

Saint Michael's College
Colchester, Vermont



Fifth-Year Report

Submitted to
The New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc.

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REPORT PREPARATION

This fifth-year report for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. (NEASC) was prepared under the direction of the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs at Saint Michael's College. Team members included: Dr. Kathleen M. Balutansky, team co-chair, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of English; John P. Kulhowick, Director of Institutional Research; Lisa Beale Powlison, Assistant to the President; Mary Jane Russell, Director of Finance; Dr. Janet Watson Sheeran, team co-chair and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Dr. William E. Wilson, Associate Dean of the College and Professor of Political Science. Responses to areas identified for special emphasis were drafted as follows: long-range planning by Dr. Sheeran and Ms. Russell, advising and assessment of student outcomes by Dr. Wilson, and diversity by Dr. Balutansky. The enrollment and fiscal data and summaries, ratios and graphs were compiled by Mr. Kulhowick.

Preparation of the report began in October 2004 with appointment of the team by President Marc A. vanderHeyden. Dr. Robert C. Froh, Associate Director of the NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) met with the team on November 17 to discuss the report and implementation of the new Standards for Accreditation. Provost Sheeran e-mailed a message to the Saint Michael's College community in January 2005 detailing the process for preparation of the report. In May, the team presented its preliminary findings to the Administrative Council on campus. A draft was completed in the summer and shared further with faculty and staff for comments during the fall semester. Final updates were then made by the team prior to submission, under the direction of Dr. Balutansky.

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INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Founded in 1904 by the Society of Saint Edmund (SSE), Saint Michael's College is a Catholic, residential, liberal arts college located on a 440-acre campus in Colchester, Vermont. The student body consists of 1,945 full-time undergraduate students, 468 full- and part-time graduate students, and 50 to 100 international students in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, depending on the time of year. The undergraduates come from 33 states and 20 countries, with about 80 percent from New England and a gender split of approximately 54 percent women and 46 percent men.

The College has approximately 150 highly qualified, full-time faculty members, supplemented by 85 lecturers. Advising by faculty is considered a teaching responsibility. In addition, a seasoned group of staff members provide support and guidance in all facets of student life.

A Catholic, residential, liberal arts college, Saint Michael's goals, as stated in its Bylaws, are to:

- be an academic community that promotes the pursuit of truth, development of virtue and high levels of excellence in all its academic, social and religious programs with a view to bettering the human condition;
- conduct its various programs in accordance with policies that are consistent with the principles of the Catholic faith, especially those of truth, justice and charity, and to promote these principles, in fulfillment of its mission, throughout the world; and
- enrich the knowledge of Catholicism in its various dimensions and in relationship to various disciplines and fields of knowledge and to promote the moral and spiritual development of the entire College community.

The curriculum requires that all undergraduates complete Liberal Studies Requirements (LSR) in Religious Studies, Philosophy, Social and Organizational Sciences, Natural and Mathematical Sciences, Humanities, and Artistic Experience as well as demonstrating proficiency in both writing and a second language. In addition, students concentrate in one of eighteen majors leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree or one of eleven majors leading to a Bachelor of Science. Students may also submit proposals for independent majors to the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee. Optional minors in 35 fields are available.

Nearly 30 percent of undergraduates study abroad for at least one semester, and other enhancements of the academic experience include independent study, internships and student/faculty research opportunities. Saint Michael's undergraduate college is complemented by five graduate programs: Theology, Education, Administration and Management, Clinical Psychology, and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). In addition, the School of International Studies (SIS) includes the English Language Programs (ELP), which bring students from 40 countries to learn English on campus.

The Klein Academic Enrichment Commons houses the associate dean for academic affairs, Writing Center, and offices for the director of study abroad, liaison for students with learning differences and disabilities, director of the Edmundite Center for Peace and Justice, and the tutoring, service-learning and internship coordinators. The Student Resource Center, located in an adjoining section of Klein Hall, offers personal and career counseling. Supplementing the academic offerings are over 100 co-curricular activities in athletics, student clubs, Edmundite Campus Ministry, the Enterprise Plan Competition, fine arts, publications, the Fire and Rescue Squads, domestic and international service programs organized by Mobilization of Volunteer Efforts (MOVE), Student Association, Student Life leadership, Wilderness Program and Women's Center.

The College shelters Vermont's Gamma chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's preeminent academic honors society. Since 1990, Saint Michael's has been ranked in the top 15 North Regional Universities in *U.S. News & World Report's College Guide* and was just selected for inclusion in the Princeton Review's 2006 edition of *Best 361 Colleges*. The Pew Charitable Trust and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching have ranked the College among 34 institutions from across the country that are considered to be outstanding in student satisfaction and engagement. In 1997, Saint Michael's was also named as an exemplary college for fostering character development in students by the John Templeton Foundation of Pennsylvania.

Facilities include a comprehensive sports and recreation complex, the McCarthy Arts Center, Durick Library, Chapel of Saint Michael the Archangel, Alliot Student Center (including a newly redesigned dining area), Women's Center, International Commons and a range of residential options. Some of the various academic buildings are currently midway through a comprehensive three-year renovation to incorporate instructional technology and improve the flexibility of learning spaces. Recent additions to the main campus are the Hoehl Welcome Center, which houses the admission office and a presentation room used for many events, as well as three new state-of-the-art residence halls. The College's north campus, one mile away, is home to the visual arts department, additional residence halls and many community organizations.

RESPONSE TO AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR SPECIAL EMPHASIS

A. LONG-RANGE PLANNING

The NEASC accreditation letter, dated November 29, 2000, cited long-range planning as one of four areas of special emphasis for Saint Michael's College. At the time of the evaluation team's site visit, a five-year strategic plan (see Appendix I) had been formulated with substantial campus input, but priorities had not yet been identified nor financial plans developed. The 2000-2005 strategic plan charted 62 strategies organized under 18 goals, which were clustered under the five major institutional foci of the Vision 2004 statement (see Appendix II, since revised as Vision 2010, provided in Appendix III): Foundation and Future in Faith, Academic Excellence, Centrality of Students, Strength in Community, and Fiscal Responsibility through Resource Acquisition and Accountability.

The Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of the President's Cabinet and wide representation from the campus community. As the first process to involve such broad input, the resulting plan was aggressive, and segments of the community were justifiably skeptical. The NEASC visiting team judged that the strategic plan was overly ambitious and, hence, had the potential to disappoint expectations raised among a campus community that was generally unaware of resource constraints. The team suggested that the College establish priorities and determine costs and also that the Vision 2004 statement should be more widely adopted and contextualized with regard to enrollment goals, graduate programs, residential-life expectations, facilities on north campus, status of School of International Studies (SIS) and use of technology. Saint Michael's was urged to develop and communicate the criteria used to set priorities for the various strategies.

Subsequent action produced annual priorities and budgets; modifications to the strategies—but not the goals—have occurred each year. Of the original 62 strategies listed in 2000, 18 have been accomplished, 30 show significant progress (portions have been completed, but other parts are still in progress), 12 have been started, and only 4 were removed, modified or postponed. Remarkably, except for marketing, all of the high-cost initiatives have been funded. Significant achievements under the five institutional foci of Vision 2004 include:

Foundation and Future in Faith - Commitment to maintain the archives of the Society of Saint Edmund; establishment of the Edmundite Center for Faith and Culture; Pontigny Society study groups and heritage trips; and increased student and faculty involvement in religious activities and retreats.

Academic Excellence - Architects of Learning plan to increase the number and quality of full-time faculty; comprehensive academic advising plan; fully reorganized Honors Program; Phi Beta Kappa chapter; Design for Learning classroom renovations; Klein Academic Enrichment Commons; Library and Information Services (LIS) Information Fluency Five-Year Quality Plan; student outcomes assessment program; reorganization and improvement of information technology (IT) department, including a new instructional technology center; comprehensive study of graduate programs, preparatory

to action recommendations; implementation of online registration; and integration of SIS into College administration.

Centrality of Students - Increased number and quality of applications; with construction of three new residence halls, all undergraduates (except local residents) live on campus for all four years; improved first-to-second-year retention rates; increased support of and participation in Wilderness Program and Mobilization of Volunteer Efforts (MOVE); detailed study of athletic programs, including the viability of joining Division III; additions and improvements to athletic facilities for varsity and intramural sports; and establishment of Student Activities Report to provide official record of students' co-curricular learning outcomes.

Strength in Community - Construction of the Hoehl Welcome Center; commitments to house the personal library of Dr. Harold Bloom and the personal papers and photography of Senator Patrick Leahy; market-driven compensation plan for faculty and staff; improved Office of Human Resources; and increased outreach in the larger Vermont community through the Elley-Long Music Center on north campus and a variety of area groups (e.g., Burlington City Arts and ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain).

Fiscal Responsibility through Resource Acquisition and Accountability - Tuition increases at or below national averages; active efforts to analyze and manage financial aid to cap the discount rate; sophisticated five-year financial modeling process; planning integrally linked to financial resources and improved monitoring of expenditures; successful capital campaign; and systematized assessment in almost every area.

The success of the past five years may be attributed to careful planning on the part of all areas at Saint Michael's—from the Board of Trustees through individual units. Of particular importance, however, has been the application of increasingly sophisticated data-gathering and assessment procedures, which has enabled an informed prioritization of needs. One foundational element for these major achievements is a long-range financial model, which was thoroughly reworked in 2000 by the Vice President for Finance, who joined Saint Michael's in the summer of 1999. It permits a realistic designation of priorities based on modeling that includes not only the annual operating budget, but also an indication of the impact of various decisions and factors, such as financial aid, on the College's balance sheet and key financial ratios.

With the revised Vision 2010 statement, strategic plan and multiyear financial model, Saint Michael's is now able to make major mission-driven decisions with greater confidence and fiscal responsibility. Subsequent to FY 2001, priority-setting was incorporated into the budget planning process by the Strategic Planning Committee, which was comprised of the President's Cabinet along with representatives from the Faculty and Personnel Welfare Committees and other groups directly affected by the initiatives. Starting with the Cabinet retreat in December 2000, planning continues to be refined by the affected units, while decision-making has become more centralized in Cabinet action. This process provides for broad-based campus input, but also assures greater communication and stability.

Regarding improved communication, the President maintains an open dialogue with all segments of the College—he and the Board Chair make annual “State of the College” presentations to faculty and staff at Opening Assembly, just before the start of each academic year. In addition, the President sends regular e-mail messages to the campus community and makes frequent informal visits to each unit. The financial model is frequently shared with many constituencies across campus throughout the budget-planning process, from open meetings of Trustee committees to managerial groups, faculty committees and community forums. The deliberations of the Blue Ribbon Benefits Committee, concluded in FY 2001, raised awareness of the impact of compensation on the institution’s operating budget. Formation of an Administrative Council in the fall of 2001 has enhanced communication with all direct reports to Cabinet members, and the Faculty and Personnel Welfare Committees, Faculty Executive Committee and Faculty Council also have more regular interaction with the Cabinet.

The NEASC visiting team noted that the College needed to address the use of the north campus. In addition to accomplishing some deferred maintenance in Sloane Hall and other buildings, the President’s efforts to initiate community partnerships have met with good success. Most prominent is Saint Michael’s relationship with the Vermont Youth Orchestra, which resulted in renovation of the largest building into the Elley-Long Music Center. The north campus now provides alternative residential space for students and storage areas and workspace for the College library and physical plant departments as well as office space for Vermont Public Radio and Television, the Association of Vermont Independent Colleges, Vermont Council on World Affairs, Vermont Local Roads Program and Japan-America Society of Vermont. The College also continues to work closely with its neighbor, the Vermont National Guard, through several cooperative arrangements. Discussions regarding other partnerships are in progress.

Efforts to develop and communicate criteria used to establish priorities are ongoing. Vision 2010 is currently being revised to reflect recent accomplishments and refined goals as well as to incorporate further feedback from faculty and staff. While some individuals on campus have differing opinions, the community as a whole comprehends and embraces this strategic vision. For the most part, Vision 2010 has enabled diverse areas of Saint Michael’s to focus on and improve services to students and one another with greater surety and understanding of decision-making and consequent resource allocation.

Projections

With the conclusion of the strategic plan, capital campaign and Centennial festivities all occurring at the end of June 2005, the administration and campus constituencies began to contemplate the next planning process in the fall. Because of procedures and assessments that are now in place, development of this strategic plan will be much more systematic than five years ago. Issues to be addressed in this plan are to:

- consider the mission in view of campus priorities, market forces and other factors, such as the diminishing presence of the College’s founding order;
- assure that the student outcomes assessment process is systematized in a few remaining areas and also that evaluation results in improved operations;
- undertake a comprehensive review of the curriculum;

- reach a determination regarding the graduate programs;
- provide resources for the Architects of Learning faculty plan;
- maintain and improve academic and administrative technology infrastructure and applications;
- identify the academic space needed to achieve Vision 2010 and the LIS Information Fluency Five-Year Quality Plan;
- advance information literacy, building on its present sound foundation;
- integrate the Bloom and Leahy archives into the campus, physically and programmatically;
- manage a smooth transition through personnel changes in the academic administration, Board leadership and membership and, eventually, the presidency;
- refine the desired student profile with respect to academic quality, geographic diversity, demographics and financial capability;
- design and implement an integrated marketing plan, based on significant research regarding student recruitment, alumni and donor cultivation, and image-setting for the institution as a whole;
- improve the endowment; and
- determine the structure and focus of the next capital campaign.

B. ADVISING

Under “Standard Four: Programs and Instruction,” the NEASC team’s report noted that concern for the advising program was recognized by all groups within the College. Accordingly, study and modification of the academic advising program was established as a priority in the 2001 strategic plan. A faculty member was given release time to develop, under the direction of the Associate Dean of the College, a comprehensive revision of the academic advising system. After a review of best practices in higher education and comparative analysis of peer and aspirant institutions, an advising system was designed that combined these practices with the specific values and requirements of Saint Michael’s. This required changes in academic policies and included the integration of technology into advising, student information and registration. The evolving system has been monitored by biannual surveys of registration and advising.

The design of the new advising program drew heavily on an institutional commitment to a close working relationship between faculty and students, coupled with recognition of the complexity of the curriculum, where the LSR core is combined with both traditional liberal arts and pre-professional majors. The divergent nature of these two types of majors has made a unified sequence for selection of majors and assignment of advisors extremely difficult. Yet, amid these complexities, all advising now occurs within a framework of common principles and goals.

