

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College closure
Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 12:06:07 PM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803 \(AGO remote number\)](tel:802-595-3803)
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Diane Arndt [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 9:29 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Marlboro College closure

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Dear Attorney General Donovan,

I am writing to request that you investigate and stop the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College, sale of the campus to Democracy Builders, and gift of Marlboro College's assets to Emerson College.

The proposed program at Emerson College will not replicate the singular form of education combining critical analysis, applied reasoning, artistic exploration, and intellectual rigor in a self-governing community. This place-based learning on a remote mountain hillside where the accountability of small town living and connection to the land play a central role will not transfer to an urban setting.

I believe this plan fails the test of equivalency in the transfer of assets between non-profit organizations. Further, the decision was enacted undemocratically and without transparency, contrary to the commitment to self-governance in the college's charter. Opposition to the plan, both on and off campus, was systematically silenced.

This plan would be an incalculable loss for Vermont, economically, culturally and historically. The current Board of Trustees and President have an established track record of ineffective stewardship and should not be permitted to go forward with these two major decisions that will effectively end the institution.

Sincerely,
Diane Arndt
Maplewood, NJ
Alumnus Class of 1995

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Should VT lead the nation or simply allow a shining light of democracy to be pillaged?
Date: Friday, June 19, 2020 2:05:36 PM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

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From: skyeharvest [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2020 12:38 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Should VT lead the nation or simply allow a shining light of democracy to be pillaged?

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

VT Attorney General AG Donovan:

I wrote a lengthy letter in April begging you to stop the sale and transfer of Marlboro College's assets and facilities to Emerson College. I write much more briefly now to ask you to stop the sale of the facilities to the collection of charter schools known, ironically, as "Democracy Builders." That this organization is highly suspicious fiscally has been documented by T. Hunter Wilson in his letter, and I am sure I do not have to explain to you the irony of a charter school, which "succeed" when they do at all, through rules and regimentation, calling itself "Democracy Builders.)

We are in the middle of a global crisis and long overdue civil unrest. At this moment more than ever we need to learn to work together and create democratic structures—something Marlboro has excelled at since its founding. Contrary to what the Board and President say, Marlboro has not exhausted itself. There are hundreds of faculty, emeriti faculty, townspeople, staff, students, and alumni desperate to join forces and help with recruitment, development, curriculum design, and teaching. We have offered time and money, blood sweat and tears. The only thing standing in our way has been a Board and President who absolutely refuse to consider the possibility that Marlboro might be saved. They need to go. And we, all of us, just need a chance.

Sincerely,
Skye Allen [REDACTED]

Sent from ProtonMail Mobile

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College closure
Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 12:06:07 PM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
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E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Diane Arndt [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 9:29 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Marlboro College closure

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Dear Attorney General Donovan,

I am writing to request that you investigate and stop the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College, sale of the campus to Democracy Builders, and gift of Marlboro College's assets to Emerson College.

The proposed program at Emerson College will not replicate the singular form of education combining critical analysis, applied reasoning, artistic exploration, and intellectual rigor in a self-governing community. This place-based learning on a remote mountain hillside where the accountability of small town living and connection to the land play a central role will not transfer to an urban setting.

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This plan would be an incalculable loss for Vermont, economically, culturally and historically. The current Board of Trustees and President have an established track record of ineffective stewardship and should not be permitted to go forward with these two major decisions that will effectively end the institution.

Sincerely,
Diane Arndt
Maplewood, NJ
Alumnus Class of 1995

June 12, 2020

Dear Attorney General Donovan,

Like many of my fellow Marlboro alumni, I'm writing to express my concern over the imminent loss to the State of Vermont of the educational, cultural, and historic landmark that is Marlboro College. This institution has deep roots in the landscape and life of southern Vermont. From the beginning it has distinguished itself as a noble experiment in higher education, founded on student initiative and the self-governing structure of the New England town meeting. It was designed to be small, rural, independent, and academically demanding. Since the late 1940s Marlboro has produced graduates with a strong sense of purpose forged in their self-directed Plans of Concentration, which have been likened by many outside observers to being closer to graduate than undergraduate work. Marlboro students are mavericks, risk takers, imaginative, resourceful, trained to think outside of the box.

Marlboro has had the ill fortune in recent decades to have fallen under the stewardship of administrators and trustees who seem to have lost faith in its mission. They have instead taken the advice of a succession of pricey consultants, attempting in vain to steer the college down the path of far more conventional institutions, losing track of Marlboro's identity and character. Along the way some unfortunate decisions were made, overbuilding on the campus and opening a graduate program which failed to thrive. The current president of the college seems to have decided early on in his tenure that he had to destroy the school in order to save it. In the past year deals were explored to "merge" Marlboro with two larger institutions, the University of Bridgeport and Boston's Emerson College. The latter deal is set to be finalized this month.

Even a cursory look reveals this deal to be no "merger." Marlboro's tenured and tenure track faculty have an option of teaching at Emerson, and Marlboro's currently enrolled students may transfer to Emerson as well. But this seems a pittance compared to what Emerson receives, namely Marlboro's healthy endowment. Marlboro becomes a "program" at Emerson, likely to disappear in coming years if it doesn't attract new students. Marlboro's staff and non-tenured faculty lose their jobs. The town of Marlboro loses its economic base. The area around Brattleboro loses an important center of social and cultural life. The State of Vermont loses as well, by allowing a vital institution and its endowment to disappear.

A prospective buyer for Marlboro's campus has already been found in the proposed Freedom College, to be founded by Degrees of Freedom, an organization tied to a series of socially progressive charter schools. While this appears well-meaning on paper, closer inspection reveals a highly dubious venture by yet another outsider with no experience in higher education (and a foundation which recently lost its non-profit status). Why attempt to start a new college from scratch when there is a wealth of former Marlboro faculty, staff, and students willing to salvage the college we all love and owe so much to? We strongly believe there is a way forward for Marlboro on its hill in southern Vermont, a way which will require the resourcefulness and spirit of austerity the school taught us and continues to inspire in us. One need only look at nearby Hampshire College, in Amherst, Massachusetts, to see that a dedicated community can indeed keep small, unique, beloved institutions alive for future generations.

We appeal to you to do what is necessary to block the Emerson and Degrees of Freedom deals and give Marlboro College a chance to survive as it was always intended to be, a unique, venerated institution, rooted firmly in the life and traditions of Vermont.

Many thanks for your attention.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cary D. Barney', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Cary D. Barney
Marlboro College '80

██
Saint Louis University, Madrid (Spain)

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Letter concerning Marlboro College
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 9:17:10 AM
Attachments: [Marlboro letter.docx](#)
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

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From: Cary Barney [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2020 7:55 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Letter concerning Marlboro College

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

To whom it may concern,

I am attaching a letter to Attorney General Donovan about the impending loss of Marlboro College.

Thank you,

Cary Barney

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 8:33:33 AM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

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E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 7:05 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Name	Curtis
Last	Behre
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone Number	[REDACTED]
Mailing Address (required for a response)	[REDACTED] Burlington Vermont, Vermont 05401
Subject	Investigate & Stop The Unnecessary Closure of Marlboro College, Sale of the Campus to Democracy Builders, and Gift of Marlboro College's Assets to Emerson College

Message Dear Attorney General Donovan,

I am writing to request that you investigate and stop the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College, sale of the campus to Democracy Builders, and gift of Marlboro College's assets to Emerson College.

The proposed program at Emerson College will not replicate the singular form of education

combining critical analysis, applied reasoning, artistic exploration, and intellectual rigor in a self-governing community. This place-based learning on a remote mountain hillside where the accountability of small town living and connection to the land play a central role will not transfer to an urban setting.

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This plan would be an incalculable loss for Vermont, economically, culturally and historically.

The current Board of Trustees and President have an established track record of ineffective stewardship and should not be permitted to go forward with these two major decisions that will effectively end the institution.

Curtis A Behre

Burlington, Vermont

Former Student of Marlboro College (did not graduate)

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Concerning Seth Andrew and the Degrees of Freedom purchase of Marlboro College
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 1:40:54 PM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

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E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Justin Chandler [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2020 9:21 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Re: Concerning Seth Andrew and the Degrees of Freedom purchase of Marlboro College

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Hello, following up on my letter below. Have the questions below been considered and the due diligence pursued?

Can the town of Marlboro expect to have the time to hold a vote and address some of the community concerns?

Thank you,
Justin W. Chandler

On Jun 1, 2020, at 09:43, Justin Chandler [REDACTED] wrote:

To Mr. T.J. Donovan, VT Attorney General:

I hope this note finds you well. I am writing as a multi-generational Vermonter who grew up and continues to spend as much time as possible in Marlboro, VT; and who lives and works primarily around New York City.

As a representative of Vermont, I hope that when you review the purchase you are prioritizing the interests of our community over those interests of Degrees of Freedom. I respectfully and humbly request that the project be halted immediately until a

Marlboro Town Forum is commenced, and the townspeople are able to vote with adequate information at their disposal. The purchase of Marlboro College by the organization run by Seth Andrew called Degrees of Freedom concerns me for two primary reasons:

1. The mission and plan of Degrees of Freedom appears to be that of an experiment designed to test a theory of education.
2. The concept of busing or shuttling via Amtrak a group of adolescents for a very short period of time into a small close knit community raises many concerns.

To be clear, by no means do I suggest that the goal of this organization or the desire of Seth Andrew to promote learning is not a righteous endeavor. However, I question the impact such an experiment, and the impact a constant influx of individuals will have on our community in Marlboro, as well as question the financial viability of Degrees of Freedom. I believe one of the most important values of the physical campus is the atmosphere it creates for learning and growing, so one should question the value students will get by such short stays.

Further, there is wide concern that the track record of this organization and their local relationships does not look good:

“The schools have, at times, struggled with the perception of being outsiders in their host communities, importing a New York-style approach to education reform without regard for the wishes of local families.” (article link at end).

Shuttling students for short stays risks both eroding the community that they could form if one place, and, more broadly, the community of Marlboro at large.

It appears that on social media and from news articles posted that this is a done deal, but I encourage you and your team, as well as others, to look into possible friction this experiment may cause in the Marlboro community. Especially if the concept fails, as have some of the Democracy Prep charter schools. Think of South road for example, where the college resides, and all of the families, homes, and individuals who have been there for generations. How will an organization like this potentially change a community that does not desire a large increase in traffic or a constant influx of very temporary residents? We need to know about the viability of this organization and have the opportunity to vote as a community. More questions need to be asked, and there needs to be time to ask them.

How will this impact or change the fabric of the community?

Is there a secondary effect from having such an experimental institution in such a small and remote community?

Is there the possibility of negative consequences to the community?

Maybe there is a benefit to the students/individuals that come for only a few weeks or months to study, but no benefit to the town of Marlboro?

What if just one random individual finds themselves in trouble or encounters friction within the community (which is the natural result of circulating a large population of

individuals)?

Bottom line is: how do we prioritize the interests of the community and the town over the “mission” of this experimental organization?

