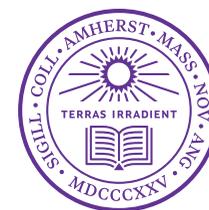


A M H E R S T

P R O M I S E





From the
moment
of its
founding
in 1821,

Sonya Clark
Class of 1989
Psychology

Amherst
College
has been
a place
for students
of promise.



John Abodeely
Class of 2001
Biology and Fine Arts



And for
the two
centuries
since, that
bold and
daring
confidence

Bill Taubman
Bertrand Snell Professor of
Political Science, Emeritus

Aditi Krishnamurthy
Class of 2018
Chemistry and French



in
individual
potential
has been
fulfilled
anew
with each
graduating
class.



Today,
if you
encounter
a fellow
graduate,
whether
decades
your junior
or decades
your senior,

Kathy Chia
Class of 1988
Fine Arts

you will
find a
kindred
spirit.



Christien Wright
Class of 2018
Statistics



Morgan Yurosek
Class of 2020
Economics

We have
all benefited
from the
transforma-
tive power
of intellectual
rigor and
critical
thinking.

And we
have all
benefited
from an
environment
that
celebrates
a rich
chorus of
diverse
voices.



Amelia Worsley
Assistant Professor of English



In return,
we are
asked to
opt for the
challenging
problem
rather than
the easy
solution;

Alejandro Nino Quintero
Class of 2018
Economics

Darryl Harper
Class of 1990
Music



to embrace
the promise
of change
rather than
settle for
the comfort
of the
status quo.



We are
asked to
demonstrate
the same
confidence
in the future

DJ Williams
Class of 2020
Spanish

that a
small group
of idealists
did two
hundred
years ago.



Zoe Wong
Class of 2018
Environmental Studies



This is
our time.
This is our
commitment.

Skyhur Tranqille
Class of 2018
Film & Media Studies

Mohamed Ramy
Class of 2018
Neuroscience

This is
our chance
to fulfill
the promise
of this
treasured
place,
and to renew
our promise
to those
who will
follow us.



The Campaign for Amherst's Third Century

P R O M I S E

In a good college, students should always have a sense, sometimes heady and sometimes uncomfortable, of stretched capacities: that there is more in a question than I thought, more complication and more need for subtlety or distinctions, more in a text or picture than I had read or seen, more possibilities for these formal operations or techniques than I had envisaged Nothing has happened in the world in recent decades to reduce the relevance of these kinds of learning; if anything, they seem to grow in importance and urgency from year to year.

President Peter R. Pouncey
Report to the Trustees on Admissions, 1989

Some things are so brilliant they can only be understood as virtuosic acts of mind, thought in the pure enjoyment of itself, whether in making a poem or a scientific discovery, or just learning something it feels unaccountably good to know. There is an unworldliness in the experience, and in what it yields, that requires a larger understanding than our terse vocabularies of behavior and reward can capture. ... the beautiful persists, and so do eloquence and depth of thought, and they belong to all of us because they are the most pregnant evidence we have of what is possible in us.

Novelist Marilynne Robinson
“What Are We Doing Here?,” 2017

THE FOUNDERS OF AMHERST COLLEGE HAD FAITH in what is possible in us. They were among America’s most passionate advocates for higher education. They saw it as the basis of moral, intellectual, and material development—for individuals and for society. Amherst started out as an institution to prepare indigent youths for the ministry, then broadened out into a liberal arts institution that prepared students for every walk of life. We were a local institution that became a regional institution and then a national and global one. We were all male and then became coeducational. We were predominantly white and now have a student body in which four students out of ten identify themselves as persons of color. We provide an education that is expensive but also the financial aid that makes it affordable. Through it all, the aspirations embodied in our seal—*Terras Irradiant*, “Let them bring light to the world”—have remained a cherished constant.

Generations of the Amherst community have looked to the future of the College with confidence that its dedication to the founding values, and its contribution to the larger good, will endure. When asked today what they treasure about their Amherst education, our graduates invariably say that Amherst is the place where they learned to think, were encouraged to question, came to appreciate “the capabilities of the human mind,” made lifelong connections with friends and faculty, and built the foundations for their unique contributions to the world. At a time of uncertainty and division, Amherst’s distinctive combination of core values—critical thinking, persistent questioning, pursuit of truth, freedom of inquiry, freedom of expression, equity, civility, and friendship—has never been more important.

