Douglass College and Douglass Campus:
A Model for a 21st Century Women’s College at Rutgers University

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Introduction: Why Douglass, and Why Now?

Over the past three years, Douglass College has developed and is implementing a dynamic comprehensive strategic plan. This strategic plan is aimed at making the College a first-choice institution by: strengthening the core student body, improving curricular and co-curricular programming, creating vibrant living-learning communities, promoting women’s leadership opportunities, supporting the success of women in fields in which they have been traditionally underrepresented, and preparing our students for leadership in the new global environment. The Douglass College strategic plan was conceived as a fluid document, able to respond to opportunities and challenges as they arise.

This current proposal is in response to several external and internal forces, both existing and proposed, that have brought us to the decision that we have a new opportunity to strengthen and solidify Douglass College’s role in the future. These elements include: the proposed recommendations of the structure subcommittee of the Undergraduate Task Force at Rutgers; the realization that a stronger connection of women-centered organizations at Rutgers New Brunswick would strengthen all of these bodies as well as give the University a national voice on women’s issues that is currently, perhaps, diluted; the importance that Rutgers University has placed on the undergraduate experience and on faculty involvement and engagement; the rising importance of women’s issues on a global scale; and the perception that higher education in the United States may not be serving the interests of women (for example, Harvard President Lawrence Summers’ comments on women in the sciences).

By addressing all of these issues and modifying our strategic plan to take these elements into account, we can strengthen both Douglass College and Rutgers University. At present, the presence of a women’s college on the Rutgers University campus has brought some benefits. However, we have not yet begun to tap into the ultimate power and potential of our unique position both within the University and in the national and international arenas.

Douglass College, as the only women’s college in the United States that is part of a major public research university, can help enable Rutgers to become a lure institution for high-achieving women nationwide who appreciate the proven links between all-female educational environments and women’s success, but who also seek the range of opportunities only available in a large university setting. As for the term “college,” we envision an institution that remains connected, from a faculty governance perspective, to the proposed Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, but one which maintains its ability to ensure interaction amongst academic affairs, student life, co-curricular programming, and other faculty bodies. This synergy is necessary to marshal the talent and resources required to compete with elite women’s institutions such as Bryn Mawr, while at the same time presenting a distinctive asset for Rutgers when competing with and being compared to institutions such as the University of Michigan.

Douglass College can, therefore, set Rutgers University apart from all of its competitors. It historically has been a beacon for women students around the country but also for women faculty and researchers on women’s issues. It is this specialness that warrants the existence of Douglass as both a college and a campus.

1 See: Charting the Course: A Strategic Plan for Douglass College, http://douglass.rutgers.edu/sp/
2 For example, one major reason that Rutgers University is a leader in the nation for women chemistry faculty (“Gender: Formula for Success,” Newsweek, March 14, 2005) is that the historical foundation of the department’s faculty was Douglass College chemistry
Douglass College, post 1980-reorganization, is still having this powerful beacon effect. It has been and still continues to be the catalyst for feminist institution building.\(^3\) Douglass' student body serves as a ripe data set for research, is a source of creative initiatives that engage faculty and students, is a focus of activism, and has proven to be a fertile laboratory drawing faculty and students permanently into its community. Douglass College, on this large research university's campus, has created the perfect conditions for an area of excellence for Rutgers University. Douglass currently boasts a student body of 3,000—over 35 percent of whom are women of color, 40 percent are first generation college students, 30 percent are students for whom English is a second language and ten percent are nontraditional-aged. This College continues to foster feminist thought, scholarship and innovative communities that connect academic coursework and co-curricular activities.

We are not proposing a non-integrated Douglass College that does not take advantage of its connection with the larger research university. This is also not a sliding back into the traditional structure of a women’s college and an attempt to bring back the Douglass College of old that only exists in the past. But, it is a recognition that the structure, as proposed by the structure subcommittee, would diminish and ultimately eliminate this unique women’s college, and consequently Rutgers University as a whole would be diminished.

We are proposing that the special place of this women’s college requires a hybrid version of the structure subcommittee’s proposal. The 21st century Douglass vision will integrate the positive aspects of the subcommittee’s proposal while maintaining certain unique aspects of the Douglass Difference that have served this University well.

The presence of a women’s college and of a whole range of women-focused units within Rutgers University has been insufficiently exploited, even as those units in recent years have continued to expand and to achieve national and indeed international recognition. It is time, finally, to begin to tap into the ultimate power and potential of the unique position of Douglass College and the array of campus-based units dedicated to understanding and advancing women within the University and in the national and global arenas.

**The Importance of a Women’s College at Rutgers University**

From its inception in 1918, when only one (Catholic) College in New Jersey was open to women\(^4\), Douglass College (at the time, The New Jersey College for Women) was founded to provide a non-denominational, affordable education to women that was comparable to that received by men. The mission: “A cultural broadening in connection with scientific training so that women may go out into the world fitted not only for positions on the lower rung of the ladder of opportunity but for leadership [in the] economical, political and intellectual life of this nation.”\(^5\) This mission has expanded and been modified over time, but maintains the basic tenets of the original version, a testament to the continuing need for institutions of higher learning for women in general, and for such an institution at Rutgers University.

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\(^3\) See, *Feminist Interventions*, IWL Reaffirming Action Project report

\(^4\) The College of St. Elizabeth, founded in 1899.

\(^5\) Douglass, Mabel Smith. 1928. “Address for the Tenth Anniversary of the New Jersey College for Women.” Mabel Smith Douglass Papers, Box. 3
Continuing Importance of Women’s Colleges

The definition of a “women’s college” has expanded and been modified over time. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, dedicated women’s colleges were founded in order to allow women access to higher education that was denied them in male-only educational institutions. These institutions were independently operated with a dedicated faculty and student body. Since the nearly universal advent of coeducation in the early 1970s, the definition of a women’s college has necessarily been modified to fit the present-day environment. Currently, the Women’s College Coalition – an association representing women’s colleges in the United States and Canada, of which Douglass College is a member – has a membership of 58 institutions, including public and private, independent and church-related, and two-year and four-year colleges. These institutions range from traditional women’s colleges, that have dedicated faculty and single-sex student bodies (such as Smith College), to institutions once reserved solely for women that now admit men in certain circumstances (such as Chatham College), to institutions that are simply residential colleges (Newcomb College of Tulane University). The chart below demonstrates how Douglass College currently fits within this spectrum and definition of a “women’s college,” and will continue to do so under the structure proposed in this document.

Of course, women are now granted full access to the offerings of Rutgers University. However, it is necessary to distinguish the ability of women to access educational opportunities with the demonstrated benefits of a comprehensive women-centered college on the Rutgers campus; one that provides a supportive educational atmosphere as well as a demonstrated dedication to the importance of diversity on the campus – specifically the importance of women’s issues and research on topics of importance to women.

When it comes to a single sex academic educational opportunities, there has most certainly been a resurgence of interest in the last several years, particularly after recent comments made by Harvard University President Lawrence Summers, in which he suggested that women’s underrepresentation in the higher echelons of academia in the math and sciences is primarily due to “issues of intrinsic aptitude, and particularly of the variability of aptitude, and that those considerations are reinforced by what are in fact lesser factors involving socialization and continuing discrimination.” Gender does matter when it comes to learning styles between women and men. And although the outcome may be the same, how girls and boys approach learning and what they choose to learn significantly differs. There have been several studies conducted to support this notion that women and men have better opportunities to explore their

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own interests and abilities if they participate in single-gendered experiences, both academic and outside of the classroom.

Most of the studies comparing single-sex education with coeducation focus on grades and test scores as the parameters of interest. It is, however, important to consider the context or nature of the educational opportunity. For example, girls in an all-female school environment are more likely to study subjects such as computer science, advanced math, and physics.

The National Foundation for Educational Research8 was commissioned to study the effect of school size and school type (single-sex vs. coed) on academic performance. The Foundation studied 2,954 high schools throughout England, where single-sex public high schools are widely available. The results of their findings indicated that girls at single-sex schools were more likely to take non-traditional courses – courses which run against gender stereotypes – such as advanced math and physics. The researchers concluded that girls' schools are "helping to counter rather than reinforce the distinctions between 'girls' subjects' such as English and foreign languages and 'boys' subjects' such as physics and computer science."

The benefits of single-sex schools are not only academic. Just as importantly, single-sex education has been shown to broaden students' horizons, to allow them to feel free to explore their own strengths and interests, not constrained by gender stereotypes. For example, this is evident in the examination of student government associations on coeducational college campuses. The positional leadership opportunities, such as president, vice president, and treasurer, are primarily held by men, and therefore, opportunities for women to explore their own leadership potential while in college must be found elsewhere. Additionally, women at single-sex institutions have demonstrably higher self-esteem than women at coeducational institutions, are more likely to express satisfaction with their college experience, are more philanthropic in general, and support their college institutions at higher levels.9

Consequently, it is critical that student-centered activities, academic programs, and positional leadership roles remain available for women. The maintenance of a core women's college student body is necessary to ensure that the general benefits of a women-centered institution continue to be available to Rutgers University and its students. This is essential because it provides women with more opportunities to take on the challenges critical to success in their personal lives as well as with their contributions to their future communities.

The Benefits of a Women's College at Rutgers: A Win-Win Situation for Rutgers Undergraduates

The above sections detail the benefits of women's colleges for those women who attend them. However, the beneficiaries of the presence of Douglass College on the Rutgers University campus are not solely the core student body of Douglass women. Having a women's college on the Rutgers campus facilitates activities and scholarship that would not happen otherwise – even for those students and faculty not formally connected with the College.