Academic advising is integral to the work of the learning community that Saint Michael’s aspires to be. Over the four undergraduate years, students assume increasing responsibility for the decisions that shape their coursework and learning. The relationships between advisors and advisees are not divorced from the larger teaching context; rather, they are an extension of the focus on students and the development of autonomous learning. In support of these ideas, academic advising has four main principles—it is learning-centered, student-focused, information-rich and multilayered.

Learning suggests that the advising process does much more than support course registration; it involves the growth of the advisee's capacity for reflection on individual interests and strengths, and the application of those thoughts to immediate and long-term goals. Understandably, the focus must remain on student development, which requires active engagement by both advisor and advisee. To arrive at such autonomy, students must have an environment rich in the information necessary for important decisions and the capacity to seek guidance from many different sources. While the academic advisor remains central to this process, a variety of other "advisors" should be consulted as the advisee refines the ability to invite and evaluate the opinions and judgments of peers, parents and teachers.

The basic areas of the College's advising program encompass 16 specific goals, defined in terms of the responsibilities of advisors and advisees:

- *Background* - Goals that set the context for advising and are necessary to the development of an appropriate relationship between advisee and advisor.
- *Deep Academic* - Goals that are generally longer term and indirectly influence an advisee's decisions about courses and a major.
- *Surface Academic* - Goals that relate directly to the selection of courses and curricular course options as an undergraduate.
- *Skill Development* - Goals that emerge from the advising process and can be applied to an advisee's general learning skills.

Over the course of an undergraduate career, decisions on academic life are progressive within the curriculum and relate to lifelong learning and career choices. While not rigidly sequential, there are **initial** decisions, which occur before matriculation at the College, followed by decisions regarding **liberal studies** coursework and the choice of **major**. The latter two categories comprise most students' decisions during the first two years, but their relative importance may vary. For most pre-professional and natural science majors, the emphasis is on reaching an early decision concerning the major because of the extent and structure of the curricula. Over time, students make **elective** decisions regarding courses, off-campus study, independent study and internships. Finally, and especially in their final year, students begin to make **post-graduation/lifelong learning** decisions regarding their future.

Implementing this new advising program design required major policy changes. Most significant was revising the Faculty Regulations to categorize advising as a "teaching" responsibility, shifting it from its prior designation as "service." Deliberation on this issue was thorough and not without disagreement. In part because of the time spent in consideration of advising and its connection to the program's design, the decision to change the regulations eventually enjoyed wide acceptance.

A second policy change was to focus on selection of a major as a decision that would take place with student ownership and within the advising system. Accordingly, incoming students are invited to express their tentative selection of a major, including "exploratory" as an option. Then, after some coursework, meetings with faculty and use of other campus resources, as

appropriate, students make a formal declaration of their major between the second and fourth semesters, accompanied by a filed plan of study for graduation.

A third change concerned the selection process for advisors. Under the new design, incoming students are assigned a temporary faculty advisor during a one-day summer orientation program, which over 85 percent of new students attend. This joint orientation day for students and parents includes proficiency testing and meetings with advisors to discuss the academic program and register for fall courses. Also, students with learning disabilities receive special advising at this time. When students arrive on campus in the fall, they are assigned a permanent advisor. Certain majors require that an advisor be assigned from within the student's tentative selection of a major; for others, an effort is made to match them with a faculty member teaching their first-year seminar or another course in their initial year. Upon formal selection of a major, students may switch to an advisor in that department. At any time, students can easily change advisors.

Annually, advisors meet as a group for an entire morning in the week before classes commence. Curricular and policy changes are reviewed during the first hour, and the balance of the session features panel discussions on some element of advising and other more general topics. In 2005, the meeting focused on the special needs of first-year students. The annual meeting is supplemented by information distributed before the advising period prior to registration for each semester. New faculty members are not assigned advisees; they learn about the advising system formally during a semester-long orientation and informally through their own departments.

Recognition that students have many "advisors" on campus has prompted regular efforts to disseminate academic information to a second tier of individuals that includes Student Life and residential dormitory staff, athletic coaches and upper-class students in various majors. First-year students actually enjoy an extended orientation throughout the first semester, as faculty are invited to be dormitory sponsors and new students participate in a series of academic programs that include a focus on advising and registration.

Beyond the policy changes, the institutional commitment to the principles of the designed system makes the use of technology essential to the advising and registration process. Traditionally, advising was preoccupied with course selection and the preparation of registration forms for submission to the Registrar. The acquisition of KnightVision software provided the opportunity for a significant advance in the advising process, for both information and registration.

For information purposes, the system allows web access for advisors and advisees to class lists and schedules, e-mail addresses, transcripts, evaluation of progress toward graduation and curricular requirements for changes in the program of study. A review of this information prior to the advising meeting permits a higher level of discussion, as was anticipated in the design of the new program.

For registration, students now take full responsibility for arranging their schedules. At announced times, they log on to the KnightVision system and build their schedule for the next semester. Advisors can also monitor the schedule being developed in real time. In this way, the roles of advisor (providing advice) and advisee (making decisions) are clearly delineated.

The KnightVision system, which operates off the College's Datatel administrative database, is a general product, and adapting it to serve the Saint Michael's advising system remains an ongoing task. For example, the software design can allow students to drop a course during the semester, but this feature was disabled on the Saint Michael's system. It was judged that such an action should be an opportunity for a conversation between advisor and advisee, especially for new students. Thus, the current system for course drops requires the advisor's signature for first-year students and the professor's signature for all students. Another useful system feature is the "check-off," which permits students to register only if their advisor has indicated they have had an advising meeting.

Complementing the KnightVision system has been upgraded web support for advising and registration, and an advising handbook has been prepared that will be available on the academic section of the Saint Michael's website. The Registrar's web page has also been considerably enhanced to provide course information for students and faculty, and an improved help section. It allows students to get a semester listing of LSR courses and full catalogue descriptions for all courses, including the instructor's name and contact information.

Assessment of the advising program has depended heavily on student surveys conducted by the Director of Institutional Research. One survey is done annually, with the focus alternating yearly between advising and registration. The information gathered has been helpful in identifying both strengths and challenges of the new system and has acted as a "driver" in setting annual goals for the program. (See Section D on "Assessment of Student Outcomes" on page 15 and Appendix IV for comparative data.)

By most estimates, the academic advising program is significantly improved. In the main, this is not simply the result of a newly designed system so much as it reflects a faculty that is deeply committed to teaching and interaction with students and has been given better tools to do this work. At the same time, it is difficult to integrate the importance of advising within the broad framework of their professional responsibilities, given increased demands on faculty time and energy in all areas. The absence of a coherent process for advisor assessment has left advising as a secondary responsibility, notwithstanding the change made in the Faculty Regulations.

The process for advising students on the selection of a major remains problematic. Because many incoming students make at least a tentative commitment to a specific major, the culture is major-driven, and exploratory students do not always seek or receive the special advising they may need. A number change their tentative choice of a major over the course of the first year and need to be considered as more similar to exploratory students.

Distribution of the advising load is another difficult issue. While the average advisor's load is less than 20 students, significant differences exist among departments. A proposal to assign general advisors for the first two years, which would have better distributed the load, was rejected by faculty from the most popular majors, based on their assessment of the need for expert advising in those majors. While this problem remains unresolved, there is now greater awareness within departments regarding equity for this responsibility.

The move toward more intensive use of technology, particularly the KnightVision system, has been challenging. The initial registration periods using KnightVision failed due to difficulties inherent in the system, insufficient hardware support and human error. Special committees worked for two years to identify the nature and causes of these problems as well as potential solutions. As a result, basic difficulties with the system have been overcome, and the last two registration periods have been very successful. In addition, KnightVision is now available for registration of matriculated students in all graduate programs, and graduate administrators have electronic access to transcripts, advising information and class lists.

Projections

Plans to further improve advising in the coming years will depend partly on the development of a new strategic plan, which will occur in the midst of significant changes in the academic administration. At a minimum, the following actions will be essential in order to improve the current program:

- develop an enhanced training program for both advisees and advisors;
- create a more comprehensive advising plan for exploratory students;
- continue the annual surveys of advising and registration;
- provide stronger support for career and post-graduate education advising;
- continue to improve KnightVision through both Datatel and internal support; and
- purchase and implement the educational plan supplement to KnightVision, currently offered by Datatel.

C. DIVERSITY

In its accreditation letter of November 2000, NEASC recommended that the College give special emphasis to improving diversity. More specifically, it indicated that in the fifth-year report, Saint Michael's should provide information on its success in "improving diversity on campus among faculty, staff, and students; and providing a welcoming environment to ALANA students in keeping with the institution's own goals." CIHE further observed that "The College's strong record in attracting bilingual and trilingual faculty, its history in ESL and EFL programs, and its increasing number of students studying abroad provide a solid foundation for the development of the international aspect of the institution." It also noted the challenges presented by Saint Michael's location, but recognized the "creative effort being given to developing a more diverse student body, such as through attracting and supporting cohorts of students." The evaluation team's report added that "The committee strongly encourages that attention be given to the rationale for greater diversity and that collective College commitment be reiterated."

Although Saint Michael's has considered the ways in which some of its peers have approached issues of diversity, the combination of the College's location, Catholic character and limited financial resources has made it unrealistic to use other institutions as a model, especially if diversity is defined solely from a racial perspective. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, Saint Michael's has focused on a broad definition of diversity that comprises four major elements: racial/cultural, geographic, socioeconomic and programmatic diversity.

In 2005, both Burlington and Saint Michael's College are more diverse communities than they were five years ago. The Burlington area has become noticeably more diverse, both racially and culturally, as the African-American population of the city has increased along with the number of refugees from Bosnia, Sudan and Somalia (Bantu). These changes have created a rich multicultural community that enriches the local area, including Saint Michael's students and other members of the College community who are active in supporting these refugee groups.

In addition to experiencing more diversity generally in the local community, students find increased diversity on campus and further opportunities to encounter diversity worldwide. Development of the Global Studies minor in 2001, which requires a study-away experience, as well as the expansion of study-abroad options in non-European countries offer students multiple unique opportunities to engage the world in an immediate and personal way. The Global Studies program is also fostering the development of international service-learning courses, in which students combine a real-world experience with academic content. Students have already taken such courses in Tanzania, Haiti and Ghana.

For those who cannot study abroad or take advantage of international service trips, MOVE has increased its domestic spring-break service trips, where faculty, staff and students have a chance to engage with people in underprivileged communities, locally and nationally, who are very different from them socially and culturally. In the United States, approximately 250 students have gone to Immokalee, FL, to work with Haitian and Mexican immigrants; Selma, AL, to help build homes for African-American families; Hartford, CT, to work with homeless men from Spanish-speaking backgrounds; New York, NY, to assist individuals with HIV/AIDS; and Baltimore, MD, to work with single-parent families in homeless shelters and soup kitchens.

Students can also participate in local MOVE programs throughout the academic year. These include opportunities to work with the local refugee resettlement program to tutor children at the neighboring Winooski elementary school, which is attended by a large percentage of new immigrants. Some choose to help at the local Boys and Girls Club or a housing development where many new refugee families live. Also, students can opt to be matched on an individual basis to serve as conversation partners with international students. Approximately 400 student volunteers participate in these local programs every year.

Saint Michael's student body remains typical of the population attending private, Catholic, liberal arts colleges in the Northeast, but in recent years, the institution has increased its efforts to enroll and retain students whose family income and social background are substantially different from this norm. One tool to accomplish this aim has been to increase financial aid to students from lower-income families. Although the number of students receiving Pell Grants has remained relatively constant (between 14 and 15 percent of those enrolled), the total amount has increased from \$731,000 in 2002-03 to \$771,000 in 2004-05. Without such increases, these students would have had to leave Saint Michael's. In addition, the total value of these Pell Grant awards compares favorably with the institution's peers in New England: Assumption College at \$602,683, Saint Anselm at \$735,245 and Merrimack at \$604,148.

Since 2000, the College has paid close attention to the need to recruit students from all areas of the country, and the Director of Marketing has begun to identify potential new geo-markets for

Saint Michael's—one of the main thrusts of the integrated marketing plan for the coming years. In 2004, the College engaged a consultant to assist with development of this plan to broaden the institution's marketing beyond New England, upon which it has relied heavily for many years. In this effort, Saint Michael's will try to achieve a balance in the number of prospective students from urban and rural locations, while also seeking ethnic diversity. The geographic diversity of the faculty has also improved in the past five years, as the College has hired seven tenure-track professors who bring their native cultures—Barbadian, Croatian, Indian, Guatemalan, South African (two) and Hispanic—to the campus.

To broaden the base for undergraduate recruitment, the admission office has two positions that focus on prospective international and ALANA students and has intensified its efforts in nearby cities with strong multicultural populations. For instance, the ALANA recruiter and Director of Multicultural Affairs have deepened ongoing connections with the Pace University Upward Bound Program and Charlestown High School in Boston by offering several programs for their college-bound students, both in Boston and at Saint Michael's. These efforts yield between two and seven students each year. In the fall of 2004, the College started a program with Upward Bound, which produced two acceptances for 2005-06. In addition, two new programs are being developed in the Boston area with Cambridge Range High School and English High in Dorchester. The admission office has been extremely sensitive to the financial needs of ALANA students recruited during the last five years, and the number of full-time ALANA students at Saint Michael's has grown by 26 percent.

The individual hired to sustain the Office of Admission's efforts to enroll ALANA students has also been assigned to renew its recruitment of international students. To overcome some of the damaging effects of 9/11 on the ESL and EFL programs, the School of International Studies (SIS) has increased its affiliations with overseas institutions to become a study-abroad site for international students.

The College has strengthened its resolve to create a welcoming and supportive environment for all minority students. Unfortunately, this effort slowed in 2002 when the then Director of Multicultural Affairs left to take a new position in the Boston school system and was replaced by a part-time interim director who undertook no new initiatives. A full-time director started in the fall of 2004 and has already launched programs to better integrate ALANA students into the larger student population. These strategies embody his conviction that meeting the needs of ALANA and international students cannot be the responsibility of just one office or constituency, but requires the participation of the entire campus community. Toward this end, he is determined to address those needs through programs that bring many groups together.

