



## Compass II

*A Progress Report*  
*January 26, 2005*

The College  
Washington and Lee University

### **Today's Goals:**

1. Provide an update on the Academic Task Force (ATF) report coming out of the University Planning Process.
  - Status: How does the Compass relate to the University Plan?
  - Controversial elements: the Academic Task Force Triad notion, a W&L Center in Washington, DC.
2. Present 4 focal points for the College's own initiatives.
3. Present a "report card" on the ways that the ATF's ideas and the College's initiatives support our Compass goals.
4. Next steps for the University and College planning effort.



## **Seven Themes Central to the University's Academic Strategic Plan (August – October, 2004)**

- Intellectual Life
- Curriculum
- Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Programs
- Off-Campus Programs – Domestic and International
- Faculty Recruitment and Development
- Facilities – Spaces that Inspire Confidence in the Academic Program
- Outreach – Focus on W&L's Academic Excellence and Reputation



**Charge from the  
President:  
*Big Ideas***

## ATF #1: The Triad

**Primary Goal - To elevate the intellectual focus in all facets of academic life.**

- **Emerges from questions raised early in our planning discussions.**
  - What can be done to expand intellectual activity outside of the classroom and outside of class times?
  - How might a residential campus enrich or limit intellectual activity?
  - What can be done to foster productive academic exchange among faculty and students?
  - How do we capitalize upon the depth and breadth of the three schools to build existing strengths and new collaborative areas into areas of distinction?
  
- **Responds to concerns raised by all 3 faculties regarding:**
  - Desire for improved intellectual life,
  - Desire for improved opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and team teaching – we see these as recruiting/retention issues for our faculty,
  - Spaces to support intellectual life,
  - Extra-curricular opportunities for all students,
  - Desire to develop collegial relationships with faculty in other schools.

## ATF # 1 The Triad

*Continued*

- **Note first line of University Mission Statement:**
  - “Washington and Lee University provides a student-centered education that uniquely combines pre-professional, legal, and liberal education of the highest quality. The Washington and Lee experience is distinguished by personalized teaching, development of the capacity for leadership and service, and core values of personal honor, integrity, and civility.” (draft)
  
- **Key Elements of the Triad notion:**
  - We need to uniquely combine our educational approaches,
  - Hire additional faculty to permit freedom to be more creative with our curriculum,
  - Create administrative support for working together across departments and schools,
  - Set aside funds to host distinguished lecturers and support co-curricular programming,
  - Create opportunity for shorter-term interdisciplinary focus emphasizing students and scholarship in all 3 schools,
  - Ideally, connect residential life programming to curricular emphasis,
  - Triad participation would be completely voluntary on part of students and faculty, but available to all.
  
- **College Compass Report Card:**

This idea supports goals 1A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 3C, 4A, 4B

## **ATF #2: Education Beyond the Classroom.**

*Primary Goal -To promote learning and research for an examined life.*

### **■ Key elements of the Examined Life notion:**

- Enhance faculty-directed student research and expand financial support for faculty who mentor student scholarly projects,
- Expand support for independent scholarship for students,
- Provide appropriate funding of law school centers of distinction,
- Establish a biennial Science, Society and the Arts conference.

### **■ College Compass Report Card:**

This idea supports goals 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D

## **ATF #3: Facilities**

*Primary Goal-To provide faculty and staff with high quality classrooms, offices, technology, and support areas.*

### **■ Key elements of the Facilities notion:**

- Prioritize construction of a new, larger academic facility on the Dupont Hall site,
- Renovate the historic Colonnade and Lewis Hall,
- Provide room to grow for the Williams School,
- Expand the supply of quality office space for all 3 schools,
- Re-configure and modernize the library spaces in Leyburn and Lewis Hall.

### **■ College Compass Report Card:**

This idea supports goals 1B, 2B

## ATF # 4:

### DC or Other Remote Center for W&L Students

**Primary Goal** – To create a premier center for programs beyond the confines of Lexington.

- **Emerges from themes and questions raised early in our planning discussions**
  - Liberal arts education in the 21st century requires that students apply their skills and abilities in a setting that challenges them to move beyond the confines of Lexington, to study and work in a foreign country, or to become immersed in an extension of their studies in a different setting within the United States.
  - What are the goals of off-campus study? What are the additional benefits of off-campus study to students?
  - How does off-campus study enhance the on-campus environment?
  - How can we assure all students equal access for off-campus programs?
- **Key elements of the W&L Center notion:**
  - Create a premier center in Washington, D.C. that will allow all departments and schools at W&L to benefit from that city's educational resources,
  - Identify additional strategies for enhancing opportunities and incentives for international study and off-campus education in other domestic settings,
  - Develop internship opportunities and other off-campus learning opportunities associated with the Triad program and other aspects of the curriculum.
- **College Compass Report Card:**  
This idea supports goals 1A, 2C, 4A, 4B

## University Planning Process

*An active, dynamic discussion.*

### **Next Steps**

- *Ongoing discussion and development of ideas, with Faculty and Board input*
- *Sorting tactical vs. strategic opportunities*
- *Identification of Potential Initiatives*
- *Prioritization of Proposed Initiatives*
- *Outline of Emerging Priorities due May, 2005*



# The Compass

The College nurtures a culture of learning at Washington and Lee by providing an education steered by the liberal arts tradition. Exceptionally dedicated faculty members guide undergraduates through a wide range of scholarly methodologies and their practical applications. Students learn to examine knowledge from a variety of perspectives, while developing deep expertise in their chosen field(s) of study.

College teachers challenge students to hone their critical thinking skills and approach questions creatively. Undergraduates and faculty collaborate to generate a fertile environment for scholarship and research, focusing not only on the assimilation of information, but also on the clear communication of knowledge to members of a global society. Our joint endeavors inspire students to further discoveries beyond the classroom and across disciplinary boundaries.



