Saint Michael’s College

2010 Self-Study
For Reaccreditation

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For the Comprehensive Visit by
The New England Association of Schools and Colleges
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Introduction

The process of assembling this Self-Study for Saint Michael's College 2010 reaccreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has been deliberate and collaborative. In 2007, then President Marc vanderHeyden appointed the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Kathleen Balutansky, to chair the Self-Study Steering Committee and oversee the Self-Study process. The process began in earnest in May 2008, when President John Neuhauser named the 15 members of the Steering Committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and a student. Eleven members of the committee were selected to chair subcommittees responsible for individual standards. The Steering Committee completed its main work between its first meeting on September 17, 2008, and June 10, 2009, when it met to review and comment on the initial draft of the Self-Study’s eleven chapters.

The main goal of the Self-Study process was to be inclusive, and to this end the Steering Committee designed four surveys—one for all employees, and one each for faculty, students, and the Board of Trustees. The employee, faculty, and student surveys were completed in fall 2008, and Trustees were surveyed in spring 2009. All Self-Study chapters are grounded in data drawn from these and other departmental and institutional surveys as well as from self-appraisals written by each unit of the College.

The chapters on Standard Five (Faculty) and Six (Students) in particular make extensive use of the fall 2008 surveys, offering faculty and student perspectives on the College through their responses to the survey questions, and they also draw on evidence supported by data provided by the Office of Institutional Research. Although individual unit projections were submitted for the Self-Study while the College’s strategic-planning process was in its early stages, the final projections for each of the 11 Standards are now aligned with the goals of the Strategic Plan 2015.

A number of measures were taken to keep the community informed and involved in the process. In spring 2009, the 2010 NEASC Self-Study web site was set up to share information with the community about the self-study process; it contains links to the president’s announcement of the process, the Self-Study timetable, NEASC standards, and the spring 2009 newsletter as well as survey results, archives, and the draft of the Self-Study (made available for comments until December 1, 2009). In the fall of 2009, members of the Self-Study Steering Committee held two open meetings for the entire community (Thursday, November 5 and Tuesday, November 10). Members of the committee also gave a presentation to student leaders at the Student Association (SA) meeting of Tuesday, November 10. The chair of the Steering Committee also met with the chair of the Board of Trustees, and a presentation was made to the full Board at its December 4, 2009 meeting.

Although some updates were made in January 2010, the Self-Study narrative was mostly completed in the fall of 2009, and the data it provides is current up to that time. The visiting team is provided with a virtual “Visiting Team Resource Room” in which all appendices in the Self-Study narrative are linked electronically either to documents or to the web. The visiting team is also provided with a flash drive that contains the Self-Study, pdf versions of some appendices, and related documents. Most appendices and other documents listed in the “List of Documents and Exhibits available in the Visiting Team Room” will also be made available in hard copy in both team rooms during the visit. All electronic documents will be in pdf format.
NEASC Self-Study Steering Committee Membership

Steering Committee Chair
Kathleen Balutansky, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Standard 1: Mission and Purposes
Zsuzsanna Kadas, Professor of Mathematics

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation
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Standard 3: Organization and Governance
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Standard 4: The Academic Program
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Standard 5: Faculty
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Standard 6: Students
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Standard 7: Library and Other Information Resources
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Standard 9: Financial Resources
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Standard 10: Public Disclosure
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Standard 11: Integrity
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Institutional Overview

History

Saint Michael's Institute was founded in 1904 in Winooski Park, Vermont, by members of the Society of Saint Edmund (SSE). The priests and brothers, known as Edmundites, came to Vermont in the late 19th century to escape religious persecution in France. The Edmundites bought the farmland on which the College stands today. As the Institute developed into an American-style college, the farmland became a campus. Founders Hall (1904), the only building in the early years, was later complemented by Jeanmarie Hall in 1921.

The College grew slowly in its first 40 years, reaching an enrollment of only 250 students by the end of World War II. After the war, with the return of veterans and the G.I. Bill, Saint Michael's expanded to some 1,145 students. To accommodate the expansion, military barracks were acquired from the federal government from nearby Fort Ethan Allen, an area that became known as the North Campus. The barracks, which where moved to the main campus, served as classrooms, faculty offices, the library, and student residences.

The College first followed a curriculum deeply rooted in the classical European liberal arts tradition, including mandatory Greek and Latin. In 1951, the dean and future president, Rev. Gerald E. Dupont, SSE, initiated the Saint Michael's Plan, which basically followed a “Great Books” curriculum, with a focus on the intellectual growth of students, engaged in the secular world, and informed by Catholicism. This plan was replaced in 1971 with a limited set of distribution requirements. The current Liberal Studies Requirements (LSR), now under review, traces its lineage back to the distributional model of the early 1970s.

Over the past 50 years, Saint Michael's has developed into a Catholic, residential, liberal arts college, attracting undergraduates primarily from the New England and Middle Atlantic states. In the early 1970s the College became fully coeducational. Enrollment increased gradually to its present undergraduate level of 2,000 full-time students, 500 part-time adult graduate students, and an additional 200 international students enrolled in intensive English programs.

International students come to Saint Michael's as full-time undergraduates, as English language students, and as graduate students in its well-known master's program for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. In addition to MATESOL, the College also currently offers graduate programs leading to master's degrees in education, theology, and clinical psychology.

Context

In 2000 the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) highlighted four areas to which the College should give special attention: long-range planning; faculty advising of students; improvement of campus diversity; and assessment of learning outcomes. In structuring this Self-Study, the Steering Committee chose not to isolate these areas of special emphasis, but to treat them within the 11 chapters instead, providing a holistic (and historical) picture of the challenges and successes in addressing them. As might be predicted, long-term planning is primarily addressed in the chapter on “Planning and Evaluation,” assessment of learning outcomes is discussed mostly in the chapter on “The Academic Programs,” and advising is addressed in the chapter on “Faculty,” following the NEASC standards. However, the challenge to increase diversity is a more complex story that is told from different perspectives in several sections. It is initially addressed in the first chapter, “Mission and Purposes,” to highlight the vital role that diversity has come to occupy at the College; however, the full story is told through the entire Self-Study.
Findings

For ease of reference, each Standard begins with an overview of the chapter's main issues and findings. In its entirety, the Self-Study captures the shift of Saint Michael's College from a regional university to a national liberal arts college. While this change in status within the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education occurred in 2007, it was the culmination of an entire decade of many transitions. Thus, transitions are what this Self-Study highlights, whether expressed in the campus community’s struggle to increase its diversity, the faculty’s interest in curriculum changes and concerns about the College’s expectations of them, or the alternating sense of frustration and pride in how much has been accomplished in the past 10 years in the face of serious resource limitations.

Indeed, what emerges most clearly in the details of this Self-Study is the story of an institution that has grown significantly in the past 10 years and which, while continuing to face various internal and external challenges, is well prepared to move into the next decade. With its focus on the past decade, this story explains and illustrates the anxieties and excitement that are inherent in academic transitions. It provides the best stage for the Strategic Plan 2015, which is the document that articulates the College’s guiding principles and strategic goals for the next five years.
Standard One
MISSION AND PURPOSES

The institution’s mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education, consistent with its charter or other operating authority, and implemented in a manner that complies with the Standards of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The institution’s mission gives direction to its activities and provides a basis for the assessment and enhancement of the institution’s effectiveness.

Overview

The core of the Saint Michael's College mission is teaching. This aspect of the mission is both implicit and explicit in the Mission Statement (Appendix 1.1), and some members of the community want it to be even more explicit, although it is widely known and understood by all constituencies and discussed regularly, particularly by Trustees and faculty. Values flowing from the mission are embedded in the curriculum and College life, and are generally embraced by the community. Nevertheless, the College faces mission-related challenges: maintaining mission priorities in the face of financial constraints, especially in implementing a plan to enhance diversity at the College and to foster both the Edmundite identity and the Catholic intellectual tradition in the context of the founding order’s declining numbers.

This chapter illustrates the many ways in which the distinctive Catholic and Edmundite character of the College animates its mission and the many ways in which academic actualization of that mission focuses on giving students the skills, knowledge, and principles needed to pursue moral lives, social justice, and global citizenship.

Description

The mission statement, easily found on the College web site, and in catalogues and numerous other locations, is “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.”

In the College Bylaws (Appendix 1.2a 2002 Bylaws and Appendix 1.2b draft revision 2010 Bylaws), this brief and iconic mission statement is followed immediately by a Statement of Goals which elaborates: “to be an academic community that promotes the pursuit of truth, the development of virtue, and high levels of excellence in all its academic, social and religious programs with a view to bettering the human condition.” Further, according to its Bylaws, the College conducts its programs to be “consistent with principles of the Catholic faith, especially those of justice and charity,” to enhance understanding of Catholicism and its relationship to various fields of knowledge, and to “promote the moral and spiritual development of the entire College community” (Section 2.2; August 2002).

This interpretation of a Catholic college is rooted in the charism of its founding fathers, the priests and brothers of the Society of Saint Edmund (SSE), who established the College in 1904, and it has endured, even as the French-style “collège” for young men of Vermont evolved over the course of a century into a modern coeducational liberal arts college. The mission in its current form was included in the Bylaws in 1987, and the College has a history of reflecting upon it, particularly the curricular implications of its religious, spiritual, and moral dimensions. In the 1990s, then President Paul Reiss articulated five hallmarks of the “Edmundite Learning Tradition”: respect for human dignity, excellence in the search for truth, the development of moral character, commitment to service, and the value of community.
Throughout the vanderHeyden presidency (1996-2007), the mission statement was supplemented by a Vision Statement (Appendix 1.3), providing greater specificity about how the College seeks to achieve the aims set forth in the mission. During this period, drafts and revisions of the Vision 2010 statement were discussed and debated by faculty and staff because of the Vision’s import for future assessments of institutional curricular success. Both statements are readily accessible on the College web site and in its publications, and are widely known to the College community.

**Actualizing the Mission**

The Vision Statement articulates how the College actualizes its mission of higher education in the Catholic intellectual tradition, asserting that “The shared vision of Saint Michael's is to be a superior Catholic, liberal arts, undergraduate, residential college, excelling in the preparation of students for lifelong learning in a global society.” Saint Michael’s aspires to be nationally known for academic excellence, and two indicators of progress in achieving this goal are its ranking as 105th in the Carnegie classification of liberal arts colleges (Appendix 1.4) and the sheltering of a Phi Beta Kappa Chapter in 2003.

The College values religious, intellectual, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, and geographic diversity, and actively seeks the contributions that such diversity make to the campus community. In addition, a distinctive strength of the College’s academic culture is the freedom and encouragement to address issues of morality, ethics, religion, and spirituality openly, in ways that may not always be welcome at other institutions.

The SSE has imbued the College with its spirit of hospitality, community, and calling to serve those in need, both locally and worldwide. Catholic social teachings are firmly entrenched in the Edmundite way of life, as evidenced particularly by the SSE mission work in Alabama and New Orleans, and their participation in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. The College's distinctive Catholic and Edmundite character distinguishes Saint Michael’s from most residential liberal arts colleges and manifests itself in many ways, as illustrated below.

**Curriculum**

- Although not unique among Catholic colleges, Saint Michael’s offers majors in religious studies and philosophy, a minor in peace and justice, and a master’s degree in theology and pastoral ministry.
- The Liberal Studies Requirements (LSR) include two courses in religious studies and two in philosophy, providing every student with a grounding in Christianity and philosophical discourse.
- First-Year Seminars commonly incorporate themes of spirituality, religion, justice, and morality. *Peace and Justice* (FS153), which draws upon Catholic social teaching and includes a service component, is among the most popular First-Year Seminars.
- Some courses explicitly address religion and its interface with other disciplines, such as *Work, Capital, and God* (RS326) and a Religious Studies special topic course titled *Science and Religion* (RS350).
- Many courses, such as *Approaches to Peace* (PJ101), *Theories of Economic Justice* (PO363), and *Philosophy of Human Rights* (PH363), reflect a deep interest and commitment to social justice issues.
- The growth of service-learning in the past decade reflects both faculty and student integration of course content with community partnerships to address social needs.
- Academic courses have been linked with trips for study or service abroad; for instance, the course on Medieval Burgundy takes students to an Edmundite-heritage site in Pontigny, France, while service-learning courses take students to Tanzania, Ghana, Peru, and Tonga.
- In the fall 2008 Self-Study survey, 66% of faculty indicated that the mission of the College influences the design of their courses and enhances or at least complements their teaching, scholarship, and service.
Academic Centers and Programs

• The Edmundite Center for Faith and Culture, whose director is a professor of religious studies, was established in 2005 “to advance the place of the Catholic tradition in relationship to human culture” and to promote “greater understanding of and appreciation for the Catholic tradition among members of the College community.” To this end, it sponsors conferences and lectures with internationally-known speakers.

