



# THE NEXT CHAPTER: A Strategic Direction for Bryn Mawr College

APRIL 2026



**BRYN MAWR  
COLLEGE**

## Dear Bryn Mawr Community,

I write today to share *The Next Chapter*, a ten-year strategic direction that will guide Bryn Mawr College's future. Our Board of Trustees voted last Saturday to endorse this direction, which our community created together over the last three and a half years. The plan connects the wisdom of earlier generations with the possibilities of future ones. It is focused on today's students and faculty and recognizes that the students who will join the class of 2035 — our sesquicentennial or 150th academic year — are today in fourth grade.

Bryn Mawr has always been the “Scholarly Sister” — a unique blend of rigorous research in a liberal arts setting and a premier college for women. We remain deeply committed to this identity, a radical act in a global environment actively questioning values — of critical analysis, truths, and a lifelong commitment to learning and growth — that we hold dear. With our mission statement as our sacred text and north star, we will remain a stronghold for those traditionally excluded from the halls of power, committed to creating mobility across all aspects of inequality. We will continue to stand firm in our values, committed to both our multi-generational communities and to enhancing our visibility in the world.

The Board's vote affirms our collective vision and charges us to work together with purpose in this strategic direction.

### Our Key Commitments

These guiding pillars will drive our approach:

- **Academic Excellence & Faculty Support:** We are investing in the intellectual heart of the college. With the move to a reduced two-course teaching load each semester and our reaffirmed support for graduate education, we empower our faculty to lead in research and mentorship. We will also reimagine the “library of the future” as a beacon of digital and physical inquiry. Through these investments and others, we will pioneer new, interdisciplinary modes of learning that prepare students to navigate and lead in an increasingly complex global landscape.
- **Holistic Student and Alumnae/i Success:** From matriculation to commencement, we are prioritizing the experiences of students. We are aligning our success framework with the aspirations of the future, ensuring every student has the tools to thrive in a rapidly changing world. We know one is a Mawrter for life, and we are building new ways for this lifelong community to engage, connect, and transform our worldwide network into a powerful resource for all of us.
- **Access, Inclusion, and Belonging:** We will continue to dismantle barriers to ensure that people from a range of backgrounds can come to and thrive at the college. This includes continuing to move towards need-blind admissions, supporting our community college partnerships, and supporting the continued development of truly equitable institutional structures for all.
- **Global Impact and Visibility:** Acknowledging our history as a modest place, we will foster joyful pride in our remarkable accomplishments. We aim to amplify our voices

better on local, state, national, and global stages to celebrate the scholarship and leadership of our faculty, staff, and student community. We will also establish Bryn Mawr as a vital global convener, partnering to advance progress on defining issues of our time.

- **Modernizing Infrastructure, Facilities, and Systems:** Finally, our goal of carbon neutrality by 2035 inspires us to ensure that our work and spaces will reflect our commitment to environmental justice, sustainability, and a world-class residential experience. We are investing in state-of-the-art facilities to create living and learning communities that strengthen the student experience.

This vision is more than a strategy; it is a commitment we make to one another and to the world. It is how we operationalize the college's mission as we prepare to celebrate 150 years with excitement and pride. It emerges from our history and charts our future in an era of increasing skepticism toward higher education and related headwinds.