As a representative of Vermont, I hope you are asking these questions and reconsider moving too quickly to approve this purchase of Marlboro College by Degrees of Freedom. I am not convinced that this is in the best interest of the community, but rather is an experimental pursuit, that may be of good intention, but may not be meant for Marlboro.

Public articles illustrating further “Degrees of Freedom” concerns:

<https://www.the74million.org/article/democracy-preps-expansion-woes-raise-questions-about-whether-civics-education-can-be-brought-to-scale/>

Best regards,

Justin W. Chandler

-Concerned citizen in favor of transparency and advocate for the town of Marlboro, VT

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#)
Cc: [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College and Me.
Date: Monday, June 8, 2020 10:33:35 AM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

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109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803](tel:802-595-3803) (AGO remote number)
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Jamme Chantler [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 10:32 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Marlboro College and Me.

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Hi Attorney General,

I am writing to let you know that my years at Marlboro College were the most important of my life. It taught me how to think independently and to think clearly. The college was a place that accepted people who were different and who felt that they didn't belong at other schools. Some maybe weren't good at academics because of emotional problems or maybe they didn't approach learning in a traditional way. I felt different because I was shy and gay and came from a broken family life. My professors and the other students changed my life completely around. So long as you were a student who loved books and were passionate about learning, there was a place for you at Marlboro. And professors engaged with us students as equals, listened to our ideas and became like aunts and uncles to us.

Now I hear that it is being sold and its endowment is being sent out of state to a college that is not at all what Marlboro is. I didn't love Marlboro only for the independent study aspect of its academics, which they are pretending to recreate in Boston. There was something about being at a small college on a mountain in Vermont with a small group of adults and kids who were dedicated to reading the classics and arguing about ideas that transformed my life among many student's lives and prepared us for graduate work better than many other undergraduate programs. I would love to rewind the years of my life and be back at Marlboro again. Of course, with our scientific understanding where it is currently, journeys across time aren't possible. I had hoped, though, that this most precious of colleges would continue on into the future for other students, who like me, would best be served by a close-knit community of scholars in the mountains of Vermont. Please help! Don't let

them kill it!
Warm Regards,

Jamme K. Chantler



“Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness.” – [Maya Angelou](#)

“If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music.” – [Albert Einstein](#)

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Letter to the Attorney General RE: Marlboro College
Date: Friday, June 12, 2020 8:37:54 AM
Attachments: [Coakley-AG Letter June.pdf](#)
Importance: High

Deb Matthews
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E-Mail \ deborah matthews@vermont.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: John Coakley [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 4:32 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Letter to the Attorney General RE: Marlboro College

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Good afternoon,

Attached please find a letter for the Attorney General regarding the proposed merger between Marlboro College and Emerson College. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Best,
John Coakley

10 June 2020

Attorney General TJ Donovan
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609

Dear A.G. Donovan,

I write to ask you to investigate the proposed “alliance” between Marlboro College and Emerson College and ultimately to rule against this transfer of significant assets out of Vermont. I graduated from Marlboro in 2002. While there I served as head selectperson of the campus community, I sat on several committees important to the running of the school, and met regularly with other campus leaders including then-president Paul LeBlanc. I also hold a Ph.D. in History from the University of Wisconsin, and today I am a college teacher myself. Marlboro prepared me well for a life in higher education because it let me see inside from the very beginning. It invited me into the process as a student.

Marlboro is one of the only places I felt truly at home, and I gave my heart to the place, always prepared to give much more. I knew it to be a labor of love and devotion and believed there might be a time when I would be honored enough to dedicate my life to the continuation of Marlboro College. That’s why it’s been so hard to admit that for the past year, I have found the actions of Marlboro’s administration, and ultimately its board, reprehensible and unredeemable.

What follows is a brief analysis of several of Marlboro’s preventable problems over the past decade or so that I believe have significantly contributed to the college’s moves towards closure. This analysis is largely focused on alumni issues for the past ten years, because that is the information I’ve been able to glean through my current position as a member of Marlboro’s Alumni Council (though in this letter, I speak only for myself and not for that group). Problems of alumni engagement are some of Marlboro’s most significant and most preventable. In sum, Marlboro has shown remarkably little interest in its alumni for a long time, and now shows all but a select few utter contempt.

1. The College maintains a very poor database of alumni contacts. When the Alumni Association finally succeeded (after several attempts) at getting Marlboro’s alumni contact information, we found it nearly useless. Out of over 5,000 names, nearly half did not have an email address listed; many of these are people who graduated in the last 30 years – people who grew up with email addresses. Physical addresses were out of date, some alumni listed as active were deceased, and sometimes names were badly mangled. A friend of mine from the class of 2005 who later married an alumna also from 2005 is listed as being married to an entirely different individual (class of 1983). He confirmed that indeed, every few months, he gets mailings addressed to him and a wife he has never met. When this same friend of mine began making a significant income 5-10 years ago, he was immediately contacted by a rival college he had attended briefly before finding Marlboro. A representative met with him to try to develop him as a major donor.

Marlboro, however, never changed its fundraising strategy towards him. A good alumni database is invaluable to a school; letting Marlboro's lapse was an egregious and preventable error.

2. Marlboro does not know who its alumni are and what they do. When I met briefly with the current alumni director several months ago, I noticed several filing cabinets in the basement of the administration building labeled "Alumni." Naturally, I asked what was in them, and she responded that she had no idea because they were locked. The College's alumni list does not keep information about alumni occupations, income level, or past ways they have engaged with the College. What has tended to result is just a vague sense of "the kind of person" who went to Marlboro at any point in time. Individual members of the current Marlboro community always know the individual alumni they happen to know, and otherwise have a general impression of what the other alumni are doing. Despite the overabundance of alumni currently serving on the Board of Trustees for example, none have attempted to universally represent alumni in general. Those called "alumni trustees" do not solicit alumni input.

3. Marlboro alienated many alumni over the past five years by cutting off their contact with the school. Instead of the College keeping track of its alumni in an organized fashion, it has always been up to individual faculty members to maintain relationships with their former students, an unspoken system that worked to a certain extent up until the last several years. When the College purged a significant number of longtime faculty and staff, however, that naturally resulted in dismay across the wider college community, and strained relations with alumni, not to mention the town and no doubt the Music School. Had an effort been made to engage alumni around the issue of beloved professors leaving the school, an effective capital campaign could have emerged, and it could have been even more successful had those professors been able to retire on their own terms. Perhaps a handful of faculty positions could now have endowed chairs as a result of clear thinking several years ago.

4. Marlboro never mounted a capital campaign to engage alumni and build up its endowment. Perhaps this is because the college did not know where we were or because it had an un-nuanced impression of alumni income levels. Either way, the attempt was not made, although the same tired old mailings about giving to the annual fund cluttered up mailboxes at houses we no longer inhabited. I have heard the excuse that conducting a capital campaign would have announced the College's dire financial straits and therefore doom its enrollment, but much wealthier institutions mount successful campaigns all the time without the world believing they are insolvent.

5. Over this past year, Marlboro never took seriously the alumni and former faculty who offered assistance and ideas to help preserve the school. No one responded when in August a group of alumni working in higher education wrote to Marlboro faculty offering support and detailed concerns about Marlboro's merger process with the University of Bridgeport (the merger failed shortly thereafter). Even when alumni showed up in good faith at Home Days in October and offered ideas to anyone who would listen, they were yelled at by faculty members in the dining hall and shamed by administrators for having feelings about the botched Bridgeport merger. Alumni ideas dutifully written on sheets of butcher paper during a session with the president known as "Kevin Unplugged" never again saw the light of day, though the alumni director could easily have sent them in an email to everyone who attended that meeting. Several alumni presented detailed plans in November to the Board via the Alumni Council, but no one

responded to those ideas. One alumni plan to increase enrollment was put into action immediately, only to be dropped mysteriously by members of the administration after the Emerson deal was announced. No doubt you have heard from others what has happened since November: in short, alumni who try to prevent the closure of an institution they love are intimidated and vilified by the stewards of that institution.

This analysis makes one thing clear: any assertion that the administration and the Board attempted *everything* to save Marlboro College from destruction is a falsehood. Instead, easily preventable actions taken over the course of the last decade – at least in the realm of alumni engagement – have sped up the destruction. As an historian, I feel confident concluding that Marlboro’s demise is not the inevitable result of forces beyond human control, whether a demographic shift or a global pandemic, but instead the result of human actions.

The proposed “alliance” with Emerson will result in the closure of a 73-year Vermont cultural institution, the loss of significant assets from Vermont, and the depression of the local economy. It will also raise red flags across the world of higher education because it will erode faculty authority at Emerson. This is not business as usual (even in the cut-throat business of college mergers), and warrants investigation. I must conclude that the Marlboro administration and its Board of Trustees have not fulfilled their responsibilities to the college because they have not done everything possible to protect its assets. Even the group of individuals (tenured and tenure-track faculty and students) eligible to take a place at Emerson under the agreement is few in number and dwindling every day.

Marlboro need not be lost because of poor decisions. Some of these actions can still be reversed. When they are, there are many people who will gladly take on the task (and the risk) of shepherding Marlboro College as an independent institution in Vermont. Marlboro is a labor of love and devotion – it always has been – and some of us are still devoted. Now more than ever, the world needs Marlboro College.

Sincerely,

John Coakley, Ph.D.



From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College closure
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 9:36:46 AM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

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E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Barbara Cole [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2020 1:16 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Marlboro College closure

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Dear Attorney General Donovan,

We, Bruce and Barbara Cole, are members of the Marlboro College Class of 1959, of which there were just five graduates. It was a perilous time for our campus with few resources and a low student body. The college was able to persevere only through the devotion and dedication of its remarkable faculty and a few benefactors who believed in the work and great importance of what was being developed and nurtured on the Hill.

Who we are today as individuals and members of the Marlboro community is largely due to the influence of that time spent at Marlboro College. Working closely with great mentors, who became good friends while helping us seek our individual paths; participating in the governance of the community; setting aside one work day a week to paint buildings, dig septic lines, lay floors while helping Don Woodard, our one at the time maintenance person, maintain the physical plant; using the wonderful hillside setting with its surrounding woods and wildlife as a classroom is the heart of the Marlboro experience.

We have been associated with the college over these many years and have seen so many classes graduate future leaders and strong community members who are spreading their talents around the globe. Sadly, with the loss of Marlboro College on this hill, these quality building experience will no longer be available to future students.

We also want to stress that Marlboro College and Vermont's other educational institutions of higher learning, with their multifarious benefits to the community and state, should elicit all efforts on

many fronts to maintain their presence in the state of Vermont.

We too are writing to request that you investigate and stop the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College, the sale of the campus to Democracy Builders, and the gift of Marlboro College's assets to Emerson College.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bruce Cole '59 and Barbara Draper Cole '59

██████████ Marlboro VT 05344
██████████

We enclose the following paragraphs below, part of a letter, penned by Amy Domrad Tudor class of 1999, that reflects our thoughts as well.