• The Edmundite Center for Peace and Justice, whose director also teaches in the Peace and Justice minor, was founded in 1999 to educate the campus community about social justice in general and Catholic social teachings in particular. The Center’s programs, lectures, and conferences, often developed cooperatively with academic departments, have drawn very large audiences from the College as well as the broader community.

• The Spirituality and Intellectual Life Committee, a faculty committee active since 1999, sponsors several lectures and events every semester that explore issues relating to “values, religion and spirit” in an interfaith setting. Each year, two presentations specifically focus on the College’s mission—one by the President, and the other by an administrator or a faculty/staff panel.

Edmundite Campus Ministry Programs

• Edmundite Campus Ministry, led by a priest of the Society of Saint Edmund, is responsible for the spiritual and sacramental needs of the College community. At present there are six additional full-time professional (lay) ministers, one part-time, and one administrative staff. One position, for Retreat Ministry, is currently open but has been frozen due to the current economic situation. The staff coordinate liturgies, including instrumental music and choir, organize retreats such as LEAP and Emmaus, provide pastoral and spiritual counseling, and oversee the MOVE volunteer programs.

• The student-founded peer-ministry group known as VITA provides opportunities for other students to become more involved in exploring the spiritual life through student-led prayer and faith-sharing groups, such as Tablespecific Tuesday, Java and JC, and Spirit and Song.

• The Mobilization of Volunteer Efforts (MOVE), recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. It has been phenomenally successful in involving students in volunteer activities that range from an afternoon of apple picking for a local food shelf to winter- and spring-break service trips to help in soup kitchens in Hartford and Washington DC, to extended international trips, such as the three-week trip to Calcutta to serve with Mother Theresa’s Sisters. About 70% of the student body participates in MOVE at some point during their college career.

• The Pontigny Society, founded in 1996, is a group of faculty and staff whose purpose is to enhance understanding and appreciation for Catholic character of the College. Discussions of readings related to Catholic thought and the College’s mission are held three times each semester. Two yearly retreats are offered, one in February at St. Benoit du Lac, Canada, and a second in May at the Wildflower Inn, in Lyndonville, Vermont.

Student Affairs Programs

• The Office of Student Affairs emphasizes holistic efforts to enhance body, mind, and spirit. They plan for, react to and create learning opportunities designed to both illuminate the mission and guide students toward transformation to their better selves. Student Affairs staff partner with Campus Ministry to support many mission-based programs as part of a campaign promoting human dignity and diversity.

• GOT S.K.I.L.L.S.? (an acronym for Socially just, Kindness toward others, Inclusive toward all people, Leading at every turn, Listening with care, Self-respectful) is a “campaign for dignity and diversity” that attempts to institutionalize programs that promote responsibility, respect, social justice, and multicultural competence. This incentive-based series of a variety of programs, often followed by discussion groups, was instituted in 2006. During the academic year 2008-2009, 63 GOT S.K.I.L.L.S.? programs were attended by 1,056 different students, with many students attending numerous programs for an overall attendance of 4,140.
Other Initiatives

• The Saint Edmund Heritage Trips, a legacy of the vanderHeyden presidency, focus on SSE heritage sites in France and England. The biennial trip receives financial support from the SSE and Office of the President, and is open to the College’s faculty, staff, alumni, and selected students.
• Delta Epsilon Sigma, the honor society for colleges in the Catholic tradition, revised its selection process to heighten the emphasis on service and the mission. Student nominees are now required to write an essay on the effect of the mission on their educational experience. Faculty and staff are also inducted in recognition of their support of the College’s mission.

Appraisal

While awareness of the mission is strong among faculty and staff, students and alumni indicate less explicit awareness, but express strong appreciation for characteristics of the College that flow implicitly from the mission. Surveys of faculty, employees (including faculty), students, and Trustees conducted in fall 2008 and spring 2009 for this NEASC review, all included questions about the mission—95% of the faculty, 94% of all employees, and 61% of students responded that they are familiar with the mission statement. In an April 2009 representative student survey conducted by Sociology Professor Vincent Bolduc, 47% of students claimed to have read the statement; however, only 21% believed the mission is widely understood by students. The College needs to find ways to help students understand the rich meaning of its mission, which includes an understanding of what it means to be human, the inherent dignity of every person, and an interest in full intellectual and spiritual development.

When the fall 2008 survey asked students to name three of the College’s most prominent strengths, an overwhelming majority used terms such as “caring community,” “accepting,” “family,” and “close relationships [with faculty or others].” Nearly 60% mentioned these as the first “strength.” Similarly, in answer to the same questions, a large number of the faculty and staff mentioned this characteristic. Over 90% of the alumni and over 97% of the respondents to the employee survey agreed that they think of the College as a “caring community.”

Perceptions of Success in Meeting Mission Goals

The chart below, based on a random sample of 382 students, shows that—regardless of whether or not they were familiar with the actual wording of the mission statement—students feel that the mission is “very successful” in building a strong “sense of community on campus,” but are less likely to say that the three specific elements of the mission are met. These appear in hash marks in the bar chart. An expanded version of this chart (Appendix 1.5), containing 20 possible goals presented to the students, shows that students believe the College is very successful at achieving more general humanitarian and social-justice goals, but is less successful in meeting the three themes explicitly expressed in the official mission statement.

Based on the fall 2008 survey responses, it appears that the mission successfully influences the planning and execution of institutional activities: 79% of respondents to the employee survey agree/strongly agree that the mission influences the execution of their work; 79 % also agree/strongly agree that the mission gives direction to College activities; and 71% concur that it provides a basis of assessment. Similarly, 87% of Trustees agree that the mission meaningfully shapes the direction of the College, and 70% agree that it provides an effective basis for assessment.
Items that are marked with an asterisk are formally mentioned in the official statement of College mission.

Educates students “in the light of the Catholic faith”*
Fosters religious and spiritual growth
Contributes to the enhancement of the human person*
Contributes to the advancement of human culture*
Builds a sense of community on campus
Creates desire to serve the greater good of society

However, the final clause of the mission statement, “in the light of the Catholic faith,” is a frequent source of discussion and some disagreement regarding its interpretation and implications for institutional planning and policy. Some members of the community feel that the mission statement is not sufficiently clear and should be rewritten. Nevertheless, among faculty, whose survey included more detailed questions than the student survey, 91% agree that they understand the mission and 86% express support of “the mission as I understand it”; only 2.8% disagreed. Despite recurring discussions about its clarity, 76% of faculty respondents agreed with the statement: “the mission statement clearly expresses the mission of the College.”

The Board of Trustees and President have expressed their continuing commitment to the current articulation of the mission statement and, the 2002 revision of the Bylaws stipulates that altering it would require a three-fourths majority vote by the Board. Thus, it appears that for the foreseeable future, the mission statement will be retained as an expression of enduring principles, along with periodically revised vision statements to provide more specific shorter-term goals.

**Mission-Related Challenges**

While there is no question that the mission of the College is widely supported in its academic and spiritual dimensions and it permeates the very fiber of the College, its actualization in two areas has been especially challenging. One is the limited racial and cultural diversity in the campus community, and the other is the preservation and ongoing development of the religious and specifically Catholic character of the College. Another, closely related issue is the continuing struggle to find adequate resources to fund efforts to address these two areas. However, this last issue, in its broader scope, will receive proper attention in the chapter on Standard Nine.

**Diversity**

A century ago, Catholics were subject to considerable discrimination in their attempts to enroll or teach at American colleges and universities. Their response, like that of other minorities, was to form their own independent institutions, including Saint Michael’s, and it has only been in the past 30 years that the majority of our students have no longer been the first generation in their French-Canadian or Irish families to receive a college education.
While the French-Canadian Catholic heritage continues to be more evident at Saint Michael’s than on any other Catholic campus, attracting other ethnic minorities has been particularly challenging. To state the obvious: a relatively high percentage of the College’s students come from the northern tier of New England (Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine), three states with among the lowest percentages of non-whites and Hispanics. In Vermont specifically, in 2006, only 4% of the population was non-white and non-Hispanic; only 5% of Vermonters spoke a language other than English at home, a far cry from the 20% national average. Among the 50 states, only Hawaii and Alaska have lower percentages of foreign-born residents. Historically, the College has found it difficult to surmount these challenges in recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. Needless to say, conversations about the causes of and ways to address this problem have been ongoing in various College quarters for the past two decades.

The need to increase diversity in the student body, as well as among faculty and staff, was noted as an area of special emphasis in both the 1990 and 2000 NEASC reports, and the College’s Fifth-Year Report detailed all the initiatives intended to address that concern. In fall 2007, a group of concerned faculty, staff, and students came together to renew conversations about what might be done constructively to address ethnic and cultural diversity at the College. The Diversity Working Group (DWG) recognized that efforts had been ongoing for more than two decades, and reviewed the recommendations from the Campus Culture Committee in 1991 (Appendix 1.6) and from the American Studies Program in 2001 (Appendix 1.7). Although the DWG noted in its report for the Self-Study (Appendix 1.8) that both “the 1991 and 2001 recommendations showed a clear understanding of the interconnectedness of faculty/staff hiring, community attitude, ALANA experience and transition, institutional resources, priority and commitment, course offerings, and faculty sensitivity,” they asserted that “[n]either of the proposals displayed an understanding of the interconnection between mission, institutional priority and commitment to diversity.” The inclusion of this issue here indicates the institutional awareness of this problem; however, while the DWG provided its own timetable and targets for ALANA enrollments, the College is developing broader strategies and solutions that include international students as well as other goals to address the issue of diversity. Indeed, although they do not have the same impact on the community as full-time undergraduates, international students have been an important part of the College’s diversity over the years. In the past 55 years, the Applied Linguistics Department (formerly known as the School of International Studies) has enrolled 20,000 students from 80 different countries in its English Language Programs. In 2009, for instance, 304 international students participated in these programs.

The recent surge of energy and commitment of the faculty, staff, and students dedicated to addressing diversity on campus is a very healthy sign for the College. Indeed, there is broad agreement that it is important to work with determination to increase student, faculty, and staff diversity as well as programmatic diversity, not just ALANA enrollment. This agreement is reflected in the prominent place that the issue of diversity occupies in the College’s Strategic Plan 2015 (Appendix 1.9). However, with regard to ALANA student enrollment, the Strategic Plan projects an increase in total ALANA enrollment every year without setting specific targets. While this does not meet the DWG proposal of a 15% target, it is consistent with the realities of the current fiscal context and the facts that of all 18-year-olds in New England who go to college, only about 8% are ALANA, and that the mean ALANA enrollment at the College’s peers is 5.8%. However, there is reason to be optimistic, since the strategies used to recover from the low 2.9% ALANA enrollment for the 2008-09 academic year have yielded an ALANA first-year enrollment of 7.6% for fall 2009.

Still, the current low percentage of ALANA members on campus is an issue, and it is not surprising that according to the fall 2008 surveys, 67% of faculty/staff agreed that the College “must work harder to increase diversity among students” (63% “among faculty”; 58% “among staff”) and 22% of students named it first when asked to indicate the two most prominent weaknesses of the College—this is a relatively large fraction, considering the many competing student issues. Similarly, on their survey, several Trustees also mentioned diversity on campus as a leading weakness. While 48% believe the College has been “somewhat successful” in
increasing diversity among students and faculty, on another question, 62% say there has been “no change” over the past five years in “becoming a more diverse campus community.” In spite of all this, Saint Michael’s views itself as a community that is inclusive, and 90% of faculty/staff agree that the College is a welcoming community regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation (only 2.4% disagree).