Douglass College has played and continues to play a vital role in the generation of new institutional spaces for women at Rutgers. Far beyond its explicit mission to educate and cultivate the full capacities of young women, Douglass has made critical contributions to the creation of the Institute for Women's Leadership and to the creation of its member units. In the process of offering succor and support to fledgling feminist efforts, Douglass has crafted and re-crafted its own role, identity, and mission, during three decades in which the power and responsibilities of undergraduate colleges at Rutgers were completely changed.

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Douglass’ recent history and our contemporary efforts demonstrate the breadth and depth of the contributions of this women’s college and its continued relevance to Rutgers University in a variety of ways.

**The 1970s – Continuing a Bold Experiment**

In 1970, when Rutgers College admitted its first women students (200 women were admitted into a student population of 3,000 men), considerable pressure was brought to bear on Douglass College to abandon its commitment to women’s education and become a coeducational institution. Under the leadership of feminist faculty Elaine Showalter and Mary Howard, Douglass faculty resisted this pressure and rearticulated their commitment to continue “a bold experiment in feminist education.” Instead they developed courses in women's history, status and achievements; cultivated women’s excellence in the arts, writing, mathematics, and science; sponsored research on women; initiated outreach programs for women in the community; fought for the creation of campus day-care centers; recruited a racially and ethnically diverse student population; nurtured women students’ commitments to social justice; and fostered their capacities to work as agents of social change. Identifying women’s empowerment and women’s leadership as core objectives, Douglass College became a fertile ground for feminist activism, advocacy, and scholarship and a significant site of diversity.

Douglass College has been instrumental in the development of much of what is available in the field of women’s education, scholarship and leadership at the University today. Douglass College was among the first colleges in the country to offer courses in Women’s Studies and gained national recognition in 1973. In 1976, when only 27 percent of the tenured or tenured track faculty members at Rutgers University were women, 43 percent of those women were employed by Douglass College.

**Post 1980-Reorganization – Ongoing Support of Women’s Initiatives at Rutgers**

Under reorganization, Douglass, like all the undergraduate colleges, lost the power to hire its own faculty. Although it could no longer play the role it had historically in recruiting significant numbers of women faculty, Douglass continued to be an invaluable resource for feminist faculty at Rutgers. In 1982, the College provided desperately needed office space for Women’s Studies and the Institute for Research on Women, at a time when the University had withdrawn resources for the programs. Douglass College also provided funds to bring prominent feminist scholars to campus and to host events such as the Dana Women Artists series.

All member units of the Institute for Women’s Leadership were launched and continue to be housed on the Douglass campus. The creation, institutionalization, and achievements of these various units illuminate a range of feminist efforts to promote educational change and realize a new vision for the University. Rutgers University could not boast of the Institute for Women’s Leadership and its constituent units, but for Douglass’ existence.

Douglass College continued its innovative bold experiment when it launched the Douglass Project in 1986. The Project gave Douglass College and Rutgers University national recognition and won many awards, including the 1999 National Science Foundation’s White House President’s Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring.

The various Deans of Douglass have also provided assistance with lecture funds to bring distinguished feminist scholars and activists to campus. Moreover, these Deans have worked with feminist faculty to devise innovative educational opportunities to help groom Douglass students for leadership positions. Through breakfasts, dinners, and receptions at the Dean’s residence, Douglass also became a vital space for networking among feminist faculty, administrators, and Douglass alumnae. These informal

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10 The Institute for Women’s Leadership, the Center for Women and Work, the Institute for Research on Women, the Center for American Women and Politics, the Eagleton Institute, the Center for Women’s Global Leadership, and the Women’s and Gender Studies department.
gatherings sparked many of the ideas that led to the creation of research centers and institutes on women and the constitutive units of the Institute for Women’s Leadership for which Rutgers has become well-known. Indeed, the generosity of Douglass alumnae is responsible for major funding initiatives associated with women’s programming and capital investment, including the Douglass Project, the Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women’s Studies, the construction of the Ruth Dill Johnson Crockett Building, the Regina B. Heldrich Building and Annex featuring state-of-the-art chemistry labs, the IWL Leadership Scholars Program, the Global Village, the LEADing Edge program, the renovations to the Mabel Smith Douglass Library, and the purchase and renovation of the Wittenborn Scholars Residence (which houses visiting scholars of the Institute for Women’s Leadership consortium members).

2002 to Present – Revitalization through the Douglass Strategic Plan

The Douglass College Strategic Plan was issued in October 2003, with the planning process begun the year prior. In order to direct the focus of the strategic planning initiatives, the strategic planning team developed a set of eight broad principles, under which all the activities of the College should fall. The plan is aimed at strengthening the core student body and making the College a first-choice institution for many more students, improving curricular and co-curricular programming, creating vibrant living-learning communities, promoting women’s leadership opportunities, supporting the success of women in fields in which they have been traditionally under-represented, and preparing our students for leadership in a new global environment. Over the past two years, Douglass College has met 90 percent of the goals set forth in its strategic plan of 2002-2003.

Key successes of the strategic plan include: the expansion of the Global Village to include a new Human Rights Unit and plans for continued expansion of these issue-driven living-learning communities; the creation of the Douglass Alumnae Recruitment Team (DART), with a current membership of 250 alumnae responsible for the personal recruitment of high academic achieving young women to Douglass; the enhancement of women’s leadership programs at Douglass, including the development of the LEADing Edge program, the Leadership Mastery Credential, and the Leadership Transcript Program; and a comprehensive four-year Project SUPER experience through the Douglass Project that now includes a second year job shadowing opportunity, a third year laboratory research experience, and a strengthened faculty/peer mentoring component.

Douglass College continues to be the primary locus of undergraduate students interested in and focusing on issues of women and gender studies. The College provides the main avenue for interaction among Rutgers faculty and undergraduate students with regard to these issues, in both formal, and informal settings. The existence of Douglass College as an institution has allowed the University to continue to function as a source for feminist gatherings of faculty and students. For the past five years, Douglass has hosted the Wyeth/Douglass College Lectureship, established to recognize prominent women working in the chemical sciences. The Wyeth lectures would not be possible without the concerted efforts of and coordination among Rutgers University faculty in the chemical sciences, the students and staff of Douglass, and the institutional sponsor, Wyeth Research, made possible by a connection with a Douglass alumna.

Currently, the Douglass Project not only supports Rutgers women, but high school girls through a summer program, and provides Rutgers women and men an opportunity to participate in a mentoring-outreach program for elementary school children. Moreover, the Douglass Project provides a variety of opportunities for faculty to become directly engaged with undergraduates through summer research, special mentoring, seminar series and lecture programs (e.g. W.M. Keck Center for Neuroscience Rutgers University Women in Neuroscience [RUWINS] program, Introduction to Scientific Research course, Bunting-Cobb Residence Hall).

The Douglass College mission course, Shaping A Life, was also completely redesigned for the 2004-2005 academic year, with significant input from the faculty of the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies and the Shaping A Life faculty advisory committee. In addition, many of the instructors for the course are adjunct graduate instructors from the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies, and beginning in
2004, teaching assistants drawn from the College’s scholars program served as mentors and peer advisors.

In March 2004, the College organized the “Women in the Era of Globalization” symposium that drew over 400 participants, including practitioners and academicians from around the tri-state area, Douglass College students, and members of the University community. Participants in the day-long symposium, featuring Rutgers University faculty panelists, discussed issues and pressures facing women in a changing world, including the topics of women and poverty, HIV/AIDS and its impact on women, and the feminization of poverty both worldwide and in the United States.

**Benefits to the University are Widespread**

On this large research university's campus, Douglass College has created the perfect conditions for an area of excellence for Rutgers University. This College continues to foster feminist thought and institution building, scholarship and innovative communities that connect academic coursework and co-curricular activities.

Only Rutgers can boast of being a major public research university and the home of the largest women’s college in the nation. It is the best of both worlds for women looking for the opportunities afforded by a research university, in combination with a women-centered education and coeducational academic experiences.

In addition to fostering the creation of areas of excellence in women’s studies and women’s research, a vibrant Douglass College allows Rutgers University to continue towards its goal of becoming a world-class research institution on par with the University of Michigan, while simultaneously taking advantage of currently unrealized benefits. By maintaining a strong women’s college, Rutgers University enhances its ability to draw a diverse cohort of faculty interested in women’s issues.

Moreover, with appropriate recruitment support and resources, Douglass College could be a true source of competition for prestigious women’s colleges like Smith, Wellesley, Mount Holyoke, Barnard and Bryn Mawr. Because Douglass College “is not our mother’s women’s college,” — it is part of a coeducational institution, with opportunities for single-sex academic and co-curricular experience on a research university’s campus — it can compete with not only the Bryn Mawrs of the world but it can successfully lure high achieving women who want the benefits of a women’s college in combination with a coeducational environment.

In the following pages this document presents a detailed roadmap for a 21st century women’s college at Rutgers University. This vision encompasses both the traditional strengths of Douglass College as well as offers bold new initiatives that take advantage of the University’s unique position as the only public research university in the country with an embedded women’s college.
A view toward a 21st century women’s college

We are advocating a new breed of women’s college, one that provides all of the benefits of a traditional women’s college, with none of the traditional weaknesses.\(^{11}\) This bold vision would create a women’s college that offers a spectrum of experiences and opportunities for its students. Any institution looking to implement a 21st century women’s college would need several key elements in order to ensure its success.

