Approved by the Board of Directors
of The Nittany Valley Society
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Contents

Introduction 3

Executive Summary 4

Overview of Founding Achievements 5

Strategic Plan 2015-19

Board & Committee Development 11
Growing capacity, diversity, and impact while concretizing committee roles

Sustainability of Operations & Finances 12
Identifying leadership areas, growing earned income channels and endowed funds

University & Community Partnerships 13
Incarnating our spirit and mission in the community with people and groups

Salon of State College 14
Creating a sustaining community program and occasions for fellowship

Nittany Valley Press 15
Growing distribution, marketing infrastructure, and student/resident awareness

Nittany Valley Heritage Walk 16
Growing placemaking State College pathway by executing a business plan

The Willow Gathering 17
Cultivating an annual opportunity to celebrate the magic of the valley

Board of Directors 18
Introduction

The Nittany Valley Society’s Mission

The Nittany Valley Society fosters a spirit of community across time for Penn Staters, Central Pennsylvanians, and friends through a knowledge of our past, an appreciation for our present, and an affection for our spirit as a living treasury for our future. This finds expression through virtue, vigor, and soulfulness apparent in acts of honor, the cultivation of customs, and the Old State spirit.

Vision & Objectives

To champion the concept of cultural conservation as a valuable aspect of an environmental awareness and concern, and serve the community as a cultural conservancy that helps share the story of the Nittany Valley. Specifically, to cultivate greater appreciation for the history, customs, and traditions and spirit that make the Nittany Valley unique and special, and in so doing, incarnate the essence of its vitality in a way that inspires the same in others.

This vision can be achieved by a variety of objectives, including through Nittany Valley Press book publishing, distribution, and marketing; events and receptions like The Willow Gathering designed to cultivate a sense of fellowship and relationships among diverse constituencies; and public speaking including civic talks, literary recitations, and convocations.

Creating a Strategic Plan

As a nonprofit startup, The Nittany Valley Society has enjoyed remarkable success in its first three years in articulating and actualizing its mission, with some of the most significant successes outlined in brief in the following pages.

As The Nittany Valley Society matures, its Board of Directors has determined that a Strategic Plan is an appropriate means by which to guide the organization and ensure a spirit of transparency and internal accountability. It is further hoped that this Strategic Plan can serve as a model for The Nittany Valley Society’s future leadership, as well as as an example of operational approaches for local nonprofit peers.

As The Nittany Valley Society was just coming to life, Chris Buchignani set the tone for the organization by emphasizing that its value and resonance should be felt “in terms of months, years, and decades” rather than in terms of “minutes, hours, or days.” This spirit pervades this Strategic Plan as we look to further enhance community life.
Executive Summary

The Essential Rootedness of Community Life

It is perhaps unavoidable for a college town, a place that turns over nearly a quarter of its population annually, to forget much of its past. Even here in the Nittany Valley, a place where we claim to honor, even venerate, tradition, the mists of time quickly obscure, and sometimes totally consume, the dreams, triumphs, and failures of our predecessors. As a cultural conservancy, The Nittany Valley Society exists to continuously unearth this information and refresh it for modern sensibilities, driven by a sense of service and affection for the place. And this “place” isn’t simply Penn State—it’s also the natural spaces like Mount Nittany and the communities throughout, from Bellefonte to Lemont to Boalsburg.

Much of the language we use to describe our mission—the term "cultural conservancy," for example—evolved through discussion, trial, and error, reflecting our own nascent story. We began, nearly three years ago, with a vague, but shared understanding and moved ahead, growing as we went. The goal of this strategic plan is to help our board extend that growth process, developing a rich, cooperative approach to executing an important mission.

The document’s cover image is instructive—just as Mount Nittany is the most visible symbol and protector of the Valley, Old Willow symbolizes all that flourishes within its confines. The Willow evokes the area’s natural beauty, but also the essential rootedness of community life, standing as a testament to the ideals of Evan Pugh and the founders of the University that their hopes would take root in the fertile soil of this Nittany Valley, giving rise each new year to life, learning, fellowship, and a connection across time. The real challenge comes in bringing these stories to life in a way that captures the imagination, allowing that beneficial knowledge to serve us. If lives aren’t changed either obviously or intangibly as a result of contact with some aspect of our mission and work, then we haven’t fully succeeded in expressing the many stories that make this place remarkable. This is the essential work to which we put ourselves.

