



# Life After the Downturn

**Over the past several months**, the problems in the financial markets and the broader economy have deepened, and it is clear that the impact on the world economy will be significant and may well be prolonged. Here at Wellesley, as at every college, we are feeling the effects. We are making substantial adjustments to accommodate a projected \$20 million shortfall in our budget. Our planning has prepared for the possibility that additional shortfalls may well follow before our endowment recovers.

Last fall, as it became clear that the economic downturn would have a major deleterious effect on the College's endowment and thus on the operating budget as well, we initiated a multiyear plan to address the problem. Our economic model documents that our approach is a good one. That economic model we developed allows us to constantly update projections and to be agile in our responses to continuing financial changes.

I have made it clear to all that despite the economic challenges, we must preserve the core attributes of Wellesley. We have focused on "how can we do our work differently and better," rather than simply "what should be cut." Working with all of our constituencies, we implemented a number of actions: across-the-board measures (for example, a salary freeze); strengthening our sense of priorities (protecting our financial-aid program); streamlining operations and services (reducing redundancies by centralizing); tightening our belts (eliminating and consolidating services); and many other changes designed to make the organization more efficient.

These actions reflect difficult choices but do not compromise our strategic priorities. As always, we will remain transparent and open about our actions. I encourage you to read more at <http://www.wellesley.edu/PublicAffairs/President/announcements.html> (and also, see the article on page 6).

We have not been focused solely on our immediate situation but have been looking to the future. After all, Wellesley is a historically resilient institution; it has weathered countless crises, including the Great Depression and almost total destruction by fire. It will weather this one, as well. We have a responsibility to our students and alumnae, and to women of coming centuries, to consider the future at all times. While making the hard decisions involved in reorganization and reductions, we will also be identifying

areas where we must continue to invest our resources. Last year, for example, we introduced changes to our financial-aid policy to strengthen our recruitment of students nationally, and this year our data show that we have reaped the rewards of those changes. Our efforts this year are focused on communicating to students and their families about Wellesley's academic strength and the fact that it is need-blind and affordable.

I have emphasized that we must remain true to our values, focused on the academic and intellectual life of students and faculty at Wellesley.

Last summer, I assembled a cross section of our faculty and administration and asked the group to think creatively about the types of initiatives Wellesley might undertake to distinguish itself from peer institutions in the minds of potential students. Their report included recommendations regarding Wellesley's particular role in developing approaches to leadership training that will make a difference for women in an increasingly diverse and complex world.

Last semester, the all-faculty Academic Planning Committee, which I convened and charged to assist the College in developing a rational academic plan, held a first-ever faculty retreat. The proposals presented at the retreat included ideas to: enhance the first year at Wellesley; strengthen faculty-student collaboration; "internationalize" Wellesley; and reevaluate the content and structure of majors at Wellesley. I was delighted by the quality and thoughtfulness of the proposals that emerged and look forward to the committee's continued work.

For one example, let me describe a specific initiative that will build directly on our thinking about leadership, internationalization, and the importance of research opportunities for undergraduate liberal-arts students. As you surely know, the current US secretary of state, Hillary Rodham Clinton '69, is the second Wellesley alumna to hold that post. In celebration of the first, Madeleine Korbelt Albright '59, I have been pleased to announce this year the establishment of the Madeleine Korbelt Albright Institute for Global Affairs. The Albright Institute, for which we are currently raising money, will help to educate women leaders for this century by combining the intellectual resources of the faculty, researchers from the Wellesley Centers for Women, faculty from area graduate programs, and leading alumnae and practitioners in the fields of international relations and public policy. Highlights of the program will include a Wintersession program, a distinguished visiting faculty position, summer internships, and other opportunities. Secretary Albright has agreed to be our first distinguished visiting professor. (For more details, see the winter '09 issue of *Wellesley*, page 17.)

As we enter spring, the season of renewal, the global economic crisis continues to affect our lives every single day. However, the future for Wellesley, like springtime itself, harbors the promise of brighter days ahead.

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RICHARD HOWARD

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