

Webb Institute Strategic Plan

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Introduction

This Strategic Plan for Webb Institute was prepared by the Planning Committee and the Administration at the request of the Board of Trustees. It results from work initiated in late 2017 – including extensive surveys, interviews and white papers – and a two-day Retreat of stakeholders and industry/academic experts held on campus in April 2018.

Mission statement

To inspire and educate tomorrow’s leaders in an extraordinary learning community focused on engineering and design in the marine field.

Webb Institute:

- Provides a rigorous education in the principles of engineering and the fundamentals of naval architecture, marine engineering, shipbuilding and related marine technologies;
- Develops skills that will enable graduates to become leaders in, and make significant contributions to, their chosen profession and the wider community;
- Instills in graduates the highest ethical standards and sense of professionalism;
- Cultivates curiosity in the arts, sciences and humanities, and provides the background and encouragement necessary to support lifelong learning; and
- Perpetuates the values of William H. Webb.

Goals and objectives

This plan encompasses goals in seven areas:

1. Academic program
2. Faculty and staff
3. Community
4. Student recruitment
5. Recognition
6. Infrastructure
7. Resources

A set of objectives is defined under each goal. These objectives are intended to denote areas for special attention, greater priority or new directions.

1. Academic Program

Goal: Practice continuous improvement with Webb's academic program, curriculum, course content, and teaching approaches, so they evolve to maximize student learning, faculty development and Webb's relevance to society.

The educational and experiential programs at Webb are intended to create a vibrant learning environment for students, increase their ability to address large unstructured problems, create an exciting experience and instill a lifelong love of learning, innovation and teamwork.

Objectives:

- A) Emphasize concepts and disciplines critical to the success of future marine systems, recognizing the rapid changes in technology, environmental challenges and the global economy.
- B) Restructure and consolidate existing course material to strengthen the program while maintaining reasonable workload expectations for students.
- C) Ensure that faculty have ready access to new pedagogies and best practices.
- D) Provide incentives for faculty to develop innovative approaches and share their experiences with others.
- E) Encourage faculty to continually develop new material and experiences.
- F) Explore new partnerships that provide students with the opportunity to customize and enhance their academic experience.

2. Faculty and Staff

Goal: Develop an environment and strategy that enable Webb to recruit and retain outstanding faculty and staff talent.

Webb will do more to attract, retain and develop its faculty and staff. Teaching and mentoring of students is central to the mission. Competition is fierce for the most talented resources. Ensuring the

best learning experience for students requires holistically addressing the conditions that make the Institute an attractive venue for the best professors and staff.

Objectives:

- A) Establish a recruitment strategy aimed at bringing a diverse group of energetic, progressive, highly-qualified professors and staff to Webb.
- B) Ensure that compensation and benefits packages are competitive.
- C) Establish support systems and professional development opportunities.
- D) Recognize faculty and staff who receive distinguished awards, publish their work or take on leadership positions in professional organizations that enhance Webb's value.
- E) Encourage faculty to perform leading-edge research and industry projects, including collaboration with students.

3. Community

Goal: Foster a healthy, enjoyable educational environment for students that promotes respect, community spirit, curiosity and a passion for learning throughout the rigorous Webb experience.

To increase retention and produce graduates who can make a difference in their profession and community, we will work to promote self-development through responsibility, support each student's professional and personal passions/commitments, challenge and expand thinking, foster a caring community and ensure a safe and supportive environment.

Objectives:

- A) Foster a healthy and balanced student life through activities including athletics, professional involvement, community service and the arts.
- B) Offer programs and policy to proactively support the health, safety and well-being of students, providing the foundation for students to manage their physical and emotional needs responsibly.
- C) Reinforce the strong moral and ethical awareness of Webb students, and the principles of Webb's Honor Code, so that the college is regarded as a model of inclusivity, respect, and integrity.
- D) Develop programs that further raise the cultural awareness of the student body, faculty and staff, and provide support for the different needs of a diverse student body.
- E) Encourage collaboration among students, faculty, staff, and alumni to further strengthen the bonds within the Webb family.
- F) Establish a strategy for student leadership development.

4. Student Recruitment

Goal: Develop a comprehensive student recruitment program to ensure a highly-qualified, diverse student body in future years.

Objectives:

- A) Double the size of the pool of qualified applicants over the next five years, to enhance selectivity and choice in shaping each incoming class.
- B) Develop a marketing plan and build pipelines to high schools including those with under-represented populations.
- C) Meet the demonstrated financial need of every student, in keeping with William Webb's goal of serving students with limited resources.

5. Recognition

Goal: Enhance the awareness and reputation of Webb.