Briefly described, this 21st century women’s college is:

- Located within a large research university – acting as both a college and a campus;
- Structured on the model of an elite liberal arts college with a smaller student body, and enhanced academic criteria for admissions;
- Focused on national, and not just statewide, recruitment of students enabling it to position itself to compete with all elite women’s colleges and the best research universities;
- Characterized as a lure institution for those organizations, foundations, corporations, and individuals who wish to sponsor and support women’s initiatives;
- Designed to offer an explicit four-year experience for a core group of women, with the additional opportunity for short-term (one to two years) experiences for any interested undergraduate women;
- Integrated into the university’s general core curricular requirements for a liberal arts program, while taking into account the unique mission of a women’s college by offering specific mission-centered curricular programs;
- Designed to offer a first year living-learning experience for all of its core student body with a variety of faculty-led initiatives for upper-class living-learning experiences;
- Committed to offering both same-sex and coeducational learning experiences;
- Planned to offer flexible opportunities for undergraduate women, not a part of the core student body, to participate in the college’s initiatives at the campus and college level. Simultaneously, the college preserves a distinct four-year experience for the college’s core student body;
- Defined by a high level of faculty engagement that is formalized by specific faculty connections to living-learning communities. These connections are overseen through an integrated governing body that is a part of the whole university faculty governance structure, but represents in this instance the interests that arise from women-centered living-learning communities and initiatives;
- A locus of women-centered research and scholarship on campus, which acts as a lure and provides resources to a variety of women-centered organizations and research centers as well as faculty who define their work and programs as relating to women’s issues;
- Supplemented by college-based student affairs and academic affairs programming with overt linkages to the wider university student and academic affairs programs, ensuring mission-driven connections, but with an eye towards commonness where appropriate (e.g. centralization of areas such as academic integrity and judicial affairs, with local control of areas such as academic affairs, residential life, student centers, etc).

\(^{11}\) Traditionally, women’s colleges have only offered single-sex experiences, a limited number of majors, a narrow resource base, and are not connected with the quality of faculty present at a research university.
Enriched by student activities broadly open to all university students, but with single-sex student organizations and student government;

Marked by special programs that focus on areas where women have traditionally not been represented and by initiatives emphasizing the development of women leaders.

**The Rutgers Vision for a 21st century Douglass College**

Fortunately for Rutgers University the foundation for a 21st century women’s college is already well established and we are the only university in the country that could incorporate all of the elements required for success.

Douglass College is this foundation.

Several aspects of the 21st century women’s college already exist at Douglass and are aforementioned, but parts of the Douglass experience must be attended to immediately if the College is to become the model for women’s colleges in the future. Douglass must simultaneously be enabled to offer a codified four-year experience for a core student body, while opening up opportunities for a broader group of undergraduates to experience the Douglass Difference.

The following pages detail our proposed framework for a revitalized Douglass College. In short, the key elements of the Douglass plan are summarized below.

**What’s Bold?:**

- Reduced size of student body, leading to a smaller, more elite liberal arts college, at least for the time being as the new vision is put into place.

- A national recruitment effort that taps into the desire of high-achieving women students around the country for a college that nurtures their talents. These efforts would be enhanced by the over 34,000 Douglass alumnae and the recently developed Douglass Alumnae Recruitment Team (DART) which already has over 250 registered members.

- A significant limiting of the transfer student population from educational institutions outside of Rutgers University, to ensure a core student body with a comprehensive four-year Douglass experience. Bunting students would remain, and a more narrow number of transfers would be accepted that specifically select the women’s college experience.

- A clearly defined four-year academic and co-curricular experience that formally shapes a women-centered experience at Rutgers for a core Douglass student body. This experience is defined by a living-learning experience for all first year students and further opportunities in the upper class years, a required minor, formal connections to faculty research, and women-centered co-curricular programming.

- A Douglass Faculty Committee that is small but is a part of the newly proposed Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences. A few representatives of the committee would be a part of the governing structure (yet to be proposed) of the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, ensuring faculty oversight. This group of faculty will be drawn from not only the faculty of arts and sciences, but from various schools, disciplines, and centers (Cook, Engineering, Institute for Research on Women, etc.) who demonstrate a commitment to women-centered education, scholarship, and research. This faculty base already exists at Douglass and will be expanded by the faculty grant program (see next page). Moreover, faculty will be clearly linked to the various living-learning communities, such that those interests can be effectively represented within the University faculty governing body.
• Faculty grants to encourage faculty engagement and improve the educational experience for the core student body and DAP students (see below), designed around connecting students to faculty research and scholarship, and connecting faculty to living-learning communities. This is an opportunity to attract new/younger faculty to undergraduate education for women.

• An expansion of living-learning communities in the upper-class years, but with specific connections to academic departments, research centers and programs, thereby formalizing faculty leadership. For example, the new Human Rights Unit currently requires a disciplinary course in Gender and Human Rights for all students living in the community. The requirement of a departmental course defines the clear, formal relationship with the Women’s and Gender Studies department. Students in the residential unit all taking the disciplinary course together enhances not only the departmental course, but provides a rigorous basis for the 1.5 credit house course, being taught by a graduate student living in residence in the unit itself. This model would be duplicated for communities such as an Environmental Unit, a Middle East Coexistence Unit, a Women in Politics Unit, Comparative European Studies Unit, etc. Currently, various language and cultural houses exist along with the Human Rights Unit and the Bunting-Cobb Math, Science and Engineering Hall. Douglass College benefits in this regard from connections to various centers, units, and academic departments that have already demonstrated a commitment to our mission as a women-centered institution. Academic departments benefit from increased opportunities to support graduate students, and the enhancement of academic courses that will be required of Douglass students participating in the upper class living-learning units.

• A required academic minor for all Douglass students, with an opportunity to pursue a women-focused minor to establish an academic foundation in the mission of this women’s college. This minor would either be in Women’s and Gender Studies or other disciplinary minors, with the caveat that to complete other disciplinary minors, students would select several electives that focus on women’s issues in the particular discipline.

• A comprehensive, residential first year experience for all core students to ensure that every Douglass student has a living-learning experience that includes two courses in residence and specific academic advising and residential programming. The courses in residence would be in the fall (Bridge Course) and spring, with Shaping A Life serving as the spring course, slightly modified around a living-learning community model.12

• A Scholars Program that is a part of a broad University honors program with the same academic criteria, but that maintains opportunities for single-sex academic seminars, and connects these Scholars as teaching assistants to the first year residential experience, taking advantage of the benefits of single-sex educational experiences. (Scholars serving as teaching assistants in Shaping A Life was implemented 2004-2005).

• Academic and peer advising that has overt connections to residential living (implemented 2004-2005). These connections will strengthen advising as a result of the specific faculty linkages proposed for living-learning communities.

• A Douglass Associates Program (DAP), that provides an opportunity for undergraduate women at Rutgers to take advantage of the Douglass Difference by participating in a one- or two-year living-learning community experience. DAP students may also participate in the women-centered minors (as defined above), funded living-learning study abroad opportunities when appropriate; may take Shaping A Life; may participate in the Scholars program and live in the Scholars House; may participate in the Leadership Mastery program/leadership transcript program; student organizations; aspects of the Douglass Project; and may participate in the AADC Extern program (one or two-week career shadowing internships).

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12 To accommodate the significant commuter population at Rutgers, the first year residential experience will have the flexibility to include these students. For example, groups of commuter students will be connected to specific residential cohorts for both the Bridge and Shaping A Life courses.
• Establishment of Douglass College and the women-focused units on the Douglass campus as the locus for connections between women-centered educational and co-curricular opportunities on the New Brunswick campus, helping to afford Rutgers University a platform from which to have a national and global voice on women’s issues.

• Taking full advantage of the links to the Institute for Women’s Leadership and its programs, as well as the programs of the individual IWL consortium units including the Women’s and Gender Studies Department, the Center for American Women and Politics, the Institute for Research on Women, the Center for Global Women’s Leadership, and the Center for Women and Work.

• Emphasis on study abroad based on significant alumnae funding support for these endeavors, with goals of guaranteed study abroad funding (individual and groups) for students living in the Global Village living-learning communities. Special programs connected with international entities include our current relationship with Ewha University in Korea (joint web-course and alternating student exchange), and recent relationship with Kiriri University for Women in Science and Technology (Nairobi, Kenya).

Why a College and a Campus?

The College will continue to positively contribute to the furthering of women’s education, leadership, and scholarship, and to the reputation of the University as a whole, but needs to remain a distinct entity within the University in order to do so. The recent proposal set forth by the structure subcommittee of the Undergraduate Task Force suggests the elimination of Douglass College as a distinct entity and instead calls for the creation of several campuses, one of which would be the Douglass Campus, “reserved for women.”

Because a 21st century women’s college is a hybrid of the traditional women’s college experience, students are not able to reap the full benefits that women’s colleges deliver in a one-semester or ad hoc manner. Like a disciplinary major cannot be successfully completed by attending a single course, so too a comprehensive women-centered experience in a co-educational academic environment cannot be attended to in one year or in short bursts of engagement.

