CHAPTER FOUR

THE MISSION AND GOALS
OF QUEENS COLLEGE
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I. The 1985 Mission Statement

The last Mission and Goals Statement of Queens College was developed in 1985 through the preceding Self Study process for accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. It reads:

Discimus ut serviamus, “We learn so that we may serve,” the motto of Queens College, reflects the College’s commitment to its urban community and beyond. For qualified students of varying ages and backgrounds, the College offers a full set of undergraduate programs coordinated so as to promote the broadening enlightenment at which liberal education aims; it also offers a wide variety of programs in graduate and professional fields for those who wish to pursue more specialized studies. With a faculty distinguished as teachers and recognized in their respective disciplines, the College strives to furnish opportunities for learning, to advance human knowledge and forms of creative endeavor, and to work with the community in matters of compelling public interest. A fundamental dimension of the College’s mission is to foster understanding - understanding of oneself, of other individuals, of human civilization, and of the natural world - in the interests both of wise action and of a richer personal life. Intellectual autonomy, soundness of judgment, respect for fact and rational principle, articulate expression, aesthetic refinement, and generosity of spirit are hallmarks of the liberally educated and are prime goals of the curriculum at Queens.

It is of particular concern to the College that its students learn to appreciate the cultural heritages of humankind, the accumulated wisdom of the species about itself and the world. This is essential to a judicious perspective on issues that arise today and to a just estimate of new developments occurring in the many regions of human inquiry and creativity. As the faculty seek in their scholarship to clarify and renew cultural traditions - while also exploring fresh avenues of investigation - so our students are encouraged to examine the past, as well as the present, in readying themselves to cope with the future. The College is dedicated to the proposition that learning of this kind is the best preparation for serving, for meeting one’s responsibilities generally as an individual and as a citizen.

The College agrees wholeheartedly with the objectives of the City University of New York: it seeks quality and diversity in its faculty and student body; it strives to extend the frontiers of learning and to develop critical thinking; it supports a wide variety of academic offerings; and it affirms its commitment to the value of a strong liberal arts education.

General Goals of Queens College

A. With regard to its teaching function, the goal of Queens College is to provide the best possible liberal education for its diverse student body. Queens welcomes the pluralism of its teaching enterprise which includes professional as well as traditional liberal studies on the undergraduate and graduate level. The College’s teaching goals are manifest in three interrelating functions:

1) Intellectual. The dissemination of basic and advanced knowledge in major fields of human intellectual, scientific, moral, and aesthetic endeavor; the investigation of historical processes and of the physical, cultural, political, and economic contexts within which we live.
2) Intellectual. The development of the capacity for creative and analytic thought; the study and critique of scientific and philosophical hypotheses; the investigation and testing of data and systems within the various scientific and humanistic disciplines; an awareness of one’s own value system and tolerance for the views of others.
3) Life-Enhancing. The cultivation of an informed sensitivity to literature and the arts, both traditional and contemporary; the development of sensibilities for appreciation of beauty in all its modes; the fostering of creative talent in the various arts; the recognition of the moral and intellectual as well as the aesthetic dimensions of human achievement.

B. An equally important function of the College is to support faculty and students in their efforts to extend human knowledge and insight through their own research, scholarship and creative activity. These activities are to be pursued for their own intrinsic worth, as well as for the fulfillment of teaching and learning goals.

C. In pursuit of its public service mission, the College sets itself the goal of providing an active intellectual and artistic resource for the larger community.

There followed two full pages of specific goals for Queens College, detailing the ways by which the College could develop in its students critical thinking and communication skills; enable students to acquire further knowledge independently; support teaching, research, scholarship and creative activity; provide a milieu for effective student learning; sustain itself as a collegial community; carry out its mission to serve the wider community; and encourage and facilitate intergroup relations in recognition of the increasing sensitivity regarding racial and ethnic diversity.

II. The 1995 Statement of Purpose

The Task Force on Mission, Goals and Institutional Integrity undertook a thorough revision of the College’s Mission Statement, with an explicit goal of creating a significantly shorter and more focused document. It was agreed early on that this revision of the Mission Statement would not result in, or be reflective of, a substantive change of mission; rather the aim was to add sharpness and focus to a statement of the College’s purpose.

