



The Sage Colleges

ALBANY | TROY | ONLINE

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

THE SAGE MISSION

Sage is a community of scholars committed to empowering students:

TO BE

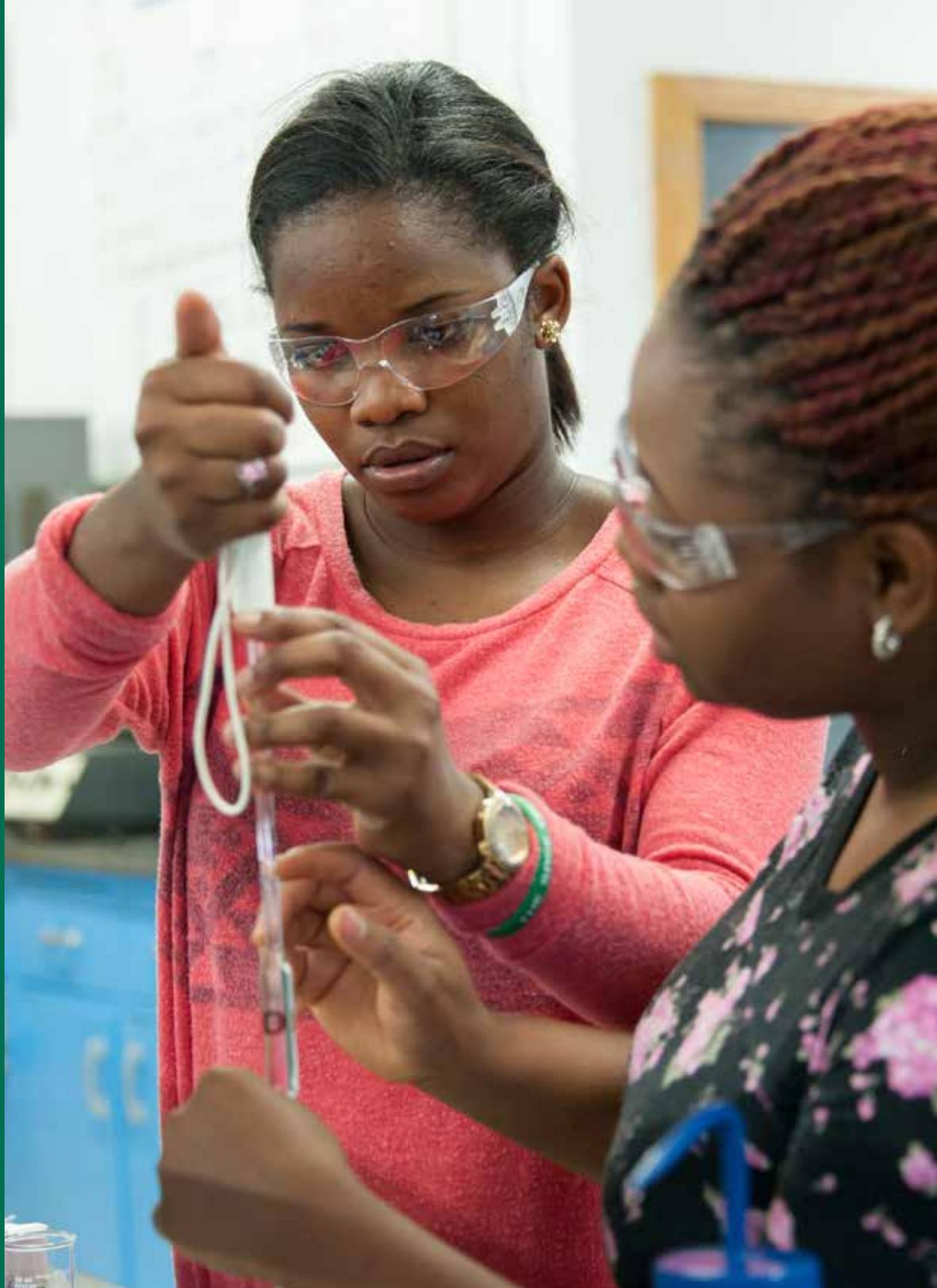
To provide the individual student with the opportunity and means to develop and advance personally and professionally, and thus to be successful in achieving life goals;

TO KNOW

To contribute to the larger society a group of diverse, thoughtful and competent citizen-leaders who continue to be engaged in the pursuit of lifelong learning; and

TO DO

To translate learning into action and application, recognizing the obligation of educated persons to lead and to serve their communities.



DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR SAGE OF THE FUTURE

Sage students thrive! Sage provides excellent professional preparation across the disciplines in a small college environment strongly supportive of student learning and emphasizing student wellness and well-being.

Sage has undergraduate and graduate programs as well as pathway programs leading from undergraduate to graduate degrees. Known for its strength in the health sciences, Sage emphasizes student wellness and well-being throughout the curriculum and campus life in an integrated program called Sage Thrive.

Under this plan, Sage would be a single coeducational college with distinctive campuses in Albany and Troy, including the historically women's campus, Russell Sage College. The two campuses would offer all students a range of choices in programming, residential life, student activities, and community connections. All Sage students would then be free to enroll in courses and programs and reside on either campus.

Students would matriculate and graduate from Sage and may also affiliate with the Women's Institute by meeting certain requirements. Honoring the spirit and

legacy of Russell Sage College's century-long commitment to women's education, the Women's Institute would provide all-women housing in historic residence halls, student-run traditions and activities, and curricular and extra-curricular support for women's and gender studies, female empowerment, and gender inclusivity. The Women's Institute would sponsor community outreach and public events on the most pressing women's and gender issues of our time.

We celebrate our unity as Sage—while valuing the distinctive character of our two campuses and the legacies of Russell Sage College as an historically women's college and Sage College of Albany as an innovative college serving a coed and diverse student body throughout its history. Sage cherishes its locations and close connections and partnerships with the cities of Albany and Troy and makes those opportunities available to all students.



SAGE: ADAPTING A SINGLE MISSION TO CHANGING TIMES



Sage began as Russell Sage College, an all-women's college founded in 1916. During World War II, an "emergency men's division" was created and in 1942 the first graduate degree was conferred. In 1949, an Albany Division was opened, offering two-year, four-year and graduate degrees under the charter of Russell Sage College and extending the College's mission to include the education of men on the second campus.

Sage Junior College of Albany received its own degree-granting powers in 1957 and developed a strong reputation in the fine arts. In 1995, Sage Graduate School became authorized to grant degrees independently, Sage Evening College became recognized as a separate administrative unit, and the institution was rechartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York as The Sage Colleges, often referred to for the sake of convenience as "Sage."

The words "Russell Sage College" came to refer only to the college for women. In 2001, Sage Junior College of Albany and Sage Evening College were replaced by a single entity, Sage College of Albany. In 2015, students were permitted not only to enroll in classes on either campus but to pursue any major regardless of its home campus.

Through all these changes, Sage remained true to its founding vision of teaching the "practical liberal arts" and graduating students who live the motto: To Be, To Know, To Do. The founding spirit of the women's college was directed to creating opportunity more broadly for those who were denied that opportunity elsewhere. That same spirit has characterized the coeducational aspects of Sage and will characterize the unified college of tomorrow.

Institutional, academic, and student governance would reflect Sage's identity as a single college with two campuses. The Sage Colleges has a single board of trustees and is recognized as a single institution by Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the NCAA, and New York State Education Department.

Male students would continue to be eligible to take classes at and enroll in majors offered on the Troy campus. Housing accommodations would be available for them in some Troy residence halls, while several Troy campus residences remain all women.

Faculty and staff are employees of Sage, and their work involves their presence and engagement on both campuses in Albany and Troy.



STRATEGIC PLAN

KEY DECISIONS AND RATIONALE

The central goal is to strengthen Sage's long-term viability by clarifying the identity of Sage as a single coherent institution, allowing for stronger messaging and name recognition.