The new director has broadened the work of his office beyond the multicultural student population, taking a more inclusive perspective that embraces staff and faculty as well. He has revitalized the Martin Luther King, Jr. Society by concentrating on thematic issues with specific learning goals—in 2004-05, for example, the Society focused on African-American inventors and their contributions to the modern world. Simultaneously, the director has initiated other diversity programming, such as workshops and films followed by discussions in the residence halls, in order to foster peer-to-peer dialogue among all students. He also plans to expand the scope of the College's ALIANZA group, which primarily organizes service trips to El Salvador,

and the Diversity Coalition's activities that promote awareness of issues such as gender, race, religion and ethnicity. New activities of the Coalition include an annual International Festival and a series of discussions/forums around issues of multiculturalism and diversity.

Saint Michael's has always benefited from the diversity that SIS students bring to campus, but has struggled to integrate them into the undergraduate student population with varying success. Recently, significant progress was made in this direction by creating Ambassador Housing, a program in which international students room with American students and participate together in a number of activities organized by Student Life staff.

Recognizing the limitations on attracting a significant ALANA population to Vermont, Saint Michael's has also focused on the programmatic integration of diversity into the curriculum and on campus, which allows students to go—literally and figuratively—to new worlds of ideas and experiences that introduce them to other peoples and cultures. The recent hiring of ALANA and international faculty (noted above) has strengthened this programmatic diversity, and the personal interests and academic specialties of these tenure-track professors have contributed to the new Global Studies minor. They have taken the lead in developing a number of courses with a global perspective for the minor (discussed in detail under Standard 4 below) and for the new service-learning initiative, for which the College received Campus Compact grants in 2003, 2004 and 2005. Another Campus Compact grant for 2005-2006 provides a coordinator to help faculty develop more local service-learning courses, through which faculty and students share the experience of addressing global issues in the classroom and on site in Tanzania, Ghana, and Haiti, for instance. In addition, faculty and staff organize and participate in international service trips to Calcutta, Uganda, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Haiti under the auspices of MOVE.

Finally, although the College's study-abroad program has been strong for many years, since 2000, the director of this office has significantly increased the number of program providers through which students can pursue their academic interests all over the world. In addition to traditional western European countries, Saint Michael's students can travel to South America, Fiji, Oman, South Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia. For example, through LEXIA's overseas programs, students have the opportunity to go to Argentina, China and Thailand. Also, echoing the College's recent efforts to institutionalize service-learning in its curriculum, more students have been encouraged to study abroad through the International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership, which offers a unique experience of service linked with academic content.

Projections

While the activities described above will continue to generate and sustain all aspects of diversity at Saint Michael's, the institution is poised to undertake the following additional short- and long-term projects:

- The **College** is in the process of institutionalizing service learning by developing an administrative structure to evaluate, support and organize such courses, domestically and internationally, and will continue to support international MOVE projects.
- The **Office of Admission** will work to bolster the efforts of the ALANA and SIS recruiters.

- The **Office of Multicultural Affairs** is committed to planning student programs, such as a leadership conference in the fall of 2005, and broadening Alianza's current focus on service activities in El Salvador to encompass more Latino issues on campus. In addition, the director expects to collaborate with the Office of Admission to seek external sources of funding to enable Saint Michael's to admit more ALANA students and meet their financial needs.
- The success of the **Global Studies minor** may lead to the development of a Global Studies major.

D. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES

Under "Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation, Strengths," the NEASC evaluation team's report noted that "There is recognition that greater attention must be given to identifying and measuring outcomes, including basic student outcomes, as assessment is a necessary component of effective planning." Accordingly, Saint Michael's strategic plan set as one of its goals: "To develop a college and post-college academic assessment system." In the ensuing years, the College has developed a comprehensive assessment framework for student outcomes, and the data and information that have been gathered and analyzed are now being integrated into academic planning.

The fundamental vehicle for data collection and communication of the assessment system can be found on a College web page (www2.smcvt.edu/assessment/vision.htm), which provides the rationale and dimensions of the project. This initiative was encouraged and supported by NEASC, and the Davis Foundation provided further assistance to encourage faculty participation in development of the assessment program.

The guiding principle of the Student Learning Assessment program is that meaningful assessment promotes the improvement of teaching and learning. As such, it provides an opportunity for dialogue and discussion across disciplines, which promotes a richness and diversity of approaches to learning and enhances communication among departments and between faculty and students. Based on this principle, the following action steps were identified:

- promote the development of departmental assessment plans,
- develop a culture that understands assessment as vital to the teaching and learning process,
- provide a vehicle for ongoing dialogue and discussion about learning outcomes assessment, and
- communicate the centrality of assessment to various constituencies.

The examination of Student Learning Assessment and its implementation plan addressed five areas: entering students, retention, students in residence, alumni and College-wide assessments (see Appendix V).

Entering Students: The outcomes assessment effort begins even before students matriculate. In recent years, the Office of Admission has been guided by a "student profile" developed in conjunction with the Campus Culture Committee. The profile helps the College identify the

qualities and characteristics that are sought in prospective students in terms of three broad categories: academic, social and personal. Incoming students are characterized by their past records and present attitudes/values, both of which indicate their potential for success at Saint Michael's. In addition, the College participates regularly in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), a national longitudinal study administered by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. This survey provides information on students' self-reported pre-college attitudes and behaviors in a variety of areas.

Retention: Like all institutions of higher education, Saint Michael's recognizes the importance of retaining current students and supporting their pursuit of a degree. While maintaining accurate records of persistors and non-persistors is important in this effort, the response to survey results and analysis lies at the heart of success in retention. The class cohort tracks student demographics, major, learning-disability status, projected and actual GPA, SAT, class rank, financial aid and co-curricular activities for the target groups. This information is used to guide the development of policy and good practices. Saint Michael's also participates in the national Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) and compares its efforts and retention results with peer and aspirant schools. Finally, the College has instituted a systematic and comprehensive exit interview for all students who decide to withdraw or take a leave of absence. The outcomes of these interviews are then explored for any patterns, trends or issues that need to be addressed (see the discussion under Standard 6 below).

Students in Residence: As students progress in their academic programs, data are collected in various ways to assess the College's efforts and develop policies and practices in response. On a regular basis, students are surveyed regarding their experiences with academic advising and registration. Saint Michael's also participates annually in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)—in fact, the College was one of twelve institutions invited to participate in the original NSSE pilot survey.

The central activity in the academic assessment of students in residence has been the development of an Academic Majors assessment. Each department/program at the College has created a basic assessment approach that responds to its disciplinary perspective and departmental mission. However, in this exercise, all departments worked from a common series of Academic Guidelines and worksheets that were used as tools for generating discussion. The original departmental assessment framework has now become the basis for annual reports that analyze progress since the preceding year and facilitate the planning of further improvements.

Naturally, some students may struggle at various points with their academic programs, and in that light, Saint Michael's works to maintain a balance between intervention and allowing students to make decisions that can have serious consequences. Several years ago, the Provost and Dean of Students established an ad hoc group of academic and student-life administrators to alert all parties to any student who may need additional attention and support in academic and/or residential settings.

Finally, under the Provost's leadership, Saint Michael's has embarked on an ambitious project to assess the learning gained by students in all the co-curricular activities sponsored by the College.

This Student Activities Report will provide graduates with a record that delineates their learning in every area outside the classroom. (See Standard 6 below for further information.)

Alumni: Saint Michael's is proud of the institution's strong ties to its graduates and relies on them to inform the College about the ways the experience has influenced their lives. This assessment begins with a Senior Survey, which is a comprehensive questionnaire covering academic programs, student life, campus ministry and other important facets of the college experience. It includes questions related to CIRP, NSSE, academic advising and other instruments administered throughout students' four years at Saint Michael's. Comparing results from the surveys used with each graduating cohort permits the development of a more comprehensive understanding of student progress, satisfaction and success.

Within a few months of commencement, all graduates are contacted for the Post-College Destination Survey to determine whether they have actually reached their intended destination (e.g., graduate school, service corps, work or career opportunity). On an annual basis, the College asks alumni who graduated five years previously to complete a comprehensive survey to gauge the level of ongoing satisfaction with their Saint Michael's experience.

College-Wide Assessments: In addition to these specific assessment efforts that focus on certain points in students' educational journey, Saint Michael's utilizes other periodic surveys and questionnaires to glean information on particular questions or issues that are of interest to the overall education and formation of students in a Catholic institution. Students are surveyed on registration and academic advising in alternate years, the results of which have helped to improve and enhance both processes. The sociology department has conducted mission and religious values surveys on a few occasions and is currently working with other Catholic colleges in New England to compare data on the religious values survey.

The College also maintains information on a wide array of items required for annual reports to national organizations and other data that enhance institutional effectiveness. This information is provided to the campus community annually in the Fact Book. The administration keeps the Trustees apprised of institutional progress using the Dashboard Indicator reports that the Board mandated a number of years ago.

The work of the past five years has focused on developing a comprehensive assessment system for student learning, and the necessary elements are now in place. Perhaps most important was the development of departmental assessment plans, described above. For both disciplinary and institutional reasons, progress in this area has been uneven. At this point, all departments have prepared a basic assessment, but only about half have provided the annual report, which indicates that original assessment documents were either too ambitious or had too little substance. Consequently, the current effort involves individual meetings between the Assistant Dean and Department Chairs to discuss improving their respective assessment plans. In the plans already posted are examples of best practices within each division. The College has also supported faculty participation in disciplinary-focused assessment workshops sponsored by NEASC.

Departmental evaluations have remained the focal point of student outcomes assessment to date. The College has not attempted any measurement of the value of LSR, except indirectly through

senior and alumni surveys. This is and will remain a challenge because of the complexity of defining desired outcomes and the difficulty in designing a valid method of assessment, but Saint Michael's will continue to search for models and "best practices" that can be applied to the assessment of liberal studies learning.

The effort to develop a culture of assessment is a longer-term goal that can be pursued only when all are convinced of the utility of formal assessment to the core task of the College—student learning. Moreover, given the current faculty workload, it is important to make assessment efficient and, to the extent possible, embedded in the ongoing evaluation of student performance, which is integral to undergraduate teaching. In individual meetings, Department Chairs have come to understand that Senior Surveys can contain questions from specific departments that contribute directly to assessment.

The organizational vehicle for dialogue on these matters is primarily within departments, stimulated by discussion among Chairs at the Dean's Council. A broader conversation among the faculty at large can be cultivated by the Teaching Resource Group, which regularly provides programming for the faculty. The anticipated discussion on LSR reform will be the work of relevant Faculty Assembly committees and, ultimately, the faculty as a whole.

Communicating the centrality of assessment can occur in many ways. The priority attached to this effort has already been established through the commitment of resources, both human and fiscal, to the design of internal instruments for analysis and participation in national surveys. More significant is the increased use of student outcomes assessment as justification for policies and programs, which has begun with support for departmental assessment initiatives.

Projections

Notwithstanding the expected changes in academic administrative personnel during the next few years, it is clear that the high priority assigned to student assessment will continue due to both external requirements and the realization of its value for teaching and learning. Further, work on assessment will become more visible and central to the decision-making of the administration, which has placed increased emphasis on the integration of assessment into policy decisions. To institutionalize this priority, the College will:

- continue annual reviews and update departmental student outcome assessments,
- incorporate departmental assessments into hiring policies and department reviews,
- utilize external surveys in policy formulation and decision-making,
- provide increased support for assessment initiatives, and
- assure that the review of LSR will draw on student learning assessment and integrate assessment into the design of any reforms.

MAJOR CHANGES BY STANDARD

STANDARD 1: MISSION AND PURPOSES

The mission statement from the Board's Bylaws appears in the catalogues and on the website:

It is the mission of Saint Michael's College to contribute through higher education to the enhancement of the human person and to the advancement of human culture in the light of the Catholic faith.

The NEASC visiting team observed that Saint Michael's Catholic mission is clearly articulated and embraced by the College community. The institution remains committed to maintaining its Catholic character and has taken steps to strengthen its mission in relation to changing internal and external climates.

The President has actively researched and acclaimed the historical roots of the Society of Saint Edmund in France and England, and many programs focus on the mission. At the same time, there is shared concern about the diminishing number of Edmundites and that a preponderance of "ownership of the mission" is too exclusively concentrated in the presence of the Edmundites.

The mission also receives strong Trustee support. Section 2.1 of the Board's revised Bylaws states that the Catholic mission of the College may not be altered except with the approval of at least three-quarters of the Trustees. Another revision modified the provision that one-third of the Board be comprised of Edmundites to read that one-third are to be Edmundites and/or diocesan clergy or members of other religious orders.

Efforts are ongoing to entrust the Catholic nature of Saint Michael's more directly to the lay leaders and groups who will be required to carry the College's mission through the twenty-first century. These include the Edmundite Center for Faith and Culture, under the direction of a senior professor of religious studies; the Center for Peace and Justice, which sponsors an academic minor; the Pontigny Society, which meets monthly to read and discuss mission-related texts; nationwide alumni days of service; and an exploration of integrating the Edmundite Saint Anne's Shrine into the life of the College. During the Centennial, the mission was directly addressed in a series of speakers on the Catholic intellectual heritage and publication of a book on the history of the College's founding.

Additional characteristics that define Saint Michael's distinctive character include its focus on traditional-age, undergraduate students in a liberal arts, residential setting in Vermont. These aspects of the institution are concretized in Vision 2010, particularly the programmatic and administrative structures that focus on academic and residential excellence. SIS and the graduate programs are corollary to the College's primary mission.

As with many colleges, particularly in the Northeast, a designation of "liberal arts" is interpreted in terms of quality as well as content orientation. Many of the strategies pursued by Saint Michael's over the past five years have aimed to advance that quality internally and promote it in the marketplace. A study is currently underway to refine the existing student profile and expand the College's recruiting areas.

Other initiatives emphasizing the mission build on the life-learning aspects of classroom work, such as establishing the position of Academic Programs Coordinator to support student-faculty interaction outside of class and developing the Student Activities Report to reflect the outcomes

of co-curricular learning. In addition, the mission provides direction to the curriculum and student life and serves as the basis for student outcomes assessment and retention studies.

With regard to the curriculum and faculty, the influence of Saint Michael's mission can be seen in a substantial LSR, liberal arts majors and minors, the emphases on interdisciplinary and global learning to enhance the College's Vermont location, faculty hiring guidelines, and interactive learning in and out of the classroom. Student Life promotes the mission through the on-campus residency requirement and design of its programming, including the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Edmundite Campus Ministry is deeply involved in residential life, liturgies, retreats, MOVE service programs, and athletic and other co-curricular activities. Tracking data show that students with the highest retention rates participate in athletics, the Honors Program, MOVE and Wilderness activities. Implementation of the Student Activities Report reinforces the philosophy that co-curricular activities produce learning outcomes.