The process by which the Task Force developed the revision is described in some detail in Appendix A. Further editing of the Mission Statement was done by the Steering Committee, which considered suggestions made by members of the campus community in response to calls for comment made in the draft Self Study. The product of this revision process is a new “Statement of Purpose for Queens College.”

Statement of Purpose for Queens College - 1995

_The mission of Queens College is to prepare students to become leading citizens of an increasingly global society._ The College seeks to do this by offering its exceptionally diverse student body a rigorous education in the liberal arts and sciences under the guidance of a faculty that is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence and the expansion of the frontiers of knowledge. Its goal is that students learn to think critically, address complex problems, explore various cultures, and use effectively the full array of available technologies and information resources.
Within a structured curriculum and in an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual respect, the College fosters an environment in which students learn the underlying principles of the humanities, the arts, and the mathematical, natural and social sciences. The College also prepares students in a variety of professional and pre-professional programs that build upon and complement the liberal arts and sciences foundation.

Recognizing the special needs of a commuting student population, the College strives to create a broad range of intellectual and social communities. The College offers a spectrum of curricular and co-curricular programs that serve individuals and distinctive student constituencies.

In support of the need for advanced study in the liberal arts and professions, the College offers a variety of master's degree and certificate programs. In particular, the College recognizes and accepts its historic responsibility for providing high quality programs for the pre-service and in-service education of teachers.

As a partner with the University's Graduate School, the College provides faculty and resources in support of the University's mission in doctoral education and research. The College employs University graduate students and prepares them for careers in higher education and research, and it supports faculty who serve as mentors for doctoral students and engage in related scholarly activities.

For its faculty, the College seeks productive scholars, scientists and artists deeply committed to teaching. It endeavors to enhance the teaching effectiveness of faculty and to encourage their research and creative work. The College recognizes the importance of a diverse faculty responsive to the needs and aspirations of students of all ages and backgrounds.

As a public institution, Queens College provides affordable access to higher education and embraces its special obligation to serve the larger community. It is a source of information in the public interest; it is a venue for cultural and educational activities serving the general public. Through its graduates' contributions to an educated workforce and through the leading roles they assume in their local communities, the College is vested in the economic future and vitality of New York.

As one of the most culturally diverse campuses in the country, Queens College faces special challenges and opportunities. By balancing tradition and innovation in the service of this diversity, it represents the future of the nation.
CHAPTER FIVE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
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I. Context

The 1986 Middle States Evaluation Team concluded that Queens College was

an institution which, in the face of adverse circumstances, had maintained very high quality instructional
and research programs and had preserved a high degree of pride, commitment and collegiality. It would
not be hyperbole to say that the team members were struck by a sense of wonderment, even awe, by the
extraordinary quality, pride and commitment that have been preserved at Queens College under adverse
and menacing circumstances.

In the intervening years, the College has continued to invest with vigor in the quality
of its academic programs and its faculty, often at the expense of some support services,
maintenance and supplies. There has been deliberate replacement of as many faculty lines
as the budget would bear, and the College has been able to attract outstanding young
scholars. The College community has been very committed to this strategy of resource
allocation.

Preserving and enhancing the quality of the academic programs has been the focus
of the College's new system of Academic Program Review. Initiated in 1989, the first
cycle of reviews of all departments and interdisciplinary programs is now almost complete.
It will be described and evaluated later in this chapter (section X.B.) and in CHAPTER
FIFTEEN: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND CHANGE.

The budget news since 1986 has not improved. With the State's continuing poor
recovery from the recession, tax levy budgets have not sustained College needs, as will be
detailed in CHAPTER EIGHT: FINANCIAL RESOURCES. The new Governor's budget,
announced in January 1995, mounts a major assault on both public systems of higher
education in the state, and is forcing the College to plan for the retrenchment of faculty and
staff, along with the potential for elimination or consolidation of academic programs.
"Adverse and menacing circumstances" are here again, and necessarily form the context for
the discussion of the current state of the academic programs, as well as for hopes and plans
for the future.