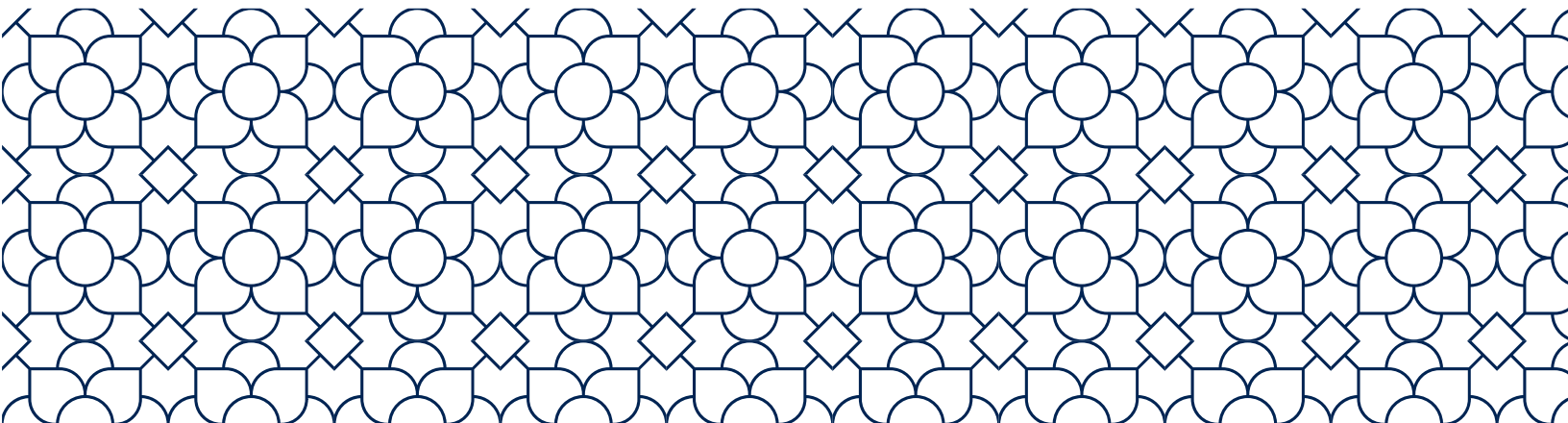
The bright spark that has always characterized Bryn Mawr is about to shine even brighter — in our lanterns and beyond — broadening our impact and reach. You will notice our academics becoming even stronger, our physical campus being updated, and our voices and leadership in higher education becoming even more prominent as we enact our commitments to equity and inclusion as the engines of excellence and innovation.

Our community is already translating these pillars into action. You can view the full framework on our website.

Higher education is at a critical moment, and it will take all of us to write the next chapter. Whether you are a student (or parent) who will start your journey in the fall of 2026, a faculty member dedicated to discovery, or an alum in a new season of leadership, we have a place for you in this work. Your collaboration will be key to ensuring that today's students and faculty, and those fourth graders who will be members of the class of 2035, are equipped with the knowledge, the courage, and the relationships to lead in finding solutions for the challenges of our shared future.

