Mills has long been dedicated to breaking barriers, whether as the first women’s college west of the Mississippi (chartered 1885), the first to have a laboratory school for aspiring teachers (1926), the first to offer a computer science major (1974), or the first to adopt a transgender-inclusive undergraduate admissions policy (2014). It has attracted and cultivated scholars, leaders, artists, and students seeking new ways of knowing and learning.

Now, Mills is ready to break another barrier by making global learning, acquisition of real-world skills, and academic excellence affordable and accessible across the historic barriers of race, class, and gender. First articulated in 2017 in an early iteration of MillsNext, this emphasis on student-centered inclusive excellence responds to rising concerns about the value of higher education in a society of increasing economic inequality, as well as the impact of technological and social change on how we learn, live, and work. MillsNext foregrounds student success in a collaborative and sustainable network of faculty, staff, and students.

Dismantling educational inequity, however, requires more than the traditional tools of a liberal arts education or college, especially in a place as full of challenge and opportunity as the City of Oakland, where inequality threatens to undermine growing economic strength. By forging new academic-business partnerships that advance gender, racial, and environmental equity, Mills can broaden academic and career opportunities for students while preserving its spirit of experimentation and innovation. Creative use of space, new academic and administrative approaches, and partnerships will prepare students to make real-world contributions as global citizens and leaders. MillsNext will enrich opportunities for its student population of talented women and gender non-binary undergraduates, graduate students of all genders, students of color, and first generation learners.

By building an inclusive and equitable campus, developing mission-aligned partnerships, diversifying the uses of the campus, and leveraging technology and data, we will establish a foundation for the pursuit of Mills’ mission that’s both rooted in our legacy and prepared for the future.

Elizabeth L. Hillman
President

May 2019
MISSION
Mills College is an independent liberal arts college for women and gender non-binary students with graduate programs for all genders. Mills educates students to think critically and communicate responsibly and effectively, to accept the challenges of their creative visions, and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to effect thoughtful changes in a global, multicultural society.

VALUES
- **Gender and Racial Justice**—we believe that women’s colleges can and should play a pivotal role in dismantling inequity, including the disparate impact of climate change.
- **Inclusive Excellence**—we recognize that academic excellence cannot be achieved without inclusive content and equitable outcomes.
- **Global and Applied Learning**—we prepare our students to make real-world impacts as global citizens and leaders.
- **Affordability and Accessibility**—we open the doors to a high quality education to those who have previously been excluded.
STRATEGY 1
Cultivate an inclusive and equitable campus where diverse students develop the intellectual curiosity, courage, and resilience to thrive.

STRATEGY 2
Develop mission-aligned, sustainable partnerships that raise Mills’ visibility, build enrollment, and increase awareness of the value of the small college experience.

STRATEGY 3
Work with key partners who share Mills’ values to diversify the uses of the campus, harness new sources of revenue, and upgrade the physical and technological condition of our buildings.

STRATEGY 4
Leverage technology and data to improve learning, student retention, efficiency, and effectiveness.

STRATEGIES, OBJECTIVES AND METRICS
- **Strategies** describe our high-level goals; how we will prioritize, distinguish ourselves, and set a course for a sustainable future.
- **Objectives** are concrete, time-limited, and achievable steps that we will take toward implementing our strategy.
- **Metrics** allow us to measure whether we have succeeded or how much further we have to go to achieve our objectives.
Equity and student success are at the core of the MillsNext vision. As an access-oriented institution, we partner with students to dismantle the systemic obstacles that block the achievement of their goals and work to ensure that more students have access to a transformative Mills education. Our commitment to equity also means that we do the “inside-out” work of building an intentional and inclusive campus community. For us, success goes beyond grades and attaining a degree. We work to ensure that students thrive inside and outside of the classroom, generate meaningful connections to their faculty and peers, and are empowered to shape their own intellectual journeys and step into leadership roles.

**STRATEGY 1**

*Cultivate an inclusive and equitable campus where diverse students develop the intellectual curiosity, courage, and resilience to thrive.*

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**OBJECTIVES AND METRICS**

1. Increase new student enrollment.
   b. Identify opportunities for new and revised graduate programs that build on our strengths and meet market demand.
   c. Revise and relaunch bachelor's degree completion program pending market research.
   d. Refine and implement our out-of-state and international recruitment strategies.