II. Overview, New Programs and Revised Majors

The College has 34 academic departments\(^1\) and 10 interdisciplinary programs that,
between them, offer 56 undergraduate majors. Seventeen of the 56 majors are available in
the evening as well as daytime. An additional five interdisciplinary programs offer

\(^1\) Three departments (the Library, Special Programs and Student Personnel) offer courses or course
sequences but do not have majors or minors.
undergraduate minors. There are 2 honors programs and 10 special programs which, while not offering majors or minors, provide important coursework of one kind or another—for example, College English as a Second Language and World Studies. Master's degrees are offered in 49 fields (21 of them in the School of Education), and six departments offer combined BA/MA degrees.

Since the last Middle States visit in 1986, three new undergraduate majors have been instituted—Labor Studies, Religious Studies, and Women's Studies.

- Labor Studies focuses on analysis of the labor force, workers' organizational affiliations, and the dynamics of labor-management relations. There are core courses and specializations in economics and sociology.
- Religious Studies provides a scholarly and interdisciplinary investigation of the world's great religious traditions, Eastern and Western. Core courses are complemented by courses in such fields as anthropology, Arabic, classics, art, Hebrew, history, philosophy, and sociology.
- Women's Studies is an interdisciplinary, multicultural program dealing with the role and contribution of women to world civilizations. Its core curriculum is complemented by courses in such fields as anthropology, biology, economics, English, history, home economics, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology.

A new undergraduate Honors Curriculum in Mathematics and Natural Sciences was introduced in 1988, featuring seminars on scientific methodology and contemporary research problems and stressing individual research by students under the direction of faculty mentors. High school students of exceptional ability in mathematics and the natural sciences have been recruited into this program in impressive numbers. A $1.1 million grant from the Initiative for Undergraduate Education in the Biological Sciences of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute has provided funds for undergraduate laboratory equipment and curriculum development, for annual summer research fellowships for ten of the best science students at the College, and for one new faculty member.

Queens College has been recognized by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC/U) and other national organizations as a leader in the development of professionally-oriented minors intended to encourage students to major in any of the liberal arts disciplines. These minors provide students with an opportunity to become part of a community group through shared classes and extracurricular activities. Two such minors have been established, and others are being developed.

The minor in Business and Liberal Arts (BALA) consists of eight courses developed as a result of a corporate needs analysis undertaken by the Queens College Corporate Advisory Board in 1986. Designed to help students build bridges between the liberal arts and business, BALA infuses each of its eight courses with writing, speaking, computing and ethical problem-solving. Faculty members teaching in BALA meet regularly to discuss
innovative approaches to teaching. BALA 100, the introductory seminar, focuses on defining "work," "business," "liberal arts," and the connections among these terms. Students have opportunities to be mentored by corporate leaders and to compete for paid internships at companies such as PaineWebber, Bear Stearns, Avon and Intelsat. Foundations and corporations have provided funding for special activities, including overnight retreats, family nights, roundtable discussions and scholarship competitions. The program has grown from 25 students in 1986 to its enrollment target of 500, first reached in 1991. By February 1995, 177 students had graduated with a BALA minor. A survey taken in spring 1994 indicated that over 90% of the alumni/ae respondents were employed or in graduate/professional school.

The 21-credit Journalism minor was designed upon the advice of the Journalism Advisory Board, currently chaired by the Executive Editor of Newsday. It consists of five core courses plus two electives, and like BALA, provides a bridge to career opportunity within the context of a strong liberal arts curriculum. The program graduated its first class in 1992; since then, three graduates have been employed at CBS News; one is an editor of the Queens Courier, a community newspaper; and another has been accepted directly after his BA to the Columbia University School of Journalism—an almost unprecedented occurrence for a graduate school that normally requires several years of professional work experience before admission. For the past two years, the journalism program has published a laboratorv paper, Queens World, funded by Newsday, and distributed on campus and at sites in the borough. The paper has won the Bess Myerson Journalism award from the Anti-defamation League for promoting communication among ethnic groups. Journalism students develop a sense of identification with the College through working on the newspaper, attending retreats and family nights, and communicating with top journalists who serve as mentors and teachers.