Projections

- Maintain community dialogue to foster understanding of all components of the mission.
- Strengthen provisions for the post-Edmundite future by increasing lay involvement in Saint Michael's Catholic mission.
- While maintaining a strong MOVE program, also explore academic service learning.
- Develop academic components that highlight the College's historic connections with Pontigny, Oxford, Canterbury and Saint Edmund.

STANDARD 2: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Nearly all planning and evaluation assessment tools and procedures are in place to accomplish and enhance the achievement of Saint Michael's mission and purposes. The College is pursuing its plans vigorously, and evaluation of implementation and subsequent adjustments is becoming more systematized. Efforts have shifted from developing assessment tools to institutionalizing processes that will assure a timely and thorough response to findings. The success in achieving most of the goals in the 2000-2005 strategic plan demonstrates that the College implements its plans effectively.

The Board of Trustees meets four times yearly (including an annual retreat), takes action on all appropriate approvals and monitors the institution's finances through the Investment Subcommittee of the Operations and Audit Committee. The 2002 emendation of the Bylaws cites more strongly the Board's responsibilities in directing and approving the budget, program modifications and major personnel changes. Each spring, the Trustees evaluate the performance of the President, based on the institution's progress toward Vision 2010, and solicit input from faculty and staff. The President's effectiveness is assessed in written and oral evaluations, which affect his next year's compensation.

Currently, the President's Cabinet, comprised of all but one his direct reports, provides the synthesis for institutional planning and evaluation. The Cabinet reviews, assesses and incorporates the prioritization of strategic objectives into the financial model during semiannual Cabinet retreats, several financial planning sessions and regular biweekly meetings. The

President is proactive in maintaining formal and informal relationships with every aspect of the campus community and considers all feedback in periodic updates of the Vision 2010 statement. He is particularly involved at present with development of the integrated marketing plan and the campus master plan. Most operational plans are initiated from areas supervised by Cabinet members, as described below.

Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs: Provost Janet Sheeran oversaw the strategic plan and annual report processes and directed special assessments, as needed. Since 2000, these have included a study of the structure and management of LIS and IT as well as a request for proposals (RFP) for possible outsourcing of IT. These efforts led to the creation of a Cabinet-level position of Chief Information Officer and a major restructuring of duties between and within LIS and IT. In addition, a Blue Ribbon Benefits Task Force gathered input from all campus constituencies for a revision of the College's benefits plan. Among the results was establishment of a Vice President for Human Resources.

Other efforts with substantial faculty input led to the five-year Design for Learning classroom renovation plan, a 2003 study of the graduate programs and the LIS Information Fluency Five-Year Quality Plan. Under the Provost's direction, several major planning endeavors were implemented:

- Guidelines for Scholarship, developed by departments and approved by the Faculty Council;
- Student Outcomes Assessment Program;
- Student Activities Report;
- comprehensive academic advising program;
- a call for curriculum review in all departments; and
- in-depth studies for the improvement of the physics, computer science, education and business departments.

The one-person Office of Institutional Research, newly established in 2000, produces over a score of reports, notably the annual Fact Book, quarterly Dashboard Indicators, an alumni survey of each class five years after graduation, annual survey of seniors, biannual advising surveys, retention reports tracking over ten student cohorts, and data from the CIRP and U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) surveys.

Faculty participation in planning has advanced by means of the Faculty Assembly and more active interaction of the administration with the faculty's statutory and other committees, particularly the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee, Faculty Welfare Committee and Faculty Council. The Assembly also directs a biannual evaluation of academic administrators and calls for the assessment and revision of its numerous committees.

Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students: Vice President Michael Samara observes that Student Affairs is in a constant mode of evaluation since most of its activities concern the day-to-day quality of life for students. This department conducts annual summer planning retreats, goal and objective setting, and "quality-of-life" surveys undertaken by the Student Affairs Assessment Committee. In addition to annual varsity sport evaluations, an

Athletic Task Force recently studied each program relative to the College's mission. Two years ago, campus parking issues led to an evaluation that incorporated student input, and new guidelines were instituted. Residential Life staff are evaluated annually, and student visits to health services and counseling include client satisfaction sheets. The campus food service is assessed regularly with input from a student committee. In summer 2004, Student Affairs held a series of planning and evaluation meetings, with input from the Director of Institutional Research, to review their educational strategies regarding substance abuse in order to develop more consistent programming. The department is also engaged in devising and implementing a more regular system of evaluations.

Vice President for Finance: The finance office, under the leadership of Vice President Neal Robinson, is responsible for the annual update of the five-year financial model as well as analyses for other planning activities and special projects. Since 2000, examples include revenue and cost analyses of the graduate programs; lease versus purchase analyses for computer system replacement and other major equipment expenditures; evaluations of online student billing services, employee purchasing cards and student/employee debit card programs; and financial data for academic evaluation efforts, such as the institution's Phi Beta Kappa application and the recent accreditation of the education department. The purchasing and auxiliary services office coordinated a consultant's outsourcing evaluation for the campus bookstore and the negotiation of major purchasing agreements. The physical plant department is responsible for long-range facilities planning, including participation in the allocation of physical resources and taking the lead role in construction and renovation projects.

Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing: Vice President Jerry Flanagan and his staff perform regular assessments of the higher-education marketplace and the enrollment "funnel." This area's strategic planning includes a series of marketing studies that will lead to development of an integrated marketing plan for Saint Michael's. The Enrollment Management Committee meets on a regular basis and considers issues ranging from the distribution of financial aid to the effectiveness of individual recruitment programs, such as a service-related book award. Admissions issues enrollment reports on a weekly basis at peak times and regularly monitors the academic performance of incoming students relative to predicted GPA. Weekly graduate enrollment reports are also prepared. In addition, when SIS was restructured, the newly hired international recruiter developed a strategic plan and is implementing a system that provides better enrollment planning for SIS programs.

Vice President for Institutional Advancement: Over the past seven years, Vice President Anne Hansen's primary responsibility has been to lead the development and implementation of a substantial campaign plan. She will continue to oversee monthly new business and cash-flow reports in the post-campaign period. Progress reports for the campaign were reviewed quarterly by the Board's Institutional Advancement Committee and monitored success in meeting targets for endowed funds for scholarship, academic programs and student life, the general endowment, capital projects, planned giving and other sponsored activities. Special attention was paid to increasing alumni involvement and gifts awaiting designation. The cost of generating funds was also closely scrutinized.

Vice President for Human Resources: Since joining Saint Michael's in 2001, Vice President Michael New has established planning procedures that involve the elected Personnel Welfare Committee; Faculty Welfare Committee; Pension Committee; and a new body, the Administrative Council, comprised of all direct reports to Cabinet members. Under his leadership, studies and extensive discussion led to a highly successful voluntary separation program, staff salary standards have been set, a system for developing position descriptions has been instituted to better direct performance evaluations and the application of related compensation standards, and content is being developed for regular staff training programs.

Director of Edmundite Campus Ministry: Rev. Brian Cummings and his staff are responsible for a broad range of campus ministry programs. They have performed a study of service learning in relation to MOVE; an inventory of possible uses of Saint Anne's Shrine, a facility operated by the Society of Saint Edmund in the greater Burlington area; and an evaluation of LEAP retreat weekends. They work closely with many students who provide input for their programs and monitor attendance to assess the effectiveness of their work.

Chief Information Officer: Under the leadership of William Anderson, a business professor on administrative assignment, IT has developed a 90-day planning model that is updated monthly. These plans receive input and are reviewed by the faculty's Educational Technology Committee, an all-College Technology Steering committee, Administrative Users Group and the Cabinet. Along with subsequent evaluations, the plans inform budget decisions, work requests and IT-generated initiatives. Quarterly performance evaluations of IT staff contribute to the planning process and an assessment of IT performance. The departmental planning and evaluation model connects the performance of the leadership team to the accomplishment of established goals based on data collected systematically through a balanced-scorecard process.

Projections

Planning and assessment in all areas of the College are taken seriously and are the products of systems that have matured over the past five years. The next task is to incorporate the means to accomplish the improvements and modifications occasioned by the planning and evaluation processes. Particular challenges for the second half of the decade include:

- development of the next five-year strategic plan;
- Board and College-level planning in relation to the transition of academic administration leadership, replacement of Trustees and eventual recruitment of a new president;
- clarification of plans to maintain and strengthen the Catholic component of the mission;
- implementation of the integrated marketing plan, which will include refinement of the student profile, an assessment of affordability, identification of recruitment markets, continued development of alumni services and a foundation for the next capital campaign;
- further evaluation and decision-making regarding the graduate programs;
- curriculum review of LSR and development of new majors and minors;
- establishment of periodic reviews of academic departments and programs, incorporating external perspectives;
- determination of academic needs to guide decisions regarding classrooms, faculty offices and informal student interaction spaces;

- integration of assessment information into the financial planning process; and
- assessment of the viability of moving the athletics program to Division III.

STANDARD 3: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The 2000 NEASC evaluation team’s report recognized a devoted Board of Trustees and applauded its restructuring, which reduced eleven committees to five. They commended the reorganization of the senior administration, particularly in the academic area, and the faculty and staff governance structures. Regarding the Board’s makeup, the team expressed concern about the institution’s ability to perpetuate an appropriate balance of skills and significant financial capacity, while also maintaining the number of Edmundites serving as Trustees. In addition, they perceived some ambiguity regarding tenure criteria and the roles of the Faculty Welfare Committee and Faculty Council. Although Saint Michael’s currently faces a time of transition in the academic administration after a period of relative stability, the overall organization and governance of the College now has a more effective and efficient structure, from the Trustees to senior administrators to faculty governance, with improved lines of communication.

Board of Trustees

Although the structure of the Board prior to 2000 enabled more Trustees to be involved in key areas of the College, it did not meet their desire for maximum interaction with the campus community, while preserving their ability to engage in rigorous internal deliberation. Upon adopting amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws in 2002, the Trustees moved to the present meeting format. For three of the quarterly meetings, each Board committee holds a morning series of “listening sessions,” open to all campus members, where administrators, faculty, staff and students present information and opinions on key issues. Campus groups and committees concerned with the topic are specifically invited to participate and frequently contribute to the preparation of materials. Afternoon committee meetings are restricted to Trustees and one or more vice presidents, if their input is requested. Two elected faculty representatives attend the Learning Committee unless it is in executive session. The official Board meeting held the next morning is exclusive to Trustees. The Board’s annual retreat considers a single topic in greater depth and develops goals for the following year. In addition, the Chair presents an address on the state of the College to the campus community each fall at Opening Assembly.

Regular assessments performed by the Chair indicate that the Board favors this combination of in-depth exposure to community input and capability for autonomous discussion. This meeting structure allows the Trustees to take actions that are fully vetted, while attempting to avoid too great an operational interest in the institution’s management—a concern expressed by the NEASC team. The new format was originally unsettling to the community, but is becoming more comfortable, although the faculty still expresses some concern about their diminished role and transparency, as the faculty representatives no longer attend the full Board meetings.

The current leadership and amended Bylaws bring the Board into better compliance with the best practices reflected in the new NEASC Standards and AGB guidelines. To assure the perpetuity of a strong Board, the Chair and President use a “talent grid” in considering new appointments.

New members receive a formal orientation under the direction of the Trusteeship and Mission Committee. As a restatement of commitment to the religious mission of Saint Michael's, the revised Bylaws addressed the diminishing number of the College's founding order by modifying the requirement that at least one-third of the Trustees be Edmundites to allow any religious member (SSE, other orders and diocesan clergy) to take these appointments. Any changes to the institution's Catholic mission would require the vote of three-quarters of the Board.

At the end of each meeting, the Chair leads an oral Board self-evaluation. Annually, the Trustees use the Vision 2010 statement, along with written and oral input from the Board and faculty, to review the President's performance and set his compensation for the following year. Results are conveyed to the President in writing.

Administration

Since 2000, the President's Cabinet has been expanded to include the Vice President for Human Resources. The regular attendance of the Chief Information Officer at Cabinet meetings reflects the importance of and significant investment in technology across campus. Also, the title of Vice President for Enrollment was modified to include Marketing, and the Director of Marketing attends Cabinet meetings.

The resignation of the long-time Director of Human Resources in 2001 provided an opportunity to review that area in light of campus concerns regarding compensation—competitive salary levels and sustainable benefits—and the desire to provide the best informed and most effective leadership for this department. Since joining Saint Michael's midway through 2001, Vice President New has improved the functionality of the office as well as its working relationships with the Personnel and Faculty Welfare Committees, leading them through a thorough revision of the Employee Handbook. He established the Administrative Council to improve communication and support the leadership, knowledge and skills of all staff who report directly to the vice presidents. He has also introduced a middle management training program, worked with the Provost and Faculty Welfare Committee on salary planning, and updated the practices of his office. He is currently leading a college-wide review of position descriptions, which will enhance performance evaluations and inform a merit-based salary system.

The academic administration that was relatively new in 2000 has enjoyed five years of stability since then, with the two associate deanships only recently being replaced by other senior faculty. The process of bringing all faculty and curriculum under the Dean of the College was completed in 2002, when the Dean of International Students returned to the faculty. As a result of this streamlining, all educational units, including the graduate programs, now report to the Dean and, ultimately, the Provost. At the same time, the administrative offices have absorbed the registrar, financial and marketing functions of the graduate programs and SIS, greatly improving consistency and quality control for these operations. The academic leadership has been able to spearhead significant advances regarding faculty recruitment and development, implementation of tenure and promotion standards, student advising, assessment, improvement of classrooms, departmental program review, instructional technology, centralization of academic enrichment programs (such as study abroad, support of students with learning differences and the writing

center), academic integrity standards and an overall accentuation of the importance of academic quality.

As of July 2005, a new academic team took office. The Provost of seven years retired, and the Dean returned to the faculty after ten years in his position. The Associate Dean of the College and Professor of Political Science, Dr. William E. Wilson, has assumed the office of Provost. Dr. Jeffrey Trumbower, Professor of Religious Studies, was appointed as Dean of the College. Restructuring of the two associate dean positions resulted in an Assistant Dean of the College, who reports to the Dean, and an Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who reports to the Provost. While potentially daunting, this turnover in leadership has provided an opportunity to bring fresh ideas and expertise to the College's academic enterprise and next strategic plan. The new team is widely respected by the campus community and has settled in well.