**Catholic and Edmundite Identity**

Due largely to the continuing decline in the number of Edmundites, maintaining the Catholic identity of the College has long been a concern. The need for action was highlighted by a January 2006 Board of Trustees commitment (Appendix 1.10) to that identity and instruction to the President “to develop a five-year plan to enhance the Catholic mission of the College.” The declining membership of the Edmundite Society overall, its reduced representation on the Board, and the fact that the College is an independent corporation, not under the direction of a religious order or diocese, make it imperative for the College to take on the responsibility for sustaining all aspects of its mission, including its religious character. While the transition in the presidency has delayed action on the Board’s instruction, this issue is one of the guiding principles of the Strategic Plan 2015.

As of the end of 2009, the SSE has 36 members worldwide, with only six below the age of 60. Although new members are being recruited, the prospects for an increase are uncertain. In 1990, 11 members of the Society served on the faculty or staff of the College; in 1999, the number was seven. Today, the only full-time Edmundites on the staff are the Director of Edmundite Campus Ministry and one faculty member in Religious Studies. A few others teach part-time or are engaged in pastoral ministry; a total of 10 currently reside on campus. Prior to 1992, one-third of the 33-member Board of Trustees was mandated to be from the Society; since then, one-third must be Catholic priests or members of religious orders. Seven members of the Society currently serve on the Board.

In the past, the Edmundites were considered the stewards of the College’s Catholic identity. Their lives, in vowed Christian community, provide a sacramental presence and witness to a way of life steeped in faith and service. Their work has also shaped and sustained the liturgical life on campus as well as many programs in the areas of spirituality and service, such as retreat programs and MOVE. Their shrinking numbers and potential absence in the future will deprive the College of both of these influences. Further, since the SSE supports many of these projects financially, the Director of Edmundite Campus Ministry, Fr. Brian Cummings, reports that “the dwindling number of Edmundites both in Campus Ministry and on campus in general will have consequences on [the SSE’s] ability to serve in many liturgical and sacramental functions as well as limit our financial resources to implement our programming.” Some members of the College community express similar concerns about the two primary mission-related academic endeavors of the College, the Edmundite Center for Faith and Culture and the Edmundite Center for Peace and Justice. Although both directors and their support staff are on the College payroll, the program budgets for both centers rely heavily on the Edmundite Endowment for Catholic Studies and Ministry. Statistics indicate that in addition to the decreasing Edmundite presence, the College as a whole has become “less Catholic” over the past decade. While 36% of faculty and 42% of all employees identify themselves as Catholic, it is the decline in the number of students who identify themselves as Catholic that some find most alarming, as is suggested by the chart on the following page.
In the College’s annual Senior Survey, students are asked whether they have developed an increased interest in spirituality during their years at Saint Michael’s. From 2002 to 2008, the percentages responding in the affirmative ranged from 32% to 45%, with the last three years at 36% or lower. Also, a relatively small fraction of students participate in retreat programs sponsored by Campus Ministry (about 20%) and other Campus Ministry activities (about 16%), presumably with a large overlap (this excludes MOVE). This may be connected with a rise in the percentage of students who self-identify as having no religious affiliation—in 2002 it was 15% and rose to 23% in 2008. Other indicators of this trend emerged in a 2004 five-campus survey which also revealed that 36% of students at Saint Michael’s reported that they “became less religious” since arriving on campus, while only 30% reported that they “became more religious.” Among the Catholics, that same survey found that 26% responded that they had become “less committed to the Catholic Church” since arriving, compared to only 20% who became “more committed.” Another indication is the falling attendance at weekly Mass to a level now slightly fewer than 20% of the Catholic students, with 43% saying that they go to Mass less frequently on campus than they did before they were students.

These statistics are consistent with national trends. There is a consistent decrease in the number of students selecting “Roman Catholic” for each cohort, and this includes Saint Michael's College as well as all four-year Catholic colleges participating in the survey, four-year “highly selective” Catholic colleges, and all institutions participating in the CIRP. Indeed, a longitudinal analysis of the CIRP survey of first-year students (from 1989 to 2000 and 2006 to 2008) confirms that the percentage of first-year students indicating “Roman Catholic” as their religious preference on the CIRP for both Saint Michael’s and other types of schools has been decreasing during the last 20 years:
While there is no agreement about the ultimate consequences of this national trend, various College constituencies recognize the seriousness of the issue. During the past five years, the Board of Trustees has regularly addressed the College’s mission and Catholic identity. At its fall meetings, the Board invites faculty, staff, and students to discuss the mission of the College in meetings with the Trusteeship and Mission Committee. The previous Dean of the College and Professor of Religious Studies, John Kenney, has made presentations to the Board on different models of religious colleges, to help clarify Saint Michael’s stance in comparison with other Catholic institutions. Dr. Vincent Bolduc, a professor of sociology, has also presented to the Board the results of his published studies on “religiosity” of students at Saint Michael’s and several peer institutions. Catholic academics have been invited to lead discussions during Board retreats, such as Dennis O’Brien, author of *The Idea of the Catholic University*, did in October 2005.

Faculty and staff also have opportunities to learn about and discuss the College’s mission and Catholic identity. In tandem with the Board’s 2005 discussions, the Faculty Assembly sponsored a discussion day with Dennis O’Brien, and Professor Bolduc’s findings have been presented in faculty/staff seminars. The Edmundite Center for Faith and Culture and the Pontigny Society have also provided speakers and venues for study and discussion, as has the faculty Committee on Spirituality and the Intellectual Life. In forums such as Faculty Assembly or Student Association meetings, the mission is often cited in considerations of curriculum, student life, compensation, and other issues. New faculty members are introduced to the mission as part of their orientation program during their first year, although the time allotted to such socialization varies considerably from year to year. From 2003 through 2006, the College was the recipient of a Davis Foundation grant that funded an extensive introduction to teaching in a liberal arts setting through a semester-long weekly seminar for new faculty. The College has since continued this program, interspersing readings on the liberal arts and pedagogy with visitors discussing the College’s history and traditions.

By its nature, the conversation about the Catholic and Edmundite identity of the institution must be an ongoing part of its growth. Professor Edward Mahoney, Director of the Edmundite Center for Faith and Culture, suggested in a June 2006 reflection on the mission and identity of the College, that it may be somewhat adrift. Developing an overarching narrative to unify and give direction to efforts to maintain and cultivate the Catholic heritage represents both a challenge and an opportunity, as the Rev. Michael Cronogue, Superior General of the SSE, pointed out at an April 2008 Spirituality and the Intellectual Life lunchtime talk on the mission; he stated that it is not a matter of recapturing something that has been lost, but rather a matter of inventing something that has never been done before. And, stating what many at Saint Michael’s understand to be the core mission of the College, Dr. Mahoney also pointed out that since Saint Michael’s is an academic institution, its mission and identity must be primarily expressed through its core activity, the academic life of the College.

**Projection**

- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to perpetuate the Edmundite charism of the College for the coming years. The President will appoint a special assistant to the President for a three-year term to lead a task force and develop a plan to retain and celebrate the Edmundite identity of the College, with special attention to the enhancement of the Edmundite Center for Faith and Culture and the Edmundite Center for Peace and Justice (Strategic Plan E.1.). *(President, FY 2011).*
- Create a high-level task force to advise the special assistant to the President in articulating the vision of the College in matters of mission and Catholic identity and in coordinating implementation efforts (Strategic Plan E.1.). *(President, FY 2011).*
- Increase campus awareness of and continue support for ecumenical and interfaith services and initiatives. Continue/increase support for students of other faiths (Strategic Plan E.2.). *(Campus Ministry Staff; Student Life Staff, financial support from College, ongoing).*

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● When faculty and staff vacancies occur, seek out candidates who can contribute to the College’s mission and rich tradition of Catholic intellectual thought (Strategic Plan B.4.). Increase mission/heritage orientation for new faculty and develop a mission/heritage orientation for all employees. (Dean and VPAA for faculty orientation, VP for Human Resources for staff orientation, ongoing).

● Continue regular discussions of the mission and offer opportunities for clarifications of the mission statement. (President, ongoing).

● Ensure the continuing vitality of Religious Studies and Philosophy courses in the LSR (Faculty and CEPC).

● Build upon the successes of the fall 2009 recruiting efforts, and design a multifaceted recruitment strategy that will underscore the College’s commitment to increased ALANA enrollment, as referred to in the third guiding principle of the Strategic Plan: “Diversity is an essential component to creating a learning environment that prepares students for citizenship in the 21st-century global community.” Increase percentage of ALANA enrollment every year. Set specific targets for ALANA faculty and staff hiring. To expand diversity in many perspectives, continue to increase the geographic reach of all recruiting. In addition, explore increased connections with Catholic universities in Africa and Latin America (Strategic Plan A.2.). (Admissions Office, Dean/VPAA, Human Resources, ongoing).

Institutional Effectiveness

The College’s Mission Statement is an abiding document that has guided the institution’s endeavors over time. The Cabinet is responsible for overall actualization of the mission and ensures that the different aspects of the mission are reviewed periodically and implemented by the appropriate institutional units. The Strategic Plan 2015 represents the College’s assessment and revision of its purpose and direction.
Standard Two
PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The institution undertakes planning and evaluation appropriate to its needs to accomplish and improve the achievement of its mission and purposes. It identifies its planning and evaluation priorities and pursues them effectively.

Overview

The chapter offers a description of major planning initiatives undertaken over the past decade, since the 2000 reaccreditation noted that the College should give special emphasis to “long-range planning efforts, including the development of a clear and realistic set of priorities.” This account gives significant space to the Strategic Plan 2015, as it is the current College-wide planning activity. More departmentally-focused planning, such as planning and evaluation in curriculum development, faculty evaluation, and financial planning will be covered fully in chapters on Standard Four, Five, and Nine respectively.

Description

In their self-appraisals for the 2010 reaccreditation, each College unit provided evidence of planning and evaluation, including systematic reviews of projects or programs begun since the last Self-Study as well as projections for the future. However, due to transitions at the highest levels of the administration, President Neuhauser waited for the arrival of the new Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) to begin the comprehensive strategic planning process now underway.

The arrival of a new President and VPAA, a major review of the Liberal Studies curriculum by the faculty, the work of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), the opportunity to prepare for the decennial reaccreditation, and a comprehensive review of the College’s image in the marketplace converged to create a kairos moment, a crucial opportunity for the institution. While President Neuhauser and the Board of Trustees have reaffirmed the nature of Saint Michael’s as a Catholic, residential, liberal arts college, the complexion and meaning of these descriptors are still unfolding.

The President’s Cabinet is the body that informs and advises the President on the development and execution of campus policies and procedures, and it will oversee implementation of the Strategic Plan 2015, with each member responsible for planning, implementation, and evaluation in their own area. Currently, the Cabinet consists of all direct reports to the President—six Vice Presidents, the Chief Information Officer (CIO), the Director of Edmundite Campus Ministry, the Director of Marketing, the Director of Government and Community Relations, and the Assistant to the President (see Appendix 2.1 for a detailed overview of the major roles of each member of the Cabinet).

PLANNING

The College’s 2000 NEASC Self-Study reported on the establishment of a Strategic Planning Committee that worked from 1999-2000 to develop a strategic plan for 2000-2005. In turn, the NEASC reaccreditation letter of November 29, 2000, cited long-range planning as one of four areas of special emphasis for Saint Michael’s. At the time of the evaluation-team’s visit, a five-year strategic plan had been formulated with substantial campus input, but priorities had not yet been identified nor financial plans developed. The evaluation 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 the 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.

From 2000-2004, the VPAA managed the development and implementation of the strategic plan, which included 18 goals and 62 strategies, and reported annually to the community on its progress. Subsequent modifications to the strategies—but not the goals—occurred each year. Of the 62 strategies, only 4 were removed, and the remainder was either completed or substantially underway by 2005. In line with the strategic plan, then President Marc vanderHeyden issued Vision 2010 in July 2002. Vision 2010, the strategic plan, and the multiyear financial model have all enabled Saint Michael's to make major mission-driven decisions with greater confidence and fiscal responsibility. The financial model is frequently shared with many constituencies across campus throughout the budget-planning process, including open meetings of Trustee committees to managerial groups, faculty committees, and community forums.

