Introduction

Castleton State College has enjoyed a notable reinvigoration during the past 10 years: a growing population of talented students, faculty, and staff; popular new academic and athletic programs; recently constructed, renovated, and purchased facilities; as well as a heightened sense of purpose and confidence among the campus constituencies.

Little about the college a decade ago foretold this reinvigoration. Had the Castleton of today been widely pronounced as the planned destination for the college 10 years ago, a skeptic back then might have replied with that old Vermont locution: “You can’t get there from here.”

Historically, that locution refers to the rugged Vermont landscape and circumstances. It suggests that, more often than not, there is some formidable obstacle in the way between here and there—a looming mountain range; a treacherous waterway; or a long, wide, deep stretch of spring mud. It further suggests that ingenuity, enterprise, and cooperation must be brought to bear in order to move over, around, or through that obstacle, and thereby win the way. Trailblazing, in other words, is one necessary reply to the Vermont landscape and circumstances—as it was 200 years ago, as it has been during the past 10 years at Castleton, and as it will be at Castleton again, with the college about to set forth into new territory during the next 10 years.

Since summer 2012, the Castleton community has considered how the college can continue to thrive, not simply survive, in the decade to come. Last fall, after plentiful meetings small and large, the community offered its support for the Castleton Strategic Plan. Last spring, seven college committees comprising 60 members undertook separate charges derived from that vision statement. Those committees made substantial contributions to this Castleton Strategic Plan by way of the drafts that they submitted in March and April. Late last spring and through this past summer, those drafts underwent necessary revisions as they were combined together into one unified plan. Most recently, all seven committees have reviewed the revised drafts of their work. As well, the president and cabinet have reviewed the entire plan, which identifies seven destinations and sets the courses that will guide the college to those destinations. Soon, with this map in hand, we members of the college community must make our way into that new territory itself, unleashing the trailblazing spirit as we go.

This plan, by definition, leaves implementation to the future—especially to the well-established college and trustees governance structures that will guide implementation. Nor does this plan burden the future with needless or counterproductive constraints. Trailblazing often needs the latitude.

The core values represented by the Castleton Mission Statement do, however, permeate this plan. Ideally, in turn, this plan and subsequent implementation will sustain, and intensify, the reinvigoration of Castleton—and therefore demonstrate that, with an abundant trailblazing spirit, you can get there from here.

Following this introduction, the document divides into two parts: first, the plan itself; and second, the appendix. Any quoted material cited within the plan comes directly from the vision statement. The appendix that follows the plan provides supplemental material: the Castleton Mission Statement, the recommendations issued last year by the college Task Force on Teaching and Learning Technology, the Castleton Strategic Plan Vision Statement, an excerpt from President Wolk’s fall 2013 Convocation address, and a list of all committee members who contributed so generously to this plan.
The Plan

Undergraduate Education

Destination 1: Castleton will “remain centrally committed to a relationship-based educational experience focused on undergraduates” and will “continue to offer undergraduates a multitude of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that vigorously encourage academic achievement, civic responsibility, and a clearer sense of purpose in the world.”

As Castleton grows through incremental increases in undergraduate enrollment and the development of new graduate programs, the college will need to build the capacity to support and deliver a high-quality educational experience to a larger number of undergraduate students. The over-arching goal is to continue to provide undergraduates with a truly transformative experience that is relationship-based, academically rigorous, and relevant to their personal and professional growth and objectives.

Inspired by this framework of relationships, rigor, and relevance, the Undergraduate Education Committee recommends the following courses to arrive at Destination 1 within the next 10 years.

1. Castleton will retain and strengthen its historical identity as a teaching institution that seeks the insights to be gained when the liberal arts and professional preparation are mutually informing. The college will thus ensure that the Castleton education is responsive to the world of the twenty-first century.
   a. Provide further support for teaching, community engagement, and scholarly and creative activity that occurs within collaborative partnerships across disciplinary boundaries.
   b. Use information from the Admissions Office about students' interests as well as market research from other sources to consider curricular innovation (e.g., converting some minors and concentrations into degree programs).
   c. Increase emphasis on undergraduates' application of knowledge and skills to complex regional, national, and global problems.
   d. Guide the General Education Program to foster integrative learning, including students' transfer of skills and knowledge from course to course and discipline to discipline.
   e. Continue to develop effective and efficient methods to measure undergraduate learning and assess program effectiveness.
   f. Demonstrate and convey the relevance and value of undergraduate programs for professional placement, post-graduate study, and citizenship.