Christopher A. Buchignani
President

Thomas A. Shakely
Vice President
Overview of Founding Achievements

Highlights of the First Three Years

The Nittany Valley Society was chartered in April 2012 as a “cultural conservancy” for the unique Central Pennsylvania community that houses Penn State University—a non-profit, locally-based organization dedicated to cultivating an appreciation, rooted in a distinct “sense of place,” for the history, customs, and traditions that define its spirit. In practice, the group aims to strengthen a sense of regional identity and enhance community experience by sharing the stories of the place in a compelling and accessible fashion, while providing context and opportunities for new stories and experiences.

Over the course of its “startup phase,” The Nittany Valley Society has grown its internal structures, attracting dynamic board members and building organizational capacity, while also articulating and expressing its unusual, challenging mission through its founding achievements.

Creation of Nittany Valley Press and its Special Collection

As the cornerstone for The Nittany Valley Society’s mission aspect of storytelling to foster “a spirit of community across time,” Nittany Valley Press was created as a local publishing imprint to release and promote a special collection of books relating to the Nittany Valley’s history and culture. Thanks to emerging technologies like print-on-demand services and tablets, Nittany Valley Press was created without large initial capital expenses, and a lack of physical in-house inventory or sales management responsibilities allow it to operate with extreme efficiency.

To this point, six books are available in both print and digital formats on Amazon, iBooks, and Nook. Books are also sold through partnerships with local retailers including McLanahan’s and Hotel State College, and are available for reading in Schlow Centre Region Library, Penn State’s Pattee/Paterno Library, and the Penn State Alumni Association’s Robb Hall library.

The Pennsylvania State College 1853-1932: Interpretation and Record: The remarkable first-ever history of Penn State by Dr. Erwin Runkle, professor, librarian, and historian. The 2014 release of this book involved an agreement with the University Libraries to release this never-before-published story, with a new foreword by George Henning, former trustee.

Although Dr. Erwin Runkle wrote this history of Penn State during the 1930s, only now is it widely available through The Nittany Valley Society’s first-time publication. His meticulous reconstruction of the University’s birth and growth—from the revolution in American education that sparked its founding to its establishment as Pennsylvania’s land-grant college—brings the Penn State story to life with a rare blending of keen attention to detail and uncommon warmth. Runkle’s opinionated, but affectionate narration offers a revealing vision of the Nittany Valley’s rich past.
The Legends of the Nittany Valley: A collection of Central Pennsylvania folk stories and legends relating to the Nittany Valley, originally published by Henry W. Shoemaker, Pennsylvania's first folklorist whose early 20th-century stories helped lead to the birth of the Nittany Lion.

While the Nittany Valley is a tangible, everyday place where people live and work, a magical kingdom lurks just beneath the surface, just waiting to be discovered by those with a pioneering and creative spirit. The Indian and settler legends collected here are chosen for their relation and proximity to the Nittany Valley. Through this enchanting mythology of real locations we inhabit today, you will encounter the spirit of the Nittany Valley—the spirit that was here long before any of us arrived, and that will remain long after we pass through.

Is Penn State a Real University?: An Investigation of the University as a Living Ideal: An examination of the history of The Pennsylvania State University and its place and aspirations in the fabric of American higher education by Dr. Ben Novak, a four-term University trustee.

On its surface, the question posed by this work seems ridiculous. Yet its thoughtful exploration by Dr. Ben Novak, a four-term former Trustee, reveals that there is far more to the answer than one might first imagine. “Is Penn State a Real University?” is an insightful meditation that presents a grounded, evergreen vision for students, alumni, townspeople, and professors everywhere.

The Birth of the Craft Brew Revolution: First-ever collection of Bellefonte attorney Ben Novak’s first-of-a-kind columns on craft brew beer, originally published by the Centre Daily Times in the 1980s, on the then-emerging craft beer brewing industry.

It’s 1984, and in America’s “Happy Valley” one local attorney is confronting an Orwellian dystopia in beer. Only five years have passed since the lifting of the prohibition against home brewing, and America’s palate atrophies from commercial sameness. Ben Novak presents his complete collection of 71 columns first published in the Centre Daily Times on the joys of beer. As fresh and accessible now as then, this collection will especially delight the student who loves its effects but is dumb to its essence and all those who think of beer as little more than another amusement on the adventure of life.

