

WHAT IS NEW COLLEGE?

A Philosophy

Four guiding principles underlie New College's approach to education:

- Each student is responsible in the last analysis for his or her own education.
- The best education demands a joint search for learning by exciting teachers and able students.
- Student progress should be based on demonstrated competence and real mastery rather than on the accumulation of credits and grades.
- Students should have from the outset opportunities to explore, in depth, areas of interest to them.

The greatest asset New College offers a student is serious dialogue with faculty and other students passionately committed to a better understanding of themselves and their world. At New College, research is undertaken by both faculty and students, not by faculty alone or by faculty with students as mere assistants. Faculty members have the freedom to teach what they think is appropriate for their students, while students are encouraged to initiate projects they believe will further their education. New College has renovated traditional academic structures so students and faculty can better listen and respond to each other across disciplines, across experiences, and across generations.

The pages that follow provide some of the specifics about New College, as it exists at this time. They answer questions about disciplines offered, facilities available, and educational costs. They cannot, however, capture the spirit of New College or the energy and aspirations that abound here.

Rather than prescribe one path for all students, New College requires students to exercise responsibility for active, individual planning through negotiation directly with the faculty contract sponsor. Area of Concentration guidelines are provided for each AOC.

A History

The history of New College began in the late 1950s, when a group of Sarasota civic leaders came to the conclusion that their community was an ideal site for a college. In 1960, with assistance from the national Congregational and Christian Church, those civic leaders created the framework for a small liberal arts college whose students would come from all parts of the nation and whose faculty and curriculum would reflect the highest standards of academic excellence. With this in mind, a board of trustees was organized and the charter for the college was duly drawn up, a college to be named New College—as new as the future—yet based on timeless values.

During the next four years, a president was selected, the essential fundraising was carried out, land for a campus was acquired, and a faculty was assembled. By the fall of 1964 the new college was ready to open; and so it did, with a first class of 101 students.

What made New College not only new but different was that it brought together a faculty primarily committed to teaching—to new ways of teaching and new kinds of courses—and a student body motivated to work intensively, unimpeded by obsolete curricular designs.

The first class graduated in 1967. Most of its members went on to graduate schools, many of them recipients of graduate scholarships and

fellowships. In that same year, New College was accredited in record time by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

During the 1960s, New College enjoyed increasing recognition in the academic world as its students came to be known in graduate and professional schools. By 1972, the enrollment had reached 500 and a handsome complex of buildings, designed by the noted architect I. M. Pei, had arisen to complement the original buildings—the landmark mansions of the Ringling families.

As New College entered the 1970s, while its academic program matured, inflation threatened the College's economic existence. In 1974, the trustees, acting on the initiative of the College president, proposed a novel solution in the interest of preserving the institution. Aware that the University of South Florida in Tampa had some interest in establishing a regional branch in the Sarasota area, the trustees offered the New College campus to the State University System as the site for such a branch. In return, the State University System agreed to provide funds for New College at the same per-student level as for the state universities. The New College trustees, changing the corporate name to "New College Foundation, Inc.," would provide the supplemental funds needed to support the distinctive New College program. A unique combination of public and private funding for higher education was thereby created.

Another momentous change for New College had its beginnings in 2000, when the Florida Legislature challenged the USF president to develop a plan to improve support for USF's regional campuses. The plan for New College included separate accreditation and improved funding. This plan became a stepping-stone for action by the 2001 Florida Legislature, which designated New College of Florida as the eleventh member institution of the State University System of Florida. The governor signed the legislation and appointed a board of trustees for New College of Florida on June 26, 2001. New College quickly began the important task of securing independent accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Accreditation was approved in June 2004 and made retroactive to January 1, 2004. Two years later, in summer 2006, the state transferred the property lease to New College of Florida in recognition of its taking full responsibility for the campus. New College initiated a "re-envisioning" of the campus to develop a new master plan, as required of each state university. Nationally known architects and planners engaged the community in a series of planning charrettes, generating an exciting 50-year vision of the campus as work on five new residence halls began on the East campus.

In 2008, the Campus Master Plan was matched by an ambitious Academic Master Plan, which laid out a roadmap for navigating the terrain of academic change over the period 2008-2018. The plan was firmly rooted in the College's mission and reaffirmed the distinctive, innovative academic features developed by the College's founders in the 1960s. At the same time, the plan laid out a framework to enhance learning for our 21st century students. In 2013, a four-year plan was adapted which identified the College's major priorities. In 2018, New College adopted a ten-year strategic plan focused on increasing student enrollment by 50%. New College received state funding for this plan and used these funds to improve support for student success, hire additional faculty, and emphasize career preparation. Due to the pandemic, the college switched abruptly to online and hybrid learning in March 2020, along with the entire university system. In fall 2021, New College returned to face-to-face, in-person learning.

New College students pay relatively low state tuition rates. The Foundation continues to provide the extra support, through its endowment and fundraising efforts, which enables New College to

maintain a highly favorable student/faculty ratio. In addition, many students receive scholarships funded by the New College Foundation.

New College alumni make their presence known in many fields. They are faculty members at colleges and universities, physicians, attorneys, corporation executives, ministers, musicians, journalists, entrepreneurs, and authors. They run government agencies, design buildings, market real estate, conceive advertising campaigns, perform in symphony orchestras and jazz combos, and manage libraries and hospitals.

New College has evolved into a unique institution—a nationally recognized public honors college that considers the student an equal partner in the design of their own education.

Our Location

Sarasota is a bayfront city located approximately one hour south of Tampa. Simultaneously a dynamic, progressive city and a tourist/retiree destination, Sarasota has adopted new urbanist Andrés Duany's intriguing plan for downtown (4 miles from campus). Nearly 55,000 individuals live in the city, while the entire county population is about eight times that size. Public transit (free for students with an ID card) and a multi-use recreational trail connect the campus with downtown.

In addition to coping with the same sprawl that most Florida communities face, Sarasota has become a center for sustainability and citizenship, with a County Office of Sustainability and many nonprofits focusing on sustainable growth, including Southface, a leading innovator in sustainability work for research, advocacy, and workforce development with offices located on the NCF campus.

Known for its arts and cultural life (symphony, opera, ballet, theater, art museum, circus, and the Taliesin-designed Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall), downtown Sarasota also features bookstores, many high-end and second-hand stores, a Saturday Farmer's Market, and several art galleries. There are numerous movie screens downtown as well as dozens of restaurants featuring a broad range of cuisines.

Across the Bay (which is home to the longest-studied population of wild dolphins) lies Mote Marine Laboratory, a research and education facility known for studies on dolphins, sharks, manatees, sea turtles, and other marine and estuarine topics. Nationally acclaimed public beaches on Lido and Siesta Keys provide access to long stretches of fine white sand and the clear waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

In addition to the urban fabric adjacent to the coast, Sarasota County's land area is roughly one-third protected natural lands. Over 150 square miles of native habitat have been protected, affording a wide range of recreational and research opportunities.

Because retirement plays a major economic and cultural role in Sarasota, young people are especially valued here for the contribution they can make to the growing economy. In contrast to a large university center, students in Sarasota do not have to compete with thousands of other students and new graduates for jobs or recognition. In fact, Sarasota is an excellent place to work and to gain internship and entrepreneurial experience.