2. Castleton will continue to be a learning community that values service, civility, and aspiration. These values will infuse an institutional identity in which sustainability, citizenship, and leadership are all integral themes.
   a. Develop a college-wide honor code to define and set expectations for Castleton community membership.
b. Support and expand programs that increase undergraduates' cultural competencies and cultivate their identities as global citizens (e.g., Soundings and study abroad).

c. Support and expand programs that foster the core values of sustainability and citizenship (e.g., Green Campus Initiative and Civic Engagement Certificate).

d. Apply for the Carnegie Classification of Community Engagement, an elective classification within the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that recognizes colleges and universities for authentic and sustained community engagement.

e. Clarify undergraduate leadership and responsible agency as a core component of the transformative Castleton education.

f. Further integrate the “academic” and “student life” components of the Castleton undergraduate education.

3. Castleton will increase the availability of and emphasis on high-impact practices that achieve deep and engaged learning. The college will thereby prepare undergraduates to enter their civic and professional lives with confidence.

   a. Integrate twenty-first century skills—including collaborative learning as well as analytic, synthetic, and other forms of critical thinking—throughout the college curriculum.

   b. Increase support for intercultural experiences in the Castleton education by enhancing affordable study abroad opportunities for students and sustainable international exchange programs for students and faculty, as well as by increasing emphasis on global diversity within the curriculum.

   c. Increase support for undergraduate research and faculty-student research collaboration.

   d. Support increased experiential learning, including internships, community engagement, study abroad, and intercultural learning in diverse communities.

   e. Support programs to develop rigorous capstone experiences.

4. Castleton will reaffirm that all members of the college community contribute to the learning and development of undergraduates. This ideal will be the hallmark of every Castleton educator, a professional who works with the full support of the Castleton community to meet this shared vision.

   a. Continue to build collaboration among Castleton employees of all divisions.

   b. Organize learning initiatives and encourage innovative pedagogy across campus, perhaps leading to the development of a center for teaching and learning, particularly concerning the integration of technology into teaching practices (e.g., hybrid courses).

   c. Increase integration of co-curricular and academic programs.

5. The Castleton education is student-centered and situated in a learning environment where undergraduates are supported and challenged in an atmosphere of respect and collegiality. Castleton will continue to serve students who benefit most from the transformational learning offered by the Castleton education.

   a. Coordinate evidence-driven efforts to support student success and persistence (e.g., transfer initiatives and Early Intervention Initiative).

   b. Increase emphasis on and investment in advising that is grounded in relationships, that helps students achieve a reasonable pace to graduation, and that sets realistic goals.
c. Help interested faculty to develop and offer select hybrid/online undergraduate courses that maintain relationship-based, engaged learning at the same level of rigor as face-to-face coursework.
d. Maintain appropriate levels of academic rigor within programs, and communicate shared expectations for students’ effort and success.

Growth

Destination 2: Castleton will increase its undergraduate population “to approximately 2,500 through a measured, incremental process that seeks to raise admissions standards and increase retention rates while expanding our recruitment efforts into each of the fifty states and all countries where we can develop sound recruitment opportunities.”

As its undergraduate population increases, Castleton will continue to strengthen its commitment to the core values proclaimed in the Castleton Mission Statement.

In addition, Castleton will continue its many concerted efforts to recruit talented and dedicated undergraduates from Vermont and the Northeast.

But the college will deploy many new efforts, as well—efforts especially directed at national and international markets where the college has not hitherto made its presence known but from which the college can recruit undergraduates who will thrive at Castleton even as they bring more of the country, more of the world, and therefore more diversity to Castleton.

One such effort is the National Scholars Award, another in an array of merit-based scholarships that Castleton offers. All new out-of-state students who complete a rigorous college preparatory curriculum in high school and who earn a high school grade-point average of 3.0 or higher will receive the award. The National Scholars Award will attract additional bright, ambitious out-of-state students to Castleton and should help to increase the college retention rate, persistence rate, and graduation rate.

The Growth Committee recommends the following courses to arrive at Destination 2 within the next 10 years.

1. Because the Castleton Mission Statement represents what the college is and what the college aspires to become, Castleton will continue to strengthen its commitment to that statement and to the core values therein, even as the college undergraduate population increases by approximately 500 students.
   a. Invite all college constituencies to review the Castleton Mission Statement in public forums during the third, seventh, and tenth years of this Castleton Strategic Plan.
   b. Elicit recommendations from those constituencies about how the college can continue to strengthen its commitment to that statement.

2. Castleton will better harmonize what prospective undergraduates seek in a college education with what the college offers.
   a. Concentrate recruitment efforts on students who in fact already seek what the college offers.
   b. Based on market research, the Castleton Mission Statement, and consensus within and among the various college constituencies, offer more of what prospective students seek—in curricular programs; in extra-curricular programs, including
athletics; and in preparation for productive careers, engaged citizenship, and meaningful lives.

