



New College of Florida

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bob Johnson
Chairman

January 4, 2003

John M. Cranor, III
Vice Chairman

Mr. James Horne
Secretary of Education
Florida Board of Education
Turlington Building
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Robert N. Allen

Robert G. Blalock

Rev. Jerome Dupree, D.D.

Lt. Gen. Rolland V. Heiser

Dear Secretary Horne:

Andrew Blair Hossack

Margaret D. Lowman, Ph.D.

Kenneth R. Misemer

Col. Walter L. "Mickey" Presha

Vicki Pearthree Raeburn, Ph.D.

Alexis A. Simendinger

Jane T. Smiley

I write to inform you of the recommendation of the New College of Florida Board of Trustees on the presidential selection process. At a meeting held today, January 4, 2003, the Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Presidential Search Committee to select Gordon E. Michalson, Jr. as its choice for President of New College of Florida for reference to the Chancellor and for ratification by the Florida Board of Education consistent with the provisions of s. 229.0081(2)(d), Florida Statutes.

The Presidential Search Committee was appointed by me on September 29, 2001, in my capacity as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and approved by the Board on that date. New College Trustee Rolland V. Heiser was named Chairman of the Search Committee, which consisted of 33 members. The Committee held 13 meetings during a 14-month period. On January 5, 2002, the New College Board of Trustees approved the selection of A. T. Kearney, executive search firm, to provide assistance throughout the presidential search process. Initially, 153 individuals expressed interest in the position; 59 completed applications were received. The Search Committee identified 23 candidates for further study and, on August 16, 2002, reduced the list to 14 and added six new names, to yield a total of 20 candidates for further consideration. On September 11, 2002 the Committee reduced the list of candidates to five. On November 8, 2002, the list was reduced to four when one of the candidates, John Cranor, Trustee of the College, withdrew his name from consideration.

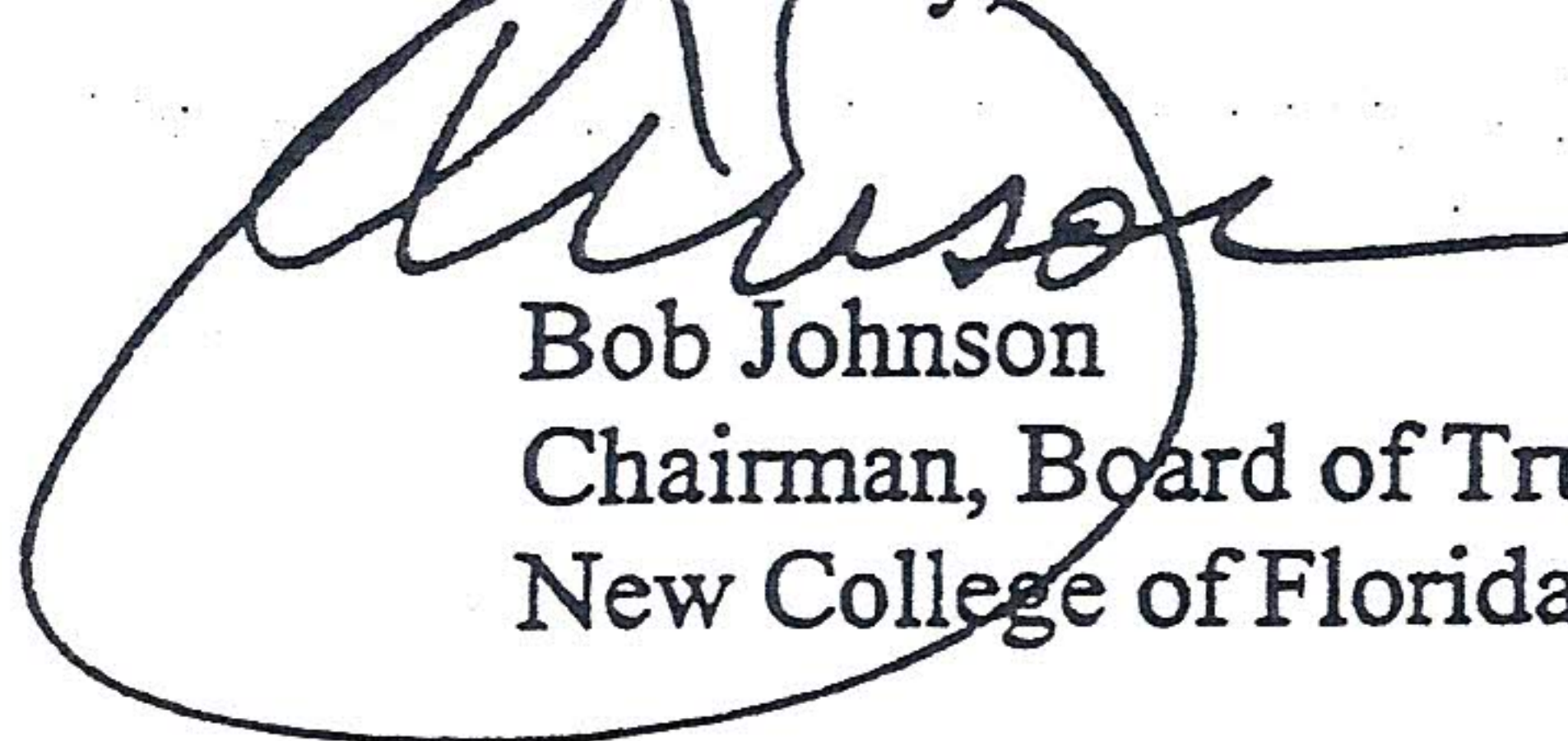
The four finalists were: Alan Dillingham, Professor of Economics and former Provost at St. Mary's College of Maryland; Marvin Henberg, Professor of Philosophy and Vice President for

Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Linfield College; Gordon E. Michalson, Jr., Professor of Humanities and President, New College of Florida; and Axel Steuer, Professor of Religion and former President of Gustavus Adolphus College. These final candidates were asked to respond in writing to nine questions prepared by the Search Committee and they were each interviewed on campus (two-day process for each) during December 3-13, 2002. At its meeting on December 17, 2002, the Presidential Search Committee voted unanimously (29/0) to recommend that Dr. Michalson be selected as the President of New College of Florida and to refer the names of Alan Dillingham and Gordon E. Michalson, Jr., to the NCF Board of Trustees.

As stated above, on January 4, 2003, the New College of Florida Board of Trustees voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Presidential Search Committee to select Gordon E. Michalson, Jr. as its choice for President of New College of Florida for reference to the Chancellor and for ratification by the Florida Board of Education consistent with the provisions of s. 229.0081(2)(d), Florida Statutes. Dr. Michalson's curriculum vitae and his responses to the nine questions posed by the Presidential Search Committee are enclosed.

In the event that you need to contact me during the week of January 6, 2003, I may be reached via cell phone (941-350-5384) in Miami, where I'll be attending a weeklong Estate and Tax Institute.

Sincerely,



Bob Johnson
Chairman, Board of Trustees
New College of Florida

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Phil Handy, Chair, Florida Board of Education
Dr. Carl Blackwell, Interim Chancellor, Division of Colleges and Universities
General Rolland V. Heiser, Chair, NCF Presidential Search Committee and Member, Florida Board of Governors

CURRICULUM VITAE

Gordon E. Michalson, Jr.
Office of the President
New College of Florida
5700 North Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, Florida 34243-2197
Phone: (941) 359-4310
FAX: (941) 359-4479
Email: michalson@ncf.edu

EDUCATION

Ph.D., "With Distinction," Princeton University (Philosophy of Religion), 1976
Rel.M., Claremont School of Theology (Philosophy of Religion/Theology), 1972
B.A., *Magna cum Laude*, Yale University (History), 1970