Conserving Mount Nittany: A Dynamic Environmentalism: The story of student, alumni, and community efforts to preserve and protect Mount Nittany, perhaps Central Pennsylvania’s most distinctive symbol and landmark, as an exercise in culturally-driven environmentalism.

In presenting the first complete history of Central Pennsylvania’s most famous mountain, Thomas A. Shakely pieces together the story of Mount Nittany as perhaps the most famous symbol of The Pennsylvania State University and the Nittany Valley. This book tells the story the physical and cultural environment from which a spirit of both affection and protection for the Mountain has been evident from the time of the American Indians into the present. A book packed with anecdotes, observations, and reflections, “Conserving Mount Nittany” is sure to delight as a conversation on how to cultivate a spirit of magic in the midst of a practical age.

Reminiscences of Dr. F.J. Pond: Penn State in the Atherton Era: Accessible, compact pamphlet-style republication of the musings of Dr. Francis J. Pond, Penn State alumnus and professor, on the state of the campus and local life during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
Dr. Francis Pond recalls the lively era of growth and change at The Pennsylvania State College spearheaded by President George W. Atherton, sharing memories of life on campus and covering topics like the establishment of fraternities, clubs, and literary societies, selection of the school colors, student pranks, compulsory chapel and military drills, and the college football scandals of the day. He paints a vivid picture of a place both foreign and familiar, speaking to us across time through this short, but riveting, account of Penn State in its formative years.

Creation of Penn State History Course for Undergraduates

As part of The Nittany Valley Society’s mission to foster “a spirit of community across time,” board member Sean Clark first suggested the idea of approaching Penn State faculty to develop a first-of-its-kind elective three-credit Penn State history course for undergraduates in order to enculturate greater knowledge of the University’s remarkable history. This idea was later spearheaded by Chris Buchignani, Zach Zimbler, Kevin Horne and others. Chris Buchignani made contact with Dr. Mike Milligan, Senior Lecturer in History, which led to further conversations with Dr. Christopher Long, Associate Dean in the College of the Liberal Arts and Professor of Philosophy and Classics.

In September 2014, Dr. Milligan began independent research and curriculum development for the course, which with support from the College of the Liberal Arts will become a permanent elective history course and is expected to become available for Penn State students to schedule as of the Fall 2015 semester. As a further commitment to the perpetual existence and success of the course, Chris Buchignani worked with Penn State’s Development staff and board member Steve Garguilo to create the “Stephen D. Garguilo Nittany Valley Society Endowment in Penn State History,” a $50,000 pledge to create a permanent University-based endowment to sustain the basic financial needs of course enrichment for students. Steve Garguilo will be fulfilling this pledge through personal giving and corporate matching dollars over the course of the next five years.

The creation of this Penn State history course is an example of part of the ethos of The Nittany Valley Society, which is not only to express its mission through programming under its own corporate umbrella, but to conceive of culturally worthwhile and community-enhancing ideas and then to serve as advocate and connector for making those ideas happen through those persons or groups best suited to execute and sustain them.

Official Recognition of Old Willow, First Symbol of Penn State

A talk by board member Tom Shakely to student leadership, coupled with the distribution of Nittany Valley Press book “Is Penn State a Real University?,” led to awareness and consideration by the Senior Class Gift of 2014 Committee to consider recognizing and endowing Old Willow and similar “heritage trees” for honor and preservation. Though the Class of 2014 ultimately selected a different gift, student action by Lion’s Paw members Brenden Dooley and Jordan Harris initiated a successful effort to publicly recognize and honor Old Willow’s third-generation.
Dooley and Harris worked with the Penn State Office of Physical Plant’s Heritage Trees and Groves program to officially designate the third-generation Old Willow as the latest scion of Penn State’s original Old Willow, representing the return of this honor for the first time since the 1980s and setting the stage for increasing student awareness and affection in years to come. The Penn State Alumni Association-sponsored plaque now situated at Old Willow reads in part:

“For decades, freshman bowed to Old Willow as Penn State’s oldest living tradition. Legend claims that when Penn State’s first president, Evan Pugh, returned from a six-year sojourn in Europe, he brought back an off-shoot of a willow from the famous garden and grotto of English poet Alexander Pope. This sapling was planted on the Allen Street Mall, near Sackett Building, by Professor William Waring in 1859. Waring was the first superintendent of farms and grounds and was charged with the layout of roads, buildings, orchards, and landscaping. After wind felled the tree in 1923, an off-shoot of this tree grew until the late 1970s, when this third-generation tree was planted.”