3. Castleton will improve the opportunities for prospective undergraduates to attend the college.
   a. Monitor the effects of all merit-based college scholarship programs and make adjustments accordingly—so that those scholarship programs serve the most qualified students and best serve college recruitment and retention efforts.
   b. Add a need-based scholarship program and expand the service-based scholarship program, thereby diversifying the population of students who receive scholarships.
   c. Continue to provide more scholarships and more generous scholarship awards to eligible students.
   d. Provide a more inviting and beneficial experience for international students, including improved transition and support services, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.
   e. Provide improved transition and support services for veterans, perhaps including a center for veterans.
   f. Offer more dual enrollment opportunities to area high school students who wish to finish high school and begin attending the college simultaneously.
   g. Offer more provisional enrollments to hard-working though underperforming students who demonstrate academic potential and wish to attend the college.
   h. Improve existing articulation agreements and increase the number of such agreements for transfer students and for students interested in advanced degree programs.

4. Castleton will help prospective undergraduates to understand more clearly the value of attending the college and being graduated from the college.
   a. Sharpen and heighten the college profile so that such value is fully, variously, and persistently proclaimed.
   b. Establish a new college website that articulates “the Castleton story,” emphasizing the Castleton Mission Statement and core values as well as the many valuable opportunities the college offers to students from near and far.
   c. Apply the most appropriate, most advanced recruitment strategies and tactics in Vermont, the Northeast, and all other states and countries where the college can “develop sound recruitment opportunities”—and thereby reinforce the value of attending Castleton.
   d. Continue current international recruitment efforts, determine how best to take international recruitment to the next level, and pursue the most promising new strategies and tactics to reinforce the value of attending Castleton.
   e. Develop initiatives that attract more veterans to the college, especially by reinforcing the value of attending Castleton.

5. Castleton will increase the retention rate, the persistence rate, and the graduation rate among students who do attend the college.
   a. Continue to raise college-wide awareness about retention, especially about how crucial retention is to the college and how all members of the college community can work together to effect a higher retention rate.
   b. Better understand the causes of student attrition and then better address those causes whenever possible.
c. Start and strengthen retention programs like the new Early Intervention Initiative.
d. Help all students to understand more clearly the value of attending the college
   and being a graduate of the college.
e. Identify the qualities of students who persist to graduation, prioritize those
   qualities in recruitment efforts, and foster those qualities in students new to the
   college.

Graduate Education

Destination 3: Castleton will develop “a number of exemplary graduate programs,”
including online and hybrid programs and courses—thereby establishing Castleton “as
Vermont’s public master’s institution” and “exerting a positive influence” on the
undergraduate experience.

As Castleton projects a decade of growth while remaining centrally committed to the
hallmark of its mission—a transformative, relationship-based education—one goal of the
college is to ensure consistency in the nature of the Castleton experience, whether that
experience is at the undergraduate or graduate level or both. Committee members
therefore envision an approach to graduate program development by which Castleton
becomes an institution that produces graduate students with recognized mastery in their
fields and the ability to act as transforming agents in the twenty-first century. The approach
is grounded in these four values: transformative, relationship-based education;
academically rigorous, exemplary programs; relevant programs aligned with student and
community needs; and institutional support for graduate program quality.

The Graduate Education Committee recommends the following courses to arrive at
Destination 3 within the next 10 years.

1. Castleton will develop graduate programs that maintain its dedication to excellence in
teaching and close student-faculty interaction, thus ensuring a transformative personal,
social, and academic experience for graduate students. Regardless of their campus-based,
low-residency, or hybrid/online designs, Castleton’s graduate programs will be recognized
for their consistent transformation of students into educated citizens with recognized
mastery in their fields.
   a. Ensure close student-faculty interaction and out-of-classroom learning
      experiences at the graduate level.
   b. Expand faculty development support, particularly in hybrid/online instructional
      strategies.
   c. Enhance efforts to recruit well-qualified graduate students and to meet the
      particular needs of graduate student development.

2. Castleton will develop graduate programs with clear and rigorous expectations that
enhance the overall academic life of the college. The types of programs that the college
offers will expand to include a variety of graduate, post-baccalaureate, certificate, and
continuing education programs. Those programs will operate in concert to clarify the
identity and strengthen the quality of Castleton’s current and emerging specialties.
   a. Clarify both our current academic strengths and specialties and additional
      strengths and specialties that we want to develop.
   b. Clarify learning outcomes at the graduate level to ensure alignment and
      progression of student skill and expertise.
c. Identify opportunities for the enrichment of the undergraduate experience in the design of graduate student experiences and assistantships (e.g., as mentors and activity coordinators) and in the design of undergraduate/graduate courses when appropriate.

d. When appropriate, develop graduate programs that collaborate with community partners as centers for positive change in the city of Rutland, Rutland County, and the surrounding region.