EMPLOYMENT

President, New College of Florida, October, 2001---
Acting President, New College of Florida, July, 2001-September, 2001
Visiting Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University, Spring, 2001
Professor of Humanities, New College of the University of South Florida/New College
of Florida, 1992-present
Dean and Warden, New College of USF, 1992-97
From Assistant Professor to Professor, Department of Religion, Oberlin College, 1977-92 (Department
Chair, 1989-92)
From Instructor to Assistant Professor, Department of Religion, Davidson College, 1975-77
Teaching Assistant, Department of Religion, Princeton University, 1974-75

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

American Consulting Editor, THE BLACKWELL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MODERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT
(1991-93)
Director, Danenberg Oberlin-in-London Program, 1987-88, 1989-92
Advisory Council, Department of Religion, Princeton University, 1988-2000; Chair, 1995-97
Board of Trustees, Shansi Memorial Association, 1988-1992
Oberlin College Board of Trustees Educational Programs and Policies Committee, 1987-1992
Visiting Senior Member, Linacre College, University of Oxford, Trinity Term, 1989
National Endowment for the Humanities (N.E.H.) Distinguished Scholar, Bucknell University, 1985
Visiting Fellow, Department of Religious Studies, Yale University, 1984-85
Visiting Fellow, Department of Religion, Princeton University, 1980-81

- "Moral Regeneration and Divine Aid in Kant," RELIGIOUS STUDIES 25 (1989).
- "The Response to Lindbeck," MODERN THEOLOGY 4 (1988).
- "The Inscrutability of Moral Evil in Kant," THE THOMIST 51 (1987).
- "The Non-Moral Element in Kant's Moral Proof of the Existence of God," SCOTTISH JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY 39 (1986).
- "Faith and History: The Shape of the Problem," MODERN THEOLOGY 1 (1985).
- "Theology, Historical Knowledge, and the Contingency-Necessity Distinction," INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION 14 (1983).
- "Pannenberg on the Resurrection and Historical Method," SCOTTISH JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY 33 (1980).
- "Lessing, Kierkegaard, and the 'Ugly Ditch': A Re-examination," JOURNAL OF RELIGION 59 (1979).
- "The Role of History in Kant's Religious Thought," ANGLICAN THEOLOGICAL REVIEW 59 (1977).
- "The Impossibility of Religious Progress in Kant," in PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION AND THEOLOGY: 1976, ed. P. Slater (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976).
- "Bultmann's Metaphysical Dualism," RELIGION IN LIFE 44 (1975).

Michalson's Response to Search Committee Questions

1. What are fund raising opportunities for New College?

New College's independence has created fresh new opportunities for successful fund raising. The unfortunate nexus of events that so closely followed our independence—such as the economic downturn and, especially, the terrorist attacks and their aftermath—have understandably kept us from capitalizing on these opportunities to the fullest extent. Yet I have no doubt that the appointment of a permanent President can be exploited by College and Foundation officials to pursue aggressive new efforts in the areas of annual giving, major gifts, planned giving, and corporate and external foundation support.

For example, our independence could be the basis for a direct appeal to all New College Foundation Associates (\$1,000 or more annual giving level) to double their next pledge. The appointment of a permanent President could also be the occasion for the creation of something such as a "President's Circle," to include annual donors of, say, \$25,000 or more. Obviously, the recently improved coordination among the Foundation, the NCLA, and the Alumnae/i Association should be exploited to increase annual giving.