2. Improve retention and student success.
   a. Integrate career guidance and planning, mentoring, and networking throughout every student's experience.
   b. Develop targeted belonging and academic success initiatives for transfer, graduate, and international students.
   c. Improve reported undergraduate sense of belonging so that more students feel they are full community members, have a voice, and possess positive relationships of support and accountability.
   d. Increase student participation in global learning experiences including study away, study abroad, and exchanges by 20% by AY22, by addressing affordability and accessibility concerns.
   e. Support 60 students per annum to attain pathways to a lower cost bachelor's degree through partnerships with community colleges and Promise programs by AY22.
   f. Increase undergraduate first-year retention to 80% within five years.
   g. Maintain retention gains and close the completion gap for students of color and first generation students.
STRATEGY 1

Cultivate an inclusive and equitable campus where diverse students develop the intellectual curiosity, courage, and resilience to thrive.

OBJECTIVES AND METRICS

CONTINUED

3. Generate a campus-wide conversation about equity.
   a. Update Mills’ Diversity and Social Justice Statement through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process.
   b. Provide “inside-out” equity training that makes space for faculty and staff to engage in personal reflection and institutional change.
   c. Work with student leaders to develop a student-centered process for prioritizing and implementing equity initiatives.
   d. Launch a campus culture assessment initiative in 2020 to inform necessary changes for achieving our vision.
   e. Raise awareness of environmental justice issues in relation to Mills’ commitment to racial and gender justice.

4. Cultivate and retain a diverse faculty and staff that reflect the life journeys of our students.
   a. Update and implement equity hiring processes in all searches.
   b. Offer professional development for people of color, women, and others stepping into new faculty and leadership roles.
   c. Implement a multiple-year compensation improvement plan.
   d. Implement initiatives to retain and develop our employees.
**STRATEGY 2**

*Develop mission-aligned, sustainable partnerships that raise Mills’ visibility, build enrollment, and increase awareness of the value of the small college experience.*

*MillsNext* celebrates Oakland; advancing community-engaged research, artistic engagement, and student learning rooted in the city’s rich cultural, demographic, ecological, political, and economic diversity. Opening up the gates and embracing local communities are central to the *MillsNext* vision. Mutually supportive relationships with local educational, artistic, governmental, and business agencies will help Mills address the significant challenges facing small colleges and enable us to contribute to solving local and global dilemmas, from the housing crisis to climate change.

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**OBJECTIVES AND METRICS**

1. **Build or deepen relationships with institutions that have the capacity to invest in a mutual partnership toward shared goals.**
   a. Conduct ongoing inventories of Mills’ partnerships and partnership opportunities.
   b. Identify additional strategic educational, business, or non-profit partners who can raise Mills’ visibility and increase Mills’ enrollment.
   c. Prioritize K-12 school districts, Promise programs and community colleges, and generate additional applications from these student populations by AY21.
   d. Build partnerships with local colleges and universities to share services, improve efficiencies, and reduce expenses.

2. **Enliven and open up our campus.**
   a. Become a hub for Oakland performing and visual arts rooted in and reflective of historically marginalized communities.
   b. Create and publicize a diverse annual calendar of events that welcome our neighbors and Bay Area communities onto campus.
   c. Raise awareness about the value of a small college experience by enabling more girls and gender non-binary students to engage with the Mills campus and community.

3. **Build learning opportunities that celebrate the unique history, people, and cultures of Oakland.**
   a. Foster and disseminate learning experiences that engage the expertise of Mills students, faculty, and staff to help solve pressing local problems.
   b. Increase community-engaged placements that provide applied learning opportunities for students and benefits for local organizations.
   c. Partner with Oakland and Bay Area non-profits, government agencies, and industry to increase student participation in internships.
STRATEGY 3

Work with key partners who share Mills’ values to diversify the uses of the campus, harness new sources of revenue, and upgrade the physical and technological condition of our buildings.

Through a dynamic campus planning process that engages multiple stakeholders, internal and external to Mills, we will plan, access, and leverage real estate development and space optimization opportunities to improve the physical plant, bring new revenue sources to campus, build engagement with external communities, and create new learning opportunities.

By creating an economically and environmentally sustainable business model, Mills will both enhance equity in our region and attract resources to our academic programs, leveraging our location in Oakland and in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area.

OBJECTIVES AND METRICS

1. Leverage the land, location, facilities, and beauty of our campus to generate revenue, revitalize our physical plant, and address the needs of students and of local communities.
   a. Identify mission-aligned partners to provide near-term programmatic opportunities and generate economic benefit for the campus and local communities.
   b. Identify mission-aligned, long-term partners to build and/or renovate and repurpose underutilized facilities.