In order to reap the greatest benefits from the presence of a women’s college at Rutgers University, the University needs to stress the contributions of Douglass College as both a college and as a campus. A college because:

• as a college, Douglass is poised to become a first-choice institution with a distinct mission and a strong sense of tradition, as well as a global vision and a history of supporting women who choose to lead in fields in which women have traditionally been underrepresented;
• as a college, Douglass can provide the full benefit of understanding a women’s experience through a focused, four-year, comprehensive, educational exploration;
• as a college, Douglass can bring together a community of diverse faculty, students, researchers, and academic and co-curricular programming centered on women’s issues, offering an established foundation to build a critical mass of voices on women’s issues;
• as a college with a distinct mission focused on women and women’s education, Douglass will enable Rutgers University to attract an elite group of women students from around the country, providing the University with a clear and visible advantage over top tier research institutions. This mission, with its evident focus on the importance of diversity in 21st century higher education, will also help to lure women faculty and scholars seeking to pursue research on women’s issues to Rutgers.
A campus, because:

- as a campus, Douglass provides a positive environment for those women students who may not recognize the full benefits of applying directly to a women’s college before they enroll at the University;
- as a campus, the wider, multi-purpose University offers the College a strong connection to all the riches of a major research institution, providing access to faculty, programs, and resources not available at other smaller educational institutions;
- as a campus, the environment offers flexibility and breadth of experiences for all interested undergraduates (including male as well as female students) to participate in elements of a women’s college, even if they are not members of the core student body. Whether or not students choose to participate in the offerings of a women’s college, the sheer fact of its existence impacts the entire community positively.\(^\text{13}\)

In short, we embrace the idea of a Douglass College that takes the fullest possible advantage of its connection with the larger research university. We view the current restructuring initiative as an opportunity not only to reaffirm the importance of this women’s college, but as a chance for Rutgers University to become a leader and to acquire a national voice on women’s education and scholarship in the 21\(^{\text{st}}\) century.

### Proposed Structure: Douglass College and the Rutgers-New Brunswick Undergraduate Experience

#### Overview of Structure

**Structural Points of Integration:**

As proposed, Douglass College would be a part of the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences. Additionally, the College would report to the Vice President of Undergraduate Education. In this regard, Douglass College would have equivalent admissions standards with the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, and all women students would have the opportunity to choose the Douglass College experience prior to matriculation. Moreover, women students not initially choosing the Douglass College experience will have multiple opportunities throughout their Rutgers tenure to engage the Douglass Difference in formal and ad-hoc ways.

Under the proposed structure, Douglass would expect its students to fulfill a University-wide core curriculum, as currently recommended by the Curriculum Subcommittee of the Task Force. This curriculum would consist of clearly articulated and uniform distribution requirements across the colleges, thus eliminating any minor inconsistencies between the colleges. However, Douglass would require curriculum that is specific to its mission as a women’s college, including its signature first year-course, *Shaping A Life*, and a required minor, with the opportunity to pursue a women-focused minor to establish an academic foundation in the mission of this women’s college (see page 22).

Various aspects of student affairs traditionally housed at the College would be centralized, including judicial affairs, academic integrity, and possibly psychological services and recreation centers. Housing and dining would continue to sit with the Vice President of Student Affairs.

\(^{13}\) See *Feminist Interventions*, IWL Reaffirming Action Project report.
Structural Points of Distinction:

The Douglass College proposal, while incorporating many aspects of the structure subcommittee’s recommendations, necessarily maintains the College’s ability to create the synergy between academic affairs (advising, academic services, special academic programs, mission courses, first year academic experience, living-learning communities) and student affairs (residential life, student center, student government and student activities, summer orientation, living-learning communities) that is imperative to the success of living-learning communities. To that end, the academic affairs and student affairs staff of Douglass College would remain under the auspices the College itself while ensuring a ‘dotted line’ relationship to the broader University student and academic affairs entities.

The Douglass College proposal also includes a small Douglass Faculty Committee that is fully integrated into the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences. A representative group of the Douglass Faculty Committee would be a part of the governing structure (yet to be determined) of the proposed Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, ensuring faculty oversight. Faculty governance is imperative in order to maintain the participation of faculty in specific ways. The role of the Faculty Committee is to be specifically connected to the living-learning communities, to encourage the creation of a curriculum throughout the University to support women-centered academic minors, and to ensure faculty involvement in the oversight of Douglass mission courses. The Faculty Committee would be linked to the various living-learning
communities, such that those interests are effectively represented within the University faculty governing body, as well as in other departments for those faculty members not affiliated with RFAS.

This group of faculty serving on the Douglass Faculty Committee would be drawn from not only the faculty of arts and sciences, but from various schools, disciplines, and centers (Cook, Engineering, Institute for Research on Women, etc.) who demonstrate a commitment to women-centered education, scholarship, and research. This faculty base already exists at Douglass and will be expanded by the faculty grant program (see Focus on Faculty Engagement).

The value of having a dedicated College Faculty Committee is the promotion and continued attention to women’s issues across the New Brunswick campus. Diversity benefits the entire University, not just Douglass College. There must be a core cadre of faculty members from a variety of academic disciplines who are focused on women’s issues, otherwise any focus that now exists will dissipate. A Rutgers University without a women’s college will naturally, over time, have fewer opportunities centered on the needs of women. Such a focus on diversity is important not only because it is a stated core value of the University, but also because it is an existing area of excellence for the University. To regress the progress that Rutgers has already made on women’s issues would eliminate this area of excellence that sets us apart from other institutions.

**Recruitment/Admission:**

As a model 21st century women’s college, Douglass College would continue to have integrated admissions with Rutgers University. The recent admissions process in which students were admitted to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, considered for admission to all three liberal arts colleges, and thereafter had an opportunity to select the appropriate college (based on academic programs, mission, and co-curricular opportunities) has served both the University and Douglass College well.

Some have indicated that the current system has created competition between the colleges. But, prior to the recent changes in admission, there was also competition in the “old system” in that students were required to select their college choices on the front-end during the application process (by ranking their choices). This system was competitive as well, but it was unfair competition that did not serve the University. By virtue of name recognition, the creation of the allusion of an elite college, and facilities improvements in residence halls / student centers / academic buildings on what is unfortunately referred to as the “main campus,” students made choices based on false information.

The current system has created a positive competition for the University, as the average SAT scores for the New Brunswick liberal arts colleges increased during this period, and the gap between various college SAT scores has lessened substantially. Moreover, it has encouraged each institution to review, assess, and create more innovative programs, as opposed to a system that allowed one college to pose as elite while simultaneously falling into the creative malaise that results when there is no apparent competition. The innovative program offerings and student friendly service that have existed at Douglass for years and are often touted, is a result of this College’s need to be competitive with other women’s colleges and within Rutgers University. When approached appropriately, competition does not require the diminishment of one’s competitors, but rather requires the sharpening of one’s mission, clarity in program offerings, and a willingness to focus on why the institution adds value to Rutgers University. This type of competition makes Rutgers University as a whole better.

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14 Douglass has had an active Douglass Fellows program drawing from not only the Faculty of Arts and Sciences but also from Cook, Engineering, Pharmacy, etc. At Fellows meetings over the past three years, typical attendance has been 30-40 fellows with a number of tenured faculty participating. This level of attendance rivals that of any meeting of the New Brunswick Faculty Council or meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Moreover, our Fellows committees (Curriculum, Shaping A Life, Student Academic Affairs Committee, Scholars) have been particularly active. Additionally, the College has nurtured its links to the Institute for Women’s Leadership consortium units including the Women’s and Gender Studies Department, the Center for American Women and Politics, the Institute for Research on Women, the Center for Global Women’s Leadership, and the Center for Women and Work.
Past Success

Despite the opportunity to more fairly compete, the recent admission successes that Douglass has experienced cannot be solely attributed to the opening up of the admission process or even to Douglass Merit Awards.\footnote{Merit awards have been a strategy that the University has used across all three campuses to recruit elite students to Rutgers University. At Rutgers-New Brunswick and at Camden, these types of awards have provided impressive results. Unfortunately, at Rutgers-New Brunswick, only one college has been able to take advantage of these awards with the admissions system creating the implication that there was only one reasonable choice for elite students to make, namely Rutgers College. Over the past ten years 90% of the merit awardees on the New Brunswick campus were enrolled at Rutgers College. The creation of the Douglass Merit Award was a recognition by the University that there needed to be a period in which the unfair playing field created by the system was leveled. Moreover, all of the data indicates that the Douglass awards did not result in a siphoning of elite students from the other colleges. While Douglass’ average SAT score increased by 20 points, the average SAT scores for the New Brunswick liberal arts colleges also increased during this same period.}

In August 2002 the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey indicated that 15 percent of students at Douglass had selected this College as their first choice. While a large percentage of the remaining 85 percent were suggesting that Rutgers University was not their first choice, there was also a significant group for which Douglass was not their first choice college within Rutgers. As a result of these figures, Douglass College made as its first priority in its strategic plan, establishing this College as a first-choice institution. Several strategies were put in place to reverse these numbers, including the development of a Douglass Alumnae Recruitment Team (DART) that now has over 250 members each making 20 personal phone calls to admitted students, the strengthening of the Douglass Student Recruitment Network (DSRN) for our overnight stay program for admitted students, the reshaping of various competitive edge programs, and the Douglass Merit Awards.

Consequently, Douglass has all but turned these numbers on their head in less than two years. In terms of the CIRP survey results, in 2003, 21 percent of students indicated that Douglass was their first choice (up from 15 percent), and in 2004, almost 30 percent of students indicated that Douglass was their first choice.

While the student self-reporting CIRP survey indicates that in less than two years the College has doubled the number of respondents indicating that Douglass is their first choice, these numbers do not tell...
the full story. It is clear when one reviews the CIRP data that a large percentage of the students who indicate that Douglass was not their first choice, are actually indicating that Rutgers University was not their first choice. A closer look at recent admissions data provides an impressive picture of the lure that Douglass College has for students choosing to attend Rutgers.