In community,

*Wendy Cadge*

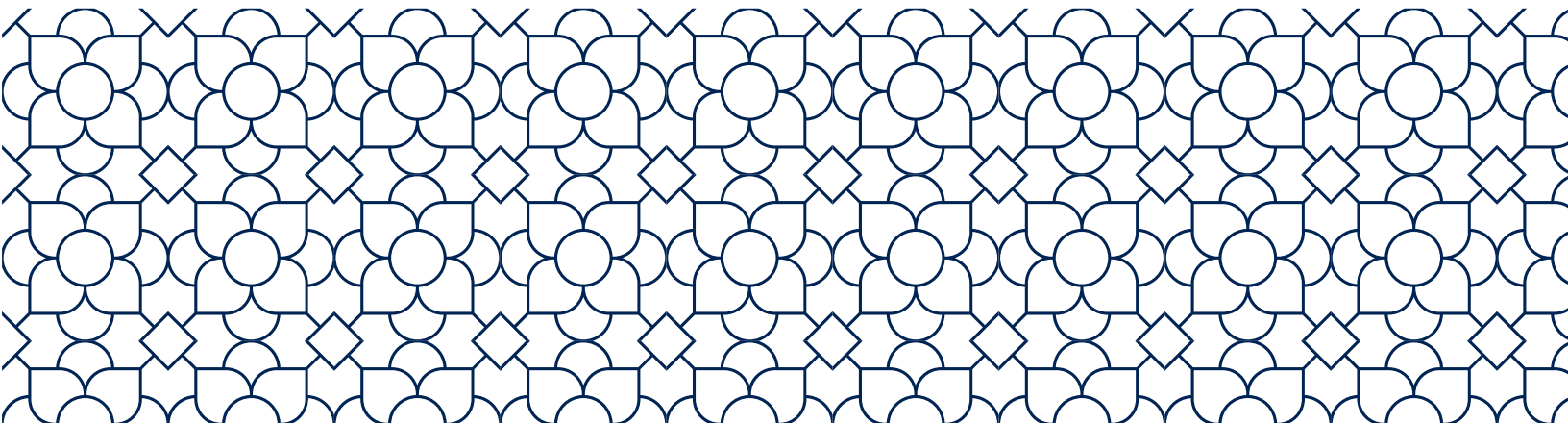






## **Bryn Mawr College was established in 1885**

to offer a more rigorous education than any available to women at that time, through a model characterized by historian Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz as “a unique blend of university and women’s college” in *Alma Mater, Design and Experience in the Women’s Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s*. Generations of students, faculty, staff, and alumnae/i advanced this commitment, which is rooted in academic rigor, pioneering student self-governance, and communities that span generations. As the College looks to—and beyond—its 2035 sesquicentennial, we have the opportunity to build forward with boldness and distinction. *The Next Chapter*, a ten-year framework of strategic focus and direction, charts a path by which Bryn Mawr will connect the best of its history with the needs and aspirations of students of the future, preparing the next generation of Mawrters who will change the world.





*The Next Chapter* is organized around guiding pillars:

- Redoubling our commitment to academic excellence and distinction
- Providing holistic support for students and alumnae/i
- Advancing a community approach to access and inclusion
- Enhancing visibility, reputation, and impact
- Modernizing infrastructure, facilities, and operating systems

These pillars emerge from three and a half years of strategic planning and [visioning](#), including the reports of [four on-campus working groups](#); conversations with hundreds of students, faculty, staff, and alumnae/i; community feedback on several draft documents; and a series of campus [conversations on related strategic topics](#).

The strategic direction is also directly informed by the experience of our graduates. More than 4,500

alumnae/i responded to an in-depth survey about the quality of their Bryn Mawr experience, the role and relevance of their education in their personal and professional lives, and their connections to one another—and to the College—today. Responses indicated broad alignment around the pillars, with particular support for priorities that advance academic excellence, student success, and access.

This planning has touched nearly every aspect of the College and has proceeded in tandem with a [process to envision](#) the buildings, landscape, and physical infrastructure of the future that itself solicited input from numerous groups and committees and hundreds of individuals. These inputs, undertaken concurrently and in dialogue with one another, form the backbone of an ambitious, integrated, and reinforcing set of goals.

## I. Planning Context

*The Next Chapter* emerges at a distinctive moment in American higher education and in the College’s history. We come to this moment

from a position of strength, including a history of defying gendered expectations, a wealth of multigenerational communities and connections, long-standing curricular and cocurricular relationships with our Bi-Co and Tri-Co consortium partners, and demonstrated courage to apply learnings from the past to the College’s future.

At the same time, higher education now faces what analysts have termed “the demographic

cliff,” with fewer students graduating from high school, as well as increased federal scrutiny and regulation of colleges’ missions and operations. Polls show increasing skepticism about the value of higher education and limited public understanding of the liberal arts model. A climate of economic uncertainty and volatility has increased pressure on institutions to offer generous financial aid across the income



spectrum to meet well-founded commitments to socioeconomic diversity and diversity broadly.

Amid these headwinds, the College is strengthening its ability to chart its own destiny by aligning decisions, resources, and investments with the factors that are most critical to institutional strength and reputation. These include competitive financial aid, liberal arts majors aligned with student interests, robust support for student success and completion, stronger connections between our undergraduate and graduate missions, and a compelling residential experience through our residence halls, dining, and cocurricular programs. Success in these areas will form the basis of a powerful academic experience that proves its value across a lifetime.

## II. Leveraging Bryn Mawr's Distinctive Identity

As we build Bryn Mawr's next chapter, we are committed to centering and reasserting what makes the College distinctive and distinctively effective.