The deliberations of a Blue Ribbon Benefits Committee, which concluded in 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 since enhanced communication with all direct reports to Cabinet members; the Faculty and Staff Welfare Committees and Faculty Executive Committee also have more regular interaction with the President and academic affairs administration. From 2006 to 2008, the VPAA continued to refine the strategic plan and coordinate its implementation. With participation from groups inside and outside the College, the CIO and department leadership developed a technology vision statement that formed the basis of its long-range plan and a 2006 revision, which guides priorities for annual budget requests and projects. The next version of the department's long-range plan is under development, and will inform and be informed by the strategic plan, reaccreditation Self-Study, and Image Development Initiative (IDI). In 2004, the VPAA and CIO began a three-year “Design for Learning” project, based on communication with faculty to determine how classrooms might be set up for maximum effectiveness. As a result, Jeanmarie is now entirely upgraded with “smart” classrooms, and technology upgrades for classrooms in St. Edmunds Hall and McCarthy are ongoing.

The Image Development Initiative mentioned above (Appendix 2.2a and Appendix 2.2b) was launched in spring of 2008 and was designed to craft an image for the College that fairly represents its institutional values and mission, highlights strengths that are valued in the marketplace, and differentiates Saint Michael's from its competitors. The research and analysis phase was completed in the summer of 2009, and results were shared with the community in anticipation of the next Strategic Plan.

In October 2008, at the request of the President, the VPAA and Vice President for Human Resources convened a committee from across the College to develop a strategic plan looking forward to 2015. Similar to the last strategic plan in its comprehensive and inclusive character, the current plan focuses on student learning and delineates six key goals that direct the development of core features of the College: recruitment and retention, curriculum and teaching, experiential learning, campus environment, spiritual formation, and stewardship of resources. The strategic plan involves every unit of the College, and successful implementation will require all areas to engage in ongoing, effective planning and evaluation. The Vice President for Institutional Advancement has begun to identify leadership for the next comprehensive campaign to support the college-wide priorities established by the Strategic Plan 2015.

The new Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) met weekly and, early in the process, invited administrators, faculty, staff, and students representing many units of the College (including the IDI, the 2010 NEASC Self-Study Steering Committee, and the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee) to hear ideas and suggestions regarding the core values of the institution. In spring 2009, committee members made presentations to all constituents of the College, established a blog for responses and comments, and held focus groups. The draft of the plan and associated PowerPoint presentation were made available to the community through an intranet public folder. In May, an Implementation Committee for each goal was established to take the plan through the next phase. These committees included at least two members of the
SPC, and others were added, as needed, to develop objectives relevant to their work on campus. Updated versions of the strategic plan, including an associated budget and implementation plan, have been reviewed by the Cabinet, presented to the Board of Trustees, and shared with the community through the public folder and open meetings.

The SPC’s recommendations were based on data and information from a number of sources, including institutional research, registration and enrollment, results from CIRP, NSSE and other surveys, and from research conducted by our consultant, George Dehne and Associates (GDA) as part of the IDI. GDA worked with the College to carry out an environmental scan, and competitor analysis as well as a variety of surveys with prospective and current students and families, faculty and staff, and alumni. This data was exceedingly helpful to the SPC and had a significant impact on the final recommendations and on the assessment indicators established for each initiative, which will be monitored to determine progress towards meeting objective outcomes (see Appendix 2.3 for a sample of this assessment plan).

In addition, the SPC was continuously aware of the fact that the plan would need to be carefully integrated with parallel processes in financial, academic, and facilities planning. Throughout the process, the SPC met on several occasions with the Vice President for Finance, the Director of Facilities, and representatives from the faculty on Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee (CEPC). The SPC shared its strategic initiatives and revised the plan, according to feedback from the relevant administrators and faculty, to be certain that the final plan would be integrated or at least compatible with other planning efforts. The co-chairs of the SPC have worked closely with the Vice President for Finance to build a strategic budget to fund the plan, which will be integrated within the regular operating budget of the College, beginning in FY 2011. In terms of facilities planning, the SPC obtained functional analyses and estimated costs from the Director of Facilities for facilities projects proposed in the plan. And, the Dean of the College, as an ex officio member of the CEPC, has been responsible for presenting the strategic plan curricular initiatives to relevant departments, faculty groups, and the faculty as a whole. Feedback from faculty has led to revisions and changes in priorities of the academic initiatives. Although still in draft format, a strategic budget by year (Appendix 2.4) is being incorporated into the financial plan of the college.

EVALUATION

After the 2000 reaccreditation evaluation, then VPAA Jan Sheeran led the College through a strategic planning process that resulted in the implementation of most of the goals articulated in the plan. In addition, she initiated a learning-outcomes assessment plan for all majors, spearheaded a student retention program that carefully reviewed and monitored data, and worked closely with the Vice President for Student Affairs to implement a number of efforts that eventually improved the College's retention numbers. The VPAA also oversaw an exhaustive review of all graduate programs in light of Vision 2010 (Appendix 1.3), which emphasized the undergraduate nature of the College. The next VPAA, William Wilson, conducted a follow-up review of the graduate programs in 2008, which resulted in a decision to phase out the Master of Science in Administration program.

The current VPAA, Karen Talentino, has begun a careful review of academic administrative structures, with a special focus on student learning and support services. Over the next two years, the reporting structures for several offices will be altered to provide more effective, integrated, and creative services focused on student academic development. The planned changes include a shift in approach and philosophy in order to better respond to student desires for more experiential learning, such as internships and service-learning. Dr. Talentino has initiated a thorough review of all the processes by which faculty and students request financial support—through grants, awards, general budgetary support—for research, teaching, and academic enrichment; these processes will be aligned with the Strategic Plan 2015 to clarify and simplify them and, finally, to assess their impact. Another important initiative, already underway, is a formal process of review for all academic programs. Each of these initiatives was initiated as a result of information (both anecdotal and from formal
surveys) from students, staff, and faculty about the need for improvements in these areas. Once changes are completed, formal evaluation of their impact will be carried out.

For the past three years, the consulting firm Maguire Associates has assisted the admission office with the enrollment process, particularly in developing targets for financial aid. In 2004, the Vice President for Enrollment initiated a strategic plan that established benchmarks for a range of areas, including higher applications, increased academic quality, diversity in the student population, and geographic diversity. The results of enrollment efforts, as measured in the number of applications received, applicants admitted, and enrolled students; the quality of students as measured by testing scores and high-school performance; their racial, ethnic, gender and geographic diversity; and the discount rate needed to enroll the class are all evaluated annually by comparing the actual results in each of these areas with Enrollment Management’s preset goals. The Vice President makes annual reports to the College community regarding the strategic goals and the extent to which these are met as well as any remaining challenges. The admission office also distributes an annual profile (Appendix 2.5) of the student body, focused on the first-year class, relative to entering classes from previous years.

The Vice President for Student Affairs is also a member of the Enrollment Management Committee and was instrumental in developing strategies for student retention and implementing Vision 2010 with regard to its focus on a full residential experience for all students. In this regard, he was a key player in the two-year planning process that led to the construction of three new residence halls on campus in by 2004.

The implementation of the Strategic Plan 2015 will require careful planning from all areas of the College, but it will also require the application of increasingly sophisticated data-gathering and assessment procedures to enable an informed prioritization of needs. Regular assessment tools, such as retention data, CIRP, and NSSE reports, were standardized to make data more accessible and establish processes for review of reports to determine better outcome indicators. In addition, a coordinated Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Survey (IPEDS), quarterly dashboard indicators, annual Fact Book, and annual faculty status report as well as eight other reports and seven in-house surveys all enhance the administration’s ability to assess the effectiveness of its implementation of the elements of the plan. Each of the strategic objectives or action items are assigned to a specific member of the administration for responsibility. Once the Strategic Plan is implemented, beginning in FY 2011, the Director of Institutional Research will coordinate a process of collecting data on the progress of implementation for each objective, including an assessment of progress towards projected outcomes, which will likely take place two times per year. In this way, the Cabinet can be kept informed of progress, and can make appropriate changes in resources, implementation strategies, or projected outcomes, where appropriate.

Appraisal

The current strategic planning process illustrates good community practices. In its early stages, the process was generally perceived as consultative, but some departments and a few constituencies felt that their input was not sought. In late July 2009, 126 concerned faculty, students, and staff signed an open letter addressed to the SPC and the entire College community, expressing concerns that the draft plan did not adequately address five key aspects: international/global issues, interdisciplinarity, experiential learning, social justice, and diversity. While 20 faculty signed the letter, fewer than 10 submitted comments through the blog that the SPC set up for community response. At a faculty open meeting on August 27, 2009, the VPAA noted that a review of the plan should reveal that, with the exception of interdisciplinarity (which is a matter to be addressed through curriculum revision, not strategic planning), all of these issues were addressed prominently in the plan. The VPAA also noted that all requests to meet with the SPC had been honored, and concerns duly passed on to the Cabinet, which was the administrative body reviewing the Strategic Plan 2015 at that point in the process. She also indicated that the strategic planning process would proceed with a greater emphasis on transparency and flexibility. The timeline for discussion of the plan and its implementation was extended by several months, which allowed for additional open meetings and small-group dinner discussions targeting
specific initiatives. As indicated earlier, the strategic plan budget is being integrated into the five-year financial plan, which will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the March or June 2010 meeting.

In addition to strategic planning, Saint Michael's has made program assessment a priority since the 2000 NEASC reaccreditation. However, this does not mean that all such efforts are completed in a systematic manner with clear outcomes and assessment tools. Some departments continue to rely on informal modes of planning and evaluation for activities that do not have significant impact on other areas of the College. At the same time, the administration's increasing use of the formal planning processes described earlier in this section has shifted the environment since the last self-study, evidenced by operational changes using assessment modalities in all major areas of the College.

While the College has developed more intentional approaches to planning and evaluation, the overall effectiveness of these processes is a work in progress. Certainly, the implementation of formal planning procedures has brought about changes in many areas, and regular surveys indicate positive results, as evidenced by reports from Information Technology and Library and Information Services. Changes in the Finance Office, especially the redesign of the financial management process, have included more supervisors in the annual financial plan and a greater sense of ownership by lower-level managers who oversee departmental budgets. The growing transparency regarding the budget processes has been both instructive and helpful. The increased involvement of faculty in the work of enrollment management and image development has led them to understand the importance of marketing—for instance, some departments have now enhanced their web sites and produce regular online newsletters and reports. Unfortunately, although the faculty has gradually come to appreciate the need to better assess how well each major—in its current design—is actually preparing students and providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills for successful careers once they graduate, there remains some discomfort with and skepticism about learning-outcomes assessment.

In 2004, the VPAA's “Architects for Learning” plan called for 10 new faculty tenure lines by 2010. The Board of Trustees approved the additional lines, and the administration and faculty were anxious to add these faculty as soon as possible. However, in spite of a review of the College's curricular needs and trends, both at Saint Michael's and in the larger academic environment, the process turned into a “bidding war” for additional lines in departments. In the end, budget constraints in subsequent years allowed the College to add only 3 of the proposed new positions.

Although the faculty appreciates the many opportunities to be involved in planning and evaluation processes across the College—in statutory, standing, and ad hoc committees—the fall 2008 faculty survey indicates some level of concern and dissatisfaction with the governance structure, including a feeling that the system of governance is unfair and ineffective. The major areas of concern center on the manner in which faculty are chosen for various committees, a perception that academic administrators play too strong a role in directing faculty affairs, and a sense that the College's departmental focus shelters faculty from a more holistic view of institution-wide concerns.

Overall, however, it is accurate to say that the College administrators, faculty, and staff pay considerable attention and accord increasing importance to systematic analysis, planning, evaluation and assessment. Whether it is through yearly planning processes, regular assessment of marketing and communications, ongoing analysis of trends regarding diversity and multicultural issues, or evaluation of student experiences, employee perceptions or campus culture, the institution does engage in widespread planning and evaluation. These and other examples, such as the Athletics Task Force, Facilities Planning Committee, Student Engagement surveys, and Image Development Initiative, will be covered in greater depth in subsequent chapters.
Projection

- Oversee implementation of the Strategic Plan and ensure sure that other planning initiatives are aligned with the Strategic Plan 2015. (President/Cabinet, FY 2011-2015).
- Provide adequate financial resources for effective institutional planning and evaluation and develop a mechanism for long-range planning to complement the five-year strategic plan (Strategic Plan: Stewardship of Resources 1. and 2.). (President/Cabinet, FY 2011-2015).
- Develop plans for the use of data, such as NSSE, to improve student learning and engagement and create a more robust evaluation of student learning in all majors and departments (Strategic Plan B.2.). (VPAA, Dean of the College and Academic Affairs Council, ongoing).