A COHERENT, UNIFIED SAGE

ONE COLLEGE WITH TWO CAMPUSES

Currently, we describe ourselves in terms of five named colleges spread over two campuses. Treating our campuses as separate colleges not only goes against the grain of how Sage is actually chartered, it creates divisions in students, faculty, staff and alumni that can be counter-productive.

The asymmetry of our two campuses poses problems for students weighing Sage as a college choice: on the one hand the fundamental distinction between the two campuses lies in the programs offered; on the other hand, one campus is coed and the other is all women. That can lead prospective male students to think certain programs are off-limits to them, even though all students can major in any

program available. The Troy campus was opened some years ago to male attendance and male majors, but not to male residents (except for theater). The different general education curricula by campus complicate this imbalance.

Currently 24% of SCA students pursue majors in Troy, while 6% of RSC students pursue majors in Albany.

Altogether, over 200 students (about 15% of undergraduates) are linked to a campus different from the one that hosts their majors.

In our functioning, Sage is both a single college with two campuses in some regards, and two separate colleges in others.

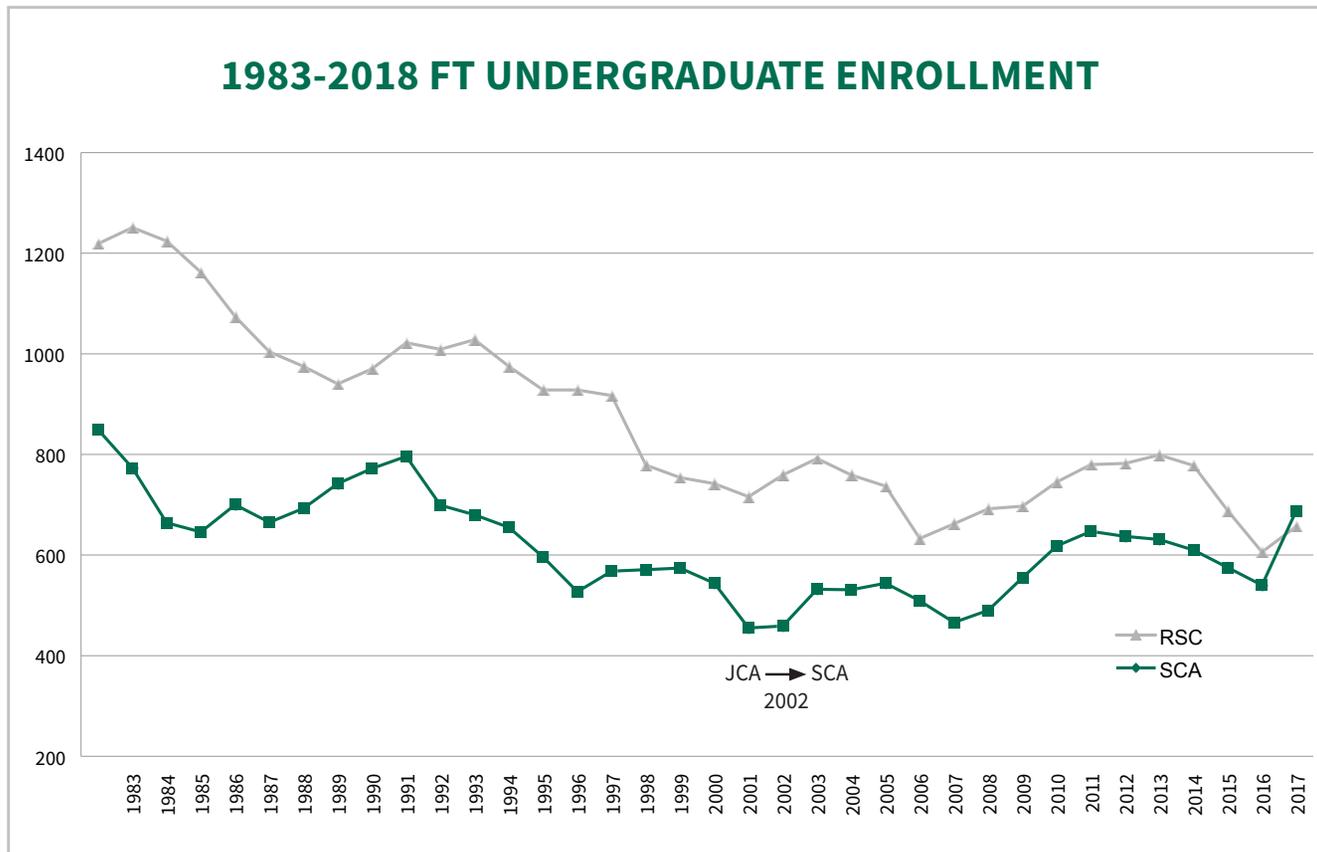
ONE COLLEGE—TWO CAMPUSES	TWO COLLEGES
CHARTER AND BOARD GOVERNANCE	APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS
NYSED RECOGNITION	CURRICULA
MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION	ALUMNI ORGANIZATIONS
NCAA AFFILIATION	PUBLIC PERCEPTION
COLLEGE LISTINGS AND RANKINGS	MARKETING
FEDERAL IPEDS DATA REPORTING	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE STATUS	