With independence, particular efforts should be made to reaffirm and celebrate those things that make New College special, beginning with the people who have helped us reach this moment. This message can be a very appealing basis for soliciting major gifts. For example, while we have benefited from the gift of Jane Cook's home, I believe her family and friends would be prepared to create an endowed professorship in her name in a field reflecting her interests, such as environmental studies/science. Since it is clear that the Foundation is a major reason for New College's current success, it will surely be appropriate at some future date to appeal to Gen. Heiser's many friends and admirers to create a special endowment in his name—perhaps a professorship, or perhaps an endowment for a "Heiser Scholars" fund that would underwrite scholarships specifically for National Merit Scholars who combine academic attainment with clear evidence of public service, in honor of Gen. Heiser's own career achievements. We also have several attractive naming opportunities that could leverage major gifts, such as the naming of the sculpture building—which could create a generous endowment to underwrite annual enhancements in the arts, performance, and humanities. With a new residence hall and social sciences building both on the Master Plan, additional naming opportunities are in the immediate future.

With the anticipated expansion of the Foundation staff, we will have the expertise to develop new planned giving programs that would be potentially appealing to donors of all ages. In time, we can develop sophisticated ways of determining giving capacities of parents of current and former students, as I believe this is a major resource that deserves further cultivation. Finally, as the college official who, during the early 1990's, encouraged the creation of an active grants office, I am committed to the work of this office as the basis of an increasingly national fund raising strategy. The permanent President will need to establish personal relationships with the leaders of major granting organizations, while we simultaneously continue to identify grant opportunities that most closely match our

institutional strengths and aspirations. Much of this work will simply involve "getting the word out" about who we are and why we are deserving of support.

2. What is the vision for New College in the next ten years? (Vision for seeing that NCF is regarded widely as one of the finest and most innovative residential liberal arts colleges in the country.)

I would disagree with the premise that the College's culture of innovative self-confidence "suffered" during the years of association with USF. Rather, I would say that the College felt besieged during this period, always wary that a single bureaucratic template would be imposed upon us that would eliminate our distinctiveness. In my view, this situation in fact increased the College's self-confidence by sustaining an ever-sharper sense of identity and of the importance of New College's mission. Throughout the USF years, we were always tremendously well served by the fact that, at New College (as opposed, perhaps, to the rest of the University), we knew what we were doing, we understood why we were doing it, and we could indicate demonstrable success through clear data.

So I'm more inclined to view the future in terms of the necessary transition from feeling besieged and marginalized to viewing ourselves in a true leadership role in the national conversation about the value of small liberal arts colleges. We should continue to exploit the arresting tension between viewing ourselves as an "honors" college (the predominant faculty viewpoint) and thinking of ourselves as an "experimental" college (the preferred student viewpoint). This is not a tension that should ever be eliminated—rather, it should be continually embraced, both in order to keep in balance these equally valuable tendencies, and in order to provide a ready source of institutional renewal and strengthening.

We have rightly made self-conscious efforts to link New College to other institutions that aspire to provide special undergraduate educational environments (COPLAC, CIEL). Within the limits of our resources, we should continue these and similar efforts to increase our national presence and offset some of the isolation we experience by virtue of size and location. Simultaneously, the entire campus community needs to think in fresh terms about how we might strengthen what we already do.

For example, current efforts to think about curriculum development should be driven by the broadest sense of our liberal arts mission rather than by sclerotic aversion to change. Among other things, this means re-thinking our three division structure—for the simple reason that worthwhile curricular enhancements never find a true advocate within any of our current divisions (which is a way of saying our current structure keeps us from doing some things we should be doing). With respect to the faculty, in particular, I believe a strong program of faculty professional development is required if there is to be true openness to change, since change is typically more threatening to those without the broader professional perspective of a research program and connections to the wider world through one's own discipline.

My "vision," then, is of a college that is true to its mission, increasingly visible within the national conversation about liberal arts education, and—precisely by

virtue of its self-confidence—capable of questioning and altering even its most cherished methods of fulfilling its mission.

3. How would you communicate the New College message to the Legislature, Governor, and soon-to-be established Board of Governors?