Institutional Effectiveness

Over the past 10 years, the College has dramatically improved its processes for planning and evaluation, especially in financial planning, enhancement of information technology, development of more effective library and information systems, and wise use of physical resources. Each of the areas responsible for these activities conducts annual reviews and assessments of the previous year's plan, and makes adjustments for the coming year. In addition, the major units use long-range forecasting that is consistent with the mission and priorities of the institution. In the academic arena, learning-outcomes assessment is increasingly becoming the focus of programmatic assessment, and plans for a meaningful assessment of learning goals in the liberal studies program are well underway.

The CIO has led the development and implementation of the College’s Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) program, which provides the Cabinet with current data on institutional performance for decision-making purposes. The College has experienced success with this institution-wide scorecard (see Appendix 8.1), and regularly reevaluates the report and its usage. The President has expressed his desire to expand this scorecard to capture progress toward goals at several levels, including those of the new Strategic Plan for 2015. As a result, SMC has joined a small cohort of institutions working with the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) on a pilot project involving the Excellence in Higher Education model. EHE is based on the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence as part of the (Malcolm) Baldrige National Quality program and provides standards that are informed by national quality leaders outside higher education, but also reflect national accreditation standards; thus, these two models have been adapted for use by the higher education sector and reflect best practices from each. In spring 2010, the CQIN team is beginning to discuss pilot projects, including possible revisions to the biweekly scorecard, based on the EHE framework and that will further support and enhance a campus-wide culture of data-informed decision making, excellence, and institutional effectiveness.
Standard Three
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity. Through its organizational design and governance structure, the institution creates and sustains an environment that encourages teaching, learning, service, scholarship and, where appropriate, research and creative activity. It assures provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organizational component.

Overview

The structures and procedures for governance and organization at Saint Michael's College are sound. This chapter describes and appraises the organizational structures and practices of the main governing units of the College: Board of Trustees, administrative leadership, academic leadership, faculty governance, staff governance, and student governance. While the College faces the challenges of the current economy, it has also experienced changes in senior officials, and is undertaking several important initiatives (the strategic planning process, the Image Development Initiative, and LSR revision, already mentioned in the two previous chapters). Indeed, it is in periods of transition that governance as a set of practices and relationships, not defined by structure and procedures alone, is most tested. It is, therefore, important to state at the outset that current College governance and operation continue to be characterized by a high degree of professional and personal integrity, and that governance at Saint Michael's is, at its core, driven by a strong conception of community, collaboration, collegiality, and respect for the mission and heritage of the institution.

Description

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is a self-perpetuating body with 33 members, one-third of whom must be from the Society of Saint Edmund, other religious orders, or diocesan priests. The College Bylaws are the binding authority for the Board—and the College, more generally. The last major amendment and restatement of the Bylaws was in 2002. Since then, minor changes have been implemented. The current Bylaws are available electronically in the “Trustees” intranet public folder. In the past year, a more significant review of the Bylaws was initiated as a consequence of the June 2008 Board retreat, which focused on Board effectiveness and responsibilities. Accordingly, at the request of the Trusteeship and Mission Committee and the Board Chair, the Bylaws are undergoing a review with the College’s outside counsel (see Appendix 1.2a 2002 Bylaws and Appendix 1.2b draft revision 2010 Bylaws).

The Bylaws establish the Board as the final authority on College policies and its binding role in approving other governance materials: Faculty Regulations and Bylaws, Employee Handbook, Alumni Association Bylaws, Student Code of Conduct and Policies, etc. They also provide clear delineation of the relationship between the Board and President as well as the internal organization of the Board into Committees and Subcommittees as well as procedures for the election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair (see Appendix 3.1 for a list of current members of the Board of Trustees as well as their affiliations).

Current Board Committees include the Executive, Learning, Operations and Audit, Institutional Advancement, and Trusteeship and Mission. Additional subcommittees and ad hoc committees include Honors, Investment, and Strategic Brand Management (see Appendix 3.2 for a list of Committee Assignments for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010). Board members serve for three-year terms with a maximum of
three consecutive terms. Board Chair and Vice-Chair are elected from the Board; both serve two-year terms with a maximum of two consecutive terms. Board vacancies occur on a regular, ordinary basis and less frequently from resignations. Recruitment of new members is done through a nomination system and in a systematic manner by considering particular needs of the Board and is supervised by the Trusteeship and Mission Committee. The Board continues its tradition of often electing College alumni or the parents of students or alumni. The Trusteeship and Mission Committee provides a formal orientation for new Board members.

To ensure Board member independence, each Trustee is required to annually submit a conflict of interest disclosure statement (Appendix 3.3). Following amendment of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws in 2002, the Board adopted a streamlined format for its three regularly-scheduled campus meetings. Prior to that format change, the full board attended each committee meeting. While this structure did provide each Trustee firsthand exposure to various issues, time limitations constrained the Board’s ability to explore issues in more than a summary way. Thus, meeting formats were changed in 2002 to provide more flexibility and time for discussion, debate and investigation. Summations of committee findings and deliberations are then reported by each committee chair to the full Board. Cabinet members are present for these summations to provide additional insight and clarification to address Board questions when needed. Meeting formats then provide for Board-only deliberations and discussion, where action is taken and confidential or sensitive issues can be addressed more freely among Trustees. Before the conclusion of each meeting, the Board holds an executive session; neither the President nor Board Secretary attends this final session. The Board Chair delivers a “State of the College” address at the opening assembly (Appendix 3.4) of each academic year.

Board meeting agendas and schedules are planned in advance, facilitated by the Board Chair, the President, and the Secretary of the Board. Individual committee agendas are planned by the committee chairs in consultation with appropriate Cabinet members. A typical meeting will include routine monitoring of fiscal issues (e.g., endowment, budget, etc.) as well as issues brought to the Board by the President or other constituencies of the College. Agendas and meeting materials, including a summary of College operations in the form of “dashboard indicators” are provided in advance to each Trustee (Appendix 3.5). Meetings reveal a highly engaged Board with high levels of inquisitiveness about core operations of the College as well as its possibilities and prospects. Following each regular meeting, the President distributes to the College community a summary of the meeting and Board decisions.

In April 2006, in compliance with its Bylaws, the Board elected a new Chair and Vice-Chair, and in June 2006 the Board formed a presidential search committee consisting of trustees, faculty, staff and student representation, who were assisted by an independent search consultant. The search committee (Appendix 3.6) was charged with presenting to the Board, for final selection and appointment, candidates to succeed then retiring President Marc vanderHeyden. Upon the appointment of Dr. John Neuhauser in July 2007 as the 17th president of Saint Michael’s College, a transition committee was formed, under the leadership of VPAA William Wilson, to provide a smooth transition of leadership for the internal and external communities of the College. Supervised by the Board, this process involved a comprehensive array of representatives from campus constituencies, an external search firm, and a commitment to transparency and collaboration, including frequent updates to the Board and College community.

The June 2008 Board retreat on “board effectiveness and responsibilities” resulted in several initiatives, including a review of the Bylaws, implementation of an individual Trustee self-review and reflection process (Appendix 3.7), and a process for presidential goal-setting and performance evaluation, pending completion and approval of the Strategic Plan 2015.
Administrative Leadership

As chief executive officer of the College, the President—whose performance is reviewed each year by the Board of Trustees—is accountable to the Board and serves without a specified term of office. At the retirement of President vanderHeyden, President Neuhauser was selected from a national pool of highly qualified applicants. The organizational chart of the College (Appendix 3.8) provides details on the structure and relationship among the various units of the institution.

In addition to the Assistant to the President and administrative support, the President’s Office includes a Director of Government and Community Relations. This position was added in 2000 to assist the President with the complexity of external relations and enhance the interface between the College and local, regional, and national interests. A direct relationship between the President and the Society of Saint Edmund is also maintained and formalized through the Edmundite Advisory Board (EAB).

Major College decisions are reviewed by the President’s Cabinet and, where appropriate, the Board of Trustees. As indicated in the previous chapter, the Cabinet plays a key role in the administrative structure of the College. No bylaw or regulation specifies its meetings or composition—both are at the discretion of the President. The format and frequency of Cabinet meetings are flexible; however, the Cabinet customarily meets weekly throughout the year with two full-day retreats, one immediately before the start of the academic year and the other in December after the conclusion of the fall semester. Nevertheless, the group or some subset of its members may be called to meet whenever circumstances warrant. In present practice, any Cabinet member may place topics on the agenda.

With regard to the College’s governance structure, the Cabinet serves as the senior management team, and connects the leadership and vision of the President and Board with the implementation and planning functions of faculty, staff, students, and alumni. The College’s previous and current presidents initiated several functional realignments and reallocation of responsibilities within the Cabinet, notably the elevation of the importance of marketing as well as the inclusion of the Director of Government and Community Relations. As of 2008-2009, in the current economic climate the President tasked a subgroup of the Cabinet with reviewing the advisability of filling open faculty and staff positions and examining the impact of other budgetary issues that confront the College. According to the Board’s self-appraisal (Appendix 3.9), Trustees have expressed satisfaction with the Cabinet’s ability to anticipate and respond to budget problems in a nimble and creative fashion.

Established by the Vice President for Human Resources as a forum for cross-functional communication at the middle management level, the Administrative Council meets monthly during the academic year, and its members attend listening sessions of the Board of Trustees. It also offers a regular forum for the President and Cabinet to share broadly with the administrative staff some of the issues (e.g., financial challenges and pandemic flu) facing the College.

Academic Leadership

In 2005, a new academic team took office. The VPAA of seven years retired, and the Dean returned to the faculty after 10 years in the position. Appointments to both positions were made from within the College. Dr. William Wilson, a long-time Professor of Political Science and Associate Dean of the College at the time, was appointed VPAA, and Dr. Jeffrey Trumbower, a professor of Religious Studies, was appointed Dean. Both appointments brought experience from the faculty ranks as well as significant experience in College governance. The appointment of a new VPAA from outside the College, after a national search in 2008, has revitalized conversations about the future of the College.
With the help of the Dean, the VPAA is at the core of the College’s academic enterprise. The roles and responsibilities for both the Dean and VPAA are defined in the Faculty Regulations (see Appendix 3.15), with a specific requirement for faculty involvement in the appointments for both positions. For the VPAA, faculty recommendations go to the President and for the Dean, to the VPAA. In both cases, the President makes the final appointment, with Trustee approval for the VPAA. These positions are supported by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Assistant Dean of the College. The Dean of the College and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs report directly to the VPAA.

Additional direct reports to the VPAA include the Registrar, Director of Library and Information Services, Director of Institutional Research, and Director for Career Development. These direct reports as well as the Assistant Dean and the Director for Foundation Relations and Sponsored Programs comprise the Academic Affairs Council (AAC). This group meets weekly to discuss operational, policy, and implementation issues for academic affairs.

The VPAA is an ex officio member of the Faculty Council and chairs the College’s Student Retention Committee and Risk Assessment Committee, which reviews all proposals for international trips with students (e.g., international faculty-led courses and athletic trips). The VPAA oversees key organizational transitions, as was the case in 2004, when Academic Enrichment programs and activities were consolidated under the supervision of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and 2009, when the Office of Career Development began reporting to the VPAA. The VPAA also presided over creation of the Edmundite Center for Faith and Culture as well as the organizational structure of the Edmundite Center for Peace and Justice and the hiring of its full-time director.

The Dean of the College has primary responsibility for faculty recruitment, development, retention, and evaluation as well as oversight of the academic programs, including all graduate programs, undergraduate majors, minors, and general education, all of which are described in detail in the next chapter. Nineteen department chairs and five graduate program directors report to the Dean, as do 16 coordinators of interdisciplinary programs, the coordinator of the second language requirement and the coordinator of writing proficiency (since fall 2009). The division of responsibilities between the VPAA and Dean currently places a significant proportion of ground-level operation of academic programs in the Dean’s office. He meets weekly with the Faculty Council and CEPC, and presides over the Dean’s Council, which consists of departmental chairs and graduate program directors. The Dean also meets with the Graduate Council separately. He has an evaluative role, which has included, most recently, implementation of more extensive fourth-year reviews for tenure-track faculty and senior reviews, as part of the College’s merit-pay system (Appendix 3.10).