In 2004, 554 traditional first-year students enrolled at Douglass College. Of these students, 363 were admitted to all three liberal arts colleges, indicating that 66 percent of our students chose Douglass College as their first choice within the Rutgers University liberal arts system. Even if one separates the ninety-nine Douglass Merit Awardees from the 363 Douglass students admitted to all three liberal arts colleges, the results are still impressive with 48 percent or 264 admitted students choosing Douglass first.16

2004-2005 Actual First Choice Admissions Data

Whether one focuses on the CIRP survey results that show a doubling of students choosing Douglass first, or the more objective admissions data that indicates that a significant percentage of Douglass students are choosing this College, these are incredible results in a short timeframe. These results are only one indication of the positive changes that have occurred including: a 20 point SAT average increase at Douglass in only one year; the University’s SAT average continuing to increase in this same year (for the New Brunswick liberal arts colleges) indicating that Douglass had not siphoned students from the other liberal arts colleges to the detriment of the University; the lessening of the distance between Douglass’ SAT average and other colleges; the recruitment successes of DART and DSRN; and data indicating that special programs like the Global Village are luring students to Douglass. All of these indicators lead us to the conclusion that there is something about the current offerings at Douglass, this women’s college experience, and the way in which Douglass students can access all of Rutgers University, that implies a large untapped market for this women’s college on a public university’s campus.

16 In sum, the admissions data indicates that of the traditional first year incoming class, 66% were admitted to all three liberal colleges and chose Douglass first. The admissions data does not indicate what college choices were available to the remaining percentage (34%) of incoming students; therefore, we cannot determine with certainty the rankings of their choices.
National Recruitment

The recruitment landscape for a 21st century women’s college is essentially unlimited. Rutgers has the opportunity to lure to it elite women, who otherwise would not come to Rutgers University, but for the existence of this vibrant women’s college, thereby increasing the overall academic profile of the University. These women recognize the unique benefits of a women’s college, and consider places like Bryn Mawr, but also value coeducational opportunities and the resources available at a large research university. In essence, Douglass provides all the benefits of a women’s college, and none of the traditional weaknesses (limited majors, only single-sex opportunities, narrowly focused faculty, etc.).

In this regard, Douglass College can be Rutgers University’s competitive edge since it is the only women’s college in the country on a public research university’s campus. Douglass College is proposing that –specifically with respect to this women’s college – by focusing on national and not just statewide recruitment of students, Rutgers can position itself to compete with all of the elite women’s colleges and the best research universities.

Four-year Douglass College Experience

In order to ensure that this new vision for Douglass College will be successful, the College must offer a distinct and appealing four-year college experience. This experience will begin before a student even arrives on campus. She will reap the benefit of a national recruitment effort, resulting in a geographically diverse student body, and a smaller core student body than the nearly 3,000 students currently enrolled. She will also know that the membership of her incoming class will not grow in later years due to incoming transfer students, as Douglass will not allow transfer students from institutions outside of Rutgers University (except Bunting students, and those transfer students specifically seeking a women’s college experience).

Key elements of the four-year experience:

- A comprehensive, residential first year experience for all core students
- A required academic minor for all Douglass students, with the opportunity to pursue a women-focused minor
- An expansion of living-learning communities in the upperclass years, but with specific connections to academic departments, research centers and programs, thereby formalizing faculty leadership
- Enhanced opportunities for engagement with faculty
- Academic and peer advising that have overt connections to residential living
- A Scholars Program that is a part of a broad University honors program with the same academic criteria, but maintains opportunities for single-sex academic seminars
- Emphasis on study abroad
- Special women-centered academic programs and co-curricular initiatives
- Single-sex student organizations
Example of possible four-year tenure

Below is a graphical representation of the possible four-year tenure for two core Douglass College students under the proposed plan. As can be seen from the chart, the student focusing in the hard sciences will have some distinct experiences from those of the student majoring in the humanities, but both students will have a variety of common experiences throughout their four years at Douglass.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Student majoring in STEM field</th>
<th>Points of convergence</th>
<th>Scholar student majoring in Humanities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Project SUPER</td>
<td>Summer orientation</td>
<td>Take honors sections of introductory courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First year living learning community residential experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fall: “Bridge Course”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring: Shaping A Life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in student government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Live in Bunting Cobb LLC</td>
<td>Participate in faculty grant-supported lecture series</td>
<td>Live in Scholars House LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in academic advising programming</td>
<td>Take Douglass Scholars course(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer advisor for Douglass Project</td>
<td>Participate in Annual Women’s Weekend</td>
<td>TA in Shaping A Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Academic Leader (PAL) in Bunting Cobb LLC</td>
<td>Live in Middle East Coexistence Unit of the Global Village LLC</td>
<td>Begin required women-centered minor in History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Travel abroad with LLC participants during winter break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Begin fulfilling requirements of Leadership Mastery Credential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in Douglass Orientation Committee (DOC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>TA in Shaping A Life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Class representative in Douglass College Government Association (DCGA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Peer Academic Leader (PAL) in Bunting Cobb LLC</td>
<td>Completion of Leadership Mastery</td>
<td>MSD Honors Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commencement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is currently the case that various departments across the College work together diligently to provide an integrated experience for Douglass students. The integration of academic programs, residential and student life experiences, academic advising, and co-curricular opportunities requires substantial communication between various departments, including the development of cross-departmental teams. This type of integration provides a comprehensive connection between departments, translates into an intimate personal experience for students, and serves as a foundation for faculty seeking a more complete picture of individual students. In order to fully develop and implement the programs and ideals set forth in this proposal, this deliberate communication and purposeful interaction amongst various College departments will continue to be a hallmark of the Douglass Difference.

**Comprehensive First Year Experience**

In the summer before her first year, an incoming Douglass student will take part in a mandatory overnight summer orientation program, designed to introduce her to all aspects of life at Douglass College, including educational, administrative, and social activities. The incoming Douglass student will arrive in

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17 Since 2004, Douglass College has offered a mandatory overnight summer orientation program. Ninety-four percent of Douglass students participated in summer orientation in 2004. This two-day program (for special populations like EOF or women in science, the program was longer than two days) provided students with academic advising, workshops, and a writing assignment connected with our mission course, *Shaping A Life*, that was graded so that students could begin assessing their performance level in college.
the fall, with the classmates she met during summer orientation, to begin the first year living-learning experience required of all Douglass students.

The first year experience for college students should be one in which they are successful in meeting specific educational and personal goals. This is based upon the premise that students need to develop intellectual and academic competence; establish and maintain interpersonal relationships; develop personal identity; decide upon a career and lifestyle; maintain personal health and wellness; and develop an integrated philosophy of life. 18 The first year of college is a critical period for student learning and persistence. It is a period of transition and adjustment, both academically and socially, during which students acquire important skills that furnish the foundation for subsequent learning. It is a period in which involvement matters most, and when learning is most readily shaped by educational programs designed to provide students with learning experiences that are motivating, challenging, and involving.

With this said, Douglass College has constructed an intentional first year experience for undergraduate women that will meet students’ educational and personal goals. It is a series of integrated programs beginning with our newly implemented summer orientation program to the College’s mission course *Shaping A Life* (see diagram). The first-year program at Douglass College is designed to:

- Provide students with comprehensive support and address academic-related and social/developmental issues, and encourage self-assessment and skill development.
- Encourage students to understand who they are as women as they build community around common courses and academic experiences, in addition to the traditional social activities in the residence halls and the broader campus community.
- Promote a feeling of connectedness to the College staff, general advisers and the Douglass community.
- Identify students who are struggling academically and outline an intervention plan, and improve retention and student satisfaction.
- Enhance communication with the Office of Academic Services as academic issues emerge in the residence halls, and identify common trends that may be addressed with all first-year students.

The first year experience will include a first year “Bridge Course” in the fall designed to orient and prepare students for the academic rigor of college life and will require all students to live in residence and participate in house courses designed to supplement the fall course. Since the College has a substantial commuter population, this group of students will be distributed among the residential students’ course sections so that they receive the majority of the benefits associated with the course.

The first semester course will focus on achieving academic success in college, self-confidence and decision-making, and setting the foundation for leadership development. Programming by Peer Academic Leaders and Resident Assistants in the residence halls will complement the subject matter that is presented in class, and students will be assigned to class sections by residential area. The benefits of such a course and its linkage to the first-year residence halls are far-reaching, ensuring a foundation in

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the basic tenets of academic success, the benefits of an all women’s environment, and the importance of leadership skill development.

In the spring semester, students will then take the College mission course, *Shaping A Life*. This rigorous writing-intensive course will continue to take a direct approach to providing students with a foundation in women’s studies. Additionally, all students will be linked with a Douglass Scholar through our recently implemented Scholars Teaching Assistant program (2004-2005). These Scholars will continue to serve as teaching assistants in the *Shaping A Life* sections of 20-25 students, connecting each first-year student to an academic student mentor.

This comprehensive first year experience will necessitate the synergy of student and academic affairs, including academic and peer advising in the residence halls and a sectioning of students by residence hall (with commuter students assigned appropriately).

The first year experience, as a part of the College’s living-learning community, will focus on Douglass students only. As the research has indicated, intentional transitional programs are critical to the retention and success of students. Therefore, in order to function as a college, Douglass will need to continue to provide direct academic support for its students through academic advising and peer mentoring programs.