3. Castleton will focus on developing graduate programs that align with prospective student and community needs inside and outside the Northeast. Consequently, the college will offer an array of programs that appeal to a diverse body of graduate students seeking professional development and expertise.

   a. Develop graduate programs that address Admissions Office student interest data, identify advantages over competitor programs, and connect with analyses of employment needs and trends.

   b. Where appropriate, develop low-residency, hybrid, and online graduate courses and programs tailored to student needs and interests and to the educational goals of individual programs.

4. Castleton will support the work of graduate program development and ensure consistency of quality across programs. The college will therefore guide the development of new programs and the ongoing improvement of existing programs by establishing clear expectations for program development, suitable resources to support those programs, and meaningful assessment of those programs through appropriate institutional leadership structures.

   a. Establish a clear set of core expectations that will guide departments in developing programs that meet college-defined standards of quality.

   b. Plan growth and maintenance of institutional infrastructure appropriate to the entire graduate student experience, including but not limited to classroom facilities, IT services, library resources, and access to housing.

   c. Establish an open, ongoing review process for graduate programs consistent with institutional and program accreditation guidelines.

   d. Review leadership structure to ensure support and consistent quality across graduate programs.

   Faculty and Staff Support

Destination 4: Castleton will maintain or improve support for faculty and staff as the college increases its “undergraduate population to approximately 2,500” and develops “a number of exemplary graduate programs.” The college will also “promote academic collaboration between undergraduate and graduate students and between students and faculty” through increased support “for teaching, scholarship, and creative endeavor.”

Castleton rightly takes great pride in its effectiveness as an institution dedicated to offering an educational experience of high quality that seeks to transform the lives of students as both scholars and catalysts for good. Such a transformational education is best achieved within the context of a vibrant campus community characterized by mutual respect and meaningful interaction. The growth and expansion of graduate programs that we envision must be accomplished in a manner that strengthens these values. Castleton’s continued success will depend upon faculty and staff who devote their time, energy, and
expertise in profoundly personal as well as professional ways. To honor and nurture such 
essential contributions, the college will extend its support of all employees in a variety of 
directions.

The Faculty and Staff Support Committee recommends the following courses to arrive 
at Destination 4 within the next 10 years.

1. Small class sizes and meaningful interaction between faculty and students are central 
elements of a Castleton education, and person-to-person service is fundamental to the 
Castleton experience. Therefore, faculty and staff numbers will continue the past decade’s 
pattern of growing in step with enrollments as the college expands its undergraduate and 
graduate student populations.
   a. Continue adding sufficient full-time faculty to maintain current class size.
   b. Continue adding full-time staff at least to maintain the current level of service and 
      workload.
   c. Seek to develop more funding sources for assistantships, internships, and work-
      study to help ease workload pressures for faculty and staff departments.

2. Recognizing that a Castleton undergraduate education is both relationship-based and 
academically rigorous, the college will provide faculty with the support necessary for 
effectively supervising undergraduate research and creative work that extends beyond 
normal course requirements.
   a. Provide more support to faculty members supervising substantial research or 
      creative work at the senior undergraduate level.
   b. Review institutional policies for supervision of independent studies.

3. Because Castleton aspires to establish graduate programs characterized by rigor, 
relevance, and a relationship-based educational environment, the college will provide 
faculty with the time necessary for developing and sustaining programs that meet its 
standards of quality.
   a. Allow faculty members to incorporate summer teaching into their normal 
      workloads.
   b. Provide more support for faculty members who are leading the development of 
      graduate programs and who are creating new graduate curricula.
   c. Provide support for faculty members to sustain the quality of existing graduate 
      courses.

4. Because Castleton intends to establish graduate programs that complement its focus on 
educating undergraduates in a relationship-based context, the college will provide 
intentional avenues of interaction between both graduate and undergraduate students and 
and graduate students and faculty.
   a. Seek to develop more funding sources for graduate assistantships that promote 
      graduate/undergraduate interaction in the classroom.
   b. Seek to develop more funding sources for graduate assistantships and internships 
      that promote collaborative research and creative endeavor among graduate 
      students, undergraduate students, faculty, and staff.

5. Recognizing that a genuinely transformational learning experience requires faculty and 
staff who are continually expanding their knowledge and expertise, the college will 
increase the resources available to faculty and staff for their professional growth.
   a. Seek to provide a comprehensive professional development program for staff.
b. Keep faculty updated about the possibilities of receiving supplemental development funds from the academic dean’s office.

c. Continue building an endowment for faculty research and creative endeavor as a means of increasing support for faculty development through institutional grants.

d. Strengthen efforts to communicate to faculty and staff opportunities for professional growth and to communicate how such opportunities might advance institutional priorities identified in the Castleton Strategic Plan.