The Associate Dean’s portfolio of responsibilities has evolved significantly since the creation of the position in 1998. In addition to a number of programmatic assignments, the current primary responsibilities of the Associate Dean are to oversee and supervise the directors and coordinators of academic enrichment programs—which include the offices of study abroad, peer tutoring, service-learning, academic programming, accessibility services, academic internships, and the Writing Center—and the Academic Enrichment Commons, which houses those programs; to supervise the Director of Foundation Relations and Sponsored Programs; to coordinate the College’s undergraduate summer session; and to manage all aspects of the college-wide 2010 reaccreditation Self-Study.

The Assistant Dean is responsible for oversight of student academic progress and engagement. Programmatic functions include student academic policy and performance, academic integrity, student outcomes assessment, administration of various student surveys, academic advising, and new student academic orientation (summer registration and academic components of fall orientation). The Assistant Dean also works closely with department chairs and the institutional research office for implementation of the College’s undergraduate
program assessments. As of July 2010, both the Director for Accessibility Support Services and the Coordinator of Peer Tutoring will report to the Assistant Dean.

**Faculty Governance**

Faculty self-governance in matters of educational policy and peer evaluation plays a vital role in actualizing the College’s mission. The faculty manages its own affairs and contributes to the shared governance of the institution through the Faculty Assembly, its statutory standing committees, and service on college-wide committees. Faculty are also part of the formal academic governance structure through their appointment as department chairs and program directors or coordinators and through service on the Dean’s and Graduate Councils. Individual faculty members expend tremendous effort in these governance and service-related activities. As will be discussed in the chapter on the faculty, this involvement can place stress on the time available for other activities, especially for those devoted to the demands of higher expectations for scholarship. Service and leadership expectations rise with rank and feature explicitly in the criteria for promotion to full professor.

The purposes of the Faculty Assembly are spelled out in section I-B-3-a of the *Faculty Regulations* (Appendix 3.11). Much of the Assembly’s work is done through the following statutory, or standing, committees: Faculty Council (advisory to the VPAA on personnel matters, such as tenure and promotion, with membership on faculty search committees), CEPC, Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) (advises the faculty and, through the VPAA, the administration on issues related to faculty compensation, the professional environment and financial exigencies, and review and revision of the *Faculty Regulations*), Academic Review Board (advises the Dean on the status of students likely to become candidates for academic dismissal), and Dispute Resolution Panel (reviews grievances brought forward by individual faculty members). Faculty regulations also enable administrators to appoint faculty to *ad hoc* committees. As a matter of course, the Faculty Council is consulted about these appointments. The Bylaws of the Faculty Assembly (see Appendix 3.16) also establish a number of committees including Enrollment Management, Educational Technology, Honors Program, Lecture, Library and Instructional Materials, Teaching Resources, and Faculty Development.

The Faculty Assembly nominates and votes on the membership of the Faculty Council, FWC, and faculty representatives to the Board of Trustees. The Faculty Council, in turn, is currently responsible for appointing faculty to all other standing committees. It is through standing and *ad hoc* committees that the faculty, working with the administration, assures the academic integrity of the educational programs and effectiveness of the faculty assessment process.

The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)—comprised of the Moderator of the Faculty Assembly, chairs of the Faculty Council, Faculty Welfare Committee, CPEC, and two faculty representatives to the Board—coordinates the Assembly agenda and represents the Assembly when it is inconvenient or impractical to convene the entire faculty. The Executive Committee meets regularly with the President and senior academic administration to consider topics of mutual interest to the orderly governance of the College.

The structure of faculty governance has been relatively stable since the 2000 NEASC reaccreditation. In 2004, however, the Curriculum Committee became the Curriculum and Education Policy Committee (CEPC), which expanded the committee’s responsibility for academic policies. More recently, two committees (Admissions and Student Financial Aid) have been combined into one Enrollment Management Committee. This new committee coheres well with organizational changes in the administration and has ensured faculty involvement in key issues of marketing, recruitment and admission standards. The Committee’s relationship with both the VPAA and Vice President for Enrollment are specified in policy terms. Faculty committees have clear charges detailed in the *Faculty Regulations and Bylaws*, but are self-governing.
**Staff Governance**

In the past decade, non-academic staff members have participated in College governance through the Staff Welfare Committee (SWC). This 12-member committee is elected in a proportional manner from various areas (Appendix 3.12), and elections are staggered to ensure continuity in committee membership. Formerly, the SWC focused solely on wellness and event planning; the current committee, however, advocates for a broader role on the working conditions and environment for non-academic staff. Currently, the SWC discusses and develops policy suggestions that are provided to the Office of Human Resources and other appropriate campus offices. Discussions include issues related to work environment, management, and training as well as compensation planning and other workplace-related topics. Through its web site, Staff Welfare Committee, the SWC expresses concerns, needs, and initiatives in both formal and informal communication with the College. The self-appraisal of the Office of Human Resources (Appendix 3.13) notes a role for the SWC in analyzing compensation data and setting salary goals and targets, including a proposal for staff compensation changes presented directly to the Cabinet in October 2008. While the SWC is the formal avenue for the articulation of non-academic staff concerns, a campus-wide staff-only satisfaction survey was administered in summer 2008 (Appendix 3.14). Both SWC input and internal review have resulted in several recent human resources initiatives.

**Student Governance**

The Student Association (SA) is the official governing body of the student community and functions through legislative action of the Student Senate and decisions of the elected officers of the Executive Board (E-Board), which consists of the SA President and Vice-President as well as seven Executive Secretaries (finance, academics, student life, communications, two for programming, and student policy). The E-Board is the student body’s liaison with the administration, faculty, and Trustees. In particular, their communication with the Board—through formal listening sessions and more informal meetings—is an important component of student governance.

Students are involved in broader governance through representatives on the CEPC and, where appropriate, through links to other facets of faculty and administration governance. For instance, during the 2008-2009 academic year, the Student Senate and the Faculty Assembly generated a joint resolution for an enhanced 24-hour study space on campus library. In addition to their formal governance structure, students are active in other interest groups on campus. They have, for instance, provided key leadership and enthusiasm to the Environmental Council, and the DWG, two special-interest groups of faculty, staff, and students.

**Policies and Procedures**

The policies and procedures for College governance and operations are captured in the College Bylaws (Appendix 1.2a 2002 Bylaws and Appendix 1.2b draft revision 2010 Bylaws), Faculty Regulations (Appendix 3.15), Bylaws of the Faculty Assembly (Appendix 3.16), Employee Handbook (Appendix 3.17), Student Code of Conduct and College Policies (Appendix 3.18), and Constitution and Bylaws of the Student Association (Appendix 3.19 and 3.20). Most of these documents have been revised or updated within the last 12 months.
Appraisal

In the fall 2008 employee survey (Appendix 3.21), of those who considered themselves able to judge, more than 90% felt that the effectiveness of the College’s governance structure had improved or was unchanged (40% felt it had improved). In the same survey, over 90% of respondents felt that the openness and transparency of College communications had improved or were unchanged (53% felt they had improved). These survey results provide support for the soundness of overall governance at Saint Michael's.

In recent years, the community’s perception has been that the Board of Trustees is committed and engaged, with enthusiastic, curious members dedicated to the welfare of the College. There was, for example, a significant level of engagement when FWC members worked with the Board on faculty evaluation and compensation in the development of the merit-pay system and appropriate faculty compensation targets. However, since the Board Bylaws revision in 2002, the faculty has not been formally represented on the Board of Trustees. Although the Faculty Assembly continues to elect two representatives to the Board, they only attend listening sessions, unless otherwise invited. As a result, the extent and intensity of faculty involvement with the Trustees has waxed and waned. At least anecdotally, faculty complain that time constraints at listening sessions have limited the level of engagement and board-faculty interaction.

Statistical data from the spring 2009 survey of Trustees (Appendix 3.22) gives a clearer view of the Board’s perspective on its own effectiveness. The survey was completed by about two-thirds of the Trustees and gives some insight into their perceptions on governance. No individual Trustee felt that the effectiveness of the governance structure of the College had declined since 2005; of those who felt able to judge, more than 60% felt effectiveness had improved. Similarly, a majority of those who responded felt that the openness and transparency of College communications had improved. Trustee responses about their decision-making processes, perceptions of the availability of information, and its format reveal that while the majority feel that enough information is “always available” (and in an appropriate format), a significant number still answered “usually” or “sometimes.” Half of the Trustees who responded felt they “always” have a committee structure and meeting format that promotes effective Board deliberation and decision-making.

President Neuhauser has communicated with the College community in a clear and consistent manner about Trustee meetings and other significant College-wide issues. For instance, during the fall 2008 economic crisis and following general and local media coverage of endowment declines and reduced enrollments, he responded with a message to the College community, and subsequently, the Vice President for Finance became the voice of the administration in e-mails on the institution’s fiscal stability and response to the crisis (see Appendix 9.16).

While making his own transition to Saint Michael's, President Neuhauser also managed the replacement of three Cabinet members (the VPAA, Vice President for Finance, and Vice President for Institutional Advancement) during his first two years in office. The Vice President for Human Resources oversaw each national search, which involved a transparent, deliberate process with participation from appropriate campus constituencies. These new administrative hires have caused minimal disruption, since President Neuhauser’s prior Board membership (since 2001) facilitated a smooth transition in the operation of the College and its overall ethos. However, adjustments to the details of governance and development of a leadership style at the Cabinet level are ongoing.

According to the fall 2008 faculty survey (Appendix 3.23), a significant majority of faculty (almost 70%) feel that serving on a faculty committee is a vital and useful part of their work. Deep engagement with College policy renders the workload of particular committees significant and consistent. For this reason, some faculty committees have expressed concerns about workload and the importance of continuity in experience and leadership. This may lead some faculty to forego service on certain committees as they devote time to
scholarship to meet expectations for tenure and promotion as well as post-tenure fifth-year reviews. The Faculty Development Committee (FDC) has inquired about increased terms for its members. Similarly, the elected Faculty Welfare Committee reports on how the complexity of its business requires considerable diligence and particular kinds of expertise from its members. In both cases, staggered terms are intended to minimize these concerns, but are not always effective. Elections of faculty to key committees (including Faculty Council) and Faculty Council appointments to others are a crucial element of faculty faith in effective governance.

Faculty concerns over governance that appeared in the open-ended comments from the fall 2008 survey are common to college and university faculty generally, and are often based on perceptions rather than fact. Faculty expressed concerns that faculty governance is not taken seriously, that the structures of governance—centered on departments—are detrimental to change, that the work of committees is not equally distributed, and even that faculty disorganization leads to more administrative control. These concerns are serious symptoms of a faculty sense of disenfranchisement and might be put to rest with better communication, and especially more attention to the actual records of governance.

In addition, an important administrative evaluation process bears mention. The faculty Committee for the Evaluation of Administrators is appointed by the Faculty Council and, in operation since 1995, has requested faculty evaluation of senior administrators on a staggered basis (different administrators each year, with each administrator evaluated every three years). Provided with a job description, faculty are given a series of criteria to evaluate senior administrators. Results of the survey, which typically are completed by a relatively small proportion of faculty, are provided to the appropriate supervisor (or the Trustees, in the case of the President). It is important that the administration acknowledge the valuable work of the faculty in this evaluation because, while it is clear that faculty committees are defined as advisory, they have become embedded to a great degree in the decision-making structure of the College. This is especially true in areas of evaluation, where FWC and Faculty Council have worked closely with the administration in devising systems and procedures to ensure due process and fair treatment. It is also true to a great degree with the CEPC and its role in the review and recommendation of the allocation of faculty lines and the associated programmatic review. The FDC makes recommendations for research development grants and VPAA summer grants for students. This stability is due in significant part to leadership longevity and the replacement, in 2005, of the retiring VPAA and the Dean of the College with internal candidates.