"The proposed program at Emerson College will not replicate the singular form of education combining critical analysis, applied reasoning, artistic exploration, and intellectual rigor in a self-governing community. This place-based learning on a remote mountain hillside where the accountability of small town living and connection to the land play a central role will not transfer to an urban setting.

I believe this plan fails the test of equivalency in the transfer of assets between non-profit organizations. Further, the decision was enacted undemocratically and without transparency, contrary to the commitment to self-governance in the college's charter. Opposition to the plan, both on and off campus, was systematically silenced.

This plan would be an incalculable loss for Vermont, economically, culturally and historically. "

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#)
Cc: [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: AGO Voicemail - Marlboro College
Date: Monday, June 8, 2020 9:35:37 AM
Attachments: [Recording \(24\).m4a](#)
Importance: High

(I am attaching the recorded voicemail message as it was a bit difficult to hear some of what she said. I got most of it though.)

DATE: 6-6-2020

TIME: 5:34pm

FROM: Sharone Cullin

PHONE: [REDACTED]

MESSAGE: Hi, my name is Sharone Cullin, I'm an alumna of Marlboro College, and I just - I'm absorbing the news of Marlboro's giving their \$20-\$30 million endowment to _____ and the campus being sold to a charter school, and I don't understand thatI guess I'm asking that the charter school model we know doesn't - it seems to not be working and it doesn't hold the legacy of Marlboro College and there are invested people locally the _____ community and donors and supporters that want to see Marlboro College stay on this hill. Again, my name is Sharone Cullin, an alumna of Marlboro College and I'm just - I'm wondering what I can do or how I can best ask the Attorney General Donovan to not agree to selling the lands of Marlboro College on _____ Hill to a charter school that doesn't seem to be in any better financial setting than Marlboro College and probably worse! So I think, I'd like a call back. [REDACTED] is my cell. Thank you.

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant

Office of the Attorney General | GCAL

109 State Street, 3rd Floor

Montpelier, VT 05609

Phone | 802-828-3689 **802-595-3803 (AGO remote number)**

E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#)
Cc: [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Monday, June 8, 2020 11:25:33 AM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 **802-595-3803 (AGO remote number)**
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 10:15 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Name	Dan
Last	Daly
Email	
Phone Number	
Mailing Address (required for a response)	 Camden, Maine 04843
Subject	Marlboro College

Message It seems like writing at this juncture about Marlboro College is a bit like that scene in the movie Chinatown. This appears to be a "...forget it Jake, it's Chinatown," situation where like in the movie, there is nothing that can be done. The powers to be have done the deal. But I will make the point that it seems to me really strange that when I went to Marlboro in the sixties the endowment was a fraction of what it is now and the student body considerably less than what the enrollment is now, yet the administration is selling out an institution that contributed to the economic and cultural well being of the state of

Vermont and sending it's assets to Massachusetts ,
Something just seems amiss and I am curious if the office of attorney general has
considered looking into this transaction.
Thank you for your consideration,
Dan Daly

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 8:10:59 AM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803](tel:802-595-3803) (AGO remote number)
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Di Starr [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2020 4:57 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Marlboro College

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Dear Attorney General Donovan,

I am writing to request that you investigate and stop the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College, sale of the campus to Democracy Builders, and gift of Marlboro College's assets to Emerson College.

The proposed program at Emerson College will not replicate the singular form of education combining critical analysis, applied reasoning, artistic exploration, and intellectual rigor in a self-governing community. This place-based learning on a remote mountain hillside where the accountability of small town living and connection to the land play a central role will not transfer to an urban setting.

I believe this plan fails the test of equivalency in the transfer of assets between non-profit organizations. Further, the decision was enacted undemocratically and without transparency, contrary to the commitment to self-governance in the college's charter. Opposition to the plan, both on and off campus, was systematically silenced.

This plan would be an incalculable loss for Vermont, economically, culturally and historically.

The current Board of Trustees and President have an established track record of ineffective stewardship and should not be permitted to go forward with these two major decisions that will effectively end the institution.

Sincerely,

Di Starr
El Sobrante, CA

Marlboro College Alumnus, [REDACTED]

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW:
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 9:15:55 AM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803 \(AGO remote number\)](tel:802-595-3803)
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Tina DuBosque [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2020 7:21 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject:

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Dear Attorney General Donovan,

I am writing to request that you investigate and stop the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College, sale of the campus to Democracy Builders, and gift of Marlboro College's assets to Emerson College.

The proposed program at Emerson College will not replicate the singular form of education combining critical analysis, applied reasoning, artistic exploration, and intellectual rigor in a self-governing community. This place-based learning on a remote mountain hillside where the accountability of small town living and connection to the land play a central role will not transfer to an urban setting.

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Tina DuBosque

Quaker Hill CT

Marlboro College '70/Marlboro College Graduate School 2001

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Please investigate and halt the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 3:03:52 PM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803](tel:802-595-3803) (AGO remote number)
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Rachel Eugster [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 2:17 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Please investigate and halt the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Dear Attorney General Donovan,

From the first announcements by Marlboro College administrators of proposed partnerships—first with the University of Bridgeport and subsequently with Emerson College—something has been off. Communications have been deceptive*, and efforts by stakeholders including alumni to help save the college stonewalled, rebuffed, or completely ignored. (21 fellow signatories and I still await an answer to a September 27 letter we sent offering our help in saving the College.)

I am therefore writing to fervently request that you investigate and halt the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College, the sale of its campus to Democracy Builders, the transfer of the institution to Emerson College, and the extremely bizarre hand-off of certain of its valuable collections and assets to other entities.

This would be an incalculable loss for Vermont, economically, culturally, and historically. The proposed program at Emerson College cannot possibly replicate the singular form of education combining critical analysis, applied reasoning, artistic exploration, and intellectual rigor in a self-governing community. Even if it did, the loss associated from transferring out of the State of Vermont, and off of a remote hilltop setting where every member of the community is dependent upon every other, is incalculable. I believe this scheme fails the test of equivalency in the transfer of assets between non-profit organizations. Further, the decision was enacted undemocratically and without transparency, in contravention of the commitment to

self-governance in Marlboro College's charter, and in contradiction of the empty assurances voiced since by the administration that the community was properly involved in the decision-making process. Quite the contrary, as opposition to the plan was systematically silenced. Furthermore, the proposed sale to an organization that proposes to offer an innovative educational model for students at the same age as an incoming class of Freshmen gives the lie to protestations that small educational institutions are no longer viable in the present day.

The current Board of Trustees and President have an established track record of ineffective stewardship and should not be permitted to go forward with these decisions that will effectively end the institution. I add my voice to those calling for an investigation.

Rachel Eugster
Marlboro College Alumna, 1977
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

*On April 30, 2019, an e-newsletter mailed to the community at large (including alumni) with the subject heading "What's Up at Marlboro? So. Much. Open me!" included these two statements:

"You have probably have [sic] heard about the closure of some of our peer institutions. While this is worthy of much concern for the state of higher education in the USA and we are super sorry to see these institutions go, rest assured that Marlboro is currently not on that path. Below are details on some of the exciting things happening around here that are inspiring and affirmational to our healthy community."

"Strategic Options Task Force

As the landscape of higher ed changes and colleges compete for fewer students as a result of shifting demographics, **Marlboro College has been proactively looking for partnerships** to help create efficiencies that will lead to an increasingly sustainable financial model for the college. Late last year, the Marlboro Board of Trustees created a **Strategic Options Task Force**, including key senior staff members, **Kate Ratcliff and William Edelglass** representing faculty, **and one student, charged with exploring a range of possible alliances**. After a careful process, the task force engaged consultants from EY Parthenon, an educational arm of Ernst & Young, to help us develop a vision for seeking such a partnership. The task force is **committed to finding partners who will value our unique pedagogy** that prioritizes student agency and strong student-faculty relationships. **We are currently in conversations with several potential partners** that would complement the work that we do here. Although this process may ultimately not yield a partner, the discussions have been important for the community to appreciate what is most valuable about a Marlboro education and focus on how we can address the challenges ahead."

No other communication was shared with alumni (other than a few fundraising appeals) until July 25, which made this announcements:

"We are pleased to share news about the future of Marlboro College and an incredible new opportunity for us. Our Board of Trustees has been forward-thinking and proactive to safeguard the ideology of Marlboro College amidst a radically changing landscape in higher education. **As a**

result, we are excited to announce that Marlboro College has signed a Letter of Intent as the first step of plans toward merging with the University of Bridgeport.”

--

[REDACTED]

From: [Curtis, Christopher](#)
To: [Wolk, Tina](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 6:16:00 PM
Importance: High

From: Matthews, Deborah <Deborah.Matthews@vermont.gov>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 2:32 PM
To: Curtis, Christopher <Christopher.Curtis@vermont.gov>; Renner, Jamie <Jamie.Renner@vermont.gov>
Cc: Sudbay, William <william.sudbay@partner.vermont.gov>
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 **802-595-3803 (AGO remote number)**
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 1:13 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Name	John Fago
Last	Fago
Email	
Phone Number	
Mailing Address (required for a	 Bethel, Vermont 05032

response)

Subject Someone is trying to steal Marlboro College!

Message Dear AG Donovan,

I am a graduate of Marlboro College and I am deeply concerned about the proposed demolition of this very special place.

In my final year before graduation in 1971, I had the opportunity of organizing a class called "Who Rules Marlboro". About six students and some interested faculty met with a host of the original and early Marlboro players, including Walter Hendricks, his wife, his college secretary, Roland Boyden, John and Margaret MacArthur, and many others. All were respectful and candid in discussing "warp and the weft" of what was woven into the fabric that became Marlboro College. Despite differences, everyone except Tom Reagle revealed a shared understanding that Marlboro's unique value and orientation came from the spirit of Black Mountain College. Someone recalled Robert Frost's response to the question of what constitutes a good education. It was simply, "Mark Hopkins on one end of the log and a student on the other."

What I see today feels like a hostile takeover attempt. Why in the world would Marlboro give more than forty million dollars of assets to feather the nests of a lucky few? Let's take a deep breath.... pay some gold-tinted-parachute lucre to those desperate enough to want to bail out, but do not sell what is irreplaceable. Give the campus a sabbatical, see what wonderful options can be found. This is a time for stewardship not real estate brokerage.

Thanks for your time and help in securing better days ahead for a special educational institution.

Sincerely yours,
John Fago

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: 75 years of Marlboro College in Vermont. Please do not let this transfer go forward.
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 7:49:30 AM
Attachments: [Attorney General Donovan letter June 2020.doc](#)
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803](tel:802-595-3803) (AGO remote number)
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Gwen D. Haaland [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 11:23 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: 75 years of Marlboro College in Vermont. Please do not let this transfer go forward.

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Dr Gwen D. Feldman Haaland class of 1981
[REDACTED]
Ashford, CT 06278
[REDACTED]

Dear Attorney General Donovan,

I am writing to request that you investigate and stop the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College, sale of the campus to Democracy Builders, and gift of Marlboro College's assets to Emerson College.