Dooley and Harris, writing in The Nittany Valley Society’s Town & Gown cultural conservation column, cite “Is Penn State a Real University?” and its chapter “Old Willow, Monarch of the Campus” as inspiration for their efforts to restore Old Willow to prominence. In their column, they note that Old Willow “symbolized a gesture of birth and hope for the newborn institution, and was thus treated with necessary reverence by its students. Freshman, as [a new plaque] remembers, would literally bow before it signifying their appreciation for Penn State’s oldest living tradition.”

Planting of Old Willow’s Fourth Generation

Chris Buchignani worked with George Henning, former Penn State Trustee, to successfully plant a fresh cutting taken from the third-generation Old Willow. This fourth-generation of Old Willow was planted in mid-2014 on the lawn of The University Club in Downtown State College as both a gift to the historic membership club, and as a means to ensure a suitable alternate descendant will always exist from which future descendants of Old Willow can spring when the time comes for Old Willow’s fourth-generation on campus. A small plaque at The University Club recognizes the historical and living significance of this growing sapling.

Creation of The Willow Gathering, An Annual Experience

Since its founding The Nittany Valley Society has hosted The Willow Gathering, an annual experience meant to bring people together from across the community to share in fellowship and celebrate local culture. The Willow Gathering’s name refers to two aspects of the Nittany Valley’s cultural history. First, it honors Old Willow and its symbolic hope that the spirit and vision of the founders continually takes root and flourishes. Second, The Willow Gathering represents the hope that, in the same way Old Willow’s roots physically take root in the soil, new students, professors, trustees, alumni, residents, and friends can grow more firmly rooted in the cultural landscape of the community by intentionally coming together for fellowship.
rather than for professional or partisan reasons. In this way, it exists to defeat the “information silo” effect that often plagues university communities, wherein diverse constituencies self-segregate, with the effect of cultural corrosion that can weaken communities over time.

In its first year hosted at Hotel State College’s Beaver Room, Ben Novak’s keynote introduced “Is Penn State a Real University?” and “The Birth of the Craft Brew Revolution,” followed by a craft beer tasting at Zenos. In 2013, Penn State Alumni Association Executive Director Roger Williams delivered a keynote at The University Club on “Evan Pugh and George Atherton: Penn State’s George Washington and Abraham Lincoln,” followed by a craft beer tasting. In 2014, Michael Paul of Penn State Lunar Lion will speak at the Nittany Lion Inn. The Willow Gathering continues to grow as an established part of the local calendar of events.

Initiation of Nittany Valley Heritage Walk

The Nittany Valley Heritage Walk represents an extraordinary opportunity to beautify Downtown State College through a distinctive, well-maintained footpath paved with engraved bricks telling the stories of thousands of Penn Staters, residents, and friends, while supporting cultural conservation including preservation and expansion of the Heister Street Inspiration Mural, which itself serves as a device for sharing the regional stories that make the Nittany Valley distinctive. In recognition of the critical importance of earned income, the Nittany Valley Heritage Walk was conceived in partnership with Michael Pilato, creator of the Inspiration Mural. Still in early development, the Nittany Valley Heritage Walk represents a ~$2 million dollar development opportunity that will generate funds to conserve the landmark Mural while allowing donors a means to “leave their mark” through engraved paver stones. The Nittany Valley Society is developing the Nittany Valley Heritage Walk as a programmatic commitment it will honor and maintain into perpetuity, and as a means to create the financial basis for perpetual operations from Centre Foundation endowment revenue.

Initiation of ‘Legends’ Recitation Readings

As an oral companion to Nittany Valley Press’s storytelling purpose, The Nittany Valley Society sponsors live recitations from “The Legends of the Nittany Valley” for students, alumni, and residents. Henry W. Shoemaker’s classic American Indian legends not only pertain to the area, but also convey a sense of shared mythology and history that further The Nittany Valley Society’s mission to foster “a spirit of community across time” by providing common reference points and vocabulary that can further bind together diverse constituencies.