BENEFITS OF A UNIFIED SAGE

The proposed re-vision of Sage as a single institution mitigates this confusion and maximizes the benefits of our two distinct campuses for all students.

- ▶ Clear, unitary identity;
- ▶ Campuses defined by academic programs and location but open to all;
- ▶ Single, general education curriculum;
- ▶ Honors RSC history in a way that does not discourage students looking to enroll in a coed institution;
- ▶ Celebrates both campuses and all programs (as opposed to traditionally Troy-centric history);
- ▶ Builds on changes in recent years breaking down barriers between our two campuses;
- ▶ Financial efficiencies from unitary structure
- ▶ Increases student interest and enrollment in Sage.

Enrollment decline has driven financial challenges. From 1984 to 2017, RSC enrollment fell from 1251 to 606.



Enrollment Trends at Women's Colleges

- In 1960: 230 women's colleges and many all-male colleges
- Between 1960-1975, most male colleges become coed
- 1967-1971: Nearby women's colleges become coed: Skidmore, Bennington, Vassar, Sarah Lawrence, and St. Rose. Male colleges become coed, including Siena and Union.
- 1980 and afterwards: steady reduction in numbers of women's colleges driven by enrollment and financial concerns
- Present day: 37 women's colleges remain

Women's Colleges Today

- 7 have elite status w endowments from \$350M to \$2B.
- 6 have endowments in the \$140-230M range
- Remainder have small endowments

Enroll #s	< 1000	1000-1500	1500-2000	>2000
	17	4	6	6

WOMEN'S COLLEGES TODAY

The primary driver of women's colleges going coed has been declining enrollment. Russell Sage's reputation may discourage male applicants, but studies show that most *women* will not consider women's colleges. As one college president put it: "Studies show that less than 1% of full-time female college students today attend a women's college and only 2% of female high school seniors say they would consider attending a women's college. Admitting men will open our doors to 98% more women who would otherwise not even consider our high-quality, distinctive educational experience." (Rhona Free, Saint Joseph University).

The top five reasons students report choosing Sage were selected from a list of 15 characteristics and proved to be the top five for both SCA and RSC students (with one difference in order). "Women's college" ranked 10th of 15 among students at Russell Sage and 12th of 15 among all female students. We know, of course, that many students who enroll in a women's college driven by other factors come to value the women's college experience deeply, but it does not appear that the all-women's character of Russell Sage College is a significant factor in recruiting students at this time.

A survey of current undergraduates about why they chose Sage shows the top five characteristics to be:

- 1 ACADEMIC PROGRAM**
- 2 CAREER PREPARATION**
- 3 SIZE OF COLLEGE**
- 4 LOOK AND FEEL OF CAMPUS**
- 5 WARM, SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

FINANCIAL BENEFITS AND EFFICIENCIES OF A UNIFIED SAGE

The most significant financial implications come with improving the clarity of Sage's identity and thus increasing inquiries, applications and enrollments. When prospective students don't understand our structure, they are less likely to pursue admission. In addition, male students and female students who are not interested in a women's college should become increasingly likely to consider Sage as their destination.