Consequentially, summer orientation, welcome week activities, academic advising, peer mentoring, and the Bridge course will remain as a part of the Douglass College four-year experience. Each of these programs is interconnected, and as aforementioned, is intentionally focused on women-centered liberal arts education and transitional issues critical to the first year of the collegiate experience.

There will be one exception to the first year experience. The capstone of the College’s first year experience, *Shaping A Life* (SAL) will continue as a mission course for Douglass College. However, SAL will provide special sections for upper class Rutgers women who are participating in the Douglass Associates Program (see page 29).

**Required Academic Minor**

Douglass College will require of all its students an academic minor. This requirement will likely be consistent with the recommendations of the undergraduate task force curriculum subcommittee, which has indicated that it will suggest that all Rutgers students be required to complete a minor.

Students will have the opportunity to complete a women-focused minor, consonant with our mission as a women’s college. The minor will contribute significantly to Douglass’ effort to orient its student body toward women’s studies, women’s leadership learning and opportunities, and College-based women’s living and learning opportunities, and will be a major curricular focus of the Douglass upper-class experience for those students who choose to pursue the women-focused minor. Since completion of the minor depends upon availability of curriculum that is women-centered, it encourages cooperation between Douglass and the faculties in women’s centered curriculum-building, and gives the Douglass Faculty Committee an important and specific mission—to encourage and coordinate women-centered course development and offerings at Rutgers University–New Brunswick (RU-NB). This needed effort will benefit not only Douglass students but all RU-NB women, and in building greater consciousness of women’s issues and scholarship, will benefit all of Rutgers University.

The minor could be satisfied in one of several ways:

a) by completing the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies (WGS) minor (consisting of three required courses and three elective courses).

b) by completing a proposed track of the WGS minor, called a Women’s Studies and Leadership (WSL) minor, in which Douglass students and Douglass Associates Program
students (see page 29) will complete *Shaping A Life*, fulfill a six credit core of the WGS minor, and for the remaining nine elective credits elect to do course work in a combination of WGS courses (and/or WGS approved cognate courses), IWL and Douglass credit-bearing women’s leadership curriculum, and Douglass credit-bearing women’s living and learning community (house) courses.

c) by completing any minor at RU-NB that includes at least 6 credits within the discipline of the minor (or perhaps within an allied discipline) that are women-centered—that is, involving the study of women, gender studies, feminist methodologies, or women’s leadership. With the exception of the WGS minor, these credits will be fulfilled through the elective credits within a given minor. A number of departments in the liberal arts offer more than enough courses focusing on women to enable students to fulfill this requirement (e.g., English has 22 such courses, History 13, Anthropology and Sociology each have 6). The minor will encourage the Douglass Faculty Committee, in concert with the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences and academic departments, to encourage the creation of more women-centered curricular offerings, especially in departments where they are lacking. It will certainly be the case that students, with the assistance of the College administration, could pursue innovative interdisciplinary and independent study projects that are women-focused.

**Expansion of Living-learning Communities in Upperclass Years**

As they move through their Douglass experience, students will also be able to take advantage of the Douglass College living-learning communities. These communities will be an expanded version of the existing living-learning communities at Douglass, which currently include the language and cultural units of the Global Village, the Human Rights Unit of the Global Village and the Bunting-Cobb Math, Science, Engineering and Technology residence hall. The living-learning communities at Douglass will require the combined efforts of Rutgers, New Brunswick faculty members (to help conceive of and oversee the units and to teach the credit-bearing courses), various research centers and programs at Rutgers (such as the Women’s Global Center’s ties to the existing Human Rights Unit), as well as the academic affairs and student affairs departments at Douglass. Proposed communities already include a LEAD House (with close ties to the Institute for Women’s Leadership), Environmental Unit (with close ties with Cook) and the Women in Politics Unit (which will be tied to the Center for American Women and Politics at the Eagleton Institute), the Women in Business Unit (which will be tied to the Rutgers Business School), the Middle-East Coexistence House (in conjunction with various area studies and language departments), and the Europe House (tied to Comparative European Studies).

These living-learning communities, by design, have specific connections to academic departments, and research centers and programs, thereby formalizing faculty leadership. Currently, Douglass College has a Living-Learning Communities advisory committee that meets regularly to shape the scope of our residential learning communities. This includes development of new units and house courses, working with faculty members and departments, connecting with potential faculty for residential living, and making recommendations about the future trajectory of living-learning communities at Douglass College. This committee would be expanded under this proposal to include members of the Douglass Faculty Committee as well as other important constituents.

Douglass has already demonstrated substantial leadership in this area through the Human Rights Unit that requires not only a 1.5 credit house course each semester taught by a graduate student who lives in residence with the students, but also requires a disciplinary 3 credit course that all community members must take together. This disciplinary course requirement creates faculty ownership of the residential community, as well as enhances the work and classroom experience of those students not living in the residential community. Moreover, in this model, a graduate student serves as an instructor in the house course, thereby connecting the relevant academic department with additional resources to support graduate students.
The Human Rights model helps to demonstrate the linkages Douglass College has made with the language departments as well as with women-centered units on our campus. Douglass’ partnership with the Center for Women’s Global Leadership and Women’s and Gender Studies in implementing the Human Rights Unit in fall of 2004 is a successful template for the College’s next initiatives. This model, currently in place in the Human Rights Unit, will be duplicated with various units and expanded to include the involvement of visiting scholars.19

These living-learning communities at Douglass College provide distinctive settings in which student academic success is supported through residential experiences. These communities bring academics into the residence halls through on-site classes, specific advising (peer and general), residential assistants, tutors, and special opportunities to interact with faculty and staff.

The residential experience is the foundation of the experience at Douglass College. Residential living at Douglass plays an important part in educating our students, both socially and academically, because it is also a single-sex experience with all the benefits aforementioned. Moreover, there is growing evidence that “creating seamless learning environments to educate the whole student through greater collaboration between student affairs and academics” is beneficial to college student learning.20 Students learn as much from other students as they do in a classroom, and benefit from direct interaction with faculty.21 Researchers contend that residence halls prove to be a perfect venue in which to integrate students’ curricular and co-curricular experiences, resulting in living-learning communities.22 Therefore, Douglass College will continue to offer a quality living-learning experience for first-year and upper-class women by providing an environment in which women can reap the benefits of a single-sex experience and become effective leaders in an expanding global community.

General Residential Experience

While all first-year students are required to participate in the comprehensive first-year living-learning experience and in the upperclass years Douglass students may choose to participate in one or many of the living-learning communities described above, students may also opt for a more traditional residential experience.

Residential living at Douglass College plays an important role in the education of women. It is well documented that college women are less likely to speak up in class, more likely to report disparate treatment by their professors, and more likely to experience low self-esteem.23 Women’s colleges offer a culture in which women are valued, exposed to positive role models, and may maximize their potential both academically and as leaders.24 The single-sex residential experience sets Douglass apart from the rest of the University, in that it is the foundation for the supportive women’s environment within the larger University structure.

Residential living provides both the opportunity to live in a women-centered community and to lead in that community as well. Each of these experiences provides its own distinctive benefit for women students to define their identity and values, develop personal goals and relationships with others, and to assess their own leadership potential within a supportive women’s environment.

19 The full curriculum of these living-learning communities includes a house course, a suggested or fully-funded study abroad component, house curricular programmatic activities, and a 3-credit disciplinary course.
Each year, the Douglass College residential experience not only permits students to live in a single-sex environment but also includes opportunities to serve as Peer Academic Leaders (based in residence) and resident advisors (40 positions). These residential student leaders offer more than 300 women-centered programs each year to those Douglass students living in residence. In many cases, the residential experience is the first opportunity for a Douglass College student to explore the concepts associated with identity and values, particularly in a nurturing environment. The programs and resources help women to learn about themselves and others, as well as to develop skills that can be utilized in the classroom and beyond. Students have an opportunity to do this through intentionally designed programs through the living-learning communities, the general residential experience, as well as through the opportunity to take on leadership positions. Whether it is as a peer mentor, resident assistant, or interacting with colleagues in the student led programming, the residents have the opportunity to not only grow and develop but also help other students become engaged in the Douglass community.

**Focus on Faculty Engagement**

All of the opportunities provided to the core Douglass student body and to the expanded Douglass Associates Program students (see explanation of DAP on page 29) will be evidenced by a high level of faculty engagement. The Douglass Faculty Committee will form the center of this engagement with core faculty specifically connected to the College’s mission courses, living-learning communities, and the breadth of the academic minors available for Douglass students.

Additional living-learning communities, like the current Human Rights Unit, will be developed in conjunction with faculty departments and will require the students in the community to take together a disciplinary course offered by an academic department. Moreover, various centers and institutes will be linked to the different living-learning communities. These specific linkages will create ownership by faculty and centers who are offering a disciplinary course in which a significant number of living-learning community students will be enrolled.

A faculty grants program will also be developed to provide incentives for faculty involvement. Douglass College has the ability to provide these types of grants based on our previous success in securing foundation, corporation, and alumnae support for special opportunities and because our mission attracts scholars and researchers. The faculty grants program will offer resources to faculty who develop courses, programs, and initiatives that:

1. promote the mission of Douglass College and contribute in significant ways to the education of women;
2. contribute to faculty/student interaction and collaboration;
3. have as their main purpose a substantive benefit to undergraduate education; or
4. serve as “seed money” for longer-term projects that benefit the overall education of women at Rutgers University.

The Douglass Faculty Committee, as a result of its connection with the first-year residential experience, mission courses, living-learning communities, the academic minor, and the faculty grants program will have a strengthened relationship with academic advising. Since 2004, Douglass has implemented academic advising that springs from residential programs and our living-learning communities. The specific faculty relationships enhanced by our living-learning communities will make these faculty advising connections more comprehensive.