Beyond new program development, the College curriculum continues to evolve in dynamic ways. Several departments have taken advantage of the opportunities for self study associated with Academic Program Review to undertake substantial revisions of their majors. Anthropology has accomplished a thorough revision of its curriculum, with honors seminars being one of the new features. English has approved a substantial revision of its undergraduate major. Economics has strengthened the mathematics requirements for its major. Library and Information Studies has expanded its program to include business information sources and law librarianship, and is overhauling its offerings in information science and technology. Discussions with alumni/ae concerning curriculum are taking place in a number of departments, including Economics, Home Economics and Educational and Community Programs.

Undergraduate programs have also had to respond programmatically to non-academic forces. For example, Elementary and Early Childhood Education, having lost a

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2 More detail about the revisions to the Anthropology major as a result of Academic Program Review may be found in section X, later in this chapter.
number of faculty in the last few years, has had to discontinue its evening undergraduate major and now advises evening students to acquire other BA’s and then enroll in its graduate advanced certificate program. The major in Elementary and Early Childhood Education offered during the day has become a co-major as a result of a CUNY directive (1989) that requires students to follow a major in some liberal art or science, where formerly only a minor was required. Having to fulfill two majors, on top of satisfying the College’s general education requirements, means that these students are allowed few free electives and, in any case, cannot opt for co-majors with high credit-hour requirements, as in the natural sciences. The faculty in Elementary Education continue to grapple with this problem and are trying out alternative programs for providing students with appropriate background for teaching science at the elementary level.

III. Undergraduate Requirements and Standards

A. The Baccalaureate Degree

A baccalaureate degree at the College entails 128 credits. Most students receive a Bachelor of Arts degree. However, students in Computer Science and Geology have an option to receive either a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree; all students in Physical Education receive a Bachelor of Science degree. Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees are also awarded.

Besides completing a major, all undergraduates must qualify themselves with respect to Basic Learning Skills, Advanced Learning Skills, and the Liberal Arts and Sciences Area Requirements (LASAR). Basic Learning Skills, in reading, writing, and mathematics, are demonstrated by placement tests (CUNY assessment tests and the College’s mathematics placement test). If the tests are not passed upon entry, remedial, developmental or compensatory coursework is required (see the 1993-1995 Undergraduate Bulletin, pp. 38-39). Requirements in Advanced Learning skills involve one course in Physical Education and, unless conditions for waiver are met (Bulletin, pp. 38-39), two courses in English composition and three semesters of study in a foreign language (or its equivalent).

The number of credits required for a major varies from department to department; most are about 36 credits, but those which must meet external accrediting standards (such as Accounting, Chemistry and Elementary Education) are much more. Minors, as a rule, entail 18 or 21 credits.

B. The Liberal Arts and Sciences Area Requirements (LASAR)

The breadth inherent in a liberal arts education is embodied in the seven areas of the

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3 Students in the Bachelor of Music program take a modified set of LASAR requirements and an abbreviated language sequence. All other degrees require the same set of basic and advanced learning skills requirements and LASAR.
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College's LASAR requirements. LASAR calls for 28 - 31 credits to be selected from lists of courses which have been approved as "LASAR courses" by the Academic Senate (see Bulletin pp.43-44 for complete listing). The seven areas include:

- **Humanities I** (2 courses in literature and literary criticism)
- **Humanities II** (1 course in art, music, or theatre)
- **Humanities III** (1 course involving the study of language, culture, or aesthetics)
- **Physical and Biological Sciences** (2 courses, including a lab course)
- **Scientific Method and Quantitative Reasoning** (1 course in mathematics, computer science, data analysis, statistics, scientific methodology, or logic)
- **Social Sciences** (2 courses, from different departments, dealing with historical change, the economy, government, decision-making, community structure, and organization)
- **Pre-Industrial and/or Non-Western Civilization** (1 course, may be fulfilled if courses in other categories fulfill historical or geographical intent)

In 1987-88, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee formed a subcommittee composed of students and faculty to examine and evaluate LASAR after its first seven years. This group reaffirmed the value of a "menu-driven" format in principle, but concluded that the selections had become so numerous and varied that LASAR had lost its coherence and focus as a general education curriculum. Recommendations for improvement included a tighter scheme featuring a strengthening of the requirements in world literature and natural sciences and greater attention to improving student writing.