6. Because Castleton’s dreams for the future will transpire in a rapidly changing landscape of financial challenges, efforts to redefine higher education, and dramatic technological innovations, the college will evaluate at regular intervals the effectiveness of its tactics for support of faculty and staff, particularly in light of revisions that might be made to collective bargaining agreements.

   a. Whenever a new contract is ratified, assess its implications for support.
   b. Whenever appropriate, review the Castleton Strategic Plan to assess support opportunities and recommend any needed changes.

Infrastructure

Destination 5: Castleton will add infrastructure, including “energy efficient facilities” and technology, thus “maintaining current class size” and ensuring that “the level of service to students and their families meets or exceeds that which we currently provide.”

Castleton will increase its undergraduate population by an average of approximately 50 students each year for the next 10 years. It will also add graduate programs at a measured pace. As part of this growth, the college will also seek to enhance its presence and importance as a key intellectual driver of entrepreneurship and community development in the city of Rutland and surrounding communities.

The resulting revenue will initially finance the creation of new academic space within already existing college buildings and will eventually help finance new academic and residential buildings in preparation for serving an undergraduate population of 2,500, additional graduate students, and a select student population in Rutland.

Because there will be many decisions to make about new classrooms, laboratories, and buildings—such as which existing buildings to repurpose or renovate, what exactly to build, when precisely to build, and where ideally to build, among others—Castleton will continue its relationship with an architectural consulting firm so that the college can expertly align growth with capacity. That firm will undertake extensive research and offer expert advice; but, ultimately, decisions about such matters will rest with the president, who will seek advice from the college community and approval from the Vermont State Colleges trustees.

The Infrastructure Committee recommends the following courses to arrive at Destination 5 within the next 10 years.

1. For at least the first three of the next 10 years, Castleton will keep pace with the incremental increase in student population by creating new classrooms and laboratories within existing buildings on campus and continuing to increase its presence and influence in Rutland. The college will also plan for the future addition of academic and residential buildings.
a. Immediately begin architectural consultations to plan for the creation of new classrooms and laboratories within already existing college buildings wherever appropriate—and to plan for future new buildings.
b. Decide which plans are the most promising plans for the college.
c. Implement those plans for new classrooms and laboratories when student enrollment numbers reach a prescribed level.
d. Promote sustainable and environmentally responsible designs, materials, and processes when adding new classrooms and laboratories.

2. When enrollment numbers warrant, Castleton will undertake to implement its plans for new buildings, thereby providing the college with even more academic space, including more library space, and more residential space, as well. The nature and location of these new buildings will depend on what the architectural consulting firm advises, what the president decides in consultation with the college community, and what the Vermont State Colleges trustees approve.
   a. Implement new building plans when student enrollment numbers reach a prescribed level.
   b. Promote sustainable and environmentally responsible designs, materials, and processes for all such construction.
   c. Increase library holdings and resources to serve a growing undergraduate and graduate population.

3. Castleton will expand and modernize its technology infrastructure. The college will make Internet and wireless service faster and more consistent across campus; add and improve classroom and library technology when and where appropriate; and, as revenue from increased enrollment permits, continue seeking to implement recommendations offered by the college Task Force on Teaching and Learning Technology.
   a. Continue working to ensure that Internet and wireless service is faster and more consistent across campus.
   b. Add and improve classroom technology when and where appropriate.
   c. Add and improve library technology when and where appropriate.
   d. Continue seeking to implement the recommendations offered by the Task Force on Teaching and Learning Technology.

4. Castleton will develop deferred maintenance, renovation, and replacement schedules for college buildings and technology infrastructure.
   a. Establish and follow ongoing schedules so that college buildings and technology infrastructure support excellence in undergraduate and graduate education.
   b. Ensure that all renovated, repurposed, and new space includes the best technology infrastructure that college resources can provide.

**Funding**

Destination 6: Castleton will increase “public and private funding.”

As the percent of funding from the state remains level or decreases, it will be necessary for Castleton to continue funding alternative sources of revenue.

To secure that revenue, the college will expand fundraising efforts in the areas of annual giving, niche giving, corporate giving, sponsored research (grants), scholarships,
and endowment donations, while also launching a capital campaign that aligns with strategic initiatives. The college will explore public-private partnerships for future projects and will seek alternative revenue from auxiliary services, entrepreneurial ventures, graduate programs, and continuing education. As the college continues to rely heavily on external funding sources, it will be important to establish a culture of college entrepreneurship that recognizes revenue-generating departments, programs, and individuals. Just as important will be establishing a culture of philanthropy among all college constituents.

By developing a comprehensive and workable advancement plan, the college will actively pursue creative fundraising initiatives to strengthen its financial position. This plan will focus on raising funds for various institutional and department-level priorities, including scholarships, program enhancement, facilities, equipment, and new program development.

The Advancement Office will work closely with administrators, college deans, and department chairs to help raise necessary funds for their projects. At the same time, the office will direct financial support to students with the greatest need, through scholarships, assistantships and, if possible, more opportunities for student employment on campus.