2. Leverage external partnerships to bolster economic development that supports local businesses and neighborhoods.
   a. Model climate leadership by lowering the campus’ carbon footprint.
   b. Explore expanded housing capacity to meet the tremendous demand for housing in Oakland, including Mills employees.

3. Expand creative campus uses of land and buildings that advance academic programs and student success.
   b. Identify and implement year-round campus partnerships that offer opportunities to enhance and grow academic and co-curricular learning experiences.

4. Identify partnerships to address local social problems and harness local opportunities, including housing, healthcare, technology, and workforce diversity.
   a. Activate the edges of campus to provide needed services and enhance opportunities for Mills community and neighbors.
   b. Explore partnerships that would enable the College to cultivate workforce development opportunities for meaningful 21st century jobs in collaboration with existing workforce efforts in East Oakland.
STRATEGY 4

Leverage technology and data to improve learning, student retention, efficiency, and effectiveness.

New technologies and data analytics provide opportunities to transform the way we teach, learn, and do business. MillsNext seizes these opportunities. New technologies will allow us to reach new student populations, to innovate our pedagogy, and to enhance efficiency and student satisfaction. A new data culture will harness data to improve decision-making, boost recruitment, and enhance student learning. Our approach also attends to the dangers of digital and data inequities by ensuring that students, faculty, and staff gain access to the technologies and skills development they need to participate fully.

OBJECTIVES AND METRICS

1. Leverage technology to create unique and innovative learning experiences, increase access, and promote digital equity.
   a. Upgrade our online learning platform (LMS) and provide faculty development and incentives to enhance digital learning.
   b. Expand academic and co-curricular programming at the intersections of arts, humanities, and technology, and tech equity.
   c. Enroll 200 students in fully online programs by AY24, and identify and develop a second fully online graduate program for a Fall 2021 start date.
   d. Triple the number of online and hybrid courses for undergraduates by AY21.

2. Build a data culture that allows campus constituents to access, analyze, share, and deploy data to improve decision-making, recruitment, and student learning.
   a. Undertake a campus wide assessment of data resources and data silos.
   b. Develop dashboards to provide real-time, accessible, and shared data in key operational areas of the College.
   c. Provide professional development for faculty and staff, and identify data facilitators in academic and operational areas.
   d. Gather data that enables us to tell a story about the impact of a Mills education for enrollment, marketing, public relations, and external partners.

3. Utilize technology to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and security.
   a. Create digital workflows that save money and time while improving the user experience and easing burdens on staff and faculty by better utilization of Banner, Argos reporting, and other measures.
   b. Implement paperless forms for 90% of student academic records and financial services documentation.
   c. Administer student satisfaction survey of academic, administrative, and financial services; attain improvement in student experience by AY21.
   d. Implement a cyber security program to enhance the delivery of a secure educational environment.
Thank you to all the faculty and staff who attended the Spring 2019 Strategic Planning meetings:

**Equity and Student Success**
Inês Barbosa (Asst. Dean, Advising, Careers and Global Learning); Devin Carr (Area Coordinator, Residential Life); Carlota Caulfield (Professor, Spanish and Spanish American Studies); Anuujin Elbegdorj (EA, VP of Student Life/DOS); Cassie Eskridge (Assc. Dean of Students); Sherie Gilmore-Cleveland (Director, Admissions); Angie Harris (Director, Financial Aid); Mark Henderson (Assc. Professor, Public Policy; Director, Public Policy Program); Renee Jadushlever (VP, Strategic Partnerships); Allie Littlefox (Director, APER; Asst. Dean of Students); Sheila Lloyd (Assc. Provost, Teaching, Learning, and Faculty Affairs); Robynne Lofton (Assc. VP, Enrollment and Student Financial Services; Exec Director, Admissions); Chicora Martin (VP of Student Life, Dean of Students); Cole Moyer (Registrar); Dara Olandt (Director, Spiritual and Religious Life; Chaplain); Chinyere Oparah (Provost and Dean of the Faculty); lea robinson (Asst. Dean, Student Retention, Equity, and Inclusion); Carolyn Sherwood Call (Director, Business Programs, Lokey School); Audrey Tanner (VP, Enrollment and Marketing); Aviva Wilcox (Director, CAPS).

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Updating and Revising the MillsNext Vision
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