If, as expected, the new Board of Governors continues Gov. Bush's plan to devolve most institutional authority to the local boards, its chief remaining responsibility will be to avoid wasteful duplication of programs and to encourage each member institution to emphasize its particular strengths. This situation can only help New College in the years ahead. For example, there is already speculation that some members of the state system will be encouraged to broaden access (i.e., grow), while other members will be under less pressure to grow and be encouraged instead to build national-level quality. Regarding this latter option, the two schools mentioned are the U. of Florida and New College—just where we want to be in the statewide conversation.

During the last year-and-a-half, our message within the state's political culture has been that the state of Florida is reaping tremendous benefits through New College for a very small investment—in fact, less than one-half of one percent of the total budget for the state university system. Our prominence in national guides and ratings brings a measure of academic attainment to the system, to supplement the state's more traditional visibility in the form of football prowess. As the only Florida institution to which many of our Florida-based students apply, we obviously keep students in state who would otherwise leave—while simultaneously bringing bright out-of-state students here, many of whom settle permanently in Florida or else come back to Florida after living elsewhere following graduation. The impressive career achievements of our graduates serve as living proof that our institutional rhetoric has substance—a message that I've often driven home by informing legislators which members of the legislative staff are New College graduates.

This message has been very well received, and I am confident that everyone from Gov. Bush on down is eager to see New College thrive. Along with Board members, our lobbyists, and certain alums, I have encouraged our political leaders to take ownership of the positive news about the College and to share in the credit for bringing the school to independent status. This effort naturally involves ongoing, face-to-face cultivation of our elected officials and of legislative staffers. With term limits, this latter group has become increasingly important.

The beauty of our message is that a genuine "fair share" of state funds for New College is an absurdly small amount, given the tremendous return the state receives. The message becomes even more appealing when we point out how generously the state funding is supplemented by the private funds provided by the Foundation. The end result is a model of a well-managed, public/private partnership focusing on full-time undergraduate education and taught in small classes by full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty rather than by graduate teaching assistants—a message whose appeal naturally transcends all party lines and political differences.

4. How would you raise the profile of New College in the local community?

While I personally would not view the relations with other area institutions in terms of a "race," I appreciate the underlying point about institutional profile within the local setting. I am naturally frustrated whenever I encounter people in our immediate area who know little or nothing about New College. Once again, I am confident that our clarity of purpose is our best resource for addressing this issue, as it would do no good to respond to the "local profile" problem by trying to be all things to all people.

It's worth pointing out that a small liberal arts college—especially one with no varsity sports programs—is a difficult thing for many people to understand, even when such a place is right in their midst. Moreover, until recently, New College's capacity for an active public affairs effort was subordinated to the efforts of USF, a situation that produced both a mixed and a muted message. While we have benefited over time from the publicity efforts of the New College Foundation, we are only now developing our own independent office of public affairs, within a context of inadequate staffing and funding.

Within these limitations, the College must obviously continue to cultivate the kind of press coverage and feature stories that convey the substantive educational activities characterizing campus life. I think considerable progress in this area has been made, especially in connection with student involvements. We should also continue with current efforts to promote op-ed pieces by faculty and trustees, so that people in our area will associate New College with thoughtful reflection on contemporary issues.

As we build our administrative capacity to support academic conferences on campus, we should continue to host such events as a means of raising our local profile. To the extent possible, we should design such conferences with a view to including members of other area educational and cultural institutions, both as a community service, but also as the basis for genuine partnership opportunities on an ongoing basis. In addition to USF and FSU, our good neighbors at the Ringling School and Mote all have interests and aspirations that converge with our own. The Sarasota community responds warmly to efforts at institutional cooperation.

