sharpen Our Focus on Academic Excellence*

- **Implement a QEP plan on learning for civic engagement in a global context and its two goals of intercultural competence and social responsibility.**

The development and implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) was an extraordinary college-wide collaboration characterized by internal assessment, intense debate, design and redesign that resulted in consensus and genuine commitment to creating a culture of civic engagement across the college.

Our goal for civic engagement in a global context, adopted by the faculty and broader college community, is “to inspire students to take a more active role in advancing socially responsible initiatives in every setting by:

- Helping them gain knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for such engagement;
- Instilling in students the mental habit of perceiving themselves as dynamic parts of a complex natural, social, and global environment; and
- Enabling students to be activists in their community, nation, and world.”

The plan calls for the establishment of a Center for Civic and Global Engagement. Following SACS endorsement of the QEP several critical steps were taken to advance the plan for the Center. The design for center, to be opened in Wenger, was completed and the Board of Trustees supported its dedication to Dr. Samuel R. Spencer Jr. The Samuel and Ava Spencer Center for Civic and Global Engagement will open in fall, 2007. Two directors for the center (civic engagement and international programs) were hired, and faculty in all disciplines offering majors identified the ways in which their academic programs would be enhanced through civic engagement activities for students. As called for in the QEP, the faculty identified an annual theme to influence college-wide programming in the coming year. That theme for 2007-08 is *Voices*.

- **Advance an aggressive national strategy to enroll applicants of high ability**

Our efforts to enroll high ability students have included scholarship incentives, an enhanced honors program, emphasis on recruiting for the Program for the Exceptionally Gifted (PEG), and faculty involvement in outreach to students with a calculated index (CI, weighing SATs and GPAs) of 85 or higher. We recruit nationally for PEG and for VWIL. While we are above the national average for women, achieving Scenario 1100 will need to be considered in the context of a more comprehensive set of enrollment goals.

Four observations are important:

- 1) Public universities in Virginia are competing aggressively for high ability students with attractive financial incentives not matched by MBC.
- 2) Our priority must be growth to capacity (1000) in the RCW.
- 3) Our advantage is in our signature strengths. We must recruit to a segmented market to obtain the best fit for Mary Baldwin while enrolling to capacity and continuing to improve retention.
- 4) MBC graduates are extraordinary women and men whose education has been transforming. We must continue to focus on access and opportunity keeping normative ability standards in perspective.

As we grow to capacity and recruit to our signature strengths, we will continue to improve the programs that attract top students. As we enter Phase II of the strategic plan, we will balance our aims to grow and to enroll students of high ability. We will remain committed to access and opportunity and will invest in those programs most likely to attract top students not only to the RCW, but to adult and graduate programs as well.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3

### *Unite and Enrich Our Community*

- **Simplify and Clarify Our Structures and Operations**

Mary Baldwin is and remains a relatively flat and lean organization using processes that often are informal and unwritten. This is at times a strength of the institution, but it can contribute to inconsistencies. This year we undertook several initiatives to simplify and clarify our structures and operations.

- 1) Most significant is the consolidation of physical education and intercollegiate athletics into a single organization, a Department of Athletics and Wellness designed to support the priorities of the strategic plan and to meet the demands of the USA South athletic conference. The new department reports to the Dean of the College. The reorganization is complete and the new staff members are in place for 2007-2008.
- 2) New contracts with Aramark and Chartwells have brought new staff and revised procedures to the college in the critical areas of physical plant and dining services.
- 3) The Student Life Office has been simplified to operate in two teams: student engagement and residence life.
- 4) In Institutional Advancement, job responsibilities and administrative procedures have been redefined and the Class Leadership Program provides the capacity for reaching a wider alumnae/i audience.

- **Enhance Our Connections to Alumnae/i and External Constituents**

With the implementation of the Class Leadership Program, including recruitment and training of class leaders, we enhanced our connections with alumnae of the Residential College in particular. Participation in the annual reunion was up significantly to about 400 attendees (350 registered). We hosted small and regional events and 85-90 alumnae/i attended the continuing education weekend. Increased communication with alumnae/i via the web, newsletters, email, and telephone has extended the reach of the Alumnae/i Office.

The transfer articulation agreement with the Virginia Community College System was completed. We also initiated potential new partnerships with the Umbau School of Architecture and with Records of Early English Drama (REED) in concert with the American Shakespeare Center.

This year Mary Baldwin was one of 300 colleges selected for Colleges of Distinction, a publication that reaches prospective students, parents and guidance counselors. Mary Baldwin appeared in a very positive article in *Newsweek* in November and was featured prominently in a story on ESPN. On Animal Planet's *Mascot Madness* Gladys the Squirrel promoted MBC in our continuing effort to reach national audiences.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #4

### *Renew Our Environment*

- **Complete Phase Three of the Campus Master Plan and Make Our Strengths Visible**

We continued our intensive efforts to reduce deferred maintenance on our beautiful campus. Most buildings have received exterior painting and restoration, thanks to Mrs. Smith's gift. The beauty of the campus is again shining brightly.

The third phase of the campus master plan was 75 percent complete, and priorities have been established for proposed facilities projects. With extensive involvement from the faculty, general schematics have been completed for the renovation of the Pearce Science Center and for the creation of an Arts Village in and around Deming. We have completed a

layout for the refurbishment and construction of facilities for wellness and intercollegiate athletics, and the walking trail that surrounds and engages the campus has been planned. Plans for the renovation of the Lyda B. Hunt dining facility include a modern redesigned food service area, elevator access to upper campus, and an addition that extends the facility 10,000 square feet and incorporates internal views of the cupola; it opens onto the campus green, the center of the campus. Wireless internet connections are now campus-wide.

The creation of the Spencer Center for Civic and Global Engagement was initiated by relocating CIS to the library as the first step in enhancing the role of the library as communication and information hub. We completed the design of the center and began construction during the summer of 2007 with the goal of opening October 11, 2007.

A series of banners highlighting the strengths of Mary Baldwin College have been hung throughout the campus in high-traffic areas. The colorful designs recognize our commitments to academic excellence, civic engagement, global awareness, inclusive community, leadership, service, and honor. We hosted public celebrations of the tenth anniversaries of Quest and of the Office of African American and Multicultural Affairs as well as the thirtieth year of the Adult Degree Program.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #5

### *Fund Our Future*

- **Plan for a Comprehensive Campaign**

The first draft of the five-year comprehensive campaign is complete with fundraising goals, solicitation planning, quarterly activities, campaign prospects and assignment of prospect portfolios. The campaign will focus on scholarships, academic programs and facilities, especially enhancements and additions to current facilities. We successfully completed the second year of Mrs. Smith's annual fund challenge, raising \$566,000—exceeding the \$500,000 goal. We received several leadership gifts toward the Smith Challenge as well, and we are on track to complete the entire challenge by June 2008.

- **Continue to Improve Our Financial Chemistry**

Our financial chemistry is improved and stabilized.

- Our Composite Financial Index rose, reflecting the improvement in unrestricted net assets and cash reserves.
- We have achieved balanced budgets for the past two years.
- We have refinanced two portions of our long-term debt with favorable reductions in interest rates.
- Comprehensive financial modeling and accounting systems are now in place.

We escalated the faculty salary improvement plan and provided a salary improvement pool for staff.