Building on Strength

Experimentation and change have been essential to preserving those core values over time, and they are critical to our future success. Today, as we near our bicentennial year, in 2021, preserving Amherst's special combination of strengths at the highest possible standard means continuing to ensure educational opportunity for young people from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, promoting the animating values of the liberal arts, and renewing the promise of the liberal arts by reinventing them for new circumstances and new populations of students.

The College approaches its bicentennial in a strong position. For more than 40 years, Amherst has been recognized as among the very top liberal arts colleges in the country. Average SAT scores of enrolled students, already among the highest, have risen steadily. Nearly 80 percent of our students go on to graduate or professional education, and as was the case 50 years ago, Harvard and Columbia are still the top destinations. Year after year, Amherst students are among the top winners of Fulbright, Watson, Gates, Soros, Beinecke, and other scholarships. In the inaugural year of the Schwarzman Scholars program, which provides future leaders from around the globe with an opportunity to develop skills and professional networks through a graduate degree at Tsinghua (one of China's most prestigious universities), three of the 51 awarded in the United States were won by Amherst students and recent graduates.

Our faculty members are distinguished professors in every field who regard teaching as a calling and an art. They include award-winning scholars, artists, and scientists who have prepared thousands of Amherst graduates for successful lives and careers. Over the past several years, Amherst faculty have received numerous National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health grants, in support of outstanding research. In the program's second year, the Carnegie Foundation awarded two of only 33 grants to Amherst faculty, one a full professor and the other recently tenured, to pursue research on challenges to democracy and international order. In recognition and support of the faculty's commitment to innovation in teaching and learning, the College was awarded a major Mellon Foundation grant in 2015 and a grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation in 2016.

The contributions of our alumni in every walk of life continue to grow in vast disproportion to our numbers. Our graduates include scholars and scientists, poets, novelists, artists, architects, editors, actors, musicians; entrepreneurs responsible for helping create entire job sectors and for extending the positive benefits of technology to the homes of millions of Americans; social activists tackling homelessness and poverty; teachers at every educational level; lawyers and judges; physicians, nurses, pharmacists; investors, inventors, farmers, craftspeople, community-builders, volunteers; military veterans, former CIA directors, former heads of the FDA, governors of the Federal Reserve, senators and members of Congress, heads of state, diplomats; and loving and supportive parents, neighbors, and friends. The networks of affinity and ambition among our alumni transcend any difference of age or background. Without their love for and loyalty to the College, Amherst would not be Amherst.

Amherst's average net tuition—what a student actually pays to attend—has remained nearly flat on an inflation-adjusted basis since 2000. Amherst is by far the most aggressive institution among its peers in keeping the cost to students and families low. The College spends a little over \$100,000 per student each year, which is nearly \$40,000 more than the comprehensive fee. This means that every Amherst student, including those who pay the “full” fee, receives a substantial subsidy. Since 2004, the College's financial aid expenditures per capita have grown over 150 percent while the comprehensive fee grew less than 80 percent—an impressive achievement given the upward cost curve among educational institutions overall. Today, 57 percent of our students receive need-based financial aid—in grants, not loans, enabling them to graduate unsaddled by debt from their Amherst aid packages. The average award this year was \$53,052. As a result of this commitment, a diversity of talent, drawn from many historically underrepresented places in our society, has enriched the dynamism and creativity of the College, benefiting young people from all backgrounds. As the student body has become more diverse,

our students' qualifications have gotten stronger. This is our answer to the urgent need nationwide to identify talent wherever it exists, knowing that it exists everywhere, and to develop that talent through rigorous liberal arts education.

When it comes to its own financial health, Amherst has stewarded its resources prudently while extracting maximum value for its educational mission. The College was founded with a Charitable Fund of \$50,000. At the end of 2017, the endowment stood at \$2.25 billion (excluding the Folger Shakespeare Library). It has grown 152 percent since 2001, despite ups and downs in the market, including, of course, the severe downturn that began in 2008. Our endowment ranks among the very highest on a per-student basis. We stand where we do because of generous philanthropy, a successful investment strategy, and cautious use of endowment resources. As it has done since the Charitable Fund was created two centuries ago, the College will continue to safeguard the integrity of the endowment and to draw on it carefully.

