*Case for Support*

**Our Mission**

The mission of Goddard College is to advance cultures of rigorous inquiry, collaboration, and lifelong learning, where individuals take imaginative and responsible action in the world. We offer a compelling alternative to the traditional college model – a learner-driven, low-residency, experiential education that serves a post-traditional student base, and that is more affordable and accessible than almost any other college of our caliber.

**Our Contribution**

Founded in 1938 on the belief that student voice and choice should be at the center of education, Goddard College was one of the first colleges in the country to allow students to entirely direct and design their own course of study. Our learner-centered model empowers students to create an education experience that is deeply personal, transformative and relevant.

Our students are people of all ages who seek to address change in the world while undertaking their studies. Goddard has a long tradition of serving post-traditional learners – from single-parent learners, to first-generation college students, to creatives who combine multiple disciplines in their fields. The College’s acclaimed low-residency model provides the flexibility and cost-effectiveness to best serve these students, making their education relevant and accessible.

Goddard College has been a historic leader of progressive education in the US, pioneering many new models of higher education on the frontlines of academic experimentation and innovation. Goddard was the national pioneer of the first Low-Residency Program in 1963, the Design Build Program in 1969, and the Single Parent Program in 1986. In addition, Goddard offered many experimental academic initiatives and partnerships, such as the Goddard-Cambridge Program for Social Change and the Institute for Social Ecology.

Goddard has as rich legacy of producing some of the finest artists, activists, social entrepreneurs, leaders, educators, and academic minds that have shaped the culture of the 20th and 21st Century, including author and director David Mamet, jazz musician Archie Shepp, former White House correspondent Ellen Ratner, and Olympian and activist Tommie Smith, to name just a few. Our alumni are champions for deep, equitable social and environmental change.

**Our Challenge**

As a largely tuition dependent institution without cash reserves or a significant endowment for most of its history, Goddard is vulnerable to enrollment fluctuations. The national declining enrollment trends for many small colleges – especially in New England – has hit the College very hard.

In October of 2018, the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) placed Goddard College’s accreditation on probation for concerns over governance and finance. We have until July 19, 2020 to showcase our ability to bring the College into financial stability and meet all of the NECHE standards. This probationary status increased the challenge of the College’s ability to recruit and retain students and donors. The COVID-19 pandemic has also increased the risks for Goddard College, making admissions and fundraising more difficult as potential students and donors are impacted financially, and creating a greater need for cash reserves to weather the economic impacts of this crisis.

**Our Growth**

Since being appointed President in November 2018, Dr. Bernard Bull has implemented a plan to build a solid financial foundation for the College by reducing expenses, increasing cash reserves and growing the endowment. The goal of financial stability is paramount to the College’s success and significant gains have been made over the past year to stabilize the institution and position it for growth.

Some of the significant achievements toward financial and institutional stability include:

* Successfully avoided a projected deficit of $1.4 million dollars in fiscal year 2019, through spending restrictions and an unprecedented community fundraising effort.

* Significantly reduced expenses, as well as staff and faculty positions, to better align with our smaller enrollment and revenue.

* A record fundraising year in FY2019, more than doubling the funds raised in any other year over the past decade, and an outpouring of support from the Goddard community.

* Our annual financial audit lifted the “going concern” that had been declared since 2016

* Launched a board approved 5-year strategic plan to align spending with revenue, increase oversight, plan upon the most conservative enrollment projections, and build cash reserves equal to 3 and 6 months of the annual budget.

These efforts have made a significant difference and the plan forward is a sustainable one. Currently, the College is operating within a balanced budget and the endowment totals $1.5 million. However, at this level the endowment cannot significantly support annual operations, and the college is without any cash reserves to cushion the College from the risks associated with future enrollment fluctuations and unforeseen expenses. For this reason, we are seeking to secure additional resources from our alumni, partners, and friends of the College.

**Our Plan**

The immediate goal is to build the financial stability that will allow Goddard to thrive, rather than a rapid increase in enrollment. Therefore, our present focus is upon financial stability at our current enrollment of approximately 350 students. That will build a foundation upon which we will launch a collection of new and promising programs and academic innovations.

At an enrollment of 350 students, Goddard College can operate on a $7.4 million budget. Our best chance to demonstrate financial stability to the accreditors is to build a cash reserve that is equal to 6 months of our operating budget, or $4 million. It is critical that we raise a minimum of $4 million prior to NECHE’s April, 20 2020 visit. The more cash reserves that we build by that time, the better our chances of being financially viable, maintaining accreditation, and saving Goddard College.

