

Community Relations Guide

Background

Many opportunities arise for area residents, groups, and communities to interact with Colby-Sawyer College and partake of its resources. The college offers educational, cultural, social, athletic, and recreational activities and events, ranging from the Adventures in Learning adult education programs, membership at the Dan & Kathleen Hogan Sports Center, and musical and theatrical performances, to use of the college's Susan Colgate Cleveland Library/Learning center and tennis courts. Throughout its history, Colby-Sawyer has encouraged the development of these formal and informal connections, which has made the college a focal point for community life and created strong bonds between the institution and area communities.

Today Colby-Sawyer has reached a point where the growing demand on its resources requires a more thoughtful and measured approach toward further commitments. While we wish to maintain and nurture our strong community ties, we must also recognize that the college's limited human, financial, and material resources exist primarily to serve our students and our educational mission. The following set of guidelines aims to assist the college community in its ongoing consideration of ways to collaborate with and engage our surrounding communities.

Guidelines

When considering whether the college should offer a service to, host, or otherwise participate in a community activity, program, or event, we should first assess that opportunity within the context of the college's current level of commitment in that area. College personnel should ask the following questions in all cases, but particularly in regard to potential formal engagements such as the creation of advisory boards and friends groups or ongoing use of facilities.

- Does the activity, program, or event fit with the college's mission?
- Is there any significant benefit to our students?
- What demands will the relationship place on college staff/faculty/students or the college's facilities and other resources?
- How well is the college able to serve its current level of commitment in this area?
- What is the duration of the potential commitment?
- Are there significant public relations or financial benefits, or other compelling reasons, to justify the college's involvement?
- Is the activity/relationship based on the college's larger needs/interests rather than an individual employee or group's personal interests/relationships?

If after considering these questions, one determines that the college should seriously consider pursuing a new level of commitment, please discuss the issue with your supervisor. Supervisors should work with faculty and staff to determine whether the potential new relationship meets the criteria above. If the relationship would benefit the college and support its mission, it must also be determined that the institution has the capacity to sustain the commitment and meet its obligations well, given its current level of community involvement. **Before making major commitments on behalf of the college to ongoing activities/ relationships/use of resources, the issue should be forwarded to the senior staff member who represents your area.**