The proposed program at Emerson College will not replicate the singular form of education combining critical analysis, applied reasoning, artistic exploration, and intellectual rigor in a self-governing community. This place-based learning on a remote mountain hillside where the accountability of small town living and connection to the land play a central role will not transfer to an urban setting.

I believe this plan fails the test of equivalency in the transfer of assets between non-profit organizations. Further, the decision was enacted undemocratically and without transparency, contrary to the commitment to self-governance in the college's charter. Opposition to the plan, both on and off campus, was systematically silenced.

Not only did I graduate from Marlboro College, but my daughter Shannon Haaland just

graduated from my alma mater last month. My Mother has been making significant donations to Marlboro College regularly for 43 year, since 1977. It was her intent that the money be used to enhance and sustain our small college on Potash hill in Marlboro Vermont for perpetuity. Requesting money and then redirecting the funds appear to be highly unethical if not outright illegal.

Higher education in our country is facing the loss of a vision and a unique personalized program of study in a special place that can not be duplicated elsewhere. Losing Marlboro College in the manner proposed would be an incalculable loss for Vermont, economically, culturally and historically.

I am concerned that the current Board of Trustees and President may be ineffective stewards of our precious college. Please do not permit them to go forward with these major decisions that will effectively end the academic institution known for nearly 75 years as Marlboro College. Please do not let this transfer go forward.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gwen Diane Feldman Haaland

Ashford, CT

Marlboro College, 

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 7:51:07 AM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803](tel:802-595-3803) (AGO remote number)
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 11:28 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Name	Gwen Diane Feldman
Last	Haaland Ph. D.
Email	
Phone Number	
Mailing Address (required for a response)	 Ashford, Connecticut 06278
Subject	Save Marlboro College after 75 years in Southern Vermont. Please do not let this transfer go forward.

Message Dr Gwen D. Feldman Haaland class of 1981


Dear Attorney General Donovan, I am writing to request that you investigate and stop the unnecessary closure of Marlboro College, sale of the campus to Democracy Builders, and

gift of Marlboro College's assets to Emerson College. The proposed program at Emerson College will not replicate the singular form of education combining critical analysis, applied reasoning, artistic exploration, and intellectual rigor in a self-governing community. This place-based learning on a remote mountain hillside where the accountability of small town living and connection to the land play a central role will not transfer to an urban setting. I believe this plan fails the test of equivalency in the transfer of assets between non-profit organizations. Further, the decision was enacted un-democratically and without transparency, contrary to the commitment to self-governance in the college's charter. Opposition to the plan, both on and off campus, was systematically silenced. Not only did I graduate from Marlboro College, but my daughter Shannon Haaland just graduated from my alma mater last month. My Mother has been making significant donations to Marlboro College regularly for 43 year, since 1977. It was her intent that the money be used to enhance and sustain our small college on Potash hill in Marlboro Vermont for perpetuity. Requesting money and then redirecting the funds appear to be highly unethical if not outright illegal. Higher education in our country is facing the loss of a vision and a unique personalized program of study in a special place that can not be duplicated elsewhere. Losing Marlboro College in the manner proposed would be an incalculable loss for Vermont, economically, culturally and historically. I am concerned that the current Board of Trustees and President may be ineffective stewards of our precious college. Please do not permit them to go forward with these major decisions that will effectively end the academic institution known for nearly 75 years as Marlboro College. Please do not let this transfer go forward.

Sincerely,
Dr. Gwen Diane Feldman Haaland
Ashford, CT
Marlboro College, [REDACTED]

Dr Gwen D. Feldman Haaland [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ashford, CT 06278
[REDACTED]

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Sincerely,

Dr. Gwen Diane Feldman Haaland

Ashford, CT

Marlboro College, [REDACTED]

From: [Sudbay, William](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College — A parent's perspective.
Date: Friday, June 26, 2020 8:44:53 AM

Will Sudbay
Executive Assistant
Office of the Vermont Attorney General
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT

-----Original Message-----

From: Ilanagcohen [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 5:12 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Marlboro College — A parent's perspective.

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Ilana Cohen, DC
[REDACTED]
Seal Beach, CA 90740

Tel. [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

June 24, 2020

Mr T.J. Donovan, A.G of Vermont

This letter is about Marlboro College and its relevance beyond the unique and incredible experience offered to my daughter, who graduated from Marlboro in 1994.

I am a Chiropractic Physician. I was born in Tel Aviv, then Palestine under the British Mandate. I was educated in schools that followed the European educational model. Classes were formal and were followed by daily long hours of homework. evaluation were based on performance in periodic and final examinations. I felt that it was a labor of study.

I did not know that any other educational model existed until I met my late husband, a professor, and a Doctor of Social Studies from The New School of Social Research in New York City. I learned that this university was founded in 1919 as a home for progressive thinking, academic freedom and intellectual inquiry.

The New School, like Marlboro (or Marlboro like it), has a student direct curriculum, exploring subjects before concentrating on a topic of their individual interest. Exception is that the performing arts students must first declare their major at enrollment. Students are expected to be the designers of their own individualized education. This is in addition to complete a high level of studies I libéral arts.

I wished that I had the opportunity to study in such an institution of higher learning and hoped that my children oiled.

My younger daughter was fascinated with dance since her early childhood. There were a number of dance schools in the New Orleans area where we lived at that time. After extensive search we enrolled her at Giacobee Academy of Dance. From childhood to her teenage years her main interest and focus were on improving her dancing skills to

the highest levels possible. That required hard physical work, mental concentration, extreme discipline and long hours of training.

However, school became more of a burden and after the second year of highschool she dropped out, enrolled in the correspondance American High School and completed all requirements within a year. The next step was a choice of college that would offer a classical ballet major.

We wished that our two daughters who were raised in Louisiana, will go to a small college in the North East for their higher education. We preferred Vermont due to its reputation of very high standard of education and the number of small colleges. Our older daughter enrolled in Green Mountain Collège and it turned out to be an excellent personal, academic and social experience.

In search for a small college that offered a classical ballet program we found Marlboro College, with its unique educational model. Her father was especially pleased with the academic model similar to The New School and the attractive location in a rural area close to the town of Marlboro, a perfect location and atmosphere for study, personal growth and integration into a small community, and for someone who grew up in the South — to experience four seasons.

My daughter completed her application. The reply was discouraging. It stated that she was not yet prepared but suggested that she re-apply in the future. She was crushed.

However, found a second choice and enrolled in Point Park College, located in Pittsburgh, PA. It turned out to be a disappointing experience.

My daughter re-applied to Marlboro College for the next year. That changed her life and had a great positive effect on our family as well.

On many occasions since her graduation in 1994 she often referred to and repeated her gratitude for the support given to her by Marlboro College. She specifically mentioned the support by Rod Gander, than the president, who was influential in the decision to accept her second application. Adding to her thanks and appreciation, we, as parents, felt that without the deep familial connection with Rod and her professors she may not have survived. Needless to say how important were her connections to other students, and we were fortunate to connect with them on our visits to Marlboro and their visits to New Orleans.

A number of time a year we came to Marlboro and had a chance to familiarize with the town. We realized the great impact the college, and its Summer Music Festival, had on the town of Marlboro, social, cultural and economic (tourism/hotel/bed and breakfast, restaurants which generate jobs and income).

There is a special asset, that one is certain to never lose, it is EDUCATION. Education in learning how to learn, develop analytic thinking, critical thinking and intellectual inquiry to fully utilize the studied subjects.

Marlboro college offers is the UNIQUE and high level of Education, without which my daughter would not be the mature, assertive, strong individual and community oriented person.

The ill thought and process of possible closing this unusual college, in the perfect location for study and personal growth, would be a great loss to the State of Vermont's reputation for diversified higher education, as well as significant economic, social and cultural loss to the town of Marlboro.

Last but not the least, the closing of Marlboro College will deprive potential students who wish, or need, this model of higher educational opportunity as an alternative to the large higher educational institutions in urban areas.

Sincerely,

Ilana Cohen, DC

Sent from my iPad

From: [Sudbay, William](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College — A parent's perspective.
Date: Friday, June 26, 2020 8:44:53 AM

Will Sudbay
Executive Assistant
Office of the Vermont Attorney General
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT

-----Original Message-----

From: Ilanagcohen [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 5:12 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Marlboro College — A parent's perspective.

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Ilana Cohen, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Seal Beach, CA 90740

Tel. [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

June 24, 2020

Mr T.J. Donovan, A.G of Vermont

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I am a Chiropractic Physician. I was born in Tel Aviv, then Palestine under the British Mandate. I was educated in schools that followed the European educational model. Classes were formal and were followed by daily long hours of homework. evaluation were based on performance in periodic and final examinations. I felt that it was a labor of study.

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the highest levels possible. That required hard physical work, mental concentration, extreme discipline and long hours of training.

However, school became more of a burden and after the second year of highschool she dropped out, enrolled in the correspondance American High School and completed all requirements within a year. The next step was a choice of college that would offer a classical ballet major.

We wished that our two daughters who were raised in Louisiana, will go to a small college in the North East for their higher education. We preferred Vermont due to its reputation of very high standard of education and the number of small colleges. Our older daughter enrolled in Green Mountain Collège and it turned out to be an excellent personal, academic and social experience.

In search for a small college that offered a classical ballet program we found Marlboro College, with its unique educational model. Her father was especially pleased with the academic model similar to The New School and the attractive location in a rural area close to the town of Marlboro, a perfect location and atmosphere for study, personal growth and integration into a small community, and for someone who grew up in the South — to experience four seasons.

My daughter completed her application. The reply was discouraging. It stated that she was not yet prepared but suggested that she re-apply in the future. She was crushed.

However, found a second choice and enrolled in Point Park College, located in Pittsburgh, PA. It turned out to be a disappointing experience.

My daughter re-applied to Marlboro College for the next year. That changed her life and had a great positive effect on our family as well.

On many occasions since her graduation in 1994 she often referred to and repeated her gratitude for the support given to her by Marlboro College. She specifically mentioned the support by Rod Gander, than the president, who was influential in the decision to accept her second application. Adding to her thanks and appreciation, we, as parents, felt that without the deep familial connection with Rod and her professors she may not have survived. Needless to say how important were her connections to other students, and we were fortunate to connect with them on our visits to Marlboro and their visits to New Orleans.

A number of time a year we came to Marlboro and had a chance to familiarize with the town. We realized the great impact the college, and its Summer Music Festival, had on the town of Marlboro, social, cultural and economic (tourism/hotel/bed and breakfast, restaurants which generate jobs and income).

There is a special asset, that one is certain to never lose, it is EDUCATION. Education in learning how to learn, develop analytic thinking, critical thinking and intellectual inquiry to fully utilize the studied subjects.

Marlboro college offers is the UNIQUE and high level of Education, without which my daughter would not be the mature, assertive, strong individual and community oriented person.