The Funding Committee recommends the following courses to arrive at Destination 6 within the next 10 years.

1. To serve students well and provide an outstanding educational experience, Castleton will continue its careful stewardship of existing resources and its creative, active pursuit of fundraising initiatives.
   a. Continue to build and maintain positive internal and external relationships.
   b. Develop and implement a comprehensive annual giving effort.
   c. Generate new resources and foster greater self-sufficiency by increasing the participation of parents, alumni, and other donors in support of fundraising initiatives.
   d. Launch and execute fundraising efforts that align appropriately with strategic initiatives outlined in the Castleton Strategic Plan.
   e. Expand advertising and media relations into specific markets and regions that are identified as key areas of opportunity for recruitment and fundraising.

2. As the college grows, Castleton will look for opportunities to increase and expand external funding opportunities (e.g., corporate giving, niche giving, sponsored research, scholarships, endowment donations, etc.) by initiating and strengthening public-private partnerships.
   a. Continue to develop strategic alliances with local, state, and federal policymakers.
   b. Develop and implement a strategy for increasing our endowments and support through planned giving.
   c. Develop and implement a comprehensive external fundraising strategy.
   d. Develop and expand public- and private-sector partnerships that support such opportunities as research and the arts.
   e. Increase grant revenue in support of research and creative endeavor.
   f. Expand the revenue generated through such entrepreneurial ventures as the campus store, conferences and events, and continuing education.
   g. Encourage innovation and future-oriented planning to promote an institutional climate of dynamic growth and change.
   h. Develop and implement an overarching marketing strategy and plan that creates greater awareness and informed advocacy across the college’s local, state, national, and international audiences.
Region, Town, and College

Destination 7: Castleton will “continue to strengthen the mutually beneficial relationship between the college and the town of Castleton” and will further develop the relationship between the college and the region, especially in the city of Rutland and Rutland County.

The town of Castleton was settled in 1767. Twenty years later, the Vermont General Assembly, meeting in Rutland, chartered the Rutland County Grammar School, from which Castleton State College has evolved. School, town, and city have stood together for over 225 years.

The historical association between school and town continues to produce mutual benefits. The town is a quintessential Vermont town and so helps the college to recruit students. After those students arrive, the town provides them municipal services, off-campus housing opportunities, and sometimes employment opportunities, as well. In turn, the college pays municipal fees to the town; contributes money to the town fire department and police department; and sponsors innumerable intellectual, cultural, and athletic events, including a popular summer concert series and, most recently, free skating at the new college ice rink—all of which are available to town residents. Volunteers from the college help to maintain the local Meals on Wheels program and the town community center. Students, of course, support the town economy by frequenting local establishments and renting local apartments and houses, and they support town schools by acting as mentors at the elementary school.

Despite these and other benefits, the college and town do feel some of the same aggravation and strain felt between colleges and towns across the country.

To further strengthen the relationship between the college and town and to further develop the relationship between the college and the region, the College and Town Committee recommends the following courses to arrive at Destination 7 within the next 10 years.

1. Castleton will continue to develop mutually beneficial relationships throughout the region, especially in the city of Rutland and Rutland County.
   a. Continue to establish the intellectual role of the college in the advancement of the city, county, and region.
   b. Continue to develop new opportunities that reinforce this role of the college (e.g., opportunities like the Spartan Arena, the Castleton Downtown Gallery, and the college’s current partnership with the Paramount Theatre).

2. Castleton will further encourage the college community to collaborate with the town and other local communities in service and civic engagement projects.
   a. Emphasize the importance of such community service during Orientation, First-Year Seminar, and civic engagement events.
   b. Complete service and civic engagement projects that promote college and community cooperation.

3. Castleton will continue to create opportunities by which members of the college and members of the town can communicate with and cooperate with one another.
a. Periodically convene advisory committees comprising a cross section of college members and town members to share ideas about how to address issues of common interest.

b. Appoint a college liaison who regularly communicates with the town, for example announcing college events and resources available to the town, announcing college plans for growth, and replying to town queries and complaints.

4. Castleton will continue to develop strategies that mitigate disruptive student behavior toward town neighbors and neighborhoods.
   a. Introduce new students to the town through means like Orientation and First-Year Seminar. Underscore the historical association and the dynamic interrelationship between college and town.
   b. Continue to provide all students, especially those who wish to live off campus, with rules and recommendations for visiting in and living in town.
The Appendix

Castleton Mission Statement

Castleton, the 18th oldest institution of higher education in the United States, emphasizes undergraduate liberal arts and professional education while also offering selected graduate programs.