# The Compass

*continued*

In striving to meet the educational needs of our increasingly diverse student body, we emphasize sensitivity to different modes of learning and living as well as respect for other cultures.

The hallmarks of a person who is educated in the College include:

- a clear sense of personal responsibility,
- a talent for independent thinking,
- the capacity to evaluate information critically and to convey it eloquently,
- competence in many methods of approaching and solving problems,
- a lively curiosity about and mature respect for varied cultures and intellectual perspectives,
- a lifelong engagement with the values of honor and civility.

## Four Initiatives of the College

- From the October Faculty Planning Meeting and the Compass Retreat, we gathered a broad spectrum of comments and desired directions for the College. From these comments as well as those contributed last year, there emerged four unique areas of focus:
  1. Enhance intellectual life,
  2. Expand the conversation about diversity,
  3. Re-conceptualize the student-faculty relationship,
  4. Advance the college.

### **College Initiative #1: *Enhance Intellectual Life***

- *An action committee comprised of College faculty and a representative of the Dean's office will explore the following ideas and generate recommendations for advancing this initiative:*
  - Recruit intellectually curious students by developing a competitive independent work major program for our best in-coming freshmen – devise a 4-year College experience in close consultation with College faculty advisors,
  - Define the College's Spring Term experience for freshmen and sophomores by challenging College departments and programs to provide opportunities to create beyond-classroom experiences that enhance the conversation and collaboration between faculty and small groups of students,
  - Identify the barriers to our progress toward an improved intellectual life.
- **College Compass Report Card:**  
This initiative supports goals 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D

## **College Initiative #2: *Expand the Conversation about Diversity***

- *An action committee comprised of College faculty and a representative of the Dean's office will explore the following ideas and generate recommendations for advancing this initiative:*
  - Emphasize the relevance of cultural studies and immersion experiences for liberally educated students and incorporate into the curriculum a broad-based perspective on other cultures,
  - Identify the areas of the W&L community that are less welcoming or jarring to people of diverse cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds,
  - Recognize the equalizing influence of rigorous academic experiences for students of different backgrounds and exploit curricular opportunities to engage diverse groups around a seminar table or in other academic settings,
  - Consider Washington, DC and other regional sites that provide resources for provoking discussions about cross-cultural exposure.
- **College Compass Report Card:**  
This initiative supports goals 2B, 2D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D

## **College Initiative #3: *Re-conceptualize the Student-Faculty Relationship***

- *An action committee comprised of College faculty and a representative of the Dean's office will explore the following ideas and generate recommendations for advancing this initiative:*
  - Develop advising relationships based on a discussion about the value of a liberal education,
  - Participate in development of the information commons and other features of a culture of learning that emphasize student responsibility for information gathering and requirement-tracking, so that we may free ourselves of logistical issues that overshadow relationship-development in our advising interactions,
  - Preserve small classes throughout the College curriculum – what policies and tradeoffs will be necessary to ensure equity in teaching and grading loads so that student-faculty relationships can flourish,
  - Consider the ways in which we might creatively develop teaching technologies and applications that preserve or enhance time for in-class discussion.
- **College Compass Report Card:**  
This initiative supports goals 1A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 4A

## **College Initiative #4: *Advance the college***

- *An action committee comprised of College faculty and a representative of the Dean's office will explore the following ideas and generate recommendations for advancing this initiative:*
  - Cultivate College alumni and prospective supporters of our programs using a clear and consistent mission-based message about the value of a College education,
  - Develop high-quality print and web materials that reflect the value of College programs,
  - Create visible signs of collaboration across departments, e.g. sharing of ideas and best practices for supporting our faculty, our curriculum and our students,
  - Engage in University planning efforts to represent College mission and goals,
  - Develop a program for evaluating the effectiveness of the College curriculum and resources so that we can clearly articulate and justify our needs, as well as demonstrate achievement in areas of the College that are well supported (i.e. show that we are a good investment).
  
- **College Compass Report Card:**
  - This initiative supports goals 1A, 1B, 1C, 3E

## **Next Steps: *The Compass for the College***

- Charge committees to discuss and develop initiatives to support our goals.
  
- Begin ongoing process of engaging College faculty in cycle of envisioning, implementing, evaluating, re-envisioning
  
- Overarching goals for the College action committees
  - Identify faculty development needs that will have a big impact on the experience.
  - Identify outcomes and measures of success.
  - Each committee identifies measures of success related to the set of goals on which we are focusing.
  - Each committee will identify the types of faculty activities related to their goals that we would consider most value.

These overarching goals support Compass goals 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E



## Compass Report Card

*January, 2005*

- **College Compass Goal #1.**

- Re-center the College's role as steward of a 4-year educational experience that is grounded in the liberal arts tradition, and define that experience.

Emerging ideas that support this goal:

Triad, ATF #2, #3, #4, College #3

- **College Compass Goal #2.**

- Foster a vibrant intellectual life at Washington and Lee for our students and ourselves.

Emerging ideas that support this goal:

Triad, ATF #2, #3, College #1, #2, #3, #4



## Compass Report Card

*Continued*

- **College Compass Goal #3.**

- Create a work environment that inspires excellence in teaching and scholarship, and that nurtures the development of leaders in the College.

Emerging ideas that support this goal:

Triad, ATF #4, College #1, #2, #3, #4

- **College Compass Goal #4.**

- Create a comprehensive and sustainable approach to diversifying our faculty, our student body, our curriculum, and our co-curricular enhancements.

Emerging ideas that support this goal:

Triad, College #2, #3, #4