Finally, it goes without saying that a large part of the President's own responsibility is to be a visible presence in the community and to cultivate the sorts of speaking and moderating engagements that pepper the normal work month—at civic and government organizations, community groups, SILL, the Reading Festival, and alumni associations. These natural opportunities to spread our message are increasingly enhanced by the availability of brief and easily digested publications, such as our "Fast Facts" booklet. Since my days as Dean and Warden, I have been struck by how eager this community is for substantive exchanges on matters of lasting concern—perhaps as an antidote to the steady diet of more superficial activities that characterize friend-and-fund raising events in our community. In the long term, the College benefits from having its leader viewed as a reflective person grounded in strong educational values, rather than simply as someone always making the rounds in Sarasota.

5. Given its unique governance structure and tradition, why would I be a successful leader for New College?

As a matter of fact, while our situation may have some unusual features, it is not at all unusual for a small liberal arts college to have "constituency" issues and, to an extent, competing points of view concerning the best way to pursue the school's mission. The key is to have the underlying confidence that all parties, however different, ultimately want what is best for the College.

The President should be someone who can genuinely appreciate these competing points of view, make creative use of them, and establish positive avenues of communication across campus constituencies. I suspect that one reason I suddenly found myself the interim President of New College is that more than a few people believed I had the skills and personal characteristics needed to achieve these things. I also genuinely like New College and what it stands for, and I think people sense this—so that, even when they may disagree with me, they appreciate that I'm not about to sell the school's soul.

Indeed, to the extent that the President has his own strong views on matters of policy and strategic direction, he must devise ways to introduce these views into the conversation in a manner that is clear but not coercive. The ultimate point of good communication across campus constituencies is to insure that, when important decisions are made, all of those affected will feel as though their views were heard, even if the result is not their preferred one. Good leadership emerges out of the sense of trust that this approach naturally breeds. I hope I engender this sort of trust in those around me.

I might add that, whatever my professional and personal liabilities may be, my professional strengths are surely the College's strengths—which is to say, a strong academic core and a love of the liberal arts ideal. As a result, I trust that I create confidence across all of our constituencies that, whenever I speak on behalf of the College, I convey a genuine sense of who and what we are. I think my capacity to generate this sense of confidence among all campus groups is the most likely key to any success I have in dealing with the campus structure problem.

I might add that the question does not refer to alumnae/i, but I can assure you that New College alums bring their own important and rewarding (if sometimes challenging!) voice into this conversational mix involving the campus structure.

6. Given small size and tight budgets, how would I enrich the academic program?

While I certainly acknowledge that teaching comes first in our faculty's professional self-understanding, I'm convinced that strong teaching depends heavily upon ongoing research in order to remain vital for the long term. This is one reason why I put so much emphasis on faculty professional development.

With the anticipated growth of the faculty, we are already confronting the trade-off's implicit in the choice between increasing curricular *depth* in fields we already teach, and bringing greater *breadth* to the curriculum through the addition of new areas of study, such as earth sciences and Japanese language. There is no single

“right” way to go in these matters, and I am confident that the faculty on its own will refine existing procedures for making wise decisions based on free-ranging debate.

Some of my own views have been no secret. For example, I think that the proposed notion of “enriching the academic program” is intimately connected with bringing greater racial and cultural diversity to the faculty. Two years ago I proposed the idea of giving a privileged status to suggested additions to the faculty that have a strong likelihood of generating a culturally and racially diverse applicant pool. This can simply take the form of including certain sub-fields known to attract a diverse applicant pool when hiring a replacement for an existing position—for example, indicating a preference for strength in African American history when replacing a Professor of American History.

In addition, I have been concerned for some time that certain valuable interdisciplinary fields end up as “orphans” in the debate over curriculum enrichment, with each division willing to make sympathetic remarks, but no one division willing to adopt the orphan. Chief among these areas for me is the History of Science and Technology—a natural basis for fruitful conversations across the curriculum, including the critical area of technology and ethics.