Creation of Cultural Conservation Column

As part of Nittany Valley Press’s storytelling purpose, The Nittany Valley Society partnered with Town & Gown Magazine to create a monthly column promoting, at a high level, the concept of cultural conservation, and at a practical level, engagement in community life by sharing the
history, culture, and the personalities that define the area. Contributions are invited from the community and are supplemented by Nittany Valley Press book excerpts.

**Creation of CBICC Student Intern Initiative**

The Nittany Valley Society employed Penn State undergraduate history interns to catalog the historical document archives of the Chamber of Business and Industry, offering an educational experience for students while creating a record of news clippings, documents, and photos pertaining to the community that date to the 1930s. The Nittany Valley Society has worked with the CBICC and other local organizations to ensure the many “hidden gems” and forgotten stories contained in this collection are conserved for the future.

**Establishment of Centre Foundation’s Nittany Valley Renaissance Fund**

Early in August 2013, The Nittany Valley Society created the Nittany Valley Renaissance Fund with Centre Foundation. The goal of the Nittany Valley Renaissance Fund is to serve as The Nittany Valley Society’s central endowment, eventually growing to the point that it can provide for 100% of the organization’s annual operating budget. After raising an initial $10,000, the board will rely on growth through revenue from the Nittany Valley Heritage Walk and the development of a Salon of State College membership program.

**Establishment of Centre Foundation’s Novak Fellowship Fund**

Honoring Ben Novak’s lifetime of devotion and service to Penn State and the Nittany Valley, The Nittany Valley Society created the Centre Foundation’s Novak Fellowship Fund in November 2013 as a perpetual designated endowment. The Novak Fellowship Fund’s annual revenue will support The Nittany Valley Society, enabling student fellows to work with Nittany Valley Press to research the area’s past with the aim of surfacing and sharing little-known aspects of the community’s shared history with new generations.

**Embrace of Continuous Communication**

As an operational imperative, The Nittany Valley Society embraced the management concept of “continuous communication” between board meetings through asynchronous platforms in order to connect its geographically dispersed board members. Instead of email, Yammer was used for most of the first three years, with Slack supplanting it as of this writing. This communications style enabled the board to be productive, achieving everything documented here.


Strategic Plan 2015-19

Board & Committee Development
Growing capacity, diversity, and impact while concretizing committee roles

Rationale: Over three years of growth relying on ad hoc organizational structures, The Nittany Valley Society has been tremendously successful in executing its mission. That said, in many cases excess responsibilities fell on concentrated sections of the board, and traditional committee structures have not yet been developed. As the board matures and the organization charts its goal for the years to come, a more intentional approach to board and committee development is prudent in order to ensure continuing success while minimizing the likelihood of burnout among existing board members.

Goal: Establish high-level guidance and resources for board members while cultivating an effective committee system that encourages collaboration and impact.

Strategic Measures

1. Create board member manual with goal to enculturate history and processes for existing and future board members.

2. Examine board composition and determine appropriate diversification for representation from constituencies across the community, while formalizing board member expectations in terms of both regular giving and member growth.

3. Initiate review of corporate bylaws with goal to evaluate board member term lengths and enshrine committee structure, including the following: University & Community Partnerships Committee, Nittany Valley Press Committee, Nittany Valley Heritage Walk Committee, Willow Gathering Committee, and Salon of State College Committee.

4. Identify ideal number of board members per committee and move toward quarterly board meeting model wherein committee leadership and members report their progress to the wider board while lessening president-centric approach to operations.

5. Continually identify and engage Penn State undergraduates whose interests intersect with our mission and ensure their representation on board and committee levels.

6. Explore value of supplementing quarterly in-person board meetings with monthly or semi-regular audio/video conferencing and regional activities designed to enhance cohesion and directly connect our key people to the places they serve.

7. Embrace communications tools that enable effective asynchronous collaboration.
Sustainability of Operations & Finances

Identifying leadership areas, growing earned income channels and endowed funds

Rationale: A goal from the founding of The Nittany Valley Society has been to create an utterly firm operational and financial foundation upon which the organization can grow and positively impact the community for generations to come. An intentional emphasis on starting as a “lean and lightweight” nonprofit has taught the organization how to create valuable programming without great cost. At this inflection point, there is an opportunity to continue emphasizing low-cost, high-impact programming while simultaneously growing our operating budget and endowed and other funds to ensure the ability to operate at a certain baseline into perpetuity.