The Faculty Council’s Self-Appraisal for the Self-Study (Appendix 3.24) carefully reviews faculty perceptions of its role in the many facets of faculty evaluation. In this process, the Council can only provide recommendations to the Dean and VPAA, but these have traditionally held considerable weight, as they represent a careful and thorough peer evaluation. Recent tenure decisions have brought about concerns regarding the role of the Faculty Council and its procedures. Given the strict confidentiality of the Council’s evaluation process, the legitimacy of its core functions depends on faculty trust. These issues may be addressed by the resumption of Council open informational meetings (which had been a welcome practice in the past), as well as new initiatives through departmental chairs.

Two other pressing issues will challenge faculty governance in the coming years: the LSR revision and the response of the College to the current economic situation. Linking these two issues with the Strategic Plan 2015 for the allocation of resources will be critical in terms of governance. The LSR revision directly involves the CEPC in academic leadership, and because those issues are linked, the importance of transparency and legitimacy in the strategic planning process cannot be understated.

Similarly, the 2008-2009 fiscal environment required the FWC to engage with the administration over compensation and working conditions. The beginning of that academic year was marked by some difficulty in communication between the administration and the faculty. This appeared in a series of meetings with the FWC and in interactions between the faculty, President, and VPAA at Faculty Assembly. The FEC raised this issue with the president and the VPAA, highlighting its concerns about the administration’s responsiveness to
committees. Both the President and VPAA responded positively to the committee’s call for transparency and frequent communication between the faculty and administration as critical for good governance.

As in the past, students continue to be highly involved in leadership and have an array of relations with the College administration, but the emergence of student leaders outside of the SA is equally impressive. In the case of the DWG and Environmental Council, the emergence of a cross-constituency of staff, faculty, and students has challenged the thinking and operation of the College and enhanced its consideration of diversity and sustainability issues. Student energies and persistence in this regard are noteworthy.

**Projection**

- Develop evaluation process for Board self-evaluation and operations. *(Board of Trustees, FY 2010).*
- Review existing administrative functions for more efficient operations, cost reductions, more cross-functional collaboration and elimination of redundancies *(Strategic Plan: Operational Effectiveness).* *(VPAA, FY 2010).*
- Request a Board revision of the definition of faculty workload, in connection with the adoption of the 4/4 course-model, and communicate this definition to faculty. Assess the effectiveness of those communications. *(Faculty Welfare Committee in consultation with Dean and VPAA, Board of Trustees, FY 2010).*
- Review fiscal operations of all SA units, to be followed by ongoing oversight of these operations. *(Vice President for Finance, Director of Student Activities, and SA officers, Fall 2009).*
- Assess the current faculty committee structure, including appointment process and reporting. Make recommendations to the Faculty Assembly. *(Faculty Executive Committee, April 2010).*
- Assess relations between the administration and the Faculty Executive and Welfare Committees, and the CEPC. *(Faculty Executive Committee, FY 2009).*
- Assess the role of the two faculty representatives to the Board of Trustees in order to improve Board/faculty interaction. *(Faculty Executive Committee, FY 2011).*

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The Board of Trustees assesses its effectiveness both at the level of individual Trustees and of Board operations more generally. At this time, the Board as well as all the governing bodies of the College are reviewing and revising their procedures for self-assessment and evaluation. In a time of financial challenges and rapid changes in higher education, colleges must be more responsive and nimble in order to survive and thrive. The College’s senior administration has begun discussions with the Faculty Executive Committee about the need to review faculty governance to determine possible changes in practices that will allow for more efficient responses and change. Although these discussions are in the early stages, the administration will continue the conversations in an attempt to achieve maximum flexibility and institutional effectiveness.
Standard Four
THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The institution’s academic programs are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes. The institution works systematically and effectively to plan, provide, oversee, evaluate, improve, and assure the academic quality and integrity of its academic programs and the credits and degrees awarded. The institution develops the systematic means to understand how and what students are learning and to use the evidence obtained to improve the academic program.

Overview

The academic program is at the heart of the College’s mission and the reason for its existence. The program is rigorous and calibrated to the appropriate developmental levels of students (first-year students through graduate level). The undergraduate academic program offers degrees in 21 different majors for the Bachelor of Arts degree, and 10 for the Bachelor of Science. It also contains a provision for custom-designed majors, individually approved by the CEPC, and a few students graduate each year with a custom-designed major. Students may also choose from 35 minor programs. Each major is built on the same LSR foundation. In addition, some majors require study in cognate disciplines (e.g., Biology requires Chemistry) or a program of study in a different discipline (e.g., Journalism requires a minor in one of the liberal arts or sciences). The academic program for graduate students includes five graduate programs leading to master’s degrees in Clinical Psychology, Education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Theology and Pastoral Ministry, and Administration and Management, which stopped admitting new students in 2008.

This chapter is divided into four main topics: 1) The Undergraduate Degree Program—which includes a description of the LSR and the majors, 2) The Graduate Degree Programs, 3) Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit, and 4) Assessment of Student Learning. Each has separate description, appraisal, and projection sections, in addition to subdivisions that address specific criteria of the standard.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM

Description

Liberal Studies Requirements

Saint Michael's College currently requires all students to take courses in different disciplines in order to graduate. The minimum is 13 courses (sometimes offset by Advanced Placement credits) and the maximum is 15, depending on the second-language requirement determined by placement testing. All students are able to count at least one, and often two, LSR toward their major. The LSR has been in place since 1995, with the laboratory science requirement fully implemented in 2002. The basic structure of the current LSR was established in the 1970s, when a distribution model replaced the multiyear core curriculum—known colloquially as the “Dupont Plan.”

The “core” of the LSR, defined as educational experiences that all students share, consists of four components: PH103 “Introduction to Philosophy,” RS120 or 130 (a broad introduction to the study of Christianity in either a stand-alone or team-taught version), along with two competencies: Writing and Second Language. All other LSR requirements are delivered in a distribution model, in which students choose from a menu of options: First-Year Seminar (FYS), another course each in Philosophy and Religious Studies, Humanities (3 courses), Social Science (3 courses), Science course with lab, another science course or Mathematics, and Artistic Experience.
All First-Year Seminars (FYS) are writing-intensive and include units on academic integrity and research skills, regardless of the seminar’s specific topic. In addition, all students must demonstrate basic competency in a second language and writing in English, accomplished through testing and/or coursework. The Philosophy and Religious Studies requirements reflect the College’s Catholic intellectual tradition. Faculty members who teach these foundational core experiences are in regular contact with one another within their respective units (Religious Studies, Philosophy, FYS, and Modern Languages), sharing syllabi and discussing common goals. Adjuncts who teach core courses are closely monitored by their respective department chairs.

Beyond this core, the central animating idea of the current LSR is that exposure to a variety of disciplines and modes of thought produces a well-rounded education and a foundation for any major. Exploratory students (those who have not yet declared a major) in particular are logistical beneficiaries of this system, since the LSR allows them to explore a variety of disciplines, while at the same time fulfilling general requirements.

In September 2009, the faculty voted to adopt a document detailing the outcomes for general education for undergraduates, the first clear document of its kind ever for the College (Appendix 4.1). Then, after a full year of intense study and discussion, and almost 20 years after the idea was first proposed, in December 2009, the faculty voted to adopt a 4/4 course-credit model. Under this model, the typical student will take 4 or 4 ½ courses per semester, and all courses will be either full or half-courses, replacing the current variable-credit model in which courses can be 1-4 credits. The plan is explained in greater detail in the Dean’s “white paper” of August 2009 (Appendix 4.2). The vote on the plan was 76-51, enough of a mandate to move forward, provided the Board of Trustees ultimately approves it. Associated with this change are recommendations from the faculty about specific policies for students and teaching load; it is not clear that all of these policies will be adopted by the administration and the Board, but they form a baseline from which to work (Appendix 4.3). Faculty will be fully consulted before implementation of any deviations from the motion that passed.

The next step in the curricular revision, in spring 2010, will be a proposal from the CEPC for a new LSR, based on the outcomes document and assuming a 4/4 course-credit model. Implementation for the whole package is slated for fall, 2011 at the earliest or fall, 2012 at the latest. All courses at the College, especially current three-credit courses, will have to undergo scrutiny by an ad-hoc faculty committee and re-approval to count as a “full course” in the new model. All majors and minors will have to be reconfigured and reapproved by the CEPC. Greater student engagement in each course and a focus on and deepening of student learning are goals of the change. The plan includes metrics to assess the effectiveness of this change, including monitoring of library usage statistics (both electronic and print resources), improvement in NSSE question 7r (“You have worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations.”), and increased student/faculty research.

**Major and Minor Programs**

All majors at the College share some common features: an introductory course, usually one that also fulfills an LSR; some type of upper-level capstone experience—be it a lengthy written thesis, research proposal, laboratory research, senior seminar, portfolio, or experiential learning; a particular course or courses designated as “writing-intensive,” to ensure that students learn in a small group setting (cap of 18) what constitutes effective writing in their discipline; and a special “honors” experience for majors also enrolled in the Honors Program.

Most majors are housed within departments, but there are also six interdisciplinary majors (American Studies, Biochemistry, Engineering 3+2 programs, Environmental Science, Gender Studies, and Information Systems). Each interdisciplinary major has a coordinator and an advisory committee, charged with regulating policies and requirements for those majors, assessing student learning, and overseeing the general quality of the major.
The College has made important strides in the last 10 years in faculty-student research, senior seminars/capstone experiences, academic internships, and other upper-level experiential learning. In 2008-2009, 234 students engaged in supervised academic internships (up from 178 in the previous year); the majority were done by students in the College’s three pre-professional departments (Business Administration and Accounting –61, Journalism and Mass Communication –53, Education –17) and Psychology (80), but a greater number of majors in the liberal arts and sciences have also undertaken internships (other social sciences –5, humanities fields –11, natural sciences –7). The level of student/faculty research activity has grown significantly in recent years; for instance, in the summer of 2009, 39 undergraduate students were on campus and engaged in non-credit-bearing research projects with professors, paid through a combination of internal and external funding, compared to 2006, when only 15 students were doing summer research on campus.

A number of majors have required senior research theses (e.g., History, Religious Studies, Psychology, American Studies); others require students to develop a rigorous research proposal that is scrutinized by multiple faculty members (Chemistry, Biochemistry, Environmental Science—for these majors it is the development of the proposal that matters, not the execution of the work); in others, students participate in a senior seminar involving a substantial research paper that is presented to an audience of peers and faculty (e.g., English, Spanish, French, Political Science, Philosophy, Biology). The pre-professional majors have their own versions of the capstone experience. Business requires an internship, a portfolio evaluating previous business experience, or a consulting class that does real-world consulting for a nonprofit agency. Journalism requires a senior project in one of a variety of media (print, documentary film, or web). Education requires a student-teaching semester and an extensive portfolio. No major is a mere collection of 10 or 11 courses. All have distinctive educational experiences at the upper-level designed to consolidate and apply the knowledge gained over the course of study in the major. Many of these experiences have been developed since the previous NEASC review.

The College offers 35 minors, some housed within single departments, while others are interdisciplinary. Of the 457 graduates in the class of 2009, 267 (58%) had minors. Of those, 214 had one minor, 48 had two, and five had three. This proliferation of minors is possible because the College currently allows unlimited “double-dipping” for minors. A maximum of two LSR courses may count toward the major, but major and LSR courses often may “double-count” for a minor in an unlimited way.

**Undergraduate Academic Support Services**

The undergraduate education at Saint Michael's College is characterized by small to medium class size, averaging 18-19 students per section, and a great deal of personal interaction with professors. In addition to faculty commitment, a number of academic support services are available: the Writing Center, the Language Learning Resource Center, Accessibility Support Services for Students with Special Needs, Peer Tutoring, and study-skills advising. The support these units provide is reflected in NSSE results, where Saint Michael's consistently outshines all comparison groups, for both first-year students and seniors, in the category of providing a “supportive campus environment.” This includes academic and student-life support for achieving academic and personal success; 69.7% of first-year respondents and 67.9% of seniors say the College provides a supportive environment, compared with 61.0% and 58.0% for all NSSE institutions; and 65.0% and 61.5% for all Carnegie-classification liberal arts schools. This highly significant difference is corroborated by another datum: our the five-year graduation rate compared to other schools with the same selectivity profile for incoming students. ACT Retention National Data show that nationwide, “selective” (middle 50% SAT scores 1470-1770) institutions offering master's and even those offering only bachelor’s degrees typically have five-year graduation rates from 65-69%, while Saint Michael's College has been averaging in the high 70s over the last five years (see Saint Michael's Facts, December 2008, p. 69 (Appendix 4.4a) and pp. 75-76 (Appendix 4.4b). This suggests a significant amount of “value added” in a Saint Michael's undergraduate
education—given the same inputs, more of our students achieve greater academic success than at many other institutions, and they report at very high levels that they benefited from a supportive campus environment.