The ill thought and process of possible closing this unusual college, in the perfect location for study and personal growth, would be a great loss to the State of Vermont's reputation for diversified higher education, as well as significant economic, social and cultural loss to the town of Marlboro.

Last but not the least, the closing of Marlboro College will deprive potential students who wish, or need, this model of higher educational opportunity as an alternative to the large higher educational institutions in urban areas.

Sincerely,

Ilana Cohen, DC

Sent from my iPad

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College brochure from 1st year and NY Times article from 1949 (FYI)
Date: Thursday, June 25, 2020 2:51:58 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-horizontal.png](#)
[20200625_135924.PDF](#)
[20200625_140403.PDF](#)
[20200625_143215.PDF](#)
[Foreign Business Registration.pdf](#)
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 **802-595-3803 (AGO remote number)**
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Save Marlboro College [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 2:50 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Adrian Segar [REDACTED]; AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>; Curtis, Christopher <Christopher.Curtis@vermont.gov>
Subject: Marlboro College brochure from 1st year and NY Times article from 1949 (FYI)

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Hello Marlboro Town Select Persons,

I attach to this email a copy of the first Marlboro College Brochure and a NY Times article with Walter Hendricks for some background information, just in case you have not yet seen these items.

I would also like to direct your attention to copy of the 1946 deed when Walter and Flora Hendricks gifted their farm to the Corporation of Marlboro College for use as a College.

I believe that that this Gift of Deed comes under the rules of the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act and cannot be sold as the College is attempting to do. I feel the Gift of Deed, original Articles of Incorporation, testimony from Walter Hendricks family members, news articles and interviews with Walter Hendricks, and other documents and information may all play an important role in establishing the future of the Marlboro College Campus relative to the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.

I also attach a copy of the email from the Marlboro Town lawyer in which he concludes there is not any action that the Town of Marlboro VT can take in regards to the Marlboro College situation. I wish to express my concern to the Town that the lawyer did not address the situation that this is a Vermont Nonprofit Corporation for Public benefit. I feel the nature of this corporation is different than a business that has not 501c3 tax exempt status. If the college closes the assets must be handled in a certain way under the law. Although the Marlboro College Board of Trustees occasionally refer to this transaction as a merger, it smacks more or a closure and distribution of assets for the short term private benefit of less than 100 teachers and students that might transfer to Emerson.

I have also attached information on Foreign Business Registration in Vermont. It is my interpretation of the law that this entity called Democracy Builders, Inc and the separate entity called Democracy Builders Fund, Inc. should have both registered as a Foreign Business in Vermont before entering a purchase and sale agreement to buy real estate. I think this registration should occur prior to meeting with any Town or State officials in Vermont. I inquired with the AGO, but they were not able to respond at the time.

I would like to suggest that the town postpone any meeting with Seth Andrew, Democracy Builders Inc, and Democracy Builders Fund, Inc before these businesses are legally registered in Vermont or before the Select board is able to get further clarification from either the Vermont AGO or Vermont Secretary of State.

Sincerely,

Martin Heck

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 8:56:58 AM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803](tel:802-595-3803) (AGO remote number)
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2020 6:35 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Name	Tom
Last	Good
Email	
Phone Number	
Mailing Address (required for a response)	 Seattle, Washington 98107
Subject	Keeping Marlboro College in Vermont
Message	To the Vermont Office of Attorney General;

As an alumnus of Marlboro College, I know first-hand its value to students specifically and to the educational landscape in general. It was the perfect place for me as a person who valued autonomy, community accountability, and the opportunity to design my own college experience, and my experience propelled me to graduate school and a career inspired by many exceptional professors. I believe the loss of Marlboro College would be detrimental to the American educational landscape and that the loss of the greater

Marlboro community would be a sad day for Vermont. This unique, quality educational institution still possesses an enviable endowment, has a beautiful Vermont campus valued at several million dollars, and is an important part of the Marlboro Town community. It is my belief that the current Board and President have acted too swiftly and with little consultation with the broader Marlboro College family of alumni, former faculty and staff. In recent years, the Marlboro admissions office has failed to reach out to its alumni network for this purpose and the college has largely reacted with indifference when alumni have offered help in the form of dollars and expertise. There are serious proposals for keeping the College where it belongs, in Vermont. Please use whatever means at the disposal of your office to slow this process in order to allow for the development of alternatives.

Thank you;

Thomas Good, Ph.D.
Marlboro College Class of [REDACTED]

From: [bruce hain](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#)
Subject: Re: Your PRA Request
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 9:48:47 PM

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Thanks Chris!

On Mon, Jun 22, 2020 at 8:34 PM Curtis, Christopher <Christopher.Curtis@vermont.gov> wrote:

I understand, Bruce. And, no, there is no difference in the response whether it is a corporation or a citizen. Thanks again.

Best, Christopher

From: bruce hain [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 22, 2020 6:20 PM
To: Curtis, Christopher <Christopher.Curtis@vermont.gov>
Subject: Re: Your PRA Request

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Dear Chris,

That sounds about right to me. I did want to make certain I get items like the package of documents Quigley submitted to the AG Office on the property deal, and on the three-day timeframe I've heard mentioned, which would also apply to anything available according to law about the merger.

I'm given to understand Martin filed his request as a Corporation (Save Marlboro College) and wonder if there is a difference as to what's available to a "concerned corporation" as against the general public.

I'm hoping I qualify for that kind of three-day response too, and can only point to being an aggrieved alumnus as far as my bonifides to claim it.

Bruce

On Mon, Jun 22, 2020 at 5:44 PM Curtis, Christopher <Christopher.Curtis@vermont.gov> wrote:

Dear Mr. Hain,

I hope this note finds you well and that you are well and staying safe during this unprecedented time of national health emergency.

Thank you for your recent public records request of earlier today (June 22, 2020). After discussion, we agreed that I will provide you with the same information requested by another party consisting of public correspondence from third parties or members of Marlboro College itself regarding proposed transactions involving the sale of the campus or transfer of assets of Marlboro College. And/or, any public documents relating to the notice of said proposed transactions itself. You indicated you are aware of these being posted already, but wished to receive notice when they are posted in the future. I am happy to respond to your request when future correspondence is received and posted. I hope this is helpful.

Thank you for your interest in the office of the attorney general.

Best, Christopher

Christopher J. Curtis

Chief, Public Protection Division

Office of the Attorney General

State of Vermont

109 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05609

802-828-5586

PRIVILEGED & CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION: This communication may contain information that is privileged, confidential, and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. **DO NOT** read, copy or disseminate this communication unless you are the intended addressee. If you are not the intended recipient (or have received this E-mail in error) please notify the sender immediately and destroy this E-mail. Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

From: [Curtis, Christopher](#)
To: [Wolk, Tina](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College
Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 6:16:00 PM
Importance: High

From: Matthews, Deborah <Deborah.Matthews@vermont.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 10:42 AM
To: Curtis, Christopher <Christopher.Curtis@vermont.gov>; Renner, Jamie <Jamie.Renner@vermont.gov>
Cc: Sudbay, William <william.sudbay@partner.vermont.gov>
Subject: FW: Marlboro College
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 **802-595-3803 (AGO remote number)**
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 10:40 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Re: Marlboro College

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Hello -

Below is a letter I sent to Attorney General Donovan via USPS on April 21, regarding the status of Marlboro College.

I understand the office is working remotely and that it may not be convenient for you to track such letters at this time, so I am sending this by way of backup - my apologies for any redundancy!

John Lehmann-Haupt

April 21, 2020

The Honorable T. J. Donovan

Attorney General
State of Vermont
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609

Dear Attorney General Donovan,

I am a 1971 Marlboro College graduate who has followed with deep concern the developments that have unfolded since the announcement of Marlboro's proposed merger with the University of Bridgeport last July. As you know, that deal fell through, but Marlboro's leadership is now homing in on an arrangement with Boston's Emerson College through which Marlboro would effectively cease to exist, with all Marlboro assets transferred to Emerson in exchange for teaching positions for senior Marlboro faculty and berths for students wishing to transfer.

Marlboro's President and Board of Trustees have taken the position that Marlboro cannot continue to exist as an independent institution, citing as cause the demographic changes among potential students and other external factors that have negatively impacted a number of small liberal arts colleges in the region. I believe their conclusion is flawed and must not be the basis for the determination of the school's future.

At its best, Marlboro is unique, distinguished from other small liberal arts colleges by a pedagogical structure that promotes the highest level of student-faculty dialogue and a deeply ingrained, community-driven governance framework, both made possible by the school's exceptionally small size. Throughout its existence, Marlboro has attracted unusual, motivated students, outliers in the best sense who need a Marlboro to survive and flourish, and whose expectations are unlikely to be aligned with demographic trends. There have always been such students, and there always will be.

There are indications that over the past couple of decades Marlboro's focus on its core attributes has weakened, and that decisions have been made regarding development strategy, infrastructure, and marketing that have been detrimental to its health. (Others more directly in touch with the school than I am have documented this.) The President and Board have not acknowledged these factors and have clung to their position with a distinct antipathy towards dialogue. They have ignored repeated offers of assistance from alumni, many of whom have professional expertise in the relevant areas, and they have rejected an offer of review by Will Wootton, an alumnus who was an administrator at Marlboro for 19 years and president from 2006 to 2012 of Sterling College, which he succeeded in pulling back from its own brink during his tenure.

I and many others believe that, with new leadership that is attuned to Marlboro's unique qualities and shapes its offerings, outreach, and infrastructure with a keen focus on the school's true audience, the college has a good chance to survive and flourish. There is no way to guarantee this, but the effort is most certainly worthwhile.

I urge you not to green-light the Marlboro-Emerson merger.

Respectfully yours,

John Lehmann-Haupt

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: PHONE CALL
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 9:32:07 AM
Importance: High

DATE: 6-22-2020

TIME: 9:26am

FROM: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MESSAGE: He is going to be sending an email asap, but he would like you to call him regarding the injunction with Marlboro College. They gave 20 days' notice, and today is the last day.

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant

Office of the Attorney General | GCAL

109 State Street, 3rd Floor

Montpelier, VT 05609

Phone | 802-828-3689 **802-595-3803 (AGO remote number)**

E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

June 11, 2020

Attorney General TJ Donovan
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609

Dear A.G. Donovan,

I write to implore you to examine closely the imminent dissolution of Marlboro College and prevent the passage of its endowment out of the state of Vermont.

I am a 2002 graduate of Marlboro, where I studied writing, literature, and history. I also hold an MA in poetry and a PhD in history from Boston University. As an historian and a poet, I am the author of scholarly articles, a collection of poetry, poetry criticism, and am the editor of a forthcoming new student edition of an important work of 20th century drama. It has been my honor and delight to teach both creative writing and history at institutions including Boston University, Colby College, the University of Hartford, and Simmons University. I don't say any of this to try to make myself look impressive, but to give context when I say without a shadow of a doubt that I would have done none of these things if not for Marlboro College, which showed me the path to a life of the mind. I feel intense gratitude and love towards the institution.