These changes may be viewed as even more significant given that Board Chair is in his last year of office and the President may also step down in the coming years, although no definitive timeline has been established. In order to maintain the momentum of the last decade, the Board and President have developed a detailed transition plan to be implemented whenever necessary.

Faculty

The Faculty Assembly called for a study of its committee structure in 2002 and revised the descriptions of several of them. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Assembly's moderator; chairs of the Faculty Council, Faculty Welfare Committee, and Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee (CEPC); and the two elected faculty representatives to the Board. This group is now taking a greater and more unifying role in faculty governance and meets monthly with the President and academic leaders to enhance communication and ensure that Assembly motions receive full consideration by the administration.

Projections

- The Board will implement its presidential transition plan, when necessary.
- The new academic administration will use this opportunity to maintain some strategies, while also responding to new visions and challenges.
- The Faculty Assembly will continue to review the role of committees and monitor communication.

STANDARD 4: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Undergraduate Degree Programs

In its report, the NEASC evaluation team noted the need for the College to reassess its formidable LSR for undergraduates and a concern about the ineffectiveness of advising and student assessment. In the past five years, Saint Michael's has substantially improved its advising program and student assessment, and has also prepared a new plan for information literacy. Because these improvements have already been discussed at length under the areas

identified for special emphasis (see Sections B and D above), this portion of the report focuses solely on changes in the academic programs.

In 2000, the LSR had only been in place for five years, and the faculty felt no urgency to review the curriculum. Following that lead, CEPC deferred a review of the LSR and has focused, instead, on the review and evaluation of a number of curricular initiatives. In the past five years, CEPC has created new guidelines for minors, special majors and asynchronous (online) courses. It has reviewed and approved a major in Information Systems and three minors—Global Studies, Peace and Justice, and Language and Linguistics. The latter was designed by SIS faculty with the clear aim of attracting a general undergraduate student population. Both the Language and Linguistics and Global Studies minors create much-needed curricular links between SIS and the undergraduate program. In fact, a professor of linguistics from SIS is the current coordinator of Global Studies. Another important contribution of SIS faculty to the undergraduate curriculum is the inclusion of several SIS professors in the first-year seminar program, who primarily teach Peace and Justice and Global Studies seminars.

In spring 2005, CEPC recommended a new tenure-track line in psychology and two tenure-track appointments—one in philosophy and global studies, and the other in anthropology and gender/women's studies. These lines were approved and searches are currently underway, with the expectation that the positions will be filled as of the fall of 2006. The latter two are evidence of CEPC's commitment to strengthen Saint Michael's innovative interdisciplinary programs.

The College's strategic emphasis on academic excellence led to the creation of the Klein Academic Enrichment Commons in 2003, which houses the Writing Center and offices for academic compliance, internships, academic programs, peer tutoring, service learning and the study abroad program. The Honors Program has undergone significant curricular and structural changes since 2000, including honors housing that can accommodate all students in the program, a common first-year experience, an honors colloquium, more honors courses or add-on components in the majors, a higher minimum GPA for graduation in the program and a service requirement. In 2003, Saint Michael's was invited to shelter a Phi Beta Kappa chapter—only one of four Catholic colleges in New England to achieve this honor.

Saint Michael's has committed significant financial resources to a wide range of programs supporting the curriculum, from the implementation of eCollege, a course management tool for faculty, which was used in 21 percent of all classes only one semester after its implementation, to improved learning environments and faculty development. The most notable classroom changes as part of implementation of the Design for Learning project are the creation of specially designed seminar rooms, a cognitive learning laboratory and a behavioral lab for the psychology department. The project has encompassed a full redesign of Jeanmarie Hall (the oldest academic building) as a wireless zone with "smart" classrooms that are equipped with state-of-the-art technology and designed to provide optimal learning environments. Campus-wide, the College has increased the number of technology-equipped classrooms from eight to forty since 2000.

Although faculty development in the last five years is more properly detailed in the section on Standard 5, some important initiatives of the Faculty Development (FDC), Educational Technology (ETC) and Teaching Resources Committees (TRC) that support academic programs

should be noted here. FDC has systematized summer stipends for junior faculty and created a web page to give faculty access to information about internal and external grant opportunities. They have also institutionalized an end-of-the-year celebration of faculty scholarly achievements which has raised campus awareness of the scholarship that the College encourages and supports. ETC has offered hands-on workshops and developed a successful mentoring program, in which faculty who have learned to use a specific technology successfully in the classroom can share their new skills with others. TRC has provided a forum for faculty dialogue on a large number of topics, from discipline-specific issues to general pedagogy. In spring 2005, in response to Saint Michael's new initiative to incorporate service-learning courses into the curriculum and anticipation of CEPC's creation of guidelines for these courses, TRC sponsored its first workshop on service learning.

Graduate Degree Programs

The NEASC team reported its concerns about the reliance of some of Saint Michael's graduate programs on lecturers, which creates impediments to student access and, therefore, makes it difficult for them to cultivate ongoing relationships with faculty. In addition, the team noted that the administration should take steps to ensure that SIS is fully integrated into the College.

In response to the need for more full-time faculty in the graduate programs, the administration invited two qualified graduate instructors to pursue tenure-track positions, but only one chose to apply. At the same time, in addition to the Provost's increased funding for lecturer salaries, the Graduate Council developed criteria for the hiring and course load of lecturers that are consistent with feasibility concerns related to each of the programs.

In response to the NEASC evaluation team's recommendation that SIS be fully integrated into the College, the administrative structure of the graduate programs has been modified to mirror that of the undergraduate programs. The administrative integration of SIS under the Dean of the College has been completed, and with the addition of the Language and Linguistics minor, SIS contributes more courses to the undergraduate curriculum.

The Dean oversees the administration and evaluation of all graduate programs, including curriculum development, course scheduling, and the approval of teaching, advising and administrative assignments, and he has charged the undergraduate and graduate programs to develop assessment tools for student learning and program evaluation. The Provost assures that the graduate programs are conducted in accordance with institutional goals and policies, are consistent with College financial requirements and are coordinated with operations in other areas.

The visiting team also called for "a thoughtful and extensive review" of the graduate programs. In 2003, the Provost initiated such a comprehensive review to examine the ways in which these programs contribute to Saint Michael's mission and its long-term viability. It was undertaken in the context of the Dean's call for self-evaluation by the undergraduate departments, the faculty response to Vision 2010, and longer-range strategic and financial planning, including an appraisal of staffing levels.

The review concluded that the graduate programs are in line with the College's mission and Edmundite educational ministry. More specifically, it identified several benefits relative to Saint Michael's undergraduate focus. For instance, many full-time faculty teaching graduate courses also teach and interact with undergraduates, and the Graduate Directors agree that the opportunity to teach advanced subject matter to adult learners stimulates professors and hones skills which are directly and indirectly beneficial to their work with undergraduates. Graduate students who interact with undergraduates, particularly those from the psychology, education and MATESL programs, provide role models and are a source of leadership for a range of campus positions, such as resident director, teaching assistant, administrative assistant and director of the Women's Center. Finally, financial analysis of the graduate programs found that, in total, they return a net marginal profit to the College's operating budget.

However, the review also identified several areas that require immediate attention in order to assure compliance with NEASC guidelines on the quality of graduate faculty, level of resources the institution needs to invest in these programs and a reduction in the number of lecturers teaching graduate courses. These issues include consistency in policy, improvement in the quality of education, better information for decision-making and—most important to address NEASC recommendations—perception of the graduate programs as detracting from the attention and resources available for undergraduates.

Projections

Undergraduate Programs

- The annual faculty day of reflection in spring 2005 was devoted to curricular reconsideration of the current LSR, and the incoming Dean is committed to this process of reevaluation, including the variable credit system.
- Optimize contributions of the undergraduate summer session to the College's mission.

Graduate Programs

- Develop criteria to be used for the approval of overload teaching assignments for full-time faculty, a student outcomes assessment plan for graduate study, an orientation and a consistent evaluation plan for all graduate instructors.
- Determine new procedures for oversight of graduate curriculum and educational policies.
- Revise the College's marketing plan, including its methodology for identifying new markets, and scrutinize the value of one or more of the graduate programs for undergraduate recruitment and "brand" marketing by means of a marketing study.
- Pursue initiatives to enhance summer-session revenues from both undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Engage in a college-wide assessment of the ways in which the graduate programs contribute to and detract from resources available for the undergraduate programs.

STANDARD 5: FACULTY

Dedicated, hardworking faculty continue to be central to high-quality student-centered learning. Progress has been made in addressing the concerns expressed in the 2000 NEASC team report, including salary goals, increasing the number of full-time faculty and diversity, as well as in

evaluating and compensating lecturers and instructors. The administration has devised a two-pronged approach to address these issues. First, CEPC has created new guidelines for evaluating departmental applications for faculty replacements and new faculty lines. Second is a three-tier salary system for lecturers, based on seniority and evaluations, and plans for the systematic evaluation of all lecturers and non-tenure track instructors.

While CEPC has consistently reviewed such proposals for faculty hires, the College's yearly budgets have not been able to accommodate their recommendations, which has precluded any significant reduction in the use of lecturers. Nonetheless, in 2004, the Provost's Architects of Learning plan stated a goal of 10 new faculty lines by 2010, and an institutional commitment has been made to attain 160 full-time faculty lines by the next re-accreditation, which will provide the resources needed to advance the curriculum and student-faculty interaction to the next level of excellence, while reducing the institution's dependence on lecturers.

In implementing this plan, academic departments have and will propose how additional faculty would add value in relation to the College's mission and their particular goals. Many goals may relate to the development of new curricula based on educational trends, demands and faculty insight. One area of need is to provide stability to interdisciplinary programs that have already been approved in Global Studies, Humanities, Gender Studies, American Studies, and Peace and Justice. Another is curriculum development concepts that will require additional specialties. In addition to curricular and classroom improvements, new full-time faculty will enhance advising initiatives, student/faculty interaction and the overall campus community lifestyle.

In the first phase of implementation in 2004-2005, departments and programs submitted applications for review by CEPC, which made recommendations to the Provost and Cabinet. Three new faculty positions were approved for search—neuropsychology, anthropology/gender studies and philosophy/global studies. The College's well-established search process will be used to seek qualified faculty from a national pool.

Compensation goals were reconfirmed in 2002 to reflect the increased quality of the present faculty and permit competitive offers to new faculty who succeed those moving toward retirement. Saint Michael's is in the second year of meeting these new goals—FY 2005 saw a 7 percent average increase in faculty salary and pensions, and FY 2006, 6.7 percent. At the request of the Board of Trustees, the Faculty Welfare Committee developed procedures for incorporating a merit component into overall compensation. The resulting plan reflects a balance of the College's commitment to quality, an increasingly effective post-tenure review process and the sense of community that is a hallmark of Saint Michael's. The Board endorsed the faculty's unique proposal enthusiastically at its January 2005 meeting.

Over the years, the Faculty Council, which reviews tenure, promotion, sabbaticals and service assignments, has worked to implement the higher standards articulated in the Faculty Regulations revision of 1996. In 2003, all departments completed their final iteration of guidelines for scholarship, which describe the scope of scholarship prevailing in their discipline and are available in a public folder that all faculty can access. This refinement complements regular reviews of a professor's teaching, scholarship and service, which occur at the second and fourth year, tenure and promotion applications, and every five years thereafter.

In the fall of 2005, the Council began a discussion of improving assessment evidence for teaching, which includes advising. Their advice informed the “Significant Dates Memo,” a multi-page document that delineates the evaluation process and describes a favorable application (see Appendix VI). While current applications include a narrative, a statement of teaching philosophy, student evaluations, letters from peers, and sample syllabi and assignments, the faculty desire that even more scrutiny be applied to evaluating teaching, the sine qua non of performance expectations at Saint Michael’s.

Concurrent with clarified standards and improved compensation, faculty development resources have increased from operating, grant and donor funding to support research and curricular development. Since 2000, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Institutional Advancement’s Director of Foundation Relations increased successful grant applications from under \$50,000 to approximately \$500,000 annually. The Faculty Development Committee and Dean’s “travel” budgets have been increased, and starting in FY 2006, a donor’s five-year pledge will provide additional funding.

The College Fact Book reports the “Status of the Faculty” annually. It tracks the faculty profile, courses and independent research, increasing numbers of internships, off-campus study tours, advising loads, service activities and scholarly productivity. Of the latter, the following data reflect an annual average of 110 faculty reporting. In conjunction with a 21-hour annual course load, faculty remain very active in scholarship.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Books	9	17	14	17	14
Chapters	12	9	7	20	7
Articles (scholarly)	55	36	29	40	33
Articles (popular)	14	39	14	22	10
Artistic activity	7	28	35	38	20
Presentations (scholarly)	97	77	71	73	87
Presentations (on/off campus)	69	58	99	138	53
Grants received	23	28	26	26	28
Editing/reviews/consulting/other	66	56	54	59	57

Following a nationwide trend, about one-third of Saint Michael’s faculty are likely to retire in the next ten years. The College has taken steps to manage that transition while maintaining quality. Starting on September 1, 2000, a three-year phased retirement program encouraged nine faculty over age 63 to move toward retirement. In FY 2003, five more faculty participated in an institution-wide voluntary separation program. All of these lines were replaced. Currently, the College actively supports faculty requests to phase a retirement transition over a two- to three-year period. These strategies provide a timeline that enables departments to find replacements without urgency, and several have used these opportunities to examine their area’s needs.

Over the years, the College had engaged approximately 21 non-tenure-track instructors, many of whom were hired in response to temporary needs. After review, an offer to move to tenure track was accepted by nine of the fifteen eligible (laboratory instructors and non-credit ESL professors

were not), who will proceed along the customary probationary review path. When the other six incumbents leave, their positions will enter the pool of tenure-track openings to be assigned as needed—three have already been vacated and two approved for tenure-track replacement. The remaining instructors were incorporated into a three-tier salary structure for lecturers in FY 2006, as determined by an improved evaluation process, which rewards and motivates faculty to strive for continued improvement. During FY 2005, all lecturers were placed on this system to achieve competitive compensation and also recognize positive evaluations and loyalty to the College.

In addition to individual evaluation, several measures assess the quality of faculty performance: the annual faculty status reports; senior, alumni and biannual advising surveys; nationally normed SUMMA student evaluations; National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE); and in 2002-2003, a review of the faculty by Phi Beta Kappa. Benchmarks for the latter show that the College's faculty and curriculum range from the 60th through the 90th percentile in our peer groups for various categories. The senior and alumni surveys indicate that student satisfaction with faculty is over 85 percent. Saint Michael's faculty have also been selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) as Vermont Professor of the Year for three of the past six years.