Our Priorities

Extending Amherst’s academic leadership into the College’s third century means preserving what has made it great while reinventing aspects of a liberal arts education for new circumstances and new generations of students. This requires philanthropic support. The campaign to raise that support aims at what we need, not what it would be nice to have. The strategic planning process, completed in 2015, clarified what we value and how to approach hard decisions about future investments. Our campaign priorities are based on that plan, which calls on us to:

1

Preserve our historic strengths by continuing to identify, enroll, and educate the most promising students from a wide range of backgrounds, regardless of their ability to pay, providing the financial aid that will allow them to enroll and succeed; replace the legendary teachers who are now retiring with outstanding new faculty equally devoted to teaching as a calling; and, promote the arts and humanities. Scholarships for students and professorships for faculty are high priorities for the campaign, as is the centrality to liberal arts education of humanistic inquiry and the arts.

2

Meet the surge in student interest in math, science, and quantitative social sciences by increasing the total number of faculty at the College. At Amherst, as elsewhere, most of the growth in the student body over the past decade has been absorbed by STEM disciplines. Our promise of an 8:1 student/faculty ratio no longer holds in the sciences, math, and economics; other fields have been forced to set enrollment caps and limit the number of majors and thesis writers because of enrollment pressures and commitments to small class sizes. The campaign will allow us to endow 15–18 new faculty positions, giving the College flexibility in moving faculty lines to the most pressing needs at any given time. Modern scientific research and teaching require facilities and

Attract and Support the Most Promising Students and Strongest Faculty

Promote the Arts and Humanities

Meet Student Need in the Sciences, Math, and Quantitative Social Sciences

Lead Innovation in Teaching and Learning

instrumentation that few liberal arts colleges can afford. With support for faculty and for our new science center, which promises to be one of the finest, if not *the* finest among our peers, the College will offer the best education an undergraduate can get in the sciences, computer science, and math.

3

Take the lead in the pursuit of experimentation and change in teaching and learning. While continuing to emphasize fundamental intellectual abilities, such as close reading, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and exceptional written and oral communication, our faculty are also continually reinventing their courses, adapting the curriculum to make it more fully international in scope and focus, and experimenting with new approaches to teaching. They are reviewing curricular policies and considering more shared intellectual experiences. These initiatives respond to exponential increases in knowledge across fields, research in the cognitive sciences about how we learn, and the needs of a new generation of students. Campaign funding will allow us to underwrite more initiatives for faculty in pedagogical design and provide enhanced academic support services for students. The campaign will also support efforts to increase opportunities for students to learn by doing, through research experiences, field-based work, course-related travel, career exploration, and internships. To ensure our students are prepared for the world they will enter, we are coordinating the work of our centers for writing and speaking, teaching and learning, quantitative skills, community engagement, and career exploration and planning. Our goal is to build core strengths and provide all our students with more than one significant opportunity to put their intellectual growth to work in the world.

**Provide
Critical Facilities**

4

Complete and equip the critical facilities our students and faculty need to excel at their work. A new interdisciplinary science center will offer facilities that separate Amherst from its peers in modern science education and research. To make way for the center, the social dorms have been razed, and four new residence halls south of Merrill, already built and occupied, will provide students with more opportunities for intimate gatherings and larger indoor and outdoor spaces for social events—fostering the durable friendships and forms of engagement that have long been hallmarks of the Amherst experience. A beautifully landscaped set of pathways through the eastern part of the campus will integrate our academic, social, aesthetic, and environmental resources, while making the campus more accessible. By the time of our bicentennial, the physical campus will have undergone the most dramatic transformation since the College’s founding. The redesign of the eastern half of the campus will be a visible metaphor of larger transformations that build on Amherst’s historic strengths. Our campaign goal will support these transformative projects and allow for upgraded facilities.

**Create a
Stronger Sense
of Community
and Belonging**

5

Address a critical societal challenge by creating a diverse intellectual community in which all three terms in that phrase are as meaningful as the middle one has always been. Intellectual community requires a sense of belonging on the part of the members of the community. It also requires time and opportunity for fun, friendship, and the development of a range of interests and talents. It requires open debate and room for disagreement. A true community is one where people can thrive as individuals—where extraordinary talent and astonishing quirks of character are able to flourish. We want Amherst to be a model of the civil society our graduates will need to create in the world beyond Amherst. One mark of a strong community is a willingness to embrace difference and disagreement without sliding into anger and contempt. Such a community must have the ability to sustain its values through difficulty and challenge, and at the same time provide a forum for fresh thinking from all quarters of an intellectually and politically robust society. In a nation marked by widening divisions of all kinds, this willingness and ability is needed now more than ever. Our classrooms already serve as crucibles of challenge to pat thinking and conventional wisdom. The College is also bringing to campus—on a regular basis and with growing frequency—outside figures who represent a diverse array of political, literary, and scholarly achievement. We seek support to expand these efforts. The campaign will help us meet these goals by endowing and naming one or more speakers series and by endowing and naming visiting positions. The campaign will also help us foster community by adding and naming new gathering spaces across campus, creating apartments within residential areas for live-in professional staff, and creating more robust and student-centered opportunities for social life and recreation on campus.