Goal: Focus on meeting operating budget needs and planning for growth while aggressively growing Centre Foundation endowments and financial reserves.

Strategic Measures

1. Continually implement tools that enable real-time operational collaboration with an emphasis on automating routine management processes.

2. Grow Centre Foundation Nittany Valley Renaissance Fund to at least $250,000 in book value in order to provide perpetual annual revenue for operations and programming.

3. Grow Centre Foundation Novak Fellowship Fund to $75,000 in book value in order to enable annual Nittany Valley Press student fellowship stipend(s).

4. As a supplement to Nittany Valley Press and Nittany Valley Heritage Walk, explore and implement opportunities for additional earned income—especially those that minimize traditional operational/personnel burdens like inventory and fulfillment.

5. Develop and maintain a scaling plan for operating budget as organizational revenue increases from Nittany Valley Press, Nittany Valley Heritage Walk, membership, etc., with a clear sense of how new revenues will enhance the impact of programming areas.

6. Maintain 33.3% or more of revenue from public contributions and complete necessary paperwork for termination of Private Foundation status via Public Charity, specifically by re-filing IRS form 8940 no later than July 31, 2019.

7. Consider community, event, and donor opportunities to grow Centre Foundation endowments to support additional programming.

8. In addition to growing our operational checking account and Centre Foundation endowments, establish mutual fund(s) reserves.
University & Community Partnerships

*Incarnating our spirit and mission in the community with people and groups*

**Rationale:** A special aspect of The Nittany Valley Society’s mission as a cultural conservancy is to advance ideas and programming and promote relationships complementing its portfolio of activity. Examples of this include promoting appreciation for Old Willow and the traditions surrounding it, and the conversations and relationships leading to the creation of a Penn State history course. Guided by a firm conviction that “a rising tide lifts all ships,” The Nittany Valley Society is committed to building and maintaining area relationships and advancing mission-related cultural conservation initiatives throughout the community.

**Goal:** Identify and build community relationships while working with partners and friends to advance cultural and regional appreciation through mission-complementary initiatives.

**Strategic Measures**


2. Create and execute calendar of annual student and community talks and presentations on cultural conservation and activities to UPUA, GPSA, LP, S&B, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.

3. Collaborate with Penn State College of the Liberal Arts and History Department to ensure public-facing Coursera-like version of Penn State history course becomes available for alumni, residents, and friends to make shared history more accessible.

4. Fulfill pledge of $25,000 to establish Stephen D. Garguilo Nittany Valley Society Endowment in Penn State History.

5. Liaise with regional agencies to incorporate conservation and enrichment of the cultural landscape into long-range visions, including CBICC, SCDID, CPCVB, Centre Region Entrepreneur Network, Office of the University President, and local governments.

6. Advance concept of campus “Founders Statues” series to honor Evan and Rebecca Pugh, George Atherton, Alma Mater, and other significant figures in the life of the University, potentially in partnership with PSAA Alumni Council and Senior Class Gift Committee.

7. Develop, advance, and implement “Storytelling Benches” for campus and community, with plan for their use, potentially in partnership with Penn State Alumni Association.

8. Engage Greek Life, helping strengthen its identity by orienting its story in larger Nittany Valley narrative.
Salon of State College
Creating a sustaining community program and occasions for fellowship

Rationale: As a cultural conservancy, The Nittany Valley Society exists to perpetuate cultural awareness, connection, and feeling for the people of the area. In its first three years, the organization’s focus has been on operational infrastructure, programming, and capacity building. But to achieve wider impact, the Salon of State College and a membership focus is called for in order to realize the promise of our mission of truly fostering a “knowledge of our past, an appreciation for our present, and an affection for our spirit.”

Goal: Create Salon of State College as an attractive membership program that will incarnate the organizational mission to connect and intangibly alter lives.

Strategic Measures

1. Develop “Salon of State College” as a community membership program involving physical meetups for appreciative thinking, fellowship, recitations, etc.

2. Launch Salon membership program for supporters of The Nittany Valley Society and cultural conservation, with Salon member dues as key organizational revenue stream.