*As the scholarly sister/sibling*, Bryn Mawr is authentically positioned to lead with its intellectual contributions. *The Next Chapter* will build on that identity by developing a distinctive undergraduate curriculum that seamlessly bridges the classroom and the residential experience; incorporates meaningful experiential opportunities; responds to students' interests in addressing complex questions, such as those around climate, migration, democracy, and ethics; and preserves disciplinary depth while enabling interdisciplinarity and collaboration. We will elevate the presence of our vibrant graduate programs—within the Graduate Schools of Social Work and Social Research, and Arts and Sciences—as well as multiple combined degree opportunities and the Post Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Program, as differentiators that make a powerful mission-centric contribution.



As a community of lifetime membership, Bryn Mawr and its alumnae/i networks are positioned to connect, support, and empower across regions and generations. *The Next Chapter* calls on the College to foster programs and networks that support students and alums at critical inflection points across their lives and to more intentionally link alums and undergraduates for workplace experience, career opportunities, lifelong learning, and sustained friendships.

As a college founded for those traditionally excluded from higher education, Bryn Mawr holds individual and collective empowerment as a core value. *The Next Chapter* will build on our demonstrated commitment to diversity, including our notable Pell enrollments and innovative partnerships with community colleges, to create mobility across class, race, ethnicity, and other demographic identities. Further, we will continue to deepen inclusion through continuous learning, including looking fearlessly at past exclusionary practices as we build for the future.

### III. Bryn Mawr’s Impact on the World

The promise of colleges and universities is in the differences they make in the lives of their students, faculty, staff, alumnae/i, and broader communities. *The Next Chapter* positions Bryn Mawr to amplify its impact beyond its traditional circles and campus boundaries through the people it educates and the ways it embodies its mission and values. Even as *The Next Chapter* strengthens the College itself, each of its pillars holds the promise of wider societal contributions through thought leadership and knowledge-sharing, generating jobs and career advancement in a knowledge economy, fostering societal connection through ideas, demonstrating and promulgating sustainable environmental practices, and advancing societal change through education.

## IV. The Pillars Expanded

Organizing Bryn Mawr’s efforts around the pillars will intensify and sharpen the College’s educational effectiveness and impact over the coming decade. Specific initiatives, timelines, deliverables, key performance indicators, and potential funding sources are in development for each pillar. *The Next Chapter* is intentionally modular in its design, enabling initiatives to move from proposal to piloting to potential implementation at variable speeds, responsive to emergent opportunities and resource constraints.

### Pillar 1: Redoubling our commitment to academic excellence and distinction

The College will reinforce its commitment to academic excellence—the heart of its mission—to recruit and retain outstanding students and



faculty, facilitate students' exploration of who they are and how they seek to embody their intellect and values in the world, and prepare students for professional and personal success at graduation and beyond. Key initiatives will include shifting to a teaching load of two classes per semester; reorganizing and streamlining advising with a clear mandate to increase retention and graduation rates; increasing faculty-student research partnerships; bringing more intention to external academic distinctions for faculty and students, including competitive national fellowships; aligning graduate and undergraduate education more intentionally; and building a library of the future to serve as the intellectual and cultural heart of the campus. Success will be reflected in Bryn Mawr graduates gaining the academic grounding, skills, and habits of mind to thrive in an increasingly turbulent postgraduate environment, with the capacity to function globally, critically, and analytically throughout their lives.

**Pillar 2: Providing holistic support for students and alumnae/i**

The College will more intentionally align students' academic, cocurricular, and extracurricular experiences, with the goal of providing holistic

support from the time they matriculate through their years as alums. Key initiatives will include more closely aligning academics and experiential learning; modernizing dining and residence halls, especially those configured as living and learning communities; expanding opportunities for connection and support among current students and recent alumnae/i to enhance student daily living and learning; and creating programs that demonstrate the value of lifetime membership in multigenerational communities composed predominantly of women. This approach will bring into sharper relief the powerful intergenerational community available to students and alumnae/i at critical inflection points throughout their lives.