I doubt I have to tell you about the unique gem that Marlboro has been; surely dozens of former students, faculty, staff, parents, and trustees have made that case to you in the past few months. I will only say that Marlboro remains the true and only home of my heart, a place where I learned lessons of democracy, self-governance, community, caring, and rigorous intellectual and creative life. The dissolution of this institution will be a loss to higher education that I believe to be incalculable. But this is not my main concern in writing to you.

My main concern is the structure of this merger deal, and the precedent it sets for college mergers in the future. As a higher education professional, I have no doubt that an era of such mergers is upon us. The Marlboro/Emerson merger (which in reality constitutes the dissolution of Marlboro and the transfer of its most substantial assets to Emerson) sets a dangerous precedent.

This deal posits faculty as mobile assets that can be transferred from one institution to another, along with the endowment of the “sending” institution to the “receiving” one. The explanation from leaders at Marlboro and Emerson has been that the endowment underwrites the faculty's lifetime salaries (though of course there is no particular reason that Emerson is obliged to tenure any of the tenure-track faculty it receives) and that the endowment is offered in exchange for the employment of Marlboro's tenured and tenure-track faculty.

This poses two significant problems. The first is that **it interferes with standard hiring and labor practices established by the American Association of University Professors as well as local contingent faculty unions.** It circumvents required procedures like job postings and national searches, and the right of departments to choose their own members. (To put it more bluntly, there will now suddenly be a couple dozen faculty jobs in the highly-competitive Boston higher education market for which no local, not to mention national or international, candidates will have had an opportunity to apply.) Moreover, local contingent faculty have been winning fights for job security, higher wages,

hiring priority, and better working conditions, and mergers like this, where faculty from dissolving institutions can simply be brought in on tenure lines which previously did not exist, threaten to reverse those gains. Departments are forced to accept from the “sending” institution faculty whom they did not choose, and will likely not be permitted to hire in addition those faculty members (some of whom have been teaching for years on contingent contracts) that they might have chosen otherwise. More seriously, **mergers of this sort may become a weapon utilized by administrations to break contingent faculty unions.**

The second problem is, however, the more pressing and severe. **If a merger of this sort is allowed to go forward, it will set the precedent that larger, predatory institutions can prey on smaller, struggling ones in order to acquire their endowments.** By using faculty jobs as a carrot, “sending” administrations can neutralize the dissent of their own faculties, while passing millions of dollars in assets to the “receiving” institution. I am concerned that more Vermont institutions stand to be poached in this way, allowing millions of dollars in endowments to leave the state. Given how many small colleges currently call the state of Vermont home, this will contribute significantly to job loss, so-called “brain drain,” and the loss of younger residents and families. All of that will have an impact on population demographics, unemployment, public school consolidation, post-office closures, and general economic health, as well as the creative and intellectual character of the state. **If you allow Marlboro’s endowment to pass from Vermont to Massachusetts, it will send a signal to other large, out-of-state universities that Vermont colleges can essentially be harvested for their endowments.**

Two things more. The first is that, in this extraordinary moment of the coronavirus pandemic, I have seen college administrations and presidents make hard but laudable choices. They have, in the past two or three months of this crisis, taken substantial cuts to their own salaries (in some cases upwards of 30 and 40%), ordered salary cuts to highly-paid administrators, and laid off administrators whose jobs were unrelated to the essential academic mission. By contrast, Marlboro’s president, Kevin Quigley, has never in the past five years—during which time, by his own admission, the college was in an increasingly dire financial free-fall—taken a pay cut. In fact, in a year when Marlboro’s budget was nearly four million dollars in deficit, he took (and the trustees allowed him to take) a \$30,000 bonus on top of an already-six-figure salary. His administration has never undertaken a major capital campaign, nor attempted to “right-size” their staff to their budget. The impasse at which Marlboro finds itself is not insoluble, but the current president and trustees have never taken proper steps to solve it, despite the urging, over the past year, of alumni, former faculty and staff, and others who volunteered to help but were rejected. **There should have been, and can still be, solutions other than this merger, which would keep Marlboro, and its jobs and endowment, in Vermont.**

Second, we have now come face to face with another pandemic, another public crisis that we as a nation should have faced long ago: that of racism and violence, combined in this moment with a disturbing breakdown of democracy and freedom of the press, and a dangerous growing authoritarianism. **Now, more than ever, Marlboro, as a self-governing experiment in education, community, egalitarianism, and democracy, is necessary in our national higher education landscape.** (I won’t speak of “Democracy Builders,” the agency that proposes to buy the campus, whose title and mission are unfortunate misnomers.) I do not believe it is too grandiose to say that Marlboro can lead, can be a beacon for Vermont, for the nation, and even for the world. And that Marlboro is needed more sorely than ever.

There are hundreds of us—alumni, former faculty, former staff, parents, residents of the town of Marlboro, and more—who would gladly come together under new leadership to revive Marlboro and set it on a financially-stable, mission-centered course again. Dozens of us who work in higher education have made ourselves available to the College, only to be ignored or rebuffed by its administration, but even so we are ready to go to work to save and sustain this precious institution. By doing so, **we can send a message that Vermont colleges are not up for grabs, that they cannot simply be poached for their endowments by larger, out-of-state institutions on the hunt for easy money.**

Please do your due diligence by examining this situation carefully with an eye not just to the future of Marlboro College but to higher education in the state of Vermont, and to the cultural and economic ramifications of this merger.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any questions.

Sincerely,
Katherine Hollander, PhD
Marlboro College ■■■
Somerville, MA 02144

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Marlboro College Endowment
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2020 9:01:19 AM
Attachments: [Attorney General Letter.pdf](#)
Importance: High

Deb Matthews
Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 802-595-3803 (AGO remote number)
E-Mail \ deborah matthews@vermont.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Katherine Hollander [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 8:58 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Marlboro College Endowment

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

To the Attorney General:

Please find attached my letter of concern regarding the transfer of Marlboro College's endowment out of the State of Vermont. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,
Katherine Hollander

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#)
Cc: [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Monday, June 8, 2020 11:25:02 AM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 **802-595-3803 (AGO remote number)**
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Saturday, June 6, 2020 10:05 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Name	Stefan
Last	Hurzeler
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone Number	[REDACTED]
Mailing Address (required for a response)	[REDACTED] Northampton, Massachusetts 01060
Subject	The Fate of Marlboro College
Message	Dear Mr. Attorney General Donovan,

I am a graduate of Marlboro College from the late 1990s. It has been my understanding that the campus is being sold to an organization of a dubious nature known as "Democracy Builders", which seeks to empower minorities and the impoverished by means of Charter School Establishment. This will not likely fill the vacuum properly that will be left by the absence of Marlboro, in the event that this is finalized.

Since Vermont has not enacted Charter School Legislation, this new institution would not likely be integrated into the Marlboro/Brattleboro area properly. Furthermore, the countries with the best Educational Systems, such as Finland, have little to no Private (or Charter) Schools. This is not the path to Educational Equality.

I'm sure you are aware of the merger with Emerson College. In actuality, it is a dissolution. The Educational Model of Marlboro is not conducive to an urban setting. There is a reason why "Location, Location, Location" plays an important role in an establishment's success.

On a personal note, I was born with Asperger's syndrome, and struggled through school from First Grade to High School Graduation. I always felt like I was out of my element, until, at Marlboro, I was able to develop my artistic and writing abilities through their unique Educational Model, as well as their socially tolerant climate, and location in a rural setting. I thrived there, and graduated with honors. I'm sure that the College has also been of benefit to many other people who have had a hard time fitting in.

Unfortunately, I know that the College has been in decline in the past two decades (although some would disagree on my timeline). This is mainly because the College has lost its proper identity due to misguided leadership, and an institution losing touch with its roots. However, there has been work done, and there is a "Mobilize Marlboro" movement that is looking to salvage the College, and take the lessons of the past into account to hopefully correct course, and revive Marlboro.

I understand the odds are not in favor of this movement, but we cannot be passive in letting a crucial and important Educational Beacon die. For whatever it might be in your power and influence to revive Marlboro, your assistance is humbly requested.

Sincerely,

Stefan Hurzeler

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 12:49:57 PM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803](tel:802-595-3803) (AGO remote number)
E-Mail \ deborah.matthews@vermont.gov

From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 10:19 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Name	Shaw Izikson
Last	Izikson
Email	
Phone Number	
Mailing Address (required for a response)	 Winsted, Connecticut 06098
Subject	Marlboro College/Emerson merger
Message	https://berkeleybeacon.com/marlboro-students-to-lose-financial-options-if-they-defer/#photo

Marlboro students to lose financial options if they defer entry for fall semester
Marlboro College students attending Emerson as a part of the proposed Emerson-Marlboro merger will lose the Marlboro tuition rate guarantee and housing scholarship if they defer entry to the college in the fall, according to a college official.

Director of Undergraduate Admission Michael Lynch said in a May Zoom session that Marlboro students who attend Emerson starting spring 2021 will be labeled transfer students and excluded from the financial aspects of the merger terms. They would be required to pay full tuition and full room and board, nearly \$20,000 more per year than the original deal.

Lynch said in the Zoom session that the college expects students to attend Emerson in the fall so they get the full benefit of the merger agreement. He did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

The stipulation regarding entry deferral was not originally released in the terms of the Emerson-Marlboro merger agreement in November, but the two institutions set up working groups to hammer out specifics of the merger over the last eight months.

Marlboro and Emerson announced in November that Marlboro students entering Emerson would be guaranteed equal tuition to what they paid at Marlboro. These students would still be subject to year-to-year tuition increases, according to the announcement. Emerson has increased its attendance cost at an average of 2.8 percent per year in the last decade.

Marlboro College also put together a fund to cover the difference in room and board costs for students entering Emerson—an average of \$5,555 per student.

The news comes against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has thrown colleges' plans for the fall semester into uncertainty as the risk of potentially spreading the virus within learning communities looms. Emerson announced Wednesday that the fall semester would take place both online and in person, with classes going fully online after Thanksgiving break.

Felix Bieneman, a Marlboro student planning to attend Emerson in the fall, said her decision now feels risky.

"I'm worried that Marlboro students are faced with no other option than to transfer to Emerson or no better option," she said in a phone interview. "We have students who are immunocompromised, or disabled, or just don't think it's safe to go back in the fall, and I'm worried that some students will feel the need to compromise their safety because they don't think they'll be able to afford Emerson if they defer."

Marlboro students have been excluded from opinion surveys about the College's plan for the fall semester sent to prospective students, continuing students, and parents, according to an email statement to The Beacon from President M. Lee Pelton. He said Emerson Polling conducted the surveys without Marlboro students because "they have a conditional admission at this point and a full acceptance was a filtering criteria." Marlboro students also received the email about Emerson's fall semester plans two hours after it was sent to current Emerson students.

Bieneman said the lack of communication with Marlboro students is frustrating.