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- ▶ Removing barriers to application and enrollment;
 - ▶ Increasing enrollment by clarifying inclusive identity (we are no longer just the women's college in Troy or the former junior college in Albany);
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- ▶ Simpler, clearer messaging in recruitment materials and website;
 - ▶ Increased housing occupancy in Troy;
 - ▶ Reduced need for duplicate courses on two campuses;
 - ▶ General education curriculum that effectively distributes class sizes and reduces needs for adjuncts;
 - ▶ Streamlining of academic administration, as in the current consolidation of the deans of RSC and SCA into one position.





A WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The goal of the yet-to-be-named Institute is to build on Russell Sage's hundred-year history of empowering women and ensure that the values and traditions of Russell Sage College remain central to the Sage experience and reputation.

- ▶ Focus on women's leadership and gender inclusivity
- ▶ Residential option
- ▶ Governed by women students; RSC traditions
- ▶ Curricular and extra-curricular elements
- ▶ Recognition on diploma
- ▶ Public events and community outreach



WHAT WILL SAGE BE KNOWN FOR IN THE FUTURE?

Excellent professional preparation across the disciplines in a small college environment strongly supportive of student learning and emphasizing student wellness and well-being.

This emphasis guides program restructuring and ties our undergraduate and graduate programs together, as reinforced by our pathway programs.

SAGE THRIVE

As a college that has been a leader for 100 years in preparing students for healthcare and health sciences careers, we are committed to a vision of wellness that includes and goes beyond traditional definitions of health.

We believe people's lives are enriched by knowledge—of the natural sciences, of the history of human thought and expression, of the frameworks for understanding human society, and of the diversity of human experience across the globe and within the United States.

We believe people lead healthier and more fulfilling lives when they have the tools and habits of mind to engage fully with society: the ability to write clearly, speak well, and make an effective presentation; a strong understanding of data and quantitative skills; the ability to do independent research and to work in groups; and an appreciation of the diversity of human experience.

We believe that individual and collective well-being is enriched by creativity and the arts and that artistic sensibility should shape how we understand the world and our connections to other people.

We believe that rapid advances in technology hold great promise for improving the quality of life but also pose challenges to human happiness and connection that need to be intentionally confronted.

We believe that public health requires not just healthy behavior by individuals but social change that addresses poverty, inadequate access to care, and political oppression.

We are committed to the idea that a healthy society is gender-positive and supports equal participation and dignity for women and LGBTQ persons.

We believe that diversity and inclusion are essential components of a healthy community and society and require cooperative effort to be fully realized.

We believe that our health is dependent on the health of our planet and our eco-system and that sustainability is a central value that infuses all we do.

We believe that our contributions to health and well-being begin on our own campus, suffuse our curriculum, and are reflected throughout our campus in academics, extra-curricular activities, athletics and the arts, and a vibrant, diverse and supportive community.

CORE VALUE BENEFITS

Developing this core value approach over the next two years can achieve several important things:

- ▶ Reinforcing our reputation for excellence in the health sciences and connecting it to our other areas of the curriculum, especially our growing reputation in art and design.
- ▶ Responding in a positive way to the increasing issues of anxiety and depression in the college-going population.
- ▶ Creating a significant area for innovative faculty collaboration.
- ▶ Connecting student life and athletics with the curriculum and the overall image of Sage.
- ▶ Underscoring the advantages of our small, caring community in a time of concern over social media and technology driven isolation.
- ▶ Reinforcing the centrality of our commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- ▶ Providing a content-rich area for marketing and rebranding.



SUMMARY

This information supports the vision articulated in the strategic vision statement and clarifies the direction that the more detailed initiatives and implementation plans will be designed to further. This vision ties closely to Sage's historical values and strengths but offers substantial changes that will be critical to ensuring our long-term success.