In fact, we need in general to provide incentives for current faculty to engage in teaching experiments that cut across the curriculum in fruitful ways, linked up with other faculty wherever possible. Past and present efforts in this direction have been very well received and have produced some courses that bring together into a common experience students of diverse academic backgrounds. Further enhancement of such efforts could include the garnering of private funds to support weeklong visits to campus by outstanding figures in fields relevant to the interdisciplinary endeavor—or perhaps two visitors, known to have opposing points of view. Such visits could include public talks open to the entire community, as well as individual class sessions.

In general, a school with New College’s heritage should lose no opportunity to remind our students that the traditional definitions of “fields” and “disciplines” are largely arbitrary and based upon professional and administrative considerations—and not on the way the “universe” is in some permanent sense. The curriculum itself, together with incentives for faculty professional development, should reflect this intellectually fluid situation.

7. Is it possible for New College to establish a niche for itself and what are some opportunities?

I think New College already has a niche, namely, that of a public, honors quality undergraduate liberal arts college, emphasizing active and individualized learning. While we constantly have to be on guard against a tendency toward institutional narcissism that has been one of our traditions, I also think we can be confident that the rest of the undergraduate educational world has much to learn from what we do here—which is to say, we don’t have to worry about being more like them so much as we should be concerned about communicating more boldly what we do here.

Indeed, since my own arrival at New College in 1992, I have been struck by how much the world—perhaps unbeknownst to itself—has been beating a path to our door. The increased national attention devoted in recent years to “active” learning, undergraduate research education, and assessments of student satisfaction are all examples of this fact.

So the trick over this next period of time is not to reinvent the wheel but to determine fitting ways to strengthen what we already do best and to assume a more visible leadership role on the national level. I do think that our special advantages of location and current programmatic emphasis suggest that some combination of marine sciences and environmental studies will serve us well in the years ahead. These fields not only provide a natural context for enhanced visibility, but they are also a good basis for grant writing as well as attractive opportunities for private giving. The current effort by the Provost and faculty to devise a closer programmatic connection between environmental studies and community service is a good example of creative thinking based upon what we already do well and within our limited resources.

Similarly, we currently have a promising opportunity to revitalize our entire studio art program, at just the moment that our music program is developing a higher profile through its own fresh and creative initiatives. Our ambition should be to have the Caples Complex become a symbol of innovative and arresting developments in the fine and performing arts. Along with the fields of marine science and environmental studies, the fine and performing arts is the natural basis for friend building in our immediate area, as well as for an increased profile on the national level.

The planned construction of a new social sciences building can simultaneously serve as the basis for highlighting the uncommonly strong heritage that the Social Sciences Division has enjoyed, especially in the production of future Ph.D.'s. Administered correctly, the construction of the new building can be viewed not simply as the long awaited provision of needed physical space, but as a celebration of the social sciences as pursued at New College. Such an approach would offer numerous opportunities to showcase a long list of outstanding faculty productions, student research projects, and joint student/faculty academic endeavors—thereby placing in a more positive context the worrisome details associated with simply getting a building up.

While I have no doubt that many new developments will occur at New College over the next period of time, I think that our efforts to enhance our national profile should be embedded in our existing strengths and in our clear sense of institutional mission.

8. What is the ideal size for a liberal arts college and why?

Coping with a growth plan is something we should be happy to do—consider the alternative.

We have a widespread consensus that enrollment growth to 800 is a good idea. As indicated in our “Institutional Plan,” the chief reasons are that growth to this level will: produce a deeper, broader curriculum; provide enhanced opportunities to

diversify the student body, faculty, and staff; create a context for a vibrant “residential college” form of student life; and reinforce our position as the Honors College of the state. As in the case of the earlier “Growth and Enhancement Plan” of 1993 (which committed us to growing from 490 to 650), the conditions for this growth are no drop in the quality of the student body, protection of an 11:1 student/faculty ratio, and the provision of on-campus housing for about 75% of our students.

