The Relevance and Cost of a Liberal Arts Education

What does Middlebury have to do to become the finest liberal arts college for the 21st century? We have to create the educational environment that best prepares our students to understand the larger world around them. We have to enable them to enter with confidence an interconnected world that is rapidly changing and to appreciate the great diversity in the world, which will affect their lives more significantly than anything past generations have experienced.

Whether a student chooses to major in chemistry, philosophy, comparative literature, or international politics and economics, he or she should leave Middlebury with a keen sense of the world and its complexity. We can help to develop that sense of the world through our curriculum; through the diversity of our students, staff, and faculty and the discussion and engagement that such diversity allows; through the rich educational resources available to all of our students; and through projects and activities that complement and enrich our academic program. All of these offer students opportunities to develop valuable skills that they would otherwise develop only after leaving Middlebury. These are the things that can make their college education more relevant for the times.

—Ronald D. Liebowitz

Relevance

Essential Skills
A Middlebury education challenges our students to:

- Think critically
- Ask questions confidently
- Synthesize knowledge
- Communicate clearly and effectively
- All are essential skills for careers in business, law, science, education, government, technology, and emerging fields.

Global Perspective
A Middlebury education prepares our students for a global society. How?

- An International and Global Studies major that develops understanding of the transnational and global forces that affect all regions.
- Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs—an internationally oriented resource and research center that supports the College’s goal of advancing global understanding.
- Language education that promotes cultural understanding. Middlebury is home to some of the finest undergraduate and graduate language programs in the country.
- Schools Abroad—an international network of 37 partner universities in 16 countries on 4 continents. Sixty percent of our students study abroad through our Schools Abroad or other institutions around the world.
- Language Schools—Middlebury’s immersion method provides extraordinary growth in 10 different languages.
- The Monterey Institute of International Studies, enables students to obtain a BA and an MA in significant internationally focused areas in a total of five years.
- A diverse student body—10 percent are international students from more than 70 countries; 19.3 percent are U.S. students of color.

Academic Program
Middlebury’s 47 departments and programs offer 44 majors and nearly limitless academic options, a 9:1 student-to-faculty ratio, small classes, and 850 courses all taught by faculty members.

The College’s distribution requirements encourage our students to apply the skills listed above as they explore course offerings in:

- Writing and Literature
- Arts
- Philosophical and Religious Studies
- Historical Studies
- Physical and Life Sciences
- Deductive Reasoning and Analytical Processes
- Social Analysis
- Foreign Languages
Applying the Liberal Arts

A hallmark of a Middlebury education is the opportunities it provides to apply newfound skills and knowledge through:

- **Undergraduate Research**—The majority of Middlebury students undertake independent research or work with their professors on cutting-edge projects. Last year, 691 students did independent work, 350 participated in the Spring Research Symposium, 98 seniors received research funding of up to $1,500, and more than 200 worked as research assistants. *Examples*: studying post-traumatic stress in the brain, converting a tractor to run on hydrogen, and developing a protocol to measure the success of social entrepreneurship projects.

- **Internships**—Our goal is for all students to do one or more internships in the U.S. or abroad before graduating. *Examples*: interning in the Office of the First Lady, conserving wetlands with The Nature Conservancy, working for an environmental organization in Shanghai.

- **Community service**—61 percent do community service, and more than 1,500 volunteer in the local community through domestic and international nonprofit organizations. *Examples*: serving as a board member for the John Graham Shelter; participating in a trip to steward traditional Cherokee lands; creating a chapter of GlobeMed, which pairs students with grassroots organizations around the world that are alleviating health inequities.

- **Self-Directed Projects**—Students define an idea, articulate their goals, develop a plan, create a budget and raise money to fund it, put their plan into action, and analyze its success or failure. *Examples*: creation of an urban garden with a school in the Bronx, construction of a hydropower project in Nepal, and building of a library in a slum in Nairobi, Kenya.

- **Programs and centers** dedicated to providing students with opportunities to apply the liberal arts and also to preparing them to engage the world: Education in Action, the Middlebury Center for Social Entrepreneurship, the Project on Creativity and Innovation, MiddCORE, and the Undergraduate Research Office.

- **Solar Decathlon**—Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, the Solar Decathlon challenges 20 collegiate teams to design, build, and operate solar–powered houses that are cost effective, energy efficient, and attractive.

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### Cost

#### How We Compare (2012–2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middlebury</td>
<td>$55,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams College</td>
<td>$56,770</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Vermont</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(tuition, fees, room, board, books, personal expenses)</td>
<td>$28,463</td>
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<tr>
<td>In state:</td>
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</tbody>
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#### How the Finances Work

- Comprehensive fee only covers 65 percent of operating costs. Remaining 35 percent is covered through current-use gifts and endowment income.
- Endowment as of 6/30/2012: $881,000,000.
- A residential liberal arts education is a labor-intensive endeavor. With a 9:1 student-to-faculty ratio and sufficient staff to support faculty and students, salaries and benefits are the single largest budget expenditure.

#### Capping Fees and Encouraging Innovation

- Since 2010, Middlebury has capped the annual increase in the comprehensive fee at 1 percentage point above the consumer price index.
- The College is implementing ways to deliver a high-quality education through hybrid courses using technology to inform and enhance the learning process. *Example*: Assistant Professor of Geography Jeff Howarth’s “upside-down” GIS course where students watch video lectures before class and apply knowledge during class.
- Middlebury is exploring other sources of revenue. Its for-profit partnership—Middlebury Interactive Languages—provides virtual and in-person world language courses for K–12 students.

#### The Future

In order to remain relevant, we must contain costs and secure current-use and permanent endowment support for:

- Financial Aid
- Faculty and Academic Program Support
- Applying the Liberal Arts
- Annual Giving

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