3. Grow supporting Salon membership to at least 3,000 while growing sustaining donor memberships to approximately 300 by June 2019.

4. Develop comprehensive Salon membership program with annual communications triggers, and point-persons to follow-up personally with new members as a means to introduce them to the full spectrum of The Nittany Valley Society’s programming.

5. As part of Salon membership, explore potential to propagate customs and traditions such as honoring Old Willow, Evan and Rebecca Pugh’s Union Cemetery gravesites, etc.

6. Explore potential to acquire physical space in Downtown State College or nearby area to serve as both a benefit of Salon membership and as a long-term corporate headquarters for The Nittany Valley Society.

7. Partner with Hotel State College to develop and renovate an historically-rooted Nittany Valley-themed hotel room; market in partnership with Hotel State College, offering discounted rates as benefit of Salon membership.

8. Investigate potential for Annual Fund, Centre Gives, or Giving Tuesday development efforts, with understanding that Salon of State College committee functions in lieu of traditional/professionalized development function until such a function can exist.
Nittany Valley Press

Growing distribution, marketing infrastructure, and student/resident awareness

Rationale: Nittany Valley Press is the cornerstone for The Nittany Valley Society’s mission aspect of storytelling to foster “a spirit of community across time,” because it is through sharing common stories that an increasingly diverse people can forge a common identity and experience culturally meaningful experiences. There is ample opportunity for Nittany Valley Press to grow the reach of its existing publications while managing complementary programming areas and exploring new opportunities.

Goal: Grow the reach of existing books, expand the collection, and manage related programming including schedule of recitations, Novak Fellowship growth, and cultural conservation columns.

Strategic Measures

1. Work toward a robust and diversified marketing strategy for books with recurring expenditures to reach various audience segments through appropriate channels.

2. Use multimedia to bring Nittany Valley Press collection alive. Produce introductory film and short promotional book trailers for applicable products; refresh as necessary.

3. Maintain an inventory of books in State College to be sold/gifted as necessary, and ensure board members maintain personal allotments for sale/distribution.

4. Develop and execute annual calendar for recitations of “The Legends of the Nittany Valley” and other applicable books/excerpts to personally connect with people.

5. Strive for creation of Nittany Valley Press audiobook editions for entire collection, while also aiming to release at least one new book every five years.

6. Move toward a zero-sum model where Press publications are sold at cost (production, royalties) as pure programming initiatives to serve mission and alleviate “Unrelated Business Income” accounting burden.

7. Build out local and statewide distribution network to place Nittany Valley Press books in local interest/Penn State sections of various retailers.

8. Create, manage, and execute monthly editorial calendar for cultural conservation columns, supplementing quarterly with Nittany Valley Press excerpts.

9. Grow Novak Fellowship Fund to $75,000 through constituency-focused fundraising, enabling fellows stipend for management of cultural conservation columns.
Nittany Valley Heritage Walk

Growing placemaking State College pathway by executing a business plan

Rationale: In its subject and presentation, the Heister Street Inspiration Mural evokes the mission of The Nittany Valley Society—celebrating the stories and people of our home in a way that distinguishes and beautifies the spaces we inhabit. Nittany Valley Heritage Walk represents an opportunity to expand this valuable function while also generating revenue to sustain The Nittany Valley Society’s cultural enrichment efforts and its partner organization, the Public Art Academy. Nittany Valley Heritage Walk will be a permanent part of the State College landscape, elegantly complimenting the Inspiration Mural and allowing donors to leave an enduring physical trace of their affection for the Nittany Valley.

Goal: Establish a detailed plan, including goals and performance metrics, for expanding the Nittany Valley Heritage Walk to enhance the physical and cultural landscape of State College.

Strategic Measures

1. Adopt short-term, medium-term marketing plan to establish advertising methods and sales goals. Identify metrics to measure effectiveness and timetable for assessments.

2. Tell the story of the Mural as integral to the regional narrative, producing promotional film(s) featuring local personalities, communicating pathway’s message and value.

3. Maintain customer connection, engagement; cultivate sense of community and belonging by “Leaving Your Mark” in the Nittany Valley; reinforce The Nittany Valley Society’s conception of the broader cultural community rooted firmly in sense of place.

4. Develop and maintain basic plan for The Nittany Valley Society’s share of net income, including goal of reaching $250,000 for Nittany Valley Renaissance Fund.