The College is dedicated to the intellectual and personal growth of students through excellence in teaching, close student-faculty interaction, numerous opportunities for outside-the-classroom learning, and an active and supportive campus community. Castleton strives to learn, use, and teach sustainable practices. The College prepares its graduates for meaningful careers; further academic pursuits; and engaged, environmentally responsible citizenship.

As a member of the Vermont State Colleges, Castleton is committed to supporting and improving the region’s communities, schools, organizations, businesses, and environment.
The Task Force has worked over the summer investigating a number of educational technologies and best practices, reviewing the college's current assets and infrastructure necessary for learning technology use, and exploring the informal practices of technology use, access, and support across campus. Our preliminary recommendations to the administration and faculty follow.

Over the course of our discussions, it became apparent that there already exists a diverse wealth of innovative teaching and learning technology (TLT) use at Castleton, and that "if only Castleton knew what Castleton knows," we would be much more productive in enhancing student learning and communicating our achievements. Thus a final step in its work, the Task Force is currently drafting a faculty survey, to be completed early this fall, that will provide more detailed information to guide the direction of our recommendations. A draft of our proposed survey questions is attached to this report.

1. **Extend robust wireless access to all academic buildings.** In the era of "The Cloud," network and Internet access is the basis for most educational technology, and until robust wifi access is available in all classrooms, the possibilities for teaching and learning applications using portable, connected devices are limited. Lack of ubiquitous wifi puts us at a competitive disadvantage relative to other schools as well. IT services estimates equipment and licensing costs of approximately $50,000 plus installation costs of approximately $1,000 related to wiring.

2. **Assure student access to the technology they need for their courses by developing a baseline standard for individual computing resources integrated into students' cost of attendance and financial aid packages.** The task force discussed the fact that most, although not all, students currently have personal computers, and an increasing number are utilizing other portable connected devices such as smartphones, but currently students do not bring them for use in class, nor can faculty plan for in-class uses. As a corollary to the above, faculty must have equivalent access to the same resources; the college should provide this.

3. **Implement a professional development program to address teaching-learning technologies.** Considering Castleton's dedication to provide a diverse and challenging curriculum where individuals matter, we should maintain a focus on enhancement of student learning rather than adoption of technology per se. The professional development program should be informed by: an understanding of current and future students' expectations and learning styles; an understanding that "technology" is a vague term, referring to a number of dissimilar things; the continuous changes in technology; and faculty motivation and time issues. The specific direction of this program should be determined following a survey of current faculty use of and interest in TLT. (See attached draft survey question #2 for potential options.)

4. **Support discipline-specific approaches to technological innovation, including the addition of a "technology" line in the Education Resources budget.** Despite the distinct marketing
attention that would be garnered by the adoption of a signature technology across the campus (e.g. iPads for all students), the task force does not recommend that college pursue a single technology for the whole school. While we discussed this question at length, ultimately we felt such an effort would not yield the best results for enhanced student learning, given the compatibility issues, turnover rates, and the variation in needs across the curriculum. Individual departments may, however, find department-wide adoption of specific technologies to be advantageous and college policies and procedures should support this. College-wide, support for educational technology innovation might best be supervised by an appropriate Faculty Assembly Committee (e.g. Educational Resources) charged with researching best practices with new technology and recommending policy on adoption and faculty development. Coordination with VSC system initiatives, particularly the VSC Teaching Learning Technology group, is also an important resource to support TLT innovation.

5. **Re-examine the General Education computing requirement.** BUS 1270 was revisited this summer by the department, and COM/ART 1230 had its course description changed for the latest catalog, but neither change was examined by the Faculty Assembly as a part of the General Education program. In re-examining this requirement, the Faculty Assembly should define what we expect new students to have as certain baseline skills and decide how far we need to further develop these, particularly the use of technology to create, to learn, and to solve problems.

6. **Establish capital and maintenance budgets for classroom technology with the goal of standardizing technology in each classroom type** (small, medium, lecture hall). The process should determine what standard equipment should be for each (e.g. projector, computer, laptop connection, symposium, smartboard, document cameras...even chalkboards). Learning spaces of a given size should be upgraded simultaneously so faculty can move fluidly in technology use from one location to another. The F.A. Educational Resources Committee should establish priorities as this initiative progresses.

7. **Review best practices at other schools and accordingly structure the college store’s textbook priorities to provide e-texts and online interactive text resources at minimal cost.** In this regard, the college store and library should be active partners with faculty in developing innovative and economical approaches to digital texts and online materials.