All of these efforts have resulted in an increasing number of faculty with adequate preparation to meet the College's academic mission and purposes, as measured by credentials, advanced degrees, excellent teaching ability, scholarship/creative work, service and other professional activity. Planning continues to enable progress toward long-term goals for the number of faculty lines, compensation, development funds, participation in governance and recruitment, and improvement is resulting in all academic areas as well as an increasingly effective system of faculty governance, particularly in the Faculty Council and Faculty Welfare, Executive, Library and Development Committees.

Training for the recruitment of diverse faculty was offered in 2002. Unfortunately, the College's overall ratios have not improved, but the gender balance has shifted from 58 percent male/42 percent female to 53/47 in that same time period. In spite of a proactive approach, Saint Michael's faces the difficulties of finding qualified pools of candidates for the specializations needed as well as the inability to identify ethnic minorities from their applications.

Projections

- Fulfillment of the Architects of Learning plan to attain 160 full-time faculty lines by 2010 through the addition of ten new tenure-track positions.
- Continued need to manage turnover due to retirements.
- Determination of improved evidentiary criteria to assess teaching.
- Identification of increased faculty development resources to meet need.
- Implementation of methodology to distribute merit recommendations.

STANDARD 6: STUDENTS

Four areas of concern were noted in the NEASC evaluation team's report on this standard, three of which were associated with diversity issues. It also indicated that "assessment processes need

to be regularized and integrated into the full co-curriculum” and “Freshman housing is not handicap accessible. Even though housing options are offered to handicapped freshmen, they cannot live with their classmates.”

The issues surrounding diversity are addressed directly in Section C of this report under “Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis,” and the need for improved assessment processes is recognized as a College priority in Section D. The best example of progress in this area is the development of the Student Activities Report, discussed below. The improvements in student services described on the next page include the construction of three new residence halls (380 beds with a net increase of about 100 for the campus) for sophomores and juniors, which can accommodate handicapped students in all four-person suites.

Because of the broad scope of this standard, the description and analysis of major changes since 2000 are addressed topically. From Vision 2004, **Admissions** identified four goals and strategies:

- Increase the number of undergraduate applicants to 3,000. Admissions has developed a new web portal, offers an “online” open house and more campus visit opportunities, and has increased its use of web and e-mail contact with prospective students.
- Increase academic quality of applicants as well as accepted and enrolled students. Merit scholarship opportunities have been increased, and a well-received Book Award Program was initiated in 2000.
- Increase geographic diversity of the undergraduate population. The Admission Office has implemented a territory management system for undergraduate recruiting and is working to enhance the institution’s recruitment efforts outside New England through the identification of new geo-markets.
- Increase ethnic diversity of undergraduate population. The College has worked to recruit students through the development of partnerships with Charlestown High School in Massachusetts and Pace University’s Upward Bound program, and has enhanced its focus in this area.

These institutional strategies have resulted in an almost 30 percent increase in applicants since 1999. The academic quality of applicants and accepted and enrolled students has also improved.

Like all institutions, Saint Michael’s recognizes the importance of the **retention** of current students and the need to support them in their pursuit of a degree. In 1999, the College created a Retention Committee under the direction of the Provost, with representatives from Student Life and Academic Affairs, which was charged with regular analysis of this issue and the development of policy recommendations. Data analysis is available to administrators and the Trustees as a component of the annual College Fact Book and quarterly Dashboard Indicators.

Accordingly—and with significant support from the Director of Institutional Research—the Retention Committee monitors a class cohort study that follows the demographics, majors, learning disability status, projected and actual GPA, SAT, class rank, financial aid and co-curricular activities of two target groups: persistors and non-persistors. Saint Michael’s also participates in the national Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE). Finally,

the College has instituted a comprehensive exit interview and questionnaire for all students who decide to withdraw or take a leave of absence.

All of this work has helped frame policies and develop actions that respond to identified factors that lower retention. First- to second-year retention rates for varsity athletes and Honors Program students are higher than average. However, issues persist with retention rates for sophomores and juniors, males, exploratory majors and students facing academic challenges. At the same time, no single cause or small group of factors offers an easy explanation for withdrawals, and the College has an admirable retention rate in comparison with its peer institutions. For 2000-2003, the average continuation rate for first-year students to the second year was 88.8 percent.

Over the past five years, an increased focus on being a truly residential College and its implications for **Student Services** has resulted in a significant expansion of facilities and programs in many areas.

Three new residence halls have been built since 2002, all of which feature single rooms in suites for four or eight students. They were designed to accommodate theme housing, GREAT (Growing Recognition of the Effects of Alcohol on Thinking) housing, the Ambassador Housing Program (where American and international students share suites) and Honors Program housing. Residence halls are now locked around the clock in response to staff, student and parent concerns regarding safety and security. Another change since 2000 is that all residence halls are now smoke-free. Renovation of the main dining hall and implementation of a new dining program in 2004 have further enhanced residential life for Saint Michael's students.

The Student Activities Report reflects the belief that in addition to a student's academic, credit-bearing program, co-curricular experiences are crucial components of learning. Through various activities, programs and events that are officially recognized by the College, students have the opportunity to improve competency skills, hone cognitive abilities, and develop personally and socially. Accordingly, the report identifies elements of cognitive ability, applied competencies, identity and integrity, attitudes and understandings that arise from co-curricular experiences. It records two levels of activity—leadership/learning and participation—for every authorized program and shows the expected learning outcomes. Beginning with the class of 2007, students will be able to access a full four-year record of their extracurricular activities.

The College has implemented a "Knight Card" program that allows students to use a single identification/debit card for business transactions on and off campus.

Recognizing the nature and demands of enhanced student life programming, Saint Michael's has been attentive to the need for appropriate staffing and collaboration. There has been a slight increase in residence-hall staff over the past five years, reducing the ratio of on-campus students to staff to approximately 30:1. Also, the focus and collaboration on challenging and increasingly complicated mental-health issues has intensified, which has helped form a tighter safety net for students. As part of the ongoing commitment to address issues of diversity, the College continues to have a full-time Director of Multicultural Student Affairs. Changes in career

services have included the development of career chat rooms, a service and nonprofit fair, and career seminars with alumni attendance.

As a residential college, Saint Michael's is working to meet the challenge of substance abuse, primarily alcohol, that besets every institution of higher learning. Pervasive programs are already in place in three areas—resource and promotion, judicial response, and programs. In the past fiscal year, the College committed approximately \$50,000 toward human resources and programming for alcohol and drug education, with full multimedia information and intensive staff work at all levels. The judicial response is consistent and comprehensive, with an array of appropriate sanctions for policy violations. Finally, the variety of programs includes substance-free housing; alcohol awareness week; athletic team social contracts; the "A Team," a club that sponsors alcohol-free events; and new student orientation, which addresses substance-abuse issues at the start of the year and throughout the first semester.

Several athletic initiatives have been implemented since 2000, including the elevation of the women's ice hockey program to varsity status, development of a popular intramural ice hockey program and implementation of the Knight Life Choices program with a grant from the NCAA that gets varsity athletes involved in providing alcohol/drug-free entertainment for the entire student community.

Saint Michael's has initiated a comprehensive relationship with the nearby Smugglers' Notch Resort through the campus Wilderness Program. All students in good academic standing are eligible for a season's pass for a nominal processing fee. This partnership also provides extensive programming opportunities for hiking, climbing and all winter sports. The Wilderness Program has increased general student participation in a range of outdoor activities with weekly outings during the semester and international trips during breaks.

The College volunteer service program, MOVE, has continued its exceptional programming and has expanded its international scope with trips to El Salvador, Haiti, Uganda and India. In 2000, the Women's Center opened with a mission "to promote awareness of women's and gender equity issues." It provides a variety of educational and social programs with a qualified full-time director.

Projections

As the College prepares for the next strategic planning cycle, the priorities for the next five years have not yet emerged. The projections listed below identify issues and anticipate steps to be considered in the next plan.

The favorable trends in **admission**—resulting from priorities identified in the last strategic plan—must continue with an emphasis on:

- implementing the integrated marketing plan to attract the targeted student profile and develop the most competitive pool of applicants, which will yield higher quality accepted and enrolled students; and

- increasing attention to diversity, in its widest sense, in order to foster the most vibrant educational environment possible on the Saint Michael's campus; and

Increasing **retention** during the entire four years of undergraduate study, especially over the last three years, will remain an important goal. With special emphasis on retention through the sophomore year, combined Student Life and Academic Affairs initiatives will include:

- increasing Student Life programming that embeds sophomores in the College community,
- initiating special advising programs for exploratory students, and
- enhancing career guidance through all four years.

Student Services will likely continue its commitment to define and implement improvements that more fully realize the idea of a residential college, such as:

- revisiting questions of preferred density and improved accessibility for the older dormitories and examining the future of the north-campus residence halls;
- reviewing the need for additional and appropriate counseling services;
- providing full weekends of activities through the development of creative programming and an infusion of more resources;
- expanding and centralizing social and educational programs, with increased emphasis on substance-free weekend activities and peer education;
- engaging in more focused planning and gaining the commitment of resources for the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty, staff and student body; and
- developing the current career services programs more fully.

STANDARD 7: LIBRARY AND OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES

While the NEASC visiting team saw progress since 1990 in the library's facilities, materials budget, reputation for service and technology, they also recognized the need for further improvements in library space and technology. The partnership between IT and LIS as well as the Datatel administrative software were challenged by an undependable network, confusing job assignments and diminished morale. The team suggested that the College explore outsourcing certain aspects of IT, but the resulting study of this possibility led, instead, to significant internal restructuring. Responsibilities were redistributed among LIS and IT staff, and due to the insight, commitment and cooperation of the new leadership of both units, outstanding improvements have been realized in both areas.

Library and Information Services

In July 2002, the structure of LIS and IT's user services/instructional technology functions returned to separate, more traditional units, and as a result of a vacancy, a new LIS director was hired. From an institutional vision of the library as a portal for learning and teaching, strategic planning began to identify core knowledge-based services that align with the College's mission and respond to patron feedback. While immediate improvements were implemented, the new director articulated three premises for future planning: student- and curriculum-focused acquisitions and services; empirically driven decision-making, based on established best

practices and maximizing existing resources; and an open, participatory process that values input from all stakeholders, especially those at the point of transaction.

Starting in FY 2003, all LIS staff engaged in an environmental scan and needs assessment, establishing benchmarks and setting goals and objectives involving assessment. A use survey was administered to students. A Systems Librarian was assigned responsibility for the Integrated Library System, and the Reference “Help Desk” was restored in the lobby of Durick Library. Statistics were revised to conform to National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) standards. The LIS web page was redesigned and tested. To provide space for growth, 3,696 linear feet of new shelving was installed. A Disaster and Recovery Planning Task Force was appointed and a comprehensive plan developed.

With input from a reinvigorated Library Committee, the director established a materials allocation policy based on enrollment, number of majors and average costs, while the library liaison structure was enhanced for greater emphasis on information literacy. Based on an active educational program that was already in place, a formal information literacy initiative was launched in 2003 with a faculty task force. A team consisting of the Provost, a faculty member and the library director accepted an invitation to participate in the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) workshop on “Transformation of the College Library.”

With the addition of an archivist, the Society of Saint Edmund centralized its records in Durick. Incunabula and rare Latin books were discovered, inventoried, appraised and exhibited. Plans were also begun to manage the future integration of the personal library of Professor Harold Bloom and the photographs and personal papers of Senator Patrick Leahy into the College’s holdings. An agreement was drafted to specify the disposition of Senator Leahy’s papers and photographs and Saint Michael’s collaboration with the University of Vermont (UVM) in this effort. Collaboration also continues with libraries at institutions belonging to the Association of Vermont Independent Colleges on archival assessment and with UVM on a congressional research digital project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

A substantial study resulted in the preparation in 2004 of the “LIS Vision 2010 Quality Plan: Information Literacy.” Major goals include building the incorporation of inflation into the College’s financial model; increasing the materials budget over four years to increase Saint Michael’s rank among its peers from 13th to 7th place; creating a wireless information commons and an electronic instruction classroom/open lab with digital collaborative workstations to support group work; funding software solutions to give patrons greater transparency among web resources; installing compact shelving to support growing collections; and providing archival planning and support.

Information Technology

At the time of the NEASC team’s visit in 2000, IT was experiencing network instability and some confusion and resistance to the division of responsibilities between LIS and IT. These circumstances discouraged faculty, staff and students from fully using campus technology. In response to the team’s suggestion to explore various options, the College developed an RFP in

2001 for the outsourcing of technology management. Of the firms interested, Collegis was willing to submit an in-depth proposal for their services. Although the proposal was attractive in some ways, the Cabinet determined it was preferable to focus on internal restructuring, and in FY 2002, Professor William Anderson—a long-time member of the business administration department, who also has significant nonacademic experience in software development and management—accepted the position of Chief Information Officer (CIO).

Mr. Anderson was charged with stabilizing the technology infrastructure, formulating a strategy for organizational effectiveness, improving classroom technology and the teaching environment, meeting faculty needs for instructional technology and training, and developing a data-driven management plan. With input from IT staff, he realigned duties within the area and, working in concert with appropriate management, faculty and student groups, developed a strategy to implement the technological aspects of Vision 2010 that is now used to prioritize capital requests, service plans and project choices. Due to the complex technology requirements of classroom renovations, the CIO assumed management of implementation of the Design for Learning project (described in the section on Standard 4).

Assessment now drives IT planning and resource allocation. The strategic plan, annual report, annual technology budget requests and 90-day planning model enable IT to prioritize choices. Instruments such as the monthly balanced scorecard as well as annual faculty classroom technology and faculty/staff/student IT surveys indicate successes and areas for improvement. The balanced scorecard evaluates performance against the 90-day plans and integrates measures from each IT team: User Services, Instructional Technology, Telecommunications, Applications, and Resource Management. Benchmarks are taken from the Cost of Supporting Technology Services (COSTS) project and EDUCAUSE core data, Higher Education Information for Technology Services (HEITS), and Campus Computing surveys.

Some of the results achieved in the past five years are operational systems directed by a rolling 90-day work plan and a lifecycle desktop equipment replacement program that has reduced hardware service calls from 50 to 17 percent of the helpdesk's workload. The network is stable, and the resulting improvement of staff, student and faculty morale regarding technology has stimulated confidence and more advanced use of academic technology.