**Academic and Peer Advising**

For the first year and upper-class experience to be successful for the Douglass student, it is essential that: academic advising be readily accessible to the student; that academic deans, as they do now at Douglass, have a thorough familiarity with the student’s record and experience; and that the deans and
advisors be thoroughly knowledgeable of both University core requirements (as proposed) as well as Douglass-specific requirements and mission opportunities. Any attempt to centralize academic advising by having it based, or reporting, outside of the College, would most certainly sever the links of academic activity to co- and extra-curricular offerings, and, very importantly, would not foster the synergy that exists, and needs to be enhanced, between academic and student life staff.

The connection between advising, residential programs (peer advising), and co-curricular programming is overt at Douglass College. Moreover, the mission-centered approach to the variety of opportunities at Douglass is the thread that is sewn throughout our students’ four-year experience. As aforementioned, these connections will be extended into our faculty led living-learning communities, and thus will need to continue to reside with the College.

**Scholars Program/Mabel Smith Douglass Honors Thesis**

Douglass looks forward to participation in a University-wide honors program that can better coordinate the various honors offerings and opportunities at RU-NB, create a common admission requirement, communicate more widely the opportunities for high-achieving students at RU-NB, and promote and incentivize the creation of more innovative honors curricula. At the same time, Douglass believes strongly, given the centrality and importance of its mission, that a single-sex Scholars Program greatly benefits Douglass students as well as enhances the diversity of honors at RU-NB. It also strongly asserts the importance of lower-level College-based seminars that are single-sex, generally interdisciplinary in orientation, and fostering of a community of highly motivated and performing women.

Over the past decade, close to half of the Douglass Scholars seminars offered focused on women-centered topics: without a Douglass component of a University-wide honors program, curricula focusing on women’s issues would suffer. Douglass, in concert with the current proposals on undergraduate honors at RU-NB, asserts the need for a general honors program with uniform standards of acceptance and retention, and uniform general requirements, but with an allotted number of credits that can be fulfilled through College-specific curriculum.

It is also the case that over half of Mabel Smith Douglass honors theses completed in the past decade have focused on women’s issues. Again, without a thesis program (which has been generously supported by the AADC) that is oriented toward the College’s mission, it is likely that the amount and quality of undergraduate honors research on women will diminish. At the same time, the College recognizes the importance of ceding authority to disciplinary expertise in the guidance of thesis work, and supports the recommendation of the Task Force Curriculum Subcommittee and the FAS committee on college honors, that thesis work be primarily directed on the department level, and that an RU-NB Office of Undergraduate Honors will have oversight of honors offerings University-wide. It is important, however, that Douglass students, in the lower level coursework as well as in thesis work stage, see themselves as a community of scholars, and for that reason, College-based colloquia on thesis work is important.

**Emphasis on Study Abroad**

The Douglass College experience will be enhanced by an emphasis on study abroad as a transformative experience for young women. Traditionally this College has prepared women for leadership, but the new focus is on preparing young women for global citizenship in this new global environment. Several existing relationships make Douglass well positioned to provide these types of experiences for young women including the connection with Ewha University (the largest women’s college in Korea) with which the College has had alternating group student exchanges for a number of years; a newly developed initiative with Kiriri Women’s University for Women in Science, Math and Technology in Nairobi, Kenya; a history of language and cultural living-learning communities; an expansion of these units to include several internationally-focused issue units that involve group study abroad; the relocation of area studies.
departments on Douglass’ campus; $450,000 specifically set aside for study abroad scholarships for students residing in the Global Village learning communities available as a result of alumnae support; and recent new successes in securing alumnae funding for study abroad.

This emphasis on study abroad was an established goal in the College’s strategic plan, and has been the source of significant fundraising and cultivation activities over the past two years. Moreover, there is a foundation, in terms of internationally-focused special programming for women that the College can offer its students and broader Rutgers women who live in its communities.

Expansion of the Douglass Experience to the Broader Rutgers Community

As is currently the case, the four-year experience will be marked by the core Douglass student body taking advantage of academic and co-curricular offerings in their upper-class years, including participating in student government and student activities, participating in the student leadership program at Douglass (the LEADing Edge), taking advantage of scholarships funded by Douglass alumnae, and participating in programs such as the Douglass Project and Project SUPER, the Scholars Program, and the Associate Alumnae of Douglass College (AADC) Extern Program.

While these types of programs have traditionally been reserved exclusively for the core Douglass student body, in keeping with the 21st century women’s college model, these programs will be expanded so that as many Rutgers women as possible can engage in the Douglass Difference.

Academic and Co-curricular Activities: Integration with Wider University

Douglass College offers a plethora of co-curricular and experiential learning opportunities for women in the area of student life. Through participation and involvement, positional leadership roles, and peer mentoring roles, Douglass women have the opportunity to explore and sharpen their leadership skills in an environment that empowers them to become exemplary leaders. Student life encompasses the Douglass Project, leadership training and development and the College’s leadership program, the LEADing Edge (Leadership Education at Douglass), student organizations, and traditional programs and activities. While these opportunities will remain Douglass-based programs, activities, and services, they will be expanded to permit Rutgers women to participate in a variety of ways.

The chart on the following page offers a graphical representation of those elements open to the core student body, those open to the Douglass Associate Program (DAP) students, those open to undergraduate women at Rutgers-New Brunswick, and those open to all interested undergraduate students.

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25 In 2003, FAS proposed the relocation of various area studies departments to the Corwin Residences on Douglass’ campus. Douglass was supportive of the FAS proposal because of the new emphasis on global leadership and study abroad initiatives detailed in the College’s strategic plan. Executive Vice President Phil Furmanski approved the relocation of these various departments in the spring of 2004.
Douglass College: A Model for a 21st Century Women’s College

The Outreach components of the Douglass Project have consistently been available to men and women across Rutgers. With supportive University funding, the undergraduate research component of the Douglass Project, Project SUPER, will be broadened to permit participation by all Rutgers women. It is critical that the new Douglass Project is developed in cooperation with RU-NB faculty and the proposed Douglass Faculty Committee. Further opening of Douglass Project opportunities to women across New Brunswick, in conjunction with the new women’s-centered minor opportunity, may necessitate the development of curriculum concerning women’s relationship to the sciences.

LEADing Edge Program

The LEADing Edge is comprised of several programs at Douglass College. The chart below details the LEADing Edge programs that will remain College-based versus those that will be open to the greater Rutgers community:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Douglass students / DAP</th>
<th>RU Women</th>
<th>University-wide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Development Day</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders Course (1.5 credits)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Women’s Weekend</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Leadership for the Workforce</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leadership Transcript Program</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The S.O.R.Co (Student Organization Resource Center)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leadership Recognition Program</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC PLEN</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADership Mastery Credential</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Student Organizations**

Student organizations at Douglass College will operate in two distinct ways. First, there will be College-based student organizations that will be fully integrated into the Douglass experience. These will specifically include the Douglass College Government Association, the Douglass Activities Board, the Douglass Commuter Association, the Douglass Orientation Committee, the Douglass Student Recruitment Network, the Red Pine Ambassadors, and the Sophia Club (for Bunting students). Students who attend Douglass College for four years or opt for the Douglass Associates Program (see below) may participate in these organizations.

In the broader context of student organizations and activities at Douglass, Rutgers University women will be able to participate fully in any other student organization by either choosing to serve as positional leaders or as members of an organization. Having opportunities for women to serve in positional leadership roles is important to the growth and development of all women, and students across Rutgers will be able to take advantage of the Douglass Difference in this regard.

**Douglass Associates Program (DAP)**

The Douglass Associates Program (DAP) represents an expansion and formalization of the opportunity for undergraduate women at Rutgers, New Brunswick to take advantage, in a more comprehensive way of the Douglass Difference. These students will be those who choose to reside on the Douglass campus in their sophomore, junior, or senior year. DAP students will have more substantive access to Douglass programming than Rutgers women who chose not to be a part of the residential community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Douglass Associates Program (DAP)</th>
<th>Year One</th>
<th>Year Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Project SUPER</td>
<td>• Participate in Annual Women’s Weekend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Live in Spanish House of the Global Village LLC</td>
<td>• Participate in faculty grant-supported lecture series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Take Spanish House course and language course in Spanish dept.</td>
<td>• Begin interdisciplinary minor in Women’s Studies and Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Begin fulfilling requirements of Leadership Mastery Credential</td>
<td>• Take Douglass Scholars course(s), live in Scholars House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Spring: <em>Shaping A Life</em></td>
<td>• Completion of Leadership Mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participate in AADC Extern Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DAP students will apply to take part in a one year residential experience in a Douglass College living-learning community. While at Douglass, DAP students must fulfill the requirements of the living-learning unit, including taking the credit-bearing disciplinary course associated with the unit, participating in the house course and house programs, and studying abroad with their classmates, if applicable.
The Douglass Associates Program will open a rich variety of Douglass programs to the wider RU-NB women’s community. DAP will be open to all Rutgers undergraduate women by application. In addition to eligibility to participate in Douglass living and learning communities, DAP students may take advantage of several opportunities currently reserved for the core Douglass student body. DAP students may participate in funded living-learning study abroad opportunities when appropriate; may take Shaping A Life; may participate in the Scholars program (which will presumably be part of the overall RU-NB honors program) and live in the Scholars House and participate in the Mabel Smith Douglass honors program (i.e., participation in scholars thesis programs and activities, such as the MSD Colloquium every spring); may participate in the Leadership Mastery program/leadership transcript program; and various aspects of the Douglass Project for women in science, math, engineering, and technology. DAP students may also participate in the Associate Alumnae’s award-winning Extern program, in which Douglass students are placed during inter-sessions in professional settings, “shadowing” professional women in their work lives. DAP students will also reap the benefits of the faculty grants program (see page 25), and could fulfill the requirements of the Women’s and Gender Studies minor, the women-centered minors in various academic departments, or the women’s studies and leadership minor (see page 22) if they expanded the DAP experience beyond one year.