"Emerson students and maybe other prospective students have been getting communication that hasn't been sent to Marlboro students and that nobody at Marlboro has gotten," Bieneman said. "We've had to hear about it second or third hand."

Emerson joined a string of schools in Boston and across the country that have released plans for modified fall semesters. This month, Northeastern University announced a plan for a hybrid education model that will allow students to decide whether to attend classes in person or remotely. Five Harvard graduate schools announced a fully online fall semester earlier this week, with a sixth—The Harvard Graduate School of Education—announcing it would go online for the entire year.

A handful of other colleges, like The University of Notre Dame, announced a plan to start their semester two weeks early and also end the semester before Thanksgiving to prevent a possible spread of COVID-19.

Bieneman said that she heard students would be willing to defer if Emerson returns in the fall or holds courses online.

“I know a lot of people have various learning disabilities or just preferences where they have a harder time online. I know people with ADHD are really concerned so I know there are people who feel very strongly about it,” she said. “It’s an accessibility issue as well, going online. So I would say that people who are suffering because of online classes should also be able to do that.”

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 12:51:08 PM
Importance: High

Deb Matthews

Administrative Assistant
Office of the Attorney General | GCAL
109 State Street, 3rd Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609
Phone | 802-828-3689 [802-595-3803](tel:802-595-3803) (AGO remote number)
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From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 10:20 AM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Name	Shaw Izikson
Last	Izikson
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone Number	[REDACTED]
Mailing Address (required for a response)	[REDACTED] Winsted, Connecticut 06098
Subject	Marlboro College/Emerson merger
Message	https://berkeleybeacon.com/emerson-projects-up-to-76-million-in-covid-19-losses/

Emerson projects up to \$76 million in COVID-19 losses

The college projects losses between \$33 and \$76 million in the next fiscal year due to the COVID-19 crisis, according to a letter President M. Lee Pelton sent to faculty Monday.

The letter says Emerson has already suffered a loss of \$7 million in the spring semester and

predicts a massive loss in the 2020-21 fiscal year, contingent on student enrollment.

The letter responds to a slew of complaints from professors brought up in a faculty meeting held last Tuesday, where faculty members claimed the college failed to consult them in crafting the recently announced reopening plan. Pelton's message also outlines the pandemic's financial impact on the college.

"We do not know about the future, we do know that we will be living with COVID-19 until a vaccine is developed, produced and administered to 300 million Americans — a development that is not likely to occur in the near future," the letter reads. "In the meantime, all of us will be adapting to the virus as the economy reopens and familiar aspects of human society begin to repopulate."

The college will announce new financial cuts in early July to help mitigate the projected losses.

Pelton said various mathematical models from an undisclosed source indicated that a hybrid online and in-person fall semester would yield a better financial outcome for the college.

He also admits to not communicating effectively with faculty and commits to improving communication efforts between faculty and administration in the future. Another open forum for faculty will be held later in the week and per requests, professors from each department will be granted a meeting with the college's epidemiological consultants.

"The Forum made clear that we need to do a better job of communicating to faculty, recognizing the distinctively critical roles that they play at the College," Pelton said.

Pelton also noted in the letter that Emerson will participate in the "Safe for School Testing Program," committing to daily COVID-19 symptom monitoring through a wellness app, and "enhanced testing and tracing programs."

"Our priorities remain the same: reduce risks, support the safety of our community, and continue to provide a high-quality educational experience that will prepare our students for meaningful futures," Pelton wrote.

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 10:31:07 AM
Importance: High

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From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 5:45 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

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Name	Shaw Izikson
Last	Izikson
Email	
Phone Number	
Mailing Address (required for a response)	 Winsted, Connecticut 06098
Subject	Marlboro College/Emerson merger
Message	In addition to my previous correspondence, I just wanted to inform the Attorney General's office that Democracy Builders has already put up signs on campus despite the fact that the sale of it is not official yet. I do have pictures but I cannot find a way to attach them to this submission box.

From: [Matthews, Deborah](#)
To: [Curtis, Christopher](#); [Renner, Jamie](#); [Sudbay, William](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 9:22:33 AM
Importance: High

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From: Office of the Vermont Attorney General <ago.helpdesk@vermont.gov>
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2020 12:34 PM
To: AGO - Info <AGO.Info@vermont.gov>
Subject: Contact Form submitted on Office of the Vermont Attorney General

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Name	Shaw Izikson
Last	Izikson
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone Number	[REDACTED]
Mailing Address (required for a response)	[REDACTED] Winsted, Connecticut 06098
Subject	Marlboro College/Emerson merger
Message	In response to the "NARRATIVE OF MARLBORO COLLEGE'S EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE" I would like to enter into the record the following articles concerning Marlboro's operations as previously published by VTDigger:

<https://vtdigger.org/2015/12/20/marlboro-college-ups-recruitment-efforts/>

Faced with declining enrollment, Marlboro College ups recruitment efforts
By Mike Faher

Dec 20 2015

MARLBORO – On a quiet campus nestled among hundreds of acres of woodland, Marlboro College leaders proudly use the phrase “intentionally small.”

But even in a close-knit academic setting, it’s possible to have too much of a good thing.

As college enrollment declines across the nation, Marlboro’s undergraduate numbers are both an example and a magnification of that trend: The school’s student body this fall is about 50 percent lower than the high-water mark of 356 in 2004, and there are about 100 students fewer than what’s considered the ideal size.

Marlboro’s undergraduate enrollment was just 182 this fall.

College President Kevin Quigley, who has been on the job less than six months, is working with faculty, staff, trustees, students and alumni to reverse that trend. He has created a Renaissance Scholars program that offers four tuition-free years at Marlboro to a student from each of the 50 states, and he is pushing to recruit veterans to the Windham County campus.

“I was very clear with the college community that ... one person can’t address these issues that are affecting Marlboro and much of higher education,” Quigley said. “But as a community, we can address them successfully. I’m completely confident of that.”

Marlboro is a relatively young college, having been founded in 1946. A graduate school, which is based in Brattleboro, was added in 1997.

Marlboro’s undergraduate program emphasizes small class sizes and student self-governance; traditional majors are eschewed in favor of multidisciplinary, student developed “plans of concentration.” From undertaking a wilderness experience after arriving at campus, to presenting their work for external review before graduation, Marlboro administrators promote the fact that things are done differently at the top of Potash Hill.

“Liberal arts colleges like Marlboro have a very distinctive, small but important niche,” Quigley said.

Marlboro occupies a niche in a nationally declining post-secondary education market. A recent report by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found that college enrollments nationally have fallen for the fourth consecutive year, and fall 2015 student numbers are down 1.7 percent compared with fall 2014.

There are some widely cited reasons for the declines, including the increasingly high cost of college. U.S. Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt., has been among those calling for solutions to that problem: In September, he convened a discussion at the University of Vermont to unveil a “college affordability agenda.”

It’s also a matter of demographics, as shrinking secondary school enrollments mean there are fewer graduates to consider post-secondary education. A 2013 report by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education found that “the nation is entering a period of modest decline in the number of (high school) graduates being produced,” with a return to

sustained growth not expected until the 2020s.

That report mentioned Vermont as a state that could see graduate losses of 15 percent or more – a change that’s already happening. In terms of higher education, “in Vermont, we know that we’re pulling from a smaller pool,” said state Rep. Emily Long, a Newfane Democrat whose district includes Marlboro.

Long, a member of the House Education Committee, also said the state has a strong high school graduate rate, but it does not fare nearly as well in the number of those students who move on to college.

Recruitment strategy at Marlboro

At Marlboro, Quigley pointed beyond Vermont’s borders to the overall graying of the region. “We’re an aging population in New England and New York, and those are our traditional strongest recruiting grounds,” he said.

Quigley is not interested, though, in playing victim to those trends. The centerpiece of his early tenure at Marlboro has been the Renaissance Scholars program, designed to lure one student from every state with the offer of free tuition. That’s a significant savings at Marlboro, where the 2016-17 tuition is \$39,086.

Some might see it as a “giveaway,” Quigley said, or as a “Hail Mary” move. “It’s anything but that,” he said. “It’s really strategic – designed to do something we need to do.”

The first goal is to “let us have a much broader reach in our recruitment, which is key,” Quigley said. And Marlboro isn’t looking for just any high school student with high marks: The Renaissance Scholars literature emphasizes community service, leadership, innovation and perseverance.

With the first round of Renaissance applications due soon, Marlboro administrators see early signs that their gamble is paying off. “Our numbers are encouraging,” Quigley said. “Our applications are up 35 percent from this time last year, and we’ve had more people pay deposits.”

Additionally, “we’ve had applicants from Louisiana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana – which we wouldn’t have had without this Renaissance Scholarship.”

There’s a clear cost to bringing in students this way. But Quigley believes “it’s far better to have more students here.”

Quigley also has sought to spur a “renaissance” that goes beyond offering scholarships. He said Marlboro’s faculty is in the midst of an in-depth review of the college’s curriculum “so that we can be clearer about what we do, what we’re best at, what’s distinctive about it, what impact it might have on the lives of our students.”

There are changes happening at the administrative level, as well: There’s more of an emphasis on marketing, for example, and Quigley said Marlboro is creating stronger ties between its undergraduate and graduate campuses while also creating the new job title of “chief learning officer” for the college.

“Every level of the college is going through this, and Renaissance Scholars has been the catalyst,” Quigley said.

There are other initiatives under way, and one is targeted directly at the nagging problem of college costs. In the past, even those Marlboro students who qualified for the largest financial-aid packages still had to come up with \$2,700 toward their college costs. “We no longer require that contribution,” Quigley said. “So we’re shifting to meet student needs as part of our approach.”

Marlboro also is looking to strengthen its articulation agreements with community colleges in an effort to attract more students from those schools. And Quigley is working on a scholarship program that would allow him to reach out to another demographic – veterans.

Marlboro’s first class, in 1947, featured 35 veterans in a class of 50. But over the past five years, there have been only six veterans enrolled here.

“We’d like to have five times that number,” Quigley said. “We think (veterans) bring maturity. They bring world experience. They understand how to work in teams. They understand discipline and executing plans, and we know from other universities that they have a really positive impact.”

“This gives us another opportunity to reconnect with our past,” Quigley said. “And to be reborn – to start anew.”

<https://vtdigger.org/2016/07/11/marlboro-college-begins-reversing-enrollment-decline/>

Marlboro College begins reversing enrollment decline

By Mike Faher

Jul 11 2016 |

MARLBORO — After years of declining enrollment, a renaissance may be underway at Marlboro College.

The number of new students submitting deposits for the upcoming fall term has increased by nearly 50 percent compared to last year, in part due to the success of a new “Renaissance Scholars” free tuition program aimed at drawing students from outside New England.

Also, the college just finished what President Kevin Quigley is calling the most successful annual fundraiser in its history. Marlboro raised more than \$2 million, a 25 percent jump from last year’s total.

While much work remains, college administrators say they’re seeing signs of progress — especially in addressing enrollment numbers that recently had dipped below 200.