Creation of an Instructional Technology division has provided timely faculty and classroom support, contributed to the design and implementation of specialty labs, and stimulated the adoption of eCollege as a course management system. Currently, 20 percent of all courses are on eCollege, and the system is leading to some uniformity and transparency. A series of instructional technology workshops are now offered (many by faculty mentors), including a weeklong summer workshop designed in response to faculty requests. In fall 2004, for instance, one faculty member noted that IT staff were "roaming the halls" to provide immediate troubleshooting. Faculty and students are excited about the new Design for Learning classrooms.

In 2005, IT arranged for an outside controls audit to evaluate access to information, security policy and control procedures. In addition, the Web Council—co-chaired by the CIO and Director of Marketing—is currently implementing a multiyear web portal project that will serve as the primary means of communication for all College constituencies. Although the IT staff

was reduced by two during the voluntary separation program, management improvements and the reduction in hardware calls have resulted in greater operational efficiency.

Projections

- Continue collection development processes in partnership with the faculty.
- Expand and institutionalize information literacy activities to fulfill the LIS Information Fluency Five-Year Quality Plan.
- Establish elements of an Information Commons that directly support learning and teaching.
- Complete the Design for Learning classroom renovation project.
- Study IT staffing needs.
- Complete the web portal project.
- Develop institutional copyright policies.

STANDARD 8: PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Saint Michael's College is fortunate to be able to offer students living and learning spaces that are functional as well as generally attractive and well-maintained. Physical resource planning is coordinated with the overall financial planning process and the campus master plan. The long-range financial plan includes a predictable capital budget allocation of \$750,000 per year dedicated to scheduled building maintenance and another \$500,000 for ongoing equipment replacement. The Physical Plant department keeps an extensive list of potential maintenance projects that is thoroughly updated every five years. It includes certain deferred maintenance projects, primarily on the north campus, where porch railings were recently replaced and dormitory buildings rewired. The site of a former military base, this location features many historic structures, and since 2000, the College has begun to enter into creative partnerships for the adaptive reuse of several buildings there. For example, the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association (VYOA) completed a capital campaign that enabled them to renovate the old cavalry stable/riding hall in 2001, which Saint Michael's leases to the VYOA for a nominal annual fee. Similar arrangements for other buildings are being negotiated at this time.

The main campus has also seen significant functional and aesthetic improvements in the past five years with the addition of three new 124-bed residence halls along Route 15 and concomitant demolition of nine old homes formerly used for student housing. The net gain of approximately 100 beds as a result of this new construction and a campus-wide process of faculty and staff office relocation in the summer of 2004 has enabled the College to house all students on the north side of Route 15, a significant safety improvement. Because of the increase in available beds, Saint Michael's is also now able to provide on-campus housing for all students except local residents for all four years, an important step in support of the College's residential focus. The additional square footage has required the rehiring of some of the seven positions eliminated in the voluntary separation program of 2003, but this staffing has been incorporated in the budget.

Summer 2004 marked the completion of two of these new dormitories as well as a major renovation to the main dining hall and kitchen facilities in Alliot Hall. The long-range campus master plan also featured a new Welcome Center for admission and marketing staff, which was

finished in 2003. The College installed an artificial-turf athletic field in the summer of 2005 and completed construction of a new fire station and ambulance garage that fall to house the functions of its subsidiary, Saint Michael's College Fire and Rescue, Inc.

Concurrent with improvements in residential areas, Saint Michael's has also focused on a long-term renovation of classroom and laboratory spaces. The Design for Learning project is reconfiguring, refurbishing and placing appropriate technology in each designated classroom and lab in the academic buildings. It encompasses 40 classrooms and 16 labs that range from discussion-style seminar rooms to sophisticated wireless computer labs and a number of flexible options between these extremes. Two grant-funded laboratories now provide space for faculty development and collaborative student learning. Renovation of Jeanmarie Hall, the oldest classroom building on campus, began in the summer of 2003 with extensive heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) work and will include a major overhaul of all instructional space during this three-year project. While all of these improvements have appreciably improved the quality of the College's learning spaces, some supply and demand conflicts for classroom assignments during prime midday class times continue.

These enhancements in IT and learning spaces have occurred under the leadership of the College's new CIO. As noted above, he has restructured the IT department, reintegrating user support services and instructional technology staff that had previously reported to the Director of LIS. Campus communication regarding IT has continued to improve under the CIO's leadership, through established groups such as the Educational Technology and Technology Steering Committees as well as an ad hoc student technology committee and an information security council. The CIO attends meetings of the President's Cabinet and, thus, directly represents technology needs during budget and long-range planning sessions and his staff in annual salary discussions. A result of the latter is that the College has made significant progress in addressing the longstanding problem of below-market compensation for IT staff professionals. While the Design for Learning project has required extensive one-time financial resources, a predictable annual capital budget allocation of \$1 million is in place to fund planned lifecycle replacement of all computers, network servers and other core technology on campus.

This focused management and consistent funding for IT projects has enabled Saint Michael's to improve the reliability and functionality of network services. Life-cycle replacement of all computers has further enhanced the efficiency of user services by standardizing PC hardware and software configurations, thus minimizing variables that create software and network issues for users and facilitating their diagnosis and correction. Specific improvements in the past five years have included the addition of T3 internet access to improve network speed and capacity, segregation of traffic into separate virtual local area networks (VLANs) for faculty/staff and students, virus-management solutions, replacement of major network switches and server upgrades. Other core system enhancements have included the October 2003 upgrade to Datatel's Colleague Release 17 (the College's administrative database) and the related introduction of the Web Advisor platform to host KnightVision online registration for all students.

The IT, Physical Plant and Finance units have engaged in significant management improvements since 2000 that have helped address physical safety and information security issues. More specifically, IT assesses the effectiveness of its operations using a balanced-scorecard approach,

monitoring performance metrics across all functions regarding customer, internal, financial and learning/growth measures. In 2002, the College engaged an independent consultant for an EPA review, which found very few areas of concern, and Saint Michael's is now participating in EPA's voluntary compliance program. A new risk management committee was recently formed to provide a forum for consideration of insurable risks, while the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act prompted creation of a campus-wide Information Security Plan in 2003, which requires annual reports from each relevant department to reassess College policies and procedures related to the safeguarding of classified information. The annual Safety and Security report, published by the director of this office, indicates no significant changes or negative trends in student safety or security since 2000, although the campus community as a whole continues to be concerned about the effects of substance abuse among college students.

Projections

While the College has made remarkable progress in its physical and technological resources during the past five years, several areas warrant attention in the near future.

- Planning will continue for donor-funded facility enhancements, including an addition to and renovation of Founders Hall (the oldest building on campus), the Dupont Library for the Bloom and Leahy archives, and the Merrill Cemetery/Military Heritage Project, as well as further beautification of sections of the campus near the new main entrance and Welcome Center, and an interior connector road linking the main and north campuses.
- A perceived need for a more formalized and centralized space-planning function, with representation from academic/program staffs, should be addressed.
- Creative and profitable ways to market the new residence halls and other campus facilities for summer conferences and other complementary uses must be pursued.
- A recently completed IT controls audit will serve as a reference to shape IT policies and procedures regarding network security, the privacy of classified information and data integrity, which will be coordinated with the internal monitoring functions of the finance department, information security council and newly formed risk management committee. The College needs to consider effective controls and other ways to coordinate the management of risks—insurable and others—across these functions.
- With the development of a web-based admission portal in the past year by the IT and marketing departments, comparable portals for alumni and other campus constituencies are planned. This change will create custom interfaces that direct users to the most relevant areas of the College's web site and will enable a focus on the web as the primary means of communication with internal and external audiences.

STANDARD 9: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Overall, Saint Michael's has enjoyed financial success since 2000 in the face of increasing fiscal demands and challenges. This is evidenced by the ratings related to the bond issues to fund the new residence halls, although Moody's most recent rating included a downgrade associated with the negative outlook for the overall industry segment of small private colleges. In August 1999, the College hired a new Vice President for Finance with many years of expertise in the financial management/treasury field. Since then, he has successfully instituted many enhancements in

Saint Michael's financial management policies and procedures, restructuring the finance function to integrate the budget and accounting functions under a single director and developing system tools that have improved financial reporting capabilities.

Fiscal controls now include monthly reconciliation procedures and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) financial statements, using new Hyperion Essbase software and related modules. In addition to regular monthly budget status reports to department heads, periodic college-wide financial forecasts are prepared and management action initiated when significant variances are predicted that could cause a shortfall in the planned surplus. The College's annual audits have resulted in unqualified opinions, and the annual budget, financial statements, audit reports and any management letter comments are reviewed by the Board's Operations and Audit Committee, which also evaluates the performance of the financial management team with the outside auditors.

Fiscal policies and procedures are approved by the Vice President for Finance and either the President's Cabinet or the Board of Trustees, as applicable. Examples of recent policy changes include the diversification of endowment funds, a new endowment spending formula approved in 2004 and a change in the fixed-asset capitalization threshold. The finance office takes the lead in developing campus-wide internal controls, with the vice president and director serving as the Gramm-Leach-Bliley compliance officers and the former initiating the creation of the risk management committee. The finance department has also begun developing policies in response to Sarbanes-Oxley, as it applies to institutions of higher education. Other compliance improvements include annual conflict-of-interest statements required of each Trustee by the revised Bylaws and a recent IT controls audit, described above under Standard 7.

A campus-wide strategic planning committee previously coordinated strategic and financial planning; now, these functions and budget prioritization are consolidated in the President's Cabinet. The Vice President for Finance has developed a comprehensive model for long-range budget planning, which includes key financial ratios and strategic initiatives formulated with input from relevant constituents. Cabinet budget discussions address the qualitative aspects of strategic and budgetary planning.

The planning model serves as a key tool in the context of a broader financial planning process, which has informed recent strategic decisions, such as the move to accelerate the timetable for construction of two new residence halls during a period of favorable pricing and historically low interest rates. It also helped the College identify the need to control compensation expenses, which led to a study by Watson Wyatt, a comprehensive restructuring of employee benefits and a voluntary separation plan in 2003 that reduced the annual payroll expense by nearly \$850,000. In addition, the model has enabled Saint Michael's to focus on a major budget priority—addressing salary levels for faculty and staff. As a result, the College is midway through a three-year plan of five-percent increases in the compensation pool targeted at the faculty as a whole and certain middle-management staff positions that were substantially lower than market values. Further, the faculty's merit-pay proposal was approved by the Board in January 2005, and the Office of Human Resources is currently leading a comprehensive staff compensation project.

Finally, the Office of Institutional Advancement staff successfully concluded the *Visions Campaign* at the end of June 2005, raising a total of \$52,843,348, surpassing the \$52 million goal. The total includes \$21.7 million for scholarship and other endowments, \$12.2 million for capital projects like the Hoehl Welcome Center and unrestricted/annual funds of \$18.9 million. As a result of the campaign, Saint Michael's has been able to supplement a few departmental budgets with designated gifts, but overall, received much more unrestricted funding than anticipated. This revenue is recognized in the operating income statement to the extent of the annual fund budget each year, with any excess unrestricted contributions treated as non-operating revenue. Thus, these unrestricted contributions are reflected in the excess of revenues over expenses, which helps build the College's unrestricted net assets. The cash flow generated each year enables the management of annual capital budgets over the long term with fewer cyclical variations related to annual operating results.

These successes notwithstanding, the College had to undertake a significant re-budgeting effort in the summer of 2005 in response to several unfavorable variances that emerged in the spring and were expected to impact the operating budget beginning July 1, 2005. These included a substantial over-expenditure in financial aid for new students as well as unanticipated increases in utilities and other costs.

Projections

- Outcomes assessment related to financial policies needs to be systematized, particularly with regard to recent changes in financial aid strategies. More formal reporting of monthly financial statements and periodic forecasts to the President's Cabinet, along with a review of these results in comparison to non-financial indicia related to student outcomes and academic assessments, have been suggested.
- Refined process for awarding financial aid and improved management of this unit, based in part on the results of an audit conducted by an external firm.
- More formalized financial planning timeframes and deadlines are needed as part of a process that invites specific input from key revenue-producing areas (e.g., the graduate programs and SIS) in the context of Cabinet-centered budget planning.
- Anticipated enhancements in the finance area include improved cost-accounting for revenue-producing units and online web-based budget inquiry tools for departmental managers.
- Funding mechanisms need to be developed in response to the outcomes of the recent IT controls audit to ensure the College's ability to implement the recommended action plans.
- Institutional advancement staff will soon begin preparing preliminary plans for the next stages of their fundraising efforts, including a review and update of the College's gift-acceptance policies.
- As the cash flow from the current capital campaign peaks, management should consider formalizing a quasi-endowment policy to invest excess resources in accordance with a designation of net assets by the Board.
- Overall endowment spending policies need to be monitored to address the delicate balance between quality/program improvements and endowment growth.

STANDARD 10: PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

In presenting the institution to prospective and current students, parents, alumni, the surrounding community, the media and other interested parties, Saint Michael's strives to provide information that is complete, accurate, consistent, accessible, clear and sufficient in order for these various constituencies to make considered decisions about the College. During the last five years, Saint Michael's has made a concerted effort to publish an increasingly broad range of information on its website to enhance current and prospective students' understanding of their education. The site now extends into virtually every facet of life at the College. Some specific activities and accomplishments include:

- In 2001, Saint Michael's undertook a major revision of its website, implementing a content management system that provided clear "audience paths" for different users (see the homepage at www.smcvt.edu).
- Admission web pages were added that provide information about requirements, the application process and academic profile of a typical current student.
- "Blogs" posted by several current students from various class years and majors offer a range of perspectives on daily life at Saint Michael's.
- A "Message Board" allows current and prospective students, parents, guidance counselors and others to post questions and receive responses.
- The undergraduate and graduate catalogues are now available on the site as are the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, College Policy on Academic Integrity, Nondiscrimination Policy and Multicultural Vision, and LIS Policy.
- Online registration is available to undergraduate and matriculated graduate students.
- Undergraduates may view transcripts and degree audits online and will soon be able to access a record of their co-curricular activities (i.e., the Student Activities Report).
- During each of the last several years, the College has tried to bring greater consistency to the site, simplify navigation, offer a more personalized web experience and demonstrate a strong commitment to "best practices" in the higher education web field.
- Currently, Saint Michael's is in the beginning stages of implementing a three-phase website redesign that will utilize portal technology and new content management workflow tools to further personalize the user's experience and better serve current and prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni and other visitors to the site, and will require more rigorous attention to timely content updates.