Objectives:

- A) Develop a marketing strategy and capability to address key stakeholders, including prospective students, the global marine industry and the general public.
- B) Enhance Webb's reputation among peer schools and with ranking agencies, to better reflect our outstanding educational experience.
- C) Continue to build upon the coalition of trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends of Webb to promote the college.

6. Infrastructure

Goal: Ensure that the physical infrastructure meets Webb's current and future needs.

Objectives:

- A) Execute the approved infrastructure plan with minimal disruption to programs and student life.
- B) Rebuild the information technology infrastructure.
- C) Develop a 10-year infrastructure plan, including construction, maintenance, safety and security.

7. Resources

Goal: Expand Webb's resources to support the objectives in this plan and a financially sustainable future.

Objectives:

- A) Develop a long-term fundraising strategy and plan to achieve a sustainable draw rate.

- B) Continue to build on our achievements during the Campaign for Webb, including a focus on foundations and other external entities as well as maintaining the momentum in annual and planned giving during coming years.
- C) Ensure that adequate financial and human resources are allocated to the objectives in this plan.
- D) Strengthen current programs designed to recognize and manage institutional risk.
- E) Strengthen the Trustee recruitment plan to support the goals of this plan, including consideration of diversity.

Background

This plan is the fourth in a series based on strategic reflections that have occurred at roughly five-year intervals since 2001. The previous plan was adopted by the Board in May 2013. Key objectives were to:

- Continue to provide an excellent engineering education
- Enhance outreach and communications
- Refine the Webb experience to align with evolving demand
- Provide the best physical and teaching resources for a modestly-expanded student body
- Ensure financial sustainability

Two major decisions were taken in the past several years that set the stage for this new plan:

- **Enrollment:** First-year class capped at 28 students, yielding a total enrollment of about 105 to 110 students. This number represents a significant increase from levels in the 75 to 80 student range that were common during the last decades of the 20th century.
- **Facilities:** Construction was authorized and is underway on a new building (the Couch Family Academic Center), designed to house modern lecture and design spaces for each class, as well as offices for professors, staff, and a computer lab. In tandem, renovation was approved to upgrade Stevenson Taylor Hall systems and modify existing classrooms as student dorm rooms.

These key decisions, as well as reflection on the relative progress during the preceding plan period, have provided context for the deliberations around the new plan.

The current state of Webb is strong, as evidenced in surveys of stakeholders and discussions with leaders within and beyond the Webb community, conducted in 2018. Webb is viewed as the strongest and most rigorous undergraduate program in naval architecture and marine engineering in the United States. Its curriculum is well-respected in the marine industry and the winter work term is seen as a positive and practical part of each student's development. The faculty is well-respected and well-liked. The collaborative environment at Webb continues to be highly valued by students and alumni. And the traditional hallmarks of Webb graduates – strong work ethic, teamwork, technical competence and practical experience – remain intact and contribute to a continued 100% job placement record. Alumni participation in annual giving is the highest of any college in the country and the Campaign for Webb has raised record sums to support critical infrastructure and programs.

Discussions at the Retreat, and in the ensuing months, have centered around how to make Webb even stronger. Many of these conversations have revolved around attracting and retaining high-quality students, professors and staff; greater development of the whole student, including responding to students' individual interests and building an expectation of future leadership; ensuring innovative learning methods and leading-edge content in marine systems; fostering creativity and collaboration across the Webb community; and building on recent successes to ensure the college's future financial sustainability.

The planning process followed to drive the current document was robust, including:

- **Surveys** of Webb alumni, faculty, students and parents. High participation rates were achieved and valuable insights were gained from these stakeholder groups.
- **Interviews** of industry leaders, engineering academics, students, faculty and alumni.
- **Working papers** on topics ranging from engineering leadership to the future of the marine industry, development of the Webb brand, Webb admissions and future education at Webb.
- A **preparation workshop** was held by the Planning Committee in February 2018.
- A **strategic planning retreat**, with more than 50 participants, in late April 2018: Students, faculty, administration, alumni, Board members and other industry and academic leaders.
- **Discussion and review** of the current document with key stakeholder groups in fall 2018 and spring 2019, prior to presentation to the Board for approval in May 2019.

A separate **implementation plan** is being prepared by the Administration to translate this strategic plan into a set of specific initiatives, with timing, resource needs and performance metrics.

For further reference:

1. *Webb Institute Strategic Plan*, by Planning Committee of the Webb Institute Board of Trustees, May 14, 2013. Adopted by the Board on May 17, 2013 and amended by the Board most recently on May 14, 2015.
2. *Assessment of Current Strategic Plan Implementation*, by Planning Committee of the Webb Institute Board of Trustees, dated May 15, 2017.
3. *Strategic Planning Retreat Materials*, April 21-22, 2018.