8. **Prioritize the incorporation of technology as a means of enhancing the student experience from recruitment and admissions through graduation and alumni relations.** At every "Spartan" touch-point, not just the classroom, the idea of an individualized, technology-enhanced approach should be cultivated. Administrative tasks should be automated so that student time on campus is spent learning and engaging with the college community. The current method of online registration for existing students, which incorporates high touch (meeting with advisor and approval to register online) and high tech (ability to register online), works well. This kind of a process should be extended to applications for degrees, declaration of major, financial aid applications and registration for new graduate students, so that all of us - faculty, staff, and students alike -- are using, and modeling expectations for lifelong use, of online tools and resources. Faculty and staff time would then be spent on providing a higher level of service to students who have special circumstances or who need personal attention.
New graduate and certificate programs will require these enhanced online services to be competitive. Administrative initiatives currently under consideration in support of this priority include adoption of an electronic course catalog and a redesign of the college's website.

9. **Offer hybrid/non-conventional models of course delivery where appropriate.** In supporting such models, the college should work to define a "Castleton Way" of learning in online environments: technology used in offering non-conventional courses should be employed to enhance Castleton's competitive position as an institution that differentiates itself by treating people in a specialized and individualized manner.
Summative Statement

Over the next decade, Castleton will remain centrally committed to a relationship-based educational experience focused on undergraduates, but with a renewed emphasis on high-quality graduate education. We will continue to offer undergraduates a multitude of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that vigorously encourage academic achievement, civic responsibility, and a clearer sense of purpose in the world. To ensure that the college continues to thrive, we will remain steadfast in our pursuit of increased public and private funding, and we will increase our undergraduate population to approximately 2,500 through a measured, incremental process that seeks to raise admissions standards and increase retention rates while expanding our recruitment efforts into each of the fifty states and all countries where we can develop sound recruitment opportunities. We will also establish Castleton as Vermont’s public master’s institution, strategically developing a number of exemplary graduate programs.

Clarifications and Elaborations

As we increase our student population, we will continue to add sufficient full-time faculty and energy-efficient facilities, thus maintaining current class size. We will also continue to add staff, infrastructure (including technology), and other resources to ensure that the level of service to students and their families meets or exceeds that which we currently provide. And we will continue to strengthen the mutually beneficial relationship between the college and the town of Castleton.

Faculty may offer select undergraduate courses online or in hybrid formats, within the context of an institutional strategy that retains face-to-face instruction as the preferred method at the undergraduate level in both general education and major programs. We will continue to develop on-campus graduate programs and courses that exert a positive influence on the undergraduate experience. However, we will also develop online and hybrid graduate programs and courses whenever they are better suited to the needs of graduate students.

To promote academic collaboration between undergraduate and graduate students and between students and faculty, we will increase support for teaching, scholarship, and creative endeavor in all ways appropriate to an institution whose central commitment remains undergraduate teaching and learning.
Excerpt from President Wolk’s Convocation Address  
Fall 2013

Over the past fifteen months the college community has engaged in a comprehensive, inclusive and exhaustive planning process for our future. The Castleton Plan will be finalized during the fall semester, and I am very excited about this strategic plan and the blueprint for the next decade. I am also very grateful to Professor Denny Shramek and Academic Dean Tony Peffer for guiding us through this journey, including all of you along the way in establishing trails and destinations that will benefit the college now and in the future.

The headline of the Castleton Plan is that we are indeed a college on the move. The Plan builds on the reinvigoration of the college over the past dozen or so years, with well-planned incremental increases in undergraduate and graduate enrollment, staffing, programs and facilities, and with an eye toward a greater investment in and commitment to the Rutland area, including downtown Rutland as a destination for selected new programs for graduate students and upper level undergraduates that will further enhance the quality of a Castleton education.

Since we have renovated virtually every existing building on campus, and built many new ones, it is clear that we are very close to the capacity of our current campus footprint. Our promising future is predicated on continued expansion of academic programs and steady, well planned enrollment increases. However, much of that growth may well be away from Castleton’s main campus, in yet to be determined venues in the Rutland region, and will include a combination of approaches to online and distance education along with more traditional face to face education. What will not change is the relationship-based approach to education that our faculty and students cherish.

This is a tremendously exciting time for the college and our future. We need to continue to be entrepreneurial and innovative in our approach to the growth of the college. It will take the collective creativity of a small college with a big heart to launch us into new frontiers that will capture the essence of what makes us special and unique, ensure our financial stability for the future, and contribute to the cultural and economic well-being of Vermont.

Our students come to us every year as bright and promising young adults, with the future world within their reach. This is also true for our beloved Castleton, full of bright promise for the future, clearly a college on the move.

It is also clear to me that we need to preserve all that we love about our campus family, but it is also imperative that, if we are to survive and thrive, we need to grow.

Our vision moving forward is a testament to the remarkable progress of the past dozen years. We are proud of what we have accomplished together in these years and for doing it in a way that embraces our rich history and enhances our cherished traditions.

So today please join me in celebrating Castleton, our small college with the big heart and high expectations, the college on the move, the place that will always offer you the warm embrace of a loving family. Thank you.
Committees and Committee Members

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