Through its website, Saint Michael's provides a "Contact Us" link for information/publications requests and a "directory dropdown table" for students, faculty, staff and alumni (password-protected), College news links and a campus events calendar. Online copies of Form 990 Tax Returns provide a fair summary of the institution's recent financial statements. A link on the homepage to the Privacy Policy details ways in which the website collects and uses information.

Saint Michael's undergraduate and graduate catalogues describe the institution's mission and current accreditation status as well as policies and programs regarding the admission of students; transfer of credits; student life services; financial information on costs, aid and refunds; and academic calendars, courses, degree requirements and regulations. In addition, they list all current full-time faculty, indicating their departmental affiliation as well as degrees and granting

institutions, and the graduate catalogue also includes many of the regular lecturers. (Information on all lecturers and their degrees is collected by the College, but not published.) Courses that are not taught for two consecutive years and will not be offered the following year are identified for possible exclusion from the catalogue or identification as non-current, and a listing of faculty who will not be teaching during a given academic year is available, although it is not published.

The catalogues also provide the slate of administrative officers as well as the names and principal affiliations of members of the Board of Trustees. Detailed information regarding the total cost of a Saint Michael's education and availability of financial aid is published in the catalogues and on the website. Archival copies of catalogues are maintained in the Registrar's Office and College library. Other rules and regulations concerning student conduct and withdrawal from Saint Michael's are outlined in the Student Handbook.

Although oversight responsibility for marketing, communications and publications (including the website) is spread over several different offices on campus—Marketing, Public Relations and Communications, and Printing and Mailing Services—Saint Michael's has worked hard during the last five years to unify these resources. The position of Director of Marketing was created and filled in 2002 and now reports directly to the President. A Publications Management System was established in 2003 to ensure that all materials directed to key audiences benefit from consistent design and content. This policy applies to all campus publications prepared for prospective students and their families, alumni, friends of the College, parents, and the current campus community of faculty, staff and students. This initiative is also being implemented through the use of content management templates for webpage design, a graphics identity standards manual, and a photography collection and style guide available on the website.

In October 2004, the Office of Institutional Research published its fifth annual College Fact Book, which is widely distributed to administrative offices on campus and the Board. It serves as a common source of basic factual information about Saint Michael's with over 120 pages of reports and charts, and has helped build an increasingly consistent and current framework for reporting key indicators. Contents include data reports on admission, enrollment, student life, retention and graduation rates, study abroad, faculty, workforce, alumni and institutional advancement, finance, library and information technology, athletics, major facilities and institutional comparisons. These data are also used to complete over twenty external surveys conducted by guidebook publishers, bond-rating agencies and college-advising websites as well as to provide documentation for statistical reporting referred to in College publications.

Saint Michael's publishes information on the size and characteristics of the student body as well as the campus setting on its admission webpage. Academic and other support services also have a well developed web presence, as do many of the co-curricular and nonacademic opportunities available to students. As previously described under Standard 6, the institution has embarked on a unique project to establish a formal record of students' co-curricular activities related to the College's overall objectives.

The summary version of Vision 2010 in the undergraduate catalogue clearly establishes goals for students' education. In turn, the College has undertaken a comprehensive assessment program, predicated on the premise that institutional effectiveness is maximized when suitable and fitting

measures are implemented to determine success in achieving these goals as well as areas needing greater attention. The assessment website (discussed in detail above) is an ongoing compilation of a variety of assessment initiatives, including those related to academic majors, advising, student surveys and graduate outcomes. Various measures of success, including retention and graduation rates as well as graduate school and employment outcomes, are reported. Recent information on passage rates for licensure examinations are published on the department of education's webpage.

Projections

Although the periodic (usually annual) updating of printed publications provides a logical occasion to review the accuracy and timeliness of material, increased use of the website presents a challenge for timely content management.

- As part of the current redesign of the web site using portal technology, the College has an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of publications review, and the new content management workflow tool can help formalize an approval process for webpage updates that will require inclusion of the most current information.
- The administration will continue its strong commitment to "best practices" in educational website design and make available the latest and most accurate information available to all constituencies.

STANDARD 11: INTEGRITY

Saint Michael's strong commitment to the achievement of "high ethical standards in the management of its affairs" will continue to be a defining value for the institution in its second century. The College's mission provides a foundation on which core values of truth, justice and charity define the context for the institution's educational goals and objectives as well as its governance and management. Vision 2010 expands on the meaning of these values in higher education: "This vision is shaped by underlying values, embraced by the College community, including the practice of open and civil discourse, respect for the fundamental dignity and value of each human person, and responsibility as citizens in an age of cultural diversity and internationalization."

The commitment to integrity and ethical conduct is often expressed through the ethos of the Saint Michael's "community." This word has come to represent the welcoming and caring nature of the institution's founders, who have effectively woven these values into the fabric of the College. As the number of Edmundites has declined in recent years, the institution has increasingly taken the lead in perpetuating these ideals. The idea of community encompasses acceptance and tolerance among students, faculty and staff. It finds purpose in the actions of many student volunteer efforts, both locally and internationally. It resides in the active intellectual, cultural and social environment on campus, where over 100 "learning" events took place last year. It has given rise to many active organizations and programs, such as the Edmundite Center for Peace and Justice, Edmundite Center for Faith and Culture, Phi Beta Kappa, Global Studies minor, Haiti Solidarity Task Force, service learning, Women's Center, Women's Caucus, Multicultural Programming Committee, Martin Luther King, Jr. Society, Diversity Coalition and Rabbi Wall Endowment Fund Committee.

The many documents that define Saint Michael's governance structure also lay the framework for institutionalizing these ideals as policies and procedures that guide the daily business of the College. In particular, the Board Bylaws, Faculty Regulations, Employee Handbook, Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, College Policy on Academic Integrity, Nondiscrimination Policy and Multicultural Vision, LIS policies, Privacy Policy (a link on the homepage) and Computer Usage Policy are widely available in print and/or on the website. The College has well-established principles and guidelines regarding academic freedom for both faculty and students, as outlined in the Faculty Regulations (pp. 24-25).

While Saint Michael's derives its legal authority from a charter granted by the Vermont State Assembly in 1913, it was first accredited by NEASC in 1939. Since the re-accreditation in 2000, the College has taken several steps to confirm and strengthen its ongoing dedication to "high ethical standards in the management of its affairs." Some significant efforts in this regard include:

- College policies on academic integrity are published on the website and in the Student Handbook, along with information on judicial procedures and sanctions. During the last several years, the issue of academic integrity has received more emphasis through its introduction to students in first-year seminars. The subject is also part of courses in library and information studies as well as the increasing number of library research presentations conducted in classrooms by library staff at the request of individual faculty. A subcommittee of the Campus Culture Committee has explored the possibility of establishing an "honor code," and at the new student convocation during orientation in the fall, entering students are asked, as a group, to take a pledge of academic commitment.
- Effective May 1, 2004, the Office of Human Resources completely updated the Saint Michael's Employee Handbook, including the nondiscrimination, sexual harassment and professional conduct policies as well as complaint procedures.
- The Director of Human Resources was elevated to Vice President in 2002, reports directly to the President and is a member of the Cabinet.
- In 2000, the human resources consulting firm Watson Wyatt was engaged to study and suggest improvements in faculty and staff compensation at the College. Their recommendations led to the establishment of a Blue Ribbon Benefits Committee and initiation of discussions that have subsequently produced an agreement on a new faculty salary plan and merit pay proposal as well as a comprehensive staff compensation project, including a current job assessment effort to rewrite all position descriptions.
- The "Appeals and Grievances" section of the Faculty Regulations was approved by the Board of Trustees on June 1, 2002. Policies and procedures for the resolution of student and staff grievances are published in the Student and Employee Handbooks, respectively.
- Establishment and publication of a "Privacy Policy" for the web outlines Saint Michael's commitment to respect the privacy of all visitors to its website.

Over the last several years, Saint Michael's has pursued multiple efforts to increase effective communication and encourage an environment where important issues can be addressed openly. The Administrative Council—comprised of all administrators who report directly to vice presidents—meets monthly during the academic year with the Cabinet to discuss important issues affecting the College and provides a feedback loop through which all the vice presidents can hear from and respond to employees across the institution. In addition, the focal presentation at each Council meeting rotates among different functional areas on campus in order to broaden understanding of College operations as a whole.

The Personnel Welfare Committee has twelve members from a range of departments with considerable breadth and depth of experience, and serves a resource for the Vice President of Human Resources in gauging employee perceptions, attitudes and concerns. This same spirit of open communication is encouraged at the departmental level as well.

Saint Michael's was pleased to be invited to participate in the NEASC and Davis Foundation Portfolio Project. The support and encouragement received from these organizations resulted in the establishment of an assessment website, a comprehensive effort to utilize assessment methods already in place at the College (e.g., CIRP, NSSE, Senior and Alumni Surveys) more effectively, and implementation of an assessment program for each academic unit. Assessment efforts should provide increasingly important outcomes information to the College as a feedback mechanism that follows entering students through their post-graduation lives and informs improvements in Saint Michael's educational programs.

Projections

- Increase awareness and understanding among faculty, students and administrators of the growing ethical and legal challenges relating to plagiarism and copyright infringement.
- Build on progress made to date by developing more effective and open communications across the campus community through increased opportunities for dialogue.
- Increase and refine the utilization of data from outcomes assessment to inform the campus community and implement improvements.

PLANS

Saint Michael's College has just successfully concluded a five-year strategic plan and a \$52-million capital campaign. The process and format for development of the next strategic plan was initiated in the fall of 2005 and is projected to be complete by June 2006. Because of the supporting structure of assessment and reporting that is in place, planning can emerge from existing processes in concert with campus discussions. A series of issues that will require attention in the next five years is already apparent and provides the foundation for the beginning of the next strategic planning process.

Almost all of the projections provided in this report fall clearly under one of the five current institutional foci of Vision 2010. Spanning all five, however, is a continuation of the effort to implement a comprehensive culture of assessment throughout each vice president's area. To manifest the following characteristics regarding assessment, Saint Michael's needs to:

- establish programs to evaluate each aspect of the institution in relation to the mission;
- compile meaningful data-based and quality reports on a systematic basis, as needed (e.g., monthly, quarterly, every semester, yearly);
- inculcate a routine of regular study of outcomes;
- incorporate improvement strategies based on deliberation of the outcomes;
- determine new initiatives based on the foundation of assessments;
- prepare quality and finance-based projections on the effects of new initiatives; and
- make priority decisions regarding resource allocation to existing and new endeavors.

At present, each vice president's area performs these functions in some form. Under the Cabinet's direction, the aim for the next five years is to formalize and articulate these processes. As examples, academic departments have produced outcomes criteria and assessment methodologies. These will become more refined as the administration responds to the findings in order to support improvements. Student Life is constantly assessing the programs it oversees. Developing a system of reporting to the larger community will emerge from processes that are already in place. Human Resources will complete the job assessment process launched in 2005, which will result in more effective performance evaluation and compensation decisions.

Listed below are projections to be considered for inclusion in Saint Michael's strategic plan for the next five years.

Foundation and Future in Faith

- Mission:
 - a. Prepare a more comprehensive plan to maintain the Edmundite character of the institution as the founding order's presence continues to diminish.
 - b. Develop and implement a more defined academic service-learning component in addition to MOVE's co-curricular activities.
 - c. Expand academic connections with the College's Pontigny and Oxford heritage.

Academic Excellence

- Curriculum:
 - a. Clarify relationship of the five graduate programs to Saint Michael's core undergraduate mission and determine steps needed to meet the new NEASC Standards for Accreditation.
 - b. Evaluate the liberal studies requirement (instituted in 1996) to determine its effectiveness in relation to the institution's liberal arts mission.
 - c. Incorporate the departmental outcomes assessment to improve the quality of existing majors and plan new majors.
 - d. Include the variety of new experiential and technology-based instructional practices in scheduling paradigms.
 - e. Integrate the programs represented in the new Klein Academic Enrichment Commons and make them more accessible.
- Faculty:
 - a. Fully implement the Architects of Learning plan.
 - b. Devise and initiate an effective retirement transition strategy to address the high percentage of maturing faculty.

Centrality of Students

- Advising:
 - a. Design and implement support mechanisms for exploratory majors.
 - b. Provide greater academic support for students with regard to career planning, graduate school and post-baccalaureate fellowships.

- Regarding campus culture, develop a substantive College-wide plan to address substance abuse effectively that encompasses policies, calendar concerns, role of academics in influencing behavior and culture modification.
- Extend the Design for Learning philosophy to determine the optimum quantity, size and configuration for instructional and informal learning spaces, the Academic Enrichment Commons and faculty offices.
- Update the master plan for physical resources to determine programming and timing strategies for all academic spaces, library and archive needs, the preservation and use of Founders Hall, additional informal learning and other student spaces, and athletic facilities, such as an ice rink.

Strength in Community

- Diversity:
 - a. Create a campus-wide definition of diversity appropriate to Saint Michael's.
 - b. Develop a thorough plan to set and reach goals for diversity in students, faculty, staff and programming.
 - c. Incorporate assessment procedures to track progress toward these goals.
- Human resources:
 - a. Complete the job assessment process and apply the results to establish total compensation standards and merit-pay practices.
 - b. Identify, plan and allocate resources for skills enhancement among staff and academic development of the faculty.
- Transition planning:
 - a. Following a smooth transition to a new academic administration under the leadership of Provost William Wilson and Dean Jeffrey Trumbower, implement a plan for selection of a new Board chair and replacement of a number of Trustees.
 - b. Develop a timeline and transition plan for the appointment of the next president and a review of the Cabinet paradigm in relation to new leadership.

Fiscal Responsibility through Resource Acquisition and Accountability

- Address issues related to the management of financial aid.
- Finance:
 - a. Systematize internal reporting to better serve budget managers.
 - b. Apply cost-accounting processes for revenue-producing units throughout the institution and enhance managerial reporting.
 - c. Improve the process of connecting budget planning to strategies, including the assessment of qualitative as well as quantitative outcomes.
- Marketing:
 - a. Refine the desired student profile in terms of academic qualifications; geographic, ethnic, cultural and economic diversity; mission-related aspirations; etc.
 - b. Undertake market research to support enrollment goals.
 - c. Identify non-recruitment objectives for marketing (e.g., institutional advancement, mission, image and relationship with the broader higher education community).
- Plan for the next capital campaign.