6

Build the Annual Fund in order to support the College's educational mission, financial aid, capital projects, and innovation. Since Amherst's founding, alumni have made gifts in support of the College, inspired by the belief that high-quality education is life-changing for individuals and essential to the well-being of society. The philanthropy of alumni, parents, and friends springs from a commitment to future generations and has helped make Amherst one of the most exceptional liberal arts colleges in the country. Annual gifts allow the College the flexibility to support critical needs and seize opportunities as they arise, and their unrestricted nature allows Amherst to apply these resources where they are most necessary. Success in our mission requires face-to-face engagement of faculty with students, and students with one another, in and outside the classroom. For all our technological advances, our presence with one another in a residential setting remains essential. Excellence in residential liberal arts education is expensive, but not nearly as costly as the failure to sustain it. Our Annual Fund campaign goal includes gifts of any amount, unrestricted and given annually.

Honoring the Intergenerational Compact

The founders of Amherst combined a passion for education with a uniquely American spirit of philanthropy. That combination has made Amherst one of the strongest liberal arts institutions in the country, academically and financially. Our commitment to setting the highest standard of excellence for students and faculty, and to being a leader in providing opportunity at a price that is affordable to people from all parts of society, has required that the College cover a higher proportion of its budget from its endowment than ever before. Operating a perpetual institution in this fashion is not a flaw. It is a fundamental source of strength. Safeguarding the College's mission is what an endowment is for.

Our ambitions will always outpace even Amherst's seemingly ample resources. The strain on those resources is evidence of the institution's dynamism and creativity. It is also reason for careful stewardship and discipline to slow the rate of growth in expenditures and fees. The finance and budget team now in place has strengthened those commitments. As we look ahead at the uncertain prospects for the rate of economic growth, the need for philanthropy becomes clear and present. The generosity that has given Amherst its endowment deserves not only gratitude but also vigorous, responsible management. Amherst is conservative in its draw on the endowment. It is one of the few institutions of its kind that has been able to maintain a AAA credit rating. We are creating a culture on campus which recognizes that financial constraints are real and that priority-setting is not a luxury but a basic part of life.

So is environmental sustainability, which we embrace and promote for the sake of generations to come. Sustainability is a moral obligation and an Amherst imperative. New initiatives—including campus-wide energy conservation, power co-generation, high-efficiency building design, and the founding of a renewable-energy consortium with other institutions—have brought the College the additional benefit of immense cost savings. We will expand such efforts significantly with a Climate Action Plan, currently in development, that will point the way to a carbon-neutral future for Amherst within a fixed time frame.

The Class of 2021

Amherst College has ventured far beyond the dreams of its founders. In the most important ways, it remains animated by those very same dreams, applying them to an evolving society.

Time and again we have called upon our graduates to provide help and guidance, to assist in welcoming current students and recent graduates into the larger world, and to provide financial support so that the College can continue to lead. Our alumni have never failed to answer the call. As a result, Amherst not only continues to provide unparalleled educational excellence in the liberal arts, but also offers a sense of intergenerational community that is far too rare.

The award-winning American novelist Marilynne Robinson is one among many who emphasize that colleges and universities remain essential sources of community in a society where other forms of community have frayed. “Graduates,” she writes, “tend to treat the students who come after them as kin and also as heirs.” We turn once again to you, our graduates, to support a campaign that will build on strength while reinventing aspects of an Amherst education for future “kin and heirs.” The time to secure that future is now.

We have welcomed the bicentennial class of 2021 with optimism and celebration. We are well positioned to take the case for an invigorated and, in some cases, reimagined liberal arts to the larger society. It is a model of the liberal arts that looks the real world in the eye. It is a model that brings in the most accomplished students and faculty from everywhere in our society, that prepares students for the world they will actually face, and that inspires them to change what must be changed.

Amherst was founded on promise.

We know what those promises are.

We have pursued them for almost two centuries.

The commitment is never-ending—
but it should not be intimidating.

It requires only the values, the talent,
the stamina, and the vision we have
always had.

Amherst College