“From today’s vantage point, I think the future looks very good,” said Montpelier attorney Dick Saudek, chairman of the college’s board of trustees. “With any small liberal arts college, there is always these days a good deal of concern. But Marlboro seems to be very much on the upswing.”

The concern Saudek refers to stems from nationwide enrollment declines in higher education. Last year, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found that U.S. college enrollments had fallen four years in a row.

Marlboro College, with its emphasis on small classes and independent learning, doesn't want thousands of students. But the college's head count last fall was just 170, down from a high of more than 350 in 2004.

Officials have pointed to the high costs of college as one reason for the national sag in post-secondary education enrollment. In this part of the country, an aging population also is a factor.

For that reason, "our strategy has to be to broaden our recruitment net beyond New England and the mid-Atlantic states," Quigley said.

Enter Renaissance Scholars, a program that Quigley launched after he became Marlboro's president in 2015. The initiative offers four tuition-free years to one student from each of the 50 states; in addition to strong academic performance, the program emphasizes qualities such as community service and leadership.

Though the program started relatively late in the recruiting season, it has made an impact: Marlboro has 74 new students who have been accepted and submitted a deposit for the upcoming term, up from 50 at this time last year.

Though enrollment numbers are not finalized, Quigley is projecting that Marlboro's head count will be between 190 and 195 this fall. That could represent a 12 to 15 percent increase over last fall's number.

"The (enrollment) trend line was downward, so at a minimum we needed to halt that," Quigley said. "We've halted the downward, and we've got some modest but significant uptick."

Also notable is the fact that the incoming class, as currently constituted, represents 34 states. "That's really encouraging," Quigley said. "Renaissance Scholars has allowed us to expand our geographic reach."

While only one student in each state could gain free tuition to Marlboro under the Renaissance program, Quigley said there's been a spillover effect among applicants "who did not win that scholarship, but they're still coming to Marlboro."

The program has had enough success to spur trustee approval of another round of Renaissance scholarships. "I think it's more than accomplished what it was originally intended to do," Saudek said.

"Every indication," he added, "is that the campus is going to have more people and more vitality."

Although Marlboro is giving up tuition payments from its Renaissance Scholars, Saudek said the school is gaining far more, both in terms of student body diversity and marketing for future students. "It broadens the reputation of the college. If they get inspired, they will

spread the word,” he said.

That kind of promotion may be particularly important for Marlboro, which markets itself as a close-knit, intentionally small learning community in a rural setting.

“What’s behind that is a very high-powered faculty, a very small student-to-faculty ratio and a great deal of individual attention to the students,” Saudek said. “It’s not an easy ‘elevator pitch’ or an easy branding tool. It’s something that comes from word of mouth.”

Quigley wants to reach many more potential Marlboro applicants, as he believes the college is built to ideally host 275 to 300 students. So administrators are pursuing other growth strategies, including broadening the college’s financial aid packages to lessen out-of-pocket responsibilities.

“That kind of removes one of the barriers for many middle-class families to have their children come to Marlboro,” Quigley said.

Other initiatives include attracting more veterans. That’s a nod to the campus’s heritage: A majority of the college’s first class in 1947 consisted of World War II veterans.

“We did secure some funding for us to set up a pilot program over the next three years to begin to recruit veterans,” Quigley said.

Funding, of course, is key for Marlboro’s future. The fact the college exceeded its \$1.85 million annual fundraising goal this year is “really a significant step forward,” Quigley said.

He added that, like student recruitment, fundraising will always be a work in progress.

“There’s no goal line in this,” Quigley said. “We just have to keep working away on it.”

<https://vtdigger.org/2016/09/18/new-semester-brings-big-changes-marlboro-college-campus/>

Editor’s note: This article by Chris Mays was first published in the Brattleboro Reformer on Sept. 16, 2016.

MARLBORO — Kevin Quigley is starting his second year as president of Marlboro College at an exciting time, given recent additions to the campus.

“The first year has really been wild and wonderful. Although Marlboro College is tiny, it’s as complex as any liberal arts college out there and it’s a college that’s a community of people,” Quigley said. “A lot of my first year has been spent trying to get to know the community so that’s students, faculty, staff, trustees and alums. I also got to know other community members here in Vermont.”

Two goals for this year involve continuing the upward trends in recruitment of students and fundraising. The latest drive saw the college take in donations at a rate of more than 25 percent of its previous record of about \$1.74 million. The hope had been to raise \$1.85 million for the annual fund, which goes toward operations. Instead, the \$2 million mark was surpassed.

Quigley said the Renaissance Scholars program — approved by trustees during his second month at the college — has increased the number of students attending the school, the student population has become more diverse and there's a new "vitality and energy" on campus.

"We really developed an important new chapter in this remarkable college's history," said Quigley.

Brigid Lawler, dean of admissions, said the college has seen a 42 percent increase in enrollment of first-year students over last year. That means 74 new students this year, whereas last year had 52.

"It was just a really good class coming in. It feels good. And I think next year, I'm very hopefully it will be even better," Lawler said, pointing out that the scholarship program had been rolled out late but this year will be different. "We're starting right off now with fall recruitment. We're seeing how it plays out next year as well. We have this philosophy that it's like finding needles in a haystack. There's Marlboro kids at every school."

Developing the Renaissance Scholars program, Lawler said, "really helped put us on the map literally and figuratively."

"We have students from Hawaii, four kids from Louisiana, one from Mississippi — just a lot of markets we had never been able to gain a strong foothold in, particularly the South. We are really starting to become hot in the South," Lawler said. "On so many levels, I think, for prospective students visiting the school to see more students on campus is good. It makes us look more attractive. So does more diversity."

The Renaissance Scholars program likely will be scaled back after this year. It may look more like the college's Beautiful Minds Challenge, which is a national competition held every fall since about 2012. Seniors in high school qualify for three scholarships: one is a full ride, another covers three-fourths the cost of tuition and the third is for half. Each year brings a new theme and different prompt for project submissions.

Renaissance scholarship recipients might be selected from fewer states. The current program looks for a student from every state. Out of about 70 applications, 28 students received a scholarship through the program and are at the school now. Lawler hopes to see 40 states represented next year.

Overall, the school has about 200 students with capacity for no more than about 320. Lawler said the faculty is happy and students are engaged. But now, the key is to keep them.

"So when you come back in December," Lawler told the Reformer, "How many of them are still here? That's the measure."

Common Ground: Living and Working in a Community

Common Ground is a new course being offered at the college that came about after "ongoing conversations about new initiatives to introduce to help strengthen our sense of community," said professor Seth Harter.

“Historically, Marlboro has always held community as an important value. I really see it as related in part to our size and scale. One thing that’s distinct is our size,” professor Kate Ratcliff said. “Because we are intentionally small, that means that on one level we can welcome and work with every student as an individual.”

Senior Solomon Botwick-Ries, who assisted in the design of Common Ground, summed the course up as “crafting space and allotting time to explore what we already do in developing skills, fostering conversation and addressing issues.”

Community in this course, Ratcliff said, “isn’t a thing out there we’re tapping into.”

“It’s something we create and recreate with others,” Ratcliff said. “It’s really another way of envisioning and way of bringing into being a future we all want to inhabit.”

Some of the class is left undefined, Harter said, so the second semester is given some room to take shape. Over the first month, students will be looking at themselves as individuals, as a group, and outside of the class. Renaissance scholarship recipients fulfill a community-service requirement by completing the course.

Small groups will break out and develop projects rooted in the broader community. They will still be on campus but outside of the classroom environment. Staying there has a certain logic. The class is “aimed at incoming students that need to find their feet where they are,” said Ratcliff.

Another aspect of the course has to do with defining leadership.

“It’s an important question for our planet, for our democracy, for Marlboro College,” Ratcliff said. “I think as a world, we’re not really all that skilled at working together, working through differences and resolving conflicts. We will be working with nonviolent communication as a way of fostering clear communication and resolving conflict.”

Connecting the class to Town Meeting — where students, faculty and staff make decisions together as part of a shared governance model — and getting a clearer sense of the capacity to effect change is one of Ratcliff’s goals. Every three weeks, the school’s Select Board meets in the dining hall. Mostly students make up the board.

New Dean

Luis Rosa, dean of students, joined the college in January. Rosa is taking over for Xenia Markowitt.

Previously, Rosa was at Antioch College in Ohio. Both Antioch and Marlboro operate by shared governance.

“I was always interested in the shared governance model,” said Rosa, who oversees academics and support services for students. “I would say the college has met my expectations and truly exceeded my expectations as far as being a unique community, a community that is tight knit, a community that truly takes seriously this notion of governance. It has an egalitarian feel to it. It really strives not to be hierarchical in the way that it approaches decision making.”

Students accepted for the Renaissance Scholars program “need to perform in a certain matter,” said Rosa.

“They need to be engaged in this community. They need to show some leadership in this community. It’s part of my responsibility to maintain that piece, to oversee that aspect,” said Rosa. “We’re building this to a certain extent but they will be asked to participate in our Town Meeting process. They will be asked to participate in our community service.”

The program, Rosa said, “for me, lacks precedence” and it has brought excitement to the college. Recipients of the scholarship were chosen in a “high selective” process.

Students on the scholarship are “motivated, energized, goal-oriented folks,” said Rosa.

“I think it has been truly a piece for the institution,” Rosa added. “We have a more diverse student body, both in race and ethnicity, and we’ve been able to utilize one of our smaller residential halls in a way. We recommissioned it to be a multicultural center. We’re in the process of fundraising for that and redeveloping that space to have space specific for underrepresented students on campus.”

The hope is to establish the Marlboro Center for Equity, Diversity and Empowerment this semester or this year. The Queer Resource Center, Women’s Resource Center and Living in Color are three organizations that plan on calling the building home.

Freshman Menefese Kudumu-Clavell applied for a Renaissance scholarship but did not get one. Coming from North Carolina after hearing about the college through his mother’s friend from Tanzania, he said the school looked interesting.

“I wanted to get out of North Carolina because I like changing cultures and things like that. The thing about this school that really hooked me was not having to take classes you felt weren’t necessary, like prerequisite math,” Kudumu-Clavell said. “You’re just taking classes that you’re interested in.”

Class sizes are similar to the ones from his high school. Particularly enjoyable to Kudumu-Clavell is the instruction.

“All the professors are very intellectual and know a lot. It’s fun hearing them talk and explain,” Kudumu-Clavell said. “They’re very passionate.”

Brattleboro reminded him of a “small-scale” Savannah, Georgia. He also visited New Hampshire and Massachusetts since arriving at Marlboro this semester.

Freshman Hailey Mount attended a nontraditional high school in Colorado. When shown Marlboro at college fair, “it was everything” she wanted in a school.

“A lot of things translated over,” Mount said. “I wanted to do another focus-based build-your-own class style.”

Having never lived anywhere but Colorado, Mount will no doubt miss the state. But of all the places, she said, Vermont’s “not that different.”