Once the necessary 6-months of cash reserves have been built, additional funds will be used to grow the endowment, with a multi-year goal of building an endowment of $15 million (based upon 2 times the annual budget for a student body of ~350).

**Our Future**

We continue to be inspired by the compelling purpose and mission of Goddard College in the world, and by the community of students, alumni and friends who are moving us forward.

With a long and inspiring history, and a strategic vision for the future, Goddard is positioned to provide an education that equips students to be imaginative and active agents of change. Our programs must have financial support, our scholarship fund needs to stay robust, and our infrastructure must be maintained.

**We believe that our most significant and high-impact advances in experimental education can and will be in the future, with your help.**

This campaign will allow Goddard to transcend the current challenges facing higher education and realize a future for the College as a thriving and financially durable institution with new and revitalized academic innovations and experiments, collaborative partnerships with like-minded institutions, and a vibrant campus community with new and diverse learning opportunities.

In conjunction with these new initiatives, Goddard will increase its collective work towards building a more diverse, responsive, and equitable culture; and to expand educational access through increased scholarship funding and student aid - values that are essential to Goddard’s mission.

We invite you to participate in the next phase of Goddard College. Your involvement will determine whether Goddard’s crucial role in higher education will survive and thrive. The funds that we raise from now until April are an expression of our shared belief in the importance of this deeply human and empowering approach to education. We must be bold and act quickly to build a foundation that will not only address the present situation, but will provide a place of strength and mission-minded educational innovation for years to come.

**Our Stance on Systemic Racism**

We send our heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless other victims of systemic racism. Their deaths painfully remind us of the institutionalized devaluing and dehumanizing of Black Americans.

As an historically white institution committed to social justice, we have much work to do. These recent events have deepened our resolve to address racism, work beginning within our own community. We cannot remain silent amid acts of racism, injustice, brutality, and violence. We will seek to further embrace anti-racism. We will work together toward the first priority in our strategic plan; a diverse, equitable and responsive culture. We must extend our efforts to make Goddard College a place of compassion, equity, and justice; and we will deepen our commitment to making it a learning community where there is no place for racism.

Goddard College is now launching a Race and Social Justice Memorial Scholarship Fund, in memory of those who have lost their lives to police brutality, to increase the number of students entering Goddard seeking to focus on anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are also in the early stages of establishing a Race, Social Justice and Inclusion Center, to support the scholarship, academic study, and discourse on and raise awareness about these vital topics in the Goddard College community and also the wider Vermont and higher education communities.

**Our Response to COVID-19**

Goddard College is committed to the health and safety of its students, and employees; and to playing an active role in responding to COVID-19 in the larger community and beyond. On March 20th we made the decision to move the last residency of the spring 2020 semester to a virtual format and to have all non-essential employees work from home.

Given our distinctive low-residency academic model, most of the Goddard College students and faculty are actively engaged in their academic work from home. We have also made the decision to move our Fall residencies to a virtual format. In many ways Goddard is well situated to respond to a crisis like this, our low-residency and individualized curriculum model already enabled our students to pursue their studies from their own home and to adapt their curriculum to fit their lives. Goddard is incurring much less unforeseen overhead costs and losses than traditional residential colleges are at this time.

The College is still vulnerable to low enrollment at this time, however. While COVID-19 will certainly influence enrollment, we are now able to announce the flexibility of reduced cost associated with virtual fall residencies. We had a drop in inquiries over the last month, but even with that, the volume of interest exceeds that which occurred during the same month in 2018 and 2019. In addition, the latest report from admissions is that our overall volume of inquiries and applications is on track to meet our fall enrollment goals.

Goddard College was recently approached by the State of Vermont to use Goddard’s Greatwood campus as a housing facility for vulnerable families and children who are in recovery from COVID-19. While this plan progressed, so did the efforts of Vermonters to contain the transmission of the virus. The State ultimately determined that the extra capacity recovery sit was not needed, but the College’s cooperation and quick response to the request demonstrated our commitment to our civic duty and contributing to the emergency response. “We were open to helping in this time of crisis, however we could,” Goddard President Bernard Bull said. “If the state doesn’t need the space, I’m hopeful that’s a good sign for where the pandemic is going.”

In addition to fundraising, Goddard will be actively seeking and pursuing foundations, individuals, and grants that offer assistance for organizations impacted by COVID-19. Goddard was approved to participate in the Small Business Administration Payroll Protection Plan made possible by the Cares Act, and is pursuing other funding sources related to this Act and related programs on the state and federal level.

To support our #Together4Goddard campaign, please go to <https://www.goddard.edu/alumni/giving/>

For additional information, please contact Mary Willems, Associate Director of Development

at (802) 322-1724 or mary.willems@goddard.edu