My own view is that New College can ultimately grow to about 1,200 students and secure all of these goals in even richer measure while also achieving greater economies of scale. Whenever anyone mentions an enrollment beyond 800, someone in the room—most often a student—worries aloud about becoming so large that we “lose New College’s special character.” This remark raises two questions: what *is* New College’s special character that we are afraid of losing; and what is the enrollment figure past which we’d lose it. These are excellent topics for discussion and should be framed in such a way as to produce fruitful, thoughtful debate in future years, rather than “us vs. them” thinking. My own general response to the issue is to note that even 1,200 is a small college by any standard—smaller than the high schools from which many of our students come. To the extent that the “special quality” of New College is associated, say, with close mentoring relations between students and faculty, I do not think this feature of campus life would be jeopardized with an enrollment of 1,200. (And I speak as someone who taught for fifteen years at a college with an enrollment of 2,700.)

In response to Question #6, I noted the trade off’s involved in adding faculty in order to *deepen* or to *broaden* the curriculum. We currently have 60 tenure track lines, which will increase to 63 in the coming academic year. An enrollment of 800 will sustain a total of 73 faculty lines—a welcome additional enhancement, to be sure, but still very limited. An eventual enrollment of, say, 1,000 would translate into 91 faculty lines, while an enrollment of 1,200 would secure 109 lines. With this larger figure, the curriculum would inevitably become deeper *and* broader. And—just as no one at New College today seems to go around bemoaning the loss of the “old” New College of 490 students—I rather suspect that the advantages of the achieved curricular enhancement would, just by itself, erase any concerns that New College had become “too big.”

If we also take into account the enrichment of student life activities that an enrollment of 1,200 would support, enhanced by the strong co-curricular atmosphere produced by the planned residential college system, eventual growth toward 1,200 becomes an attractive option worthy of campus debate. I still await a definition of “New College’s special character” that we would lose at such an enrollment level.

9. How would I address the challenge to increase diversity, broadly-defined, among students, faculty and staff?

There are of course numerous ways to understand “diversity,” and the one that has concerned me the most involves racial, ethnic, and international diversity. In these areas, New College has not suffered a “lowering” of diversity for the sad but simple reason that we’ve never achieved it in the first place.

When I left the Dean and Warden's office in 1997, I was asked what my biggest disappointment was in looking back over the previous five years. I replied by saying I was deeply disappointed that we had not been more successful in creating a more diverse campus community. The ultimate issue here is not one of affirmative action or even of social justice. Rather, the issue is strictly *educational* and concerns the weakened educational experience that follows from not providing all of our students with a range of outlooks, backgrounds, and perspectives sufficient to prepare our students for the world as they will find it. As I have said in another context, it is just as though we were not providing our students with math courses, or history courses—something critical is missing. Moreover, in pursuit of our goals, we have to insure a campus climate that creates a sense of inclusiveness for all members of the community, rather than a sense that some people are here only to make life more interesting for the majority population.

Against the background of my previous administrative experience, I have concluded that only a sustained initiative from the President's office can help build and maintain the momentum we need to achieve the campus diversity that will make New College a stronger institution. Despite my interim status, I have taken initiatives to address issues of diversity, chiefly through attempting to create a sense of total campus responsibility for the problem. While only just created, a new ad hoc committee on campus diversity and enrollment will, in time, serve as a motivating force behind bringing issues of diversity away from the margins and into the center of campus awareness...and keeping them there.

Specific actions and initiatives that I support include funding for recruitment of targeted students, generous scholarship and mentoring programs for students from underrepresented populations, creative hiring strategies for faculty, and continued strengthening of the program offerings coming out of the Diversity and Gender Center to address concerns about campus climate. Since these and related measures involve decisions about resource allocations—in a setting where many worthwhile demands on our resources are always present—it is crucial that campus-wide discussion and consensus building opportunities be developed and remain in place. Diversity tends to be one of those things that “everyone is for” unless it's at the expense of something else. We need to create a more positive and results-oriented dynamic if, down the road, we are not simply to be left with a handful of good intentions.