**College Center as a Focal Point of Student Life Activities**

The Douglass College Center provides programs, services, facilities, and employment opportunities, in an informal setting, allowing a place for the campus community to gather outside the classroom for co-curricular and mutual experiential learning and understanding. By doing so, the Center provides a safe and secure place for all students to freely express ideas. As the locus of student life, the Center also plays an integral role in fostering intellectual development, personal growth, leadership, and civic responsibility in the women of Douglass College. Moreover, we are committed to student learning and development, and guided by the philosophy that student engagement and empowerment are essential ingredients for the success of Douglass women now and in the future.

One recent report “traces the strategic interventions of a group of dedicated feminist faculty to create permanent institutions within Rutgers that could foster transformative teaching and research and provide spaces for creative thinking.”26 The Douglass College Center provides this space for women at Douglass. This women-centered mission is driven throughout the programming provided by the Douglass Activities Board and the various student organizations currently housed in the College Center. As the location of the University’s Women’s Center (a space specifically provided by the College), the space for office hours of Shaping a Life instructors, and the site of student activism, the College Center provides the dedicated “space for creative thinking” that is oftentimes unavailable, or certainly not specifically provided, for women students.

With that said, space and place are important in this effort to maintain Douglass as a college for women. It is where women can come together for women-centered curricular and co-curricular programs. It is a structure, as with the residence halls, where seamless learning can occur through the unification of programs and activities with students, faculty, and staff.

The College does recognize, however, the need to work collaboratively with the other campus centers and campus activities programs. Specifically, this needs to occur with respect to the creation of common policies and procedures as they relate to student organizations, scheduling, reservations, and opportunities to participate.

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26 See, Feminist Interventions, IWL Reaffirming Action Project report.
Locus of Women-centered Research and Scholarship

A strengthened core Douglass student body, the creation of the Douglass Associates Program, the expansion of the Douglass Difference throughout the wider Rutgers community, the expansion of living-learning communities, the student life components of the College, and the various women-centered units on the Douglass campus, make Douglass College ripe for its enhanced role as the locus of women-centered research and scholarship. Creating and supporting this locus of women-centered initiatives is the foundation for a diverse cadre of faculty, many of whom are drawn to these issues.

In order to take advantage of the synergy among undergraduate students, faculty researchers across the New Brunswick campus, and research centers and programs, Douglass College will need to create more formalized connections between the College and these women-centered entities. By strengthening these connections through a variety of means, the College, and therefore Rutgers University, can be a strong voice for issues affecting women in New Jersey and across the nation. These connections will include, but are not limited to:

*The Institute for Women’s Leadership (IWL)* – The College will strengthen Douglass’ student-driven leadership component by specifically connecting student life (LEADing Edge) with IWL. In addition, IWL and its affiliate faculty will play an integral part in the formation and launch of various new living-learning communities.

*Women’s and Gender Studies Department* – The Douglass College academic affairs department will work closely with WGS to create and oversee the Women’s Studies and Leadership academic minor, building on the connections already established with WGS faculty in the revisioning and oversight of the *Shaping A Life* mission course.

*Center for Women’s Global Leadership (Global Center)* – The College will build on the existing connection of the Global Center to the Human Rights Unit of the Global Village. Global Center visiting faculty (Global Associates) will be a natural source of resident faculty members for the Global Village living-learning communities, allowing the Global Center more ease of interaction with undergraduate students.

*Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP)* – Douglass College will establish a strong connection with CAWP and its affiliated faculty members in order to launch the Women and Politics living-learning unit.

*Academic Departments across Rutgers University* – With the relocation of various area studies departments into Corwin, in combination with the traditional language departments that currently reside on Douglass’ campus, we are poised to expand our connections with faculty departments more effectively. This is particularly true since the core of the various living-learning communities have an international focus.

Moreover, the women-centered minor will encourage various academic departments that have traditionally had few, if any, electives connected with women’s studies, to offer and develop coursework in this area. These types of innovative curricular initiatives around Douglass’ mission, the faculty grants program, and the leadership of the Douglass Faculty Committee, will be the foundation upon which we can draw new and younger faculty to this institution and into close association with Douglass.
Support, Resources, Equity

Currently, Douglass College makes use of not only University support (tuition, fees, capital improvements) but support from corporations, foundations, and alumnae. The value in this Douglass proposal is that it ensures that non-University support will not only remain, but can be enhanced. As the University considers a $1 billion campaign over the next few years, it will be important that potential areas of excellence are highlighted and shaped in ways that draw financial support.

A women’s institution has a natural constituency that can serve as a foundation for consistent financial support for a variety of institutes, centers, and academic departments. Douglass College acts as a catalyst for corporations and foundations seeking opportunities to fund women-centered programming. Especially important is alumnae support that would be diminished as a result of the dissolution of Douglass as a college. It would serve the University well to work diligently towards ensuring that a core Douglass College remains as a basis for garnering such support.

The expansion of the Douglass Difference to the wider University does have an additional impact on resources. For example, while the Douglass Project has been open to Rutgers women for many years, aspects of Project SUPER (the program that offers research scholarships for summer laboratory work) have been reserved for Douglass women, due to limited resources. While alumnae have generously supported these types of programs in the past, it will be imperative as we move forward that the University be a partner in developing resource support for non-Douglass students in a variety of areas.

Additionally, while some have described the issue of equity as one in which various programs should be open to all students, there is a much more substantive equity issue that must be addressed. As the University embarks on capital projects such as the greening of College Avenue and College Town on the Livingston campus, it must also address needed capital improvements on the Douglass campus. While one wishes that students made college choices solely based on academic offerings, all research indicates that an institution’s physical environment is also a major determining factor.

If Douglass College’s physical campus is not afforded equitable care and attention, a cycle of choices based on, for example, the most appealing residence halls will limit this College’s ability to advance its worthwhile mission and goals. Currently on the priority list is a new residence hall for Douglass College that is designed specifically around the enhancement and development of living-learning communities. This institution has not had a new residence hall in over thirty years, and it will be necessary to continue to give priority to this type\(^\text{27}\) of capital improvement on the Douglass campus to ensure equity.

\(^{27}\)The Douglass College Center, the Cook Douglass Recreation Center, Cooper Dining Hall, and various academic buildings (e.g. Hickman Hall) are sorely in need of capital improvements. A singular focus on College Avenue as the focus for these types of improvements only serves to reinforce a sense of inequity for students, faculty, and staff on other campuses.
Conclusion: Well Positioned for Success

Over the past 87 years the College has fostered the creation of a host of women-centered initiatives; and it continues to be the catalyst for feminist institution building.\(^{28}\) Douglass’ student body serves as a ripe data set for research, is a source of creative initiatives that engage faculty and students, is a focus of activism, and has proven to be a fertile laboratory drawing a diverse cohort of faculty and students into its community. The College continues to foster feminist thought, scholarship and innovative communities that connect academic coursework and co-curricular activities.

Douglass College has lately developed and is implementing a strategic plan aimed at strengthening the core student body and making the College a first-choice institution for many more students, improving curricular and co-curricular programming, creating vibrant living-learning communities, promoting women’s leadership opportunities, supporting the success of women in fields in which they have been traditionally under-represented, and preparing our students for leadership in a new global environment. Over the past two years, Douglass College has met 90% of the goals set forth in its strategic plan of 2002-2003.

Several aspects of “What’s Bold?” in our current proposal are programs that we have begun implementing at Douglass over the past two and a half years. Consequently, we are not embarking on this journey without foundation. Simply put, with this new opportunity presented by the undergraduate taskforce, the work we have been doing over the past few years, and the foundation that Douglass has fostered over the past 87 years, we are now on the brink of achieving all of the goals envisioned in our strategic plan. More grandly, we believe we are poised to become the model for women’s education in the 21\(^{st}\) century. Douglass College, on this large research university's campus, has created the ideal conditions for an extraordinary area of excellence for Rutgers University.

The benefits to the University are fourfold: 1) Douglass can act as a lure institution for women across the nation interested in women-centered education and research; 2) the presence of a women’s college on Rutgers’ campus encourages diversity both in drawing faculty researchers, scholars, and lecturers in women’s studies to the campus, and that diversity is in itself a benefit to the University; 3) the creation of a locus of women-centered initiatives will allow Rutgers to have a national voice on issues pertaining to women; 4) a critical mass of undergraduate women students, focused on issues related to women, help shape the tenor of classroom discussions, build agendas in support of women’s initiatives, and influence student life programs and activities.

Rutgers University now has the opportunity to remain an innovator in women-centered education and to advance diversity on all levels throughout the New Brunswick campus and to place a 21\(^{st}\) century spin on the bold experiment launched by Mabel Smith Douglass in 1918. By reaffirming Douglass College, Rutgers can take advantage of a uniqueness that is a competitive advantage for the entire University, helping it to rise to the challenge, whether in competition with elite women’s colleges or with top-tier research institutions.