

# Strategic Directions 2020

## Alumnae Listening Session – Washington, D.C. and New York City

November 21-22, 2014

A total of 40 people attended the two listening sessions

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President Hinton and Jon McGee met with CSB alumnae in Washington, D.C., and New York City to discuss the college's future and Strategic Directions 2020. President Hinton began by providing an overview of the planning process. She described the planning process as an opportunity to look forward and imagine a future for the College of Saint Benedict. McGee provided a brief overview of the external market forces shaping and re-defining our opportunities and our challenges. President Hinton invited alumnae to reflect on the questions below.

### **What distinguishes you from your colleagues and peers because you attended the College of Saint Benedict?**

Summary of responses:

- Empowerment of women. You can be your best here – there is nowhere to hide. We were encouraged to take risks and allowed to fail trying. The experiences creates resilience and a stronger sense of self. The self-confidence cultivated within this supportive community allowed us to approach challenging situations with a deep sense of self.
- CSB prepares women for leadership roles. It also prepares compassionate leaders.
- We had international experiences that exposed to new places and new ideas.
- We are more curious about everything – even outside the areas in which we work. CSB graduates are open-minded and ready to try new things.
- We acknowledge our peers and their achievements – we don't simply compete with them.
- Benedictine values and relationship with the sisters. Alumnae carry these relationships and values forward in their lives. We learned about hospitality, faith and stewardship.
- We learned how to share a common experience, sharing classes, living spaces, and activities. Those common experiences fostered great relationships with faculty, staff, and students. The closeness of our relationships fostered accountability for how to interact with each other.
- We are connectors and coalition builders. We learned how to build networks.
- We learned how to develop deep, long-lasting friendships and positive relationships with women. CSB alumnae are friends for life.
- Our sense of community and strength of character distinguishes us. CSB graduates have a strong service orientation, caring for the community. CSB graduates are more likely to get involved with non-profits, working to help those who have little.
- CSB alumnae are confident and able to conquer issues and challenges. We entered our adult lives with the confidence to pursue our passions and career goals.
- CSB taught us to stay true to ourselves, to be honest brokers.
- We were prepared to communicate effectively, writing and speaking.
- An ability to work effectively with diverse people. We make friends and form strong bonds with others.

## **It is 2020. What does the holistic development of women look like at CSB?**

Summary of responses:

- Women should be able to see all of the possibilities they have, and not be their own obstacles.
- Learn how to promote ourselves with grace. We need to know how to negotiate and advocate for ourselves.
- A commitment to holistic development beyond graduation.
- An atmosphere that cultivates ideas and the creativity to encourage women to think outside of the box.
- More off-campus leadership experiences, so students can learn to take risks.
- Strong spiritual development.
- The ability to integrate multiple disciplines to allow for flexibility and nimbleness throughout life.
- An emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Opportunities for life-coaching and mentorship.
- An understanding of the value of reflection and meditation. Work/life balance. The experience should teach the value of self-check-in – learning how to manage self-criticism and move beyond it.
- The ability to learn to face and welcome change to address family and career issues. An understanding of both flexibility and risk. Conversations about the transition from life in college to life afterward.
- Strong career exploration, not framed by a fear of direct links between job and major. The experience should prepare women to think forward about their careers and the types of skills required for those careers.
- The desire to follow your passion and push yourself to achieve excellence.
- The clear message that women can do anything they want.
- Business and economics should be a required part of the curriculum.
- A heightened awareness of the need to be politically active.
- Women should be prepared for difference and discrimination in the workplace (e.g. balancing work and family, learning to negotiate for compensation, etc.)
- Holistic education should help us reconcile the Catholic tradition with women and leadership.
- The experience should include programs that address a variety of leadership skills and styles, and an understanding of the different ways that young women can lead.