### **Pillar 3: Advancing a community approach to access and inclusion**

The College will continue its mission-based commitment to access, inclusion, and belonging, to ensure that people from a wide range of backgrounds are inspired and able to join, thrive in, and strengthen the Bryn Mawr community as faculty, staff, students, parents, friends, and alumnae/i. Key initiatives will include expanding financial aid with the ultimate goal of need-blind admissions; building on the Beacon Initiative; and continuing to invest in undergraduate educational access through expanded partnerships with community colleges, community-based organizations that support college access, and international partners. We will also model access and inclusion by investing in professional development and educational attainment for our staff. We will continue to learn from our past in honest and clear-eyed ways, with such Initiatives as Art Remediating Campus Histories (The ARCH Project) and the *Don't Forget to Remember (Me)* monument serving as models and exemplars, and engage in an ongoing process of reckoning with and honoring its layered history. Taken together, such work will realize Bryn Mawr's values in action, notably the call in the College's mission statement to "build fair, open and welcoming institutional structures, values, and culture."

### **Pillar 4: Enhancing visibility, reputation, and impact**

The College will expand its efforts to uplift, celebrate, and proudly share its accomplishments with local, national, and international audiences. Key initiatives will include hiring an inaugural vice president for external relations; supporting and training faculty in generating visibility for their scholarship and thought leadership; leveraging the president's presence to establish strategic relationships beyond the campus; and creating partnerships and public convenings around vital conversations of our time, such as gender equality and women's leadership, education access, environmental sustainability, civic engagement and democracy, freedom of speech and the value of expertise and truth. Asserting Bryn Mawr's voice in the world will broaden public awareness of the College's distinctively powerful educational model, expand the enrollment pipeline, build



students' career opportunities, and strengthen alumnae/i pride as they serve as our ambassadors across their professions and networks.

### **Pillar 5: Modernizing infrastructure, facilities and operating systems**

The College's outstanding faculty, staff, and students deserve to be supported by modern, efficient systems that enable them to focus their energies on their work. Key initiatives will include modernizing our buildings, landscapes, and physical infrastructure through the comprehensive campus plan; implementing state-of-the-art technologies and systems; exploring the potential for AI-informed work systems; and organizing staffing to meet today's needs. To move toward carbon neutrality by 2035, the College will weigh decisions and resource allocations for environmental impact and alignment with climate equity and justice. In buildings, grounds, systems, and organizational models grounded in sustainability, accessibility, and efficiency, the College will optimize its financial and human resources toward its core academic mission.

## **V. A Bold Vision Realized**

Success across the pillars will make visible how living and learning in Bryn Mawr's distinctive context helps students develop their own voices, grow into their own styles of leadership, and advocate for their place and well-being in the world during and beyond their college experience.

Through reflection, cocreation, and investment, Bryn Mawr will be widely recognized for its commitment to academic excellence and its own blend of undergraduate and graduate study. Its highly research-active faculty will be supported in their own work and in meaningful research partnerships with students. A library of the future will serve as an intellectual beacon and the cultural heart of the campus. A curriculum steeped in the liberal arts and responsive to students' emerging interests and needs will position graduates for professional and personal success. Graduate programs will continue to prepare scholars and practitioners for professional impact and distinction. And our cooperative relationship with partner institutions will continue to ensure that the whole of our shared educational enterprise is far greater than the sum of its parts.

Financial aid that responds to families' circumstances will help make a Bryn Mawr education accessible to those who seek it. The built environment of the campus and the programs it makes possible will embody and facilitate the College's commitment to community. Renovated residence halls will offer the opportunity to live in intentional communities around shared interests. Intentional relationship-building from the moment students matriculate through their lives as alums will showcase the salience of the community built at or through the College.

Enacting *The Next Chapter* will bring Bryn Mawr's distinctive contributions boldly and broadly into the public light. The College's forward-focused trajectory will be clearly visible in its modernized physical campus, its leadership in higher education, and its commitment to defying gender stereotypes. It will be visible in the transformative ways that its students and alumnae/i lead—in their own voices and as an empowered community—as they drive and support societal change. The light that has always burned brightly in the lives of Bryn Mawr students and alumnae/i will shine with unprecedented radiance around the world.



# BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

[mawr.life/nextchapter](http://mawr.life/nextchapter)