On the face of it, world literature—at any rate, non-English literature—has actually prospered under LASAR. Over the last decade, 154 courses have been added to the list of LASAR courses. The greatest increases in any of the LASAR areas have occurred in the numbers of courses in non-English literature listed under Humanities I and Pre-Industrial and/or Non-Western Civilization with many of the latter also listed under Humanities I. In fall 1994, 47 of these Humanities I non-English literature courses were in fact offered (65% of the total of 72 Humanities I offerings), along with 23 of the non-English literature courses under Pre-Industrial and/or Non-Western Civilization (41% of the total of 56 courses offered under this heading). To determine whether the subcommittee's concern on this score is still valid, a more thoroughgoing examination of students' actual choices of LASAR courses should be undertaken.

Even if LASAR has done well by world literature, it may not be doing much for students' writing. The work of the Provost's Advisory Committee on Writing across the Curriculum supports some of the subcommittee's concern. Data gathered by this committee

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1 The total was 507 in the 1982-1983 Bulletin and is 661 in the 1993-1995 Bulletin, counting dual listings in both cases.
in spring 1991 were of two sorts—the generally encouraging and the definitely discouraging. The generally encouraging data showed that about 85% of all courses at Queens require students to do some type of writing, 65% requiring formal papers, 55% having essay exams, and 57% having writing assignments of other kinds. As was to be expected, more writing is required in graduate courses than in undergraduate ones, and more in upper-level undergraduate courses than in lower-level ones. Formal papers are assigned in 74% of graduate courses, 66% of upper-level undergraduate courses, and 57% of lower-level undergraduate courses. Naturally a correlation was found between class size and the amount of assigned writing. Formal papers are required in 70% of classes with fewer than 40 students, but in less than 20% of classes with more than 60 students.

There were, however, three findings that are definitely discouraging. First, the required English composition courses are among the 57% of lower-level undergraduate courses that require formal papers. These English composition courses do not satisfy LASAR, and thus it seems that a disturbingly small proportion of freshmen and sophomores are required to write formal papers in either LASAR or elective courses. Second, about 75% of the lower-level courses, 64% of the upper-level courses, and 40% of the graduate courses do not require library research. Third, most of the courses that do require formal papers were found not to provide adequate guidance concerning them, with assignments structured in ways that were difficult to understand, and with students not provided opportunities to write drafts and obtain instructors’ responses while developing their papers.

The proposal of the Provost’s Committee—to set up three levels or tiers of work, each calling for well-guided writing of papers in courses besides English composition, with the third level involving a substantial paper of the type of a senior seminar thesis—deserves further and fuller consideration. To recruit support for its proposal, members of the Provost’s Committee appeared at divisional meetings of department chairs in 1991-1992. Many chairs were open to enlisting their faculty in writing across the curriculum, but some doubted that many faculty outside the English Department have the necessary wherewithal for extensive teaching of writing, particularly when it comes to offering alternatives to English 120, English Composition II, as the Provost’s Committee proposed for the second tier of the new scheme.

The Provost’s Committee held workshops for faculty in 1989-1990 and in 1990-1991, the aim being to convey ways and means of helping students with their writing. Some 23 faculty from 14 departments participated in the first year, and 11 faculty from 8 departments in the second. All divisions of the College were represented in both years. These workshops and the committee’s other activities did much to increase awareness on campus of what needs doing in this sphere. Efforts in the spirit of the Provost’s Committee are going forward at the departmental level. Of particular interest is an experimental program to be implemented in fall 1995 by the Department of Classical and Oriental Languages. This would enable students to contract for a series of three writing-intensive courses that would fulfill the English 120, Humanities I and Humanities III LASAR requirements. Experiments of this sort within departments contribute greatly to the
College's efforts in improving the teaching of writing.

