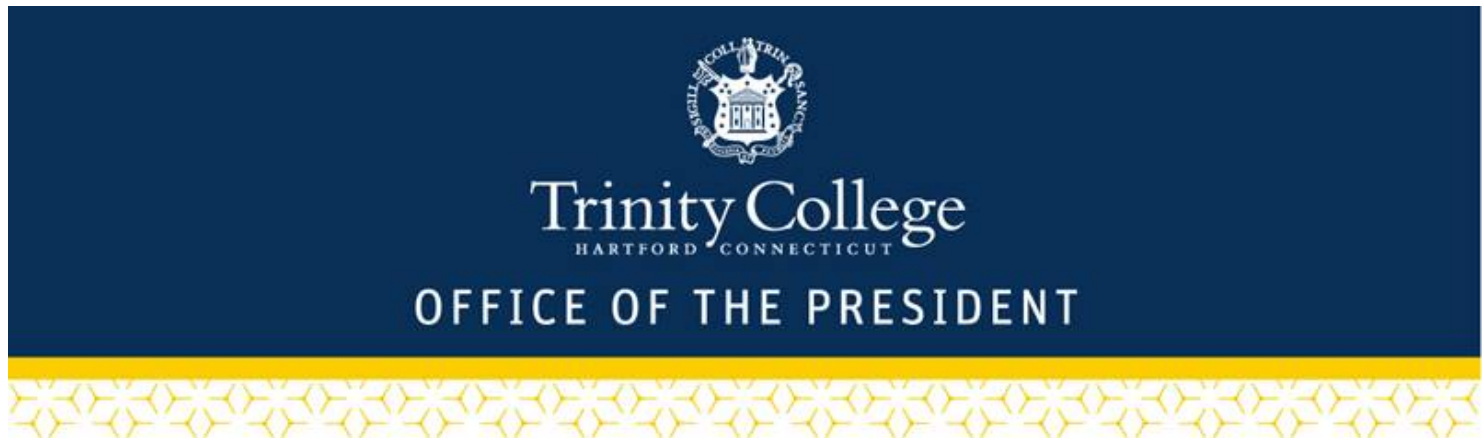


## Welcome to the start of the new academic year!

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

Tue 9/6/2022 2:43 PM

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



September 6, 2022

Dear Trinity Community,

As we begin the 2022–23 academic year, I am reenergized by the arrival of our students on campus after a wonderful summer. We start under the thankfully diminished cloud of COVID-19, and I know that nothing can suppress the spirit of renewal and determination that defines the beginning of the academic year.

Those who know me are aware that I often sign correspondences with one word—onward. Just as Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz popularized the word during the extraordinary growth of the coffee giant, I find it applicable to Trinity today because we continue to move forward on what I call our “spiral up.”

Our spiral up starts with our people. In the last two weeks, we welcomed [14 outstanding new faculty members](#) who join the ranks of stellar faculty colleagues and bring passion and dedication to their work of nurturing our students’ intellectual and social growth—the hallmark of a Trinity education. Along with new faculty and staff, our newest Bantams also have arrived. Our recently appointed [Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Matt Hyde](#) described the Class of 2026—575 talented students who come from 35 states and Washington D.C., and 46 countries—noting the five-year high in application numbers and these Bantams’ place in Trinity’s history as future graduates at the 200th Commencement.

On a gloriously beautiful day for [Convocation](#), I welcomed incoming students to the new academic year. As part of my speech, I shared a story about a 900-page science fiction novel that I recently read and how it took curiosity and persistence to finish what was one of the most fascinating and provocative books that I’ve read in several years. The novel also told a story about connections, connections that mirror a liberal arts experience at Trinity.

Looking forward, in May 2023, we will launch Trinity’s [Bicentennial celebration](#), which will mark a major historic milestone for our community. The planning has been a collaborative effort involving many departments and working groups who are actively developing a calendar of programs that promises to celebrate our past, welcome back alumni, and articulate our commitments to the future. Having an early look at the planning, I am excited for what lies ahead! You’ll be hearing more soon.

Much of our spiral up is by design and was outlined in the strategic plan, [Summit](#). It is not enough to focus on bringing highly talented and motivated students to campus each year. We continue to strive to deepen their liberal arts education so they leave uniquely prepared to face tomorrow’s reality with intellectual agility, endless curiosity, undeniable grit, and the most valuable tool of all—the confidence and connectedness that comes with belonging to our community of alumni.

Our progress is undeniable, and we have a lot to be proud of! Over the next year, you will hear more about:

- **Continued student success and the value of a liberal arts education.** Ninety-seven percent of the [Class of 2021](#) graduated knowing their next step: employment, graduate education, or a fellowship.
- **Continual curricular and learning enhancements.** In the spring, faculty approved [learning goals](#) for every student. The [Trinity Plus curriculum](#) and the realigned [Center for Academic and Experiential Advising](#) will help our students thrive academically. The college also is launching the [Center for Entrepreneurship](#), which holds promise in connecting students, faculty, and alumni in a network of innovation.
- **Deepened partnership with Hartford.** We have worked hard to broaden how we engage with our neighbors and build civic engagement. Earlier this summer, [Dream Camp celebrated its 25th anniversary](#), a great example of the depth of our commitment to the Hartford community.
- **Teaching and practicing sustainability.** With a new sustainability coordinator hired, I am confident we will push forward the [Sustainability Action Plan](#), which was drafted last year.
- **Progress in diversity, equity, and inclusion.** Great strides have been made, including the second campus climate survey, a forthcoming Racial Justice Action Plan, measures to ensure Title IX compliance, and continued efforts to make an inclusive environment for all.

And what I wrote in a [2018 letter](#) remains true, that when we focus on our mission, we create a student experience that speaks to who we are as a community and to what we aspire to be—the preeminent liberal arts college—and eventually people will take note of our rise to the Summit. How we elevate the quality of our education, broaden access to it, and improve student outcomes are priorities for us. This was not lost on [Money](#), which recently positioned Trinity College as the 10th best liberal arts college in the nation. When we remain steadfast, others will take note of our progress.

We know who we are and our place in history. Yet, how we tell our story to the world and elevate our reputation requires a disciplined approach. This is the work following the [branding](#) initiative, which began last year, and is rolling out this fall. You will begin to see signs of this taking shape, from a refreshed website design and a renewed visual identity to more focused storytelling in the [news section](#) of the website.

Finally, to keep on this trajectory, we will continue to build financial strength. Thanks to our community of alumni, parents, and friends, we successfully closed last fiscal year with a small operating surplus, an endowment close to \$800 million, and, importantly, by securing more than \$75 million in gifts and pledges—one of the highest single-year totals in Trinity's history. This has placed us well over the halfway mark of an ambitious \$500 million capital campaign, which currently is in the leadership phase. You will begin to hear more about the campaign as we enter the broader community phase in fall 2023.

We look forward, as a connected community always does, to greeting what lies ahead on the horizon together with joy and a sense of anticipation. Welcome back everyone, and here's to an auspicious start to the semester!

Onward,

Joanne Berger-Sweeney  
President and Trinity College Professor of Neuroscience