5. Establish a minimum $30,000 “Maintenance and Upkeep” endowment with Centre Foundation to ensure perpetual care of walkway. Establish protocol for annual cleaning, inspection, and replacement of damaged bricks, donor method to request replacement.

6. Provide necessary logistical and infrastructural support to ensure success of mutual Nittany Valley Society/Public Art Academy goals regarding preservation and expansion of the Heister Street Inspiration Mural.

7. Publish annual report for donors, public on Nittany Valley Heritage Walk revenue and maintenance endowment.

8. Explore linking Nittany Valley Heritage Walk with Salon of State College membership.
The Willow Gathering

*Cultivating an annual opportunity to celebrate the magic of the valley*

**Rationale:** After three years, The Willow Gathering has brought together many personalities and generations of students, alumni, residents, trustees, and friends. Its goal of intentionally connecting people from across the community and working to break down the "information silo" effect has been firmly established, but it has not yet become a fixture of the annual calendar of "must-attend" events. In the years to come, The Willow Gathering will need to become a firmer part of the annual calendar, while better expressing itself as a special opportunity for forging unexpected relationships and celebrating the character of the community.

**Goal:** Systematize core processes behind planning/execution of annual event, elevate its profile and strengthen its appeal as a memorable experience reflective of our unique mission.

**Strategic Measures**

1. Grow The Willow Gathering as a special event by engaging appreciative constituencies.

2. Integrate access to The Willow Gathering as a benefit of Salon of State College membership and transition away from Willow Gathering as a stand-alone event.

3. Emphasize The Nittany Valley Society’s role as connector and expressor of regional spirit and The Willow Gathering’s ethos as a local tapestry woven from many intersecting threads; greater understanding enhances enjoyment.

4. Craft a “Manual for Magic” to guide event planning, implementation, and growth with a focus on enculturating The Willow Gathering as a distinct experience, including an annual execution/program calendar for executing the specifics of event planning.

5. Improve and maintain visibility of both The Nittany Valley Society and The Willow Gathering logos, including professional pop-up signage and continuing focus on conveying The Willow Gathering’s purpose through commemorative items.

6. Commission and maintain public-facing archive of The Willow Gathering’s keynote and other activities through professional photography and videography.

7. Consistently incorporate local music, food, and craft brew element, while improving opportunity for guests to share their stories and foster unexpected relationships.

8. Explore potential for similarly-minded organizations to partner with The Nittany Valley Society by sponsoring The Willow Gathering to cover fixed costs and improve atmosphere.
Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of The Nittany Valley Society is responsible for setting the priorities and strategic plan of the organization and ensuring these are consistent with our mission statement.

Shauna Barnes, Board Member  
Term: 2015-present

Cori Agostinelli Kalupson, Board Member  
Term: 2012-present

Christopher A. Buchignani, President  
Term: 2012-present

Melissa McCleery, Board Member  
Term: 2015-present

Anthony Christina, Board Member  
Term: 2012-present

Chris Miller, Board Member  
Term: 2012-present

Sean Clark, Board Member  
Term: 2012-present

Anthony Panichelli, Board Member  
Term: 2015-present

Dave Cole, Board Member  
Term: 2014-present

Thomas A. Shakely, Vice President  
Term: 2012-present

Steve Garguilo, Board Member  
Term: 2013-present

Alex Smith, Treasurer  
Term: 2012-present

Jonathan Hartland, Board Member  
Term: 2012-2014

Rick Smith, Secretary  
Term: 2012-present

Kevin Horne: Board Member  
Term: 2013-present

Zach Zimbler, Board Member  
Term: 2012-present

Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

- **2015**: March 28 (Philadelphia), July 11, October 4, December 5
- **2016**: March 19 (Pittsburgh), July 9, October 8, December 3
- **2017**: March 18 (Philadelphia), July 8, September 30, December 2
- **2018**: March 17 (Pittsburgh), July 14, October 6, December 1
- **2019**: March 23 (Philadelphia), July 13, October 5, December 7

Board Meetings 2012-2014

- **2014**: March 22 (Pittsburgh), July 12, September 7, December 6
- **2013**: March 23 (Philadelphia), July 13, September 7, December 8
- **2012**: April 14, July 14, September 1, December 2