A number of other issues relating to requirements and standards are on the College's docket: whether the LASAR requirements in Physical and Biological Sciences and in Scientific Methodology and Quantitative Reasoning should be strengthened; whether passing of the College's mathematics placement test should be automatically waived for students who have passed certain Regents' exams or courses in high school; whether requirements for majors are within an acceptable range for a college offering the BA degree; whether some majors are constructed too "horizontally" while others are too "vertical;" whether the Academic Senate has tended to be more reactive than active recently in matters of curriculum; whether, when it comes to strengthening scholastic standards and grading policies, the Senate can take effective action given the tendency of its student members to unite and the tendency of its faculty members to divide. These matters and others deserve concerted attention. Therefore,

RECOMMENDATION: The Academic Senate should thoroughly review the College's Liberal Arts and Sciences Area Requirements and students' actual choices of courses to satisfy these requirements, with special attention to evaluating student choices and performance in writing, mathematics, natural science, and world literature. \(<5.1>\)

C. The University's College Preparatory Initiative

Policies of the City University also have impact on the College's curriculum. A prime example of this is the College Preparatory Initiative (CPI), which the CUNY Chancellor developed in conjunction with the New York City Public Schools. CPI calls for high school students who enter a CUNY senior college to come equipped with certain units of work in specified subjects. Starting in Fall 1993, students were required to have 4 "college preparatory" units of English, 1 of laboratory science, 2 of mathematics, and 2 of electives. By the year 2000, students are required to have 4 units of English, 2 of laboratory science, 3 of mathematics, 2 of a foreign language, 4 of social studies, and 1 of visual or performing arts—a total of 16 units. However, students need not satisfy CPI requirements for admission to a CUNY senior college; they must make up any CPI deficiencies in the course of their college career, fulfilling all prior to graduation from college.

The University is closely monitoring the pattern of college preparatory courses taken by high school students entering CUNY. Recent statistics on the number of CPI units fulfilled are promising. The percentage of New York City high school graduates entering CUNY with one or more units of sequential math rose from 65% in 1991 to 76% in 1994. In the same period, the number taking four or more units of social studies moved from 66% to 72%; two or more years of laboratory science, from 55% to 61%; two or more units of foreign language, from 63% to 72%; and four or more units of English, from 43% to 54%.
As it is fully implemented, CPI is expected to reduce the need for entering students to take remedial work. To date, there have been improved pass rates on the CUNY Freshman Skills Assessment Tests. In senior colleges, the overall pass rate in Mathematics went from 59% in 1991 to 64% in 1994. Results on the writing tests remained flat, although the proportion of foreign-born freshmen entering CUNY jumped from 33% to 41% in the same time-frame.

Most of the CPI requirements overlap with the College’s general education requirements, with two notable exceptions—laboratory science and American history. The curricular impact of CPI will not be felt for two or four more years, when a requirement for a second laboratory science is phased in for 1997, followed by a requirement for one in American history among the four social sciences units that will be required in 1999. Both of these requirements are likely to increase demand for courses in these areas. As the College moves to re-examine its general education curriculum, some attention should be paid to whether changes made will precipitate additional demand for courses fulfilling CPI requirements.

IV. Interdisciplinary Area/Ethnic/World Studies Programs and Multiculturalism

The College has for many years promoted curricula dealing with a spectrum of the world’s civilizations and cultural traditions. Thus BA majors have long been offered in Africana Studies, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, East Asian Studies, Jewish Studies, and Latin American Area Studies; and minors have long been offered in Irish Studies, Italian-American Studies, and Puerto Rican Studies. Altogether these curricula involve an average of about 150 courses in each academic year. Also notable are the many and wide-ranging courses given by the Anthropology Department and the remarkably worldwide scope of the curricula in Art History, Classical and Oriental Languages, Comparative Literature, Economics, Linguistics, History, Political Science, Sociology, and so on.

In further pursuit of cosmopolitan aims, the College inaugurated a four-course curriculum in World Studies in 1990. Incorporating perspectives from the humanities and the social sciences, this curriculum investigates both historical and modern cultures around the world—their interactions, their differing modes of conceptualization, and their various economic and political structures. World Studies, which was developed with the help of grants from the Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, was recognized in 1991 as a model curriculum of its type by the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

All these interdisciplinary programs are well launched and are contributing significantly to the College’s pursuit of its mission. They are, however, carrying on in the face of serious budget difficulties. Funds for office staff, even for basic clerical assistance, are minimal or nonexistent, as the temporary services budget which provided part time help for these programs has been especially hard hit in the past few years. The faculty who serve as program directors do practically everything single-handedly, usually with releases