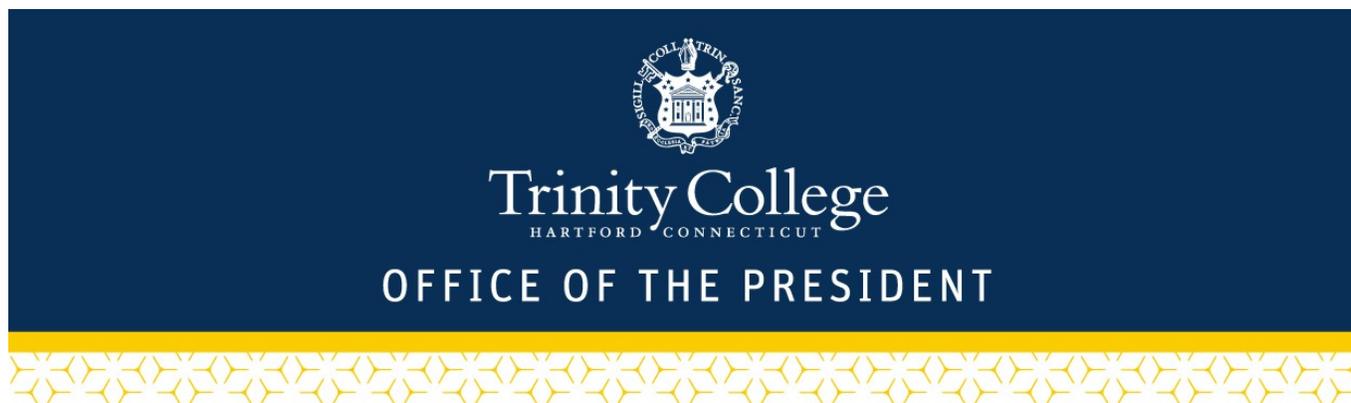


## A Message about Trinity College Athletic Facilities

President Joanne Berger-Sweeney <President@trincoll.edu>

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To: President Joanne Berger-Sweeney <President@trincoll.edu>



November 4, 2021

Dear Members of the Trinity Community,

Athletics is a key aspect of the student experience at Trinity. I am confident in saying that we are all grateful to have returned to regular-season play, practices, and team workouts following the disruption caused by the pandemic. I am extremely proud of the work of all our student-athletes, coaches, athletic staff, and faculty advisers to compete safely and to continue our tradition of winning.

However, we heard from a number of students in late September, including members of the TrinWAL (Trinity College Women's Athletics League), regarding issues related to gender equity in our athletic facilities. In particular, the concerns focused on inequity in our recent renovations to the stadium facilities that support both Jessee/Miller Field and Robin L. Sheppard Field, as well as earlier renovations to our softball facilities. Students, coaches, and families have raised concerns about disparities between the facilities for men's and women's teams and our commitment to equity for women's and men's athletics. Let me state unequivocally: equity is at the heart of Trinity's athletic program—not simply because Title IX requires it but because it is a core tenet of our institution.

Members of our student life and athletic administration senior staff have held meetings with the leaders of TrinWAL, the field hockey team, the women's lacrosse team, the softball team, and families of student-athletes—we appreciate hearing from you and understand your concerns. Since these conversations began, we have been working on plans to address the issues discussed, both in the short and long term. Not everything can be addressed as quickly as we would like due to the pandemic and the resulting global supply chain shortages and delays. We have made progress, though, and I want to provide you with an update.

### Title IX Audit:

- An independent law firm will be hired to assess the college's athletic offerings, including issues of equity, facilities, and resources.
- A review of various law firms' Title IX capabilities is underway.

### Robin L. Sheppard Field:

- Engineers and the bleacher company with which Trinity works are providing recommendations on what can be done to permanently increase bleacher height and capacity, especially in the center of the field.

- With the impending NCAA Tournament, we will install temporary bleachers, which will allow us to offer a seating capacity of 1,100 on the field and another 200 standing spaces for upper-level viewing. Temporary warming rooms and restrooms will be in place. These measures will support our commitment to a high-quality fan experience for the NCAA championship but will have to be removed before winter.
- Planning for permanent warming rooms and restrooms is underway.

Softball Field:

- A feasibility study for bleachers and a press box is in process.
- The design firm conducting the feasibility study also is exploring lighting and an artificial surface. Many steps would be involved in both, including a review by the City of Hartford and community input about the impact to the campus's physical environment. Trinity's Department of Athletics and Physical Education will continue to work with softball coaches to provide access to equitable practice spaces in the spring semester once softball begins its season.

Additionally, when considering any future changes to Trinity's athletic fields, we will form a committee with student representatives from women's and men's athletic programs, staff, faculty, and administrators. Together they will review and discuss proposed plans, with equity at the core.

What is outlined above is important work, and while it will take time, our commitment is sincere. We will keep you apprised of the process and our progress through periodic updates, and we hope that you will continue to engage with us. We welcome your input as we strive to enhance what we offer our student-athletes and the Trinity community.

Sincerely,

Joanne Berger-Sweeney  
President and Trinity College Professor of Neuroscience