Finding Balance and Collaboration Across Departments at Multi-attraction Gardens

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History of the Botanic Garden of Smith College

1890’s ~ Smith College’s first President, L. Seeyle, recruits the talents of William F. Ganong and the landscape architecture firm of Olmsted and Elliot to implement his vision.

“combining the beautifying of the campus with the formation of a scientifically arranged Botanic Garden”

(~W. F. Ganong)
❖ Campus as classroom to support Botany

❖ Recent evolution to support the study of plants across a broader range of academic disciplines
The Rock Park

An elegant, integrated space for education and enjoyment.
• Geology, Botany, Ecology, Landscape Studies, Art, Math, health and well being, alumnae relations.
How it is working well:

- A natural pairing - stones and plants

- An extraordinary upgrade for an area that now supports a breadth of college priorities

- Patience allowed the idea to be incorporated into a needed capital project, elevating its potential

- “It invites us to be advocates for each other’s priorities.” ~ Dr. John Brady, Geology
Japanese Garden

Photo: Pamela Dods
• Conceived in 1984 by Prof. of Religion and East Asian Studies, Teitetsu Unno. Designed by David Slawson

• Intended to celebrate east Asian culture and garden design and offer a place of quiet contemplation and meditation.
Early 2000’s ~ Departmental reorganization left the garden without the right caretaker. As a result, the garden declined.

2016 ~ Religion, East Asian Studies, and Landscape Studies rally support for funding from President McCartney to restore and re-envision the garden.
Other Opportunities to thrive in a shared space

- Art
- Libraries
- Health and Wellness
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Sustainability
- Landscape Studies
Thank you

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