Service-Learning
In 2005-2006, an ad hoc task force was formed to garner institutional support for the service-learning work already being done by faculty and propose formal recognition for the practice. The CEPC approved a formal set of criteria for service-learning coursework that the task force proposed. In fall 2007, service-learning was institutionalized with the appointment of a coordinator. That year, over 15 service-learning courses were offered in nine disciplines, engaging nearly 300 students in over 6,000 hours of local and/or international service connected to classroom objectives and academic learning. The College is a member of Vermont Campus Compact (VCC), the consortium of Vermont college and university campuses that actively promotes student engagement and service in higher education. The coordinator works with a Service-Learning Advisory Board that surveys the needs of the program and advances service-learning pedagogy and opportunities. The advisory board also solicits and reviews requests from faculty who desire a service-learning designation for their course and makes recommendations to the CEPC, which has ultimate approval for such designation.

Study Abroad
This office was established in 1987 with the appointment of a part-time coordinator and is now run by a full-time director and part-time assistant. Over 20 third-party program providers and exchange partners provide students with opportunities to study in over 70 countries. These program models differ and can last for a summer, semester, or whole academic year. Students can also register for short-term courses led by Saint Michael’s faculty. Since the last NEASC review, 1,454 students have taken part in credit-bearing semester-length study abroad in over 60 countries. In 2003-2004, the College reached its goal of sending 30% of the graduating class abroad. Since then (with the exception of 29% in 2006-07) Saint Michael’s has consistently sent over 30% of its undergraduate students on overseas programs; 43% of the Class of 2008 participated in “for-credit” overseas study.

Academic Internship Program
This program gives students an opportunity to integrate their academic work with a professional experience. Students are advised and guided by a site supervisor as well as a faculty supervisor from their department at the College. Each intern is expected to develop a journal, write a reflective paper, prepare a final presentation and/or complete additional readings relevant to the internship. Academic Internships may occur during the fall, spring, or summer terms. In 2008-2009, 234 students engaged in academic internships—up from 178 in the previous year.

Student/Faculty Research
The number of students conducting independent or class-based research with professors, especially in the natural sciences, psychology, mathematics, and computer science, has grown significantly since the last NEASC review. It is difficult to provide exact statistics for this activity, due to the wide variety of student research with professors throughout the year and the self-reported tracking that was done in the past. However, student/faculty research has increased significantly over the years, and summer research offers a case in point. While the practice was not even mentioned in the College’s 2000 Self-Study, that number has now mushroomed to 39 students engaged in grant-funded research on campus with faculty in summer 2009. Approximately half the funding for this research comes from internal sources (e.g., the office of the VPAA and the Social Science Research Center), while the remainder comes from external grants to faculty.

Student/faculty research is facilitated by a faculty committee, the Undergraduate Research Committee (URC), which also organizes a day-long annual spring research symposium (first held in 2009), during which students present papers to peers and faculty as at a conference, and a College-wide poster session in the Ross Sports Center showcasing student research (both class-based and independent). In addition to presenting their work during the symposium, many students participate and present their work at regional, national, and
international professional conferences and some publish their work in a variety of journals. In the future, URC hopes to “leverage” this new trend to create a “culture of inquiry” among all students and increase the academic reputation of the College.

**Summer Session**
The program has been reduced over the past 10 years, both by circumstance and design. Enrollment has declined significantly in recent years, due primarily to the national economic context, but also to the growth of summer programs at other local institutions. For instance, tuition for summer courses at Saint Michael’s is typically more than twice that at the University of Vermont, and thus, by 2004, it became clear that the College could not successfully compete with other institutions for local students. Marketing for the program was reduced to fliers sent to the College’s students and ads in the student paper, the Defender. The undergraduate summer program was then redesigned to satisfy the needs of Saint Michael’s students, with most courses fulfilling LSR or major requirements. In fall 2008, the new VPAA initiated a pilot program for hybrid online summer courses; it was a success, as reported in surveys completed by the five pilot faculty and 36 students enrolled in the pilot courses. In addition, the pilot required the use of eCollege, which provided training in the administration of the eCollege student evaluation tool. This will greatly improve the ongoing need to better assess summer courses.

**Honors Program**
This program started in the late 1980s, and has grown in stature and prominence. In its early years, there was no coordinator, only a faculty committee. In recent years the program was enhanced by the appointment of a senior faculty coordinator who is given a one-course release per year to administer the program. This course release will be increased to one course per semester in 2010-2011. Improvement in the program is most evident in the growth of student ownership; they are now much more involved than ever before in discussing requirements, planning special events, producing a handbook, and meeting with the faculty Honors Committee, which advises the coordinator and oversees the program. Honors housing continues to be available, particularly to first-years, who wish to live with other Honors students, but is not mandatory. In the 2000 NEASC Self-Study, the College reported that it was difficult for students in many majors to complete the program. Since then, the requirements have been streamlined, Honors courses have been given smaller caps, and more focus placed on honors experiences in each major. The result of all these changes has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of entering Honors students who actually graduate in the program. In 2001, of 59 seniors, only 16 graduated in the program (28.6%), but in 2009, of 83 seniors, 36 graduated in it (43.4%). There will always be students who, for whatever reason, will not finish the program (for some, this will be the result of falling below the requisite GPA), but the percentage of students who graduate with Honors is steadily increasing. In spring 2009, 299 students from all four classes (roughly 15% of the student body), were in the Honors Program.

**Phi Beta Kappa**
Since the last NEASC review, Saint Michael’s College was invited to shelter a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa after an extensive three-year application process that concluded with a visit in 2003 by a distinguished team of faculty from Princeton, Skidmore, and Boston University. The physicist from Princeton reported that he was particularly impressed by our science programs and facilities, something that surprised him given Saint Michael’s size and location. Currently, 24 faculty and staff are members of Phi Beta Kappa, including President Neuhauser. The College’s chapter was cited by the national organization in 2008-2009 as one of the most active in the country (Appendix 4.5).
Office of Career Development
The Office of Career Development provides students and alumni with the support and encouragement they require to succeed in realizing life goals. Career development encompasses career planning, career information, and the acquisition of job-search skills. The guiding philosophy focuses on education rather than placement. Students can meet individually with a career counselor for help in identifying their interests, abilities, and values, and to clarify their career goals. Students benefit from self-assessment inventories and a computer-assisted guidance system, as well as career-related programs and presentations. In addition, the staff also provides workshops on résumé writing, graduate schools, interviewing, and job-search strategies.

Articulation Agreements
The College has several articulation agreements with institutions providing graduate education, allowing for a more seamless, cost-effective, and time-saving transition from Saint Michael’s to a master’s program. The College also has a 3+2 Engineering Program with the University of Vermont and Clarkson University, as well as long-standing agreements with the University of Vermont’s doctoral program in Physical Therapy (Doctor of Physical Therapy), and Clarkson University’s MBA program. The College has a cross-registration agreement with Champlain College and Burlington College that allows students from each institution to take one course per semester from the other institution free of charge. In spring 2009 the College signed a cross-registration agreement with the Albany College of Pharmacy, which has recently opened a branch campus in Vermont, and there are plans to develop a more comprehensive articulation agreement to facilitate students’ enrollment into the Albany College of Pharmacy’s graduate program.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING IN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

In response to the previous NEASC reaccreditation report, the VPAA directed the Associate Dean of the College in 2000 to develop a learning-outcomes assessment program for every department and major. Supported by a grant from the Davis Foundation, Saint Michael's joined a consortium of New England colleges and universities to develop a comprehensive assessment program, convinced that institutional effectiveness occurs when suitable and fitting measures delineate our success and point to areas needing greater attention. Each academic department assigned a faculty member to oversee the development of learning goals and assessment tools for learning outcomes for their departments. The first reports appeared at the end of the 2003-2004 academic year, with nine of 18 majors posting both learning goals and outcome results. By 2007-2008, all departments and majors had developed plans and posted results on the College's assessment web site. Some department plans are more robust than others, and uneven application of the assessment results continues, in terms of implementing modifications and improvements in the various majors. In addition to the learning-outcomes assessment each department engages in various forms of planning and evaluation, but these are generally less formal.

The E-series forms for NEASC (see page 107) were introduced to the department chairs and program coordinators in fall 2008. Portions of several Dean’s Council meetings were devoted to them, discussing both how they should be completed, and how departments could use them to improve program assessment efforts. The Dean and VPAA have used them to identify programs that will need guidance in developing learning outcomes and assessment. The E-series forms as well as all NEASC submissions related to departments and programs are being used in the new process, initiated by the VPAA in 2009, for the implementation of a formal six-year cycle of program review for all academic programs. The implementation started in 2009-2010 with five departments and programs (American Studies, Business Management and Accounting, Classics, History, and Journalism and Mass Communication).

The one area of the curriculum not addressed by the learning-outcomes assessment initiative described above is the LSR. Starting in 2007, the CEPC began work on a revision of the LSR, holding several meetings with the faculty and inviting further comments and suggestions through a blog and web site. The current focus of the committee's work is a set of learning outcomes (knowledge and skills) that would form and inform a new
In September 2009, the committee presented the revised version of learning outcomes, which was approved by the faculty. Throughout the 2009-2010 academic year, the committee will develop a liberal studies curriculum in line with these learning outcomes, together with specific assessment criteria for each goal. The aim is to bring a revised liberal studies program to the faculty for a vote in May 2010.

Two academic majors/programs are accredited by external agencies: Chemistry (accredited every five years by the American Chemical Society, last validated in 2004-2005; the next five-year report is due in 2009-2010) and Education (accredited by the Vermont State Department of Education—also on a five-year cycle). In addition, the College’s Intensive English Program, housed in the Applied Linguistics Department, is accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation. A number of other departments are very good at tracking outcomes for their graduates, using the feedback for continual improvement. For instance, the Business and Accounting Department has been using a standardized assessment tool in Strategic Management for the last several years, and has utilized the results for improvements in course design. The History department has developed a new rubric for program assessment in their senior thesis course, resulting from their department review in 2009. Biology, Computer Science, Mathematics, and Political Science keep excellent track of their graduates’ careers and further schooling (see self-appraisals of these individual departments for more details). Other departments have anecdotal data about graduates, but do not systematically collect it.

All departments use the five-year-out survey conducted by the Office of Institutional Research to gauge graduates’ satisfaction with individual majors. Most departments also conduct some type of exit poll of seniors, reported in each department’s annual update on the College’s assessment web site. All departments maintain a presence on this page, consisting of a foundational document and yearly updates. The utility of these program assessment documents varies widely among departments; some take the process very seriously and truly use it to understand what and how students learn, but for others the annual process is more perfunctory. With the introduction of departmental reviews every six years beginning in 2009, the assessment web site should gain a higher profile and will be scrutinized more regularly by other faculty and the administration. The replacement for the outgoing Associate Dean will oversee that process, as the position is being reconfigured to focus on teaching resources and outcomes assessment.

INTEGRITY IN THE AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT

The seriousness with which the faculty approaches the awarding of credit is clear from the multi-year process that ended in the fall 2009 faculty vote to approve new 4/4 curriculum proposal. All aspects of the 4/4 curriculum conversation (e.g., student course-load, faculty teaching load) centered on academic rigor and the integrity of course credits. Following the approval of the new 4/4 curriculum, and in consultation with the Academic Administration, the CEPC has established processes for a full review of all majors and minors as well as a full review of all courses that will be offered under the new curriculum (Appendix 4.3).

The College’s degrees and programs follow widely accepted higher-education practices in awarding academic credit for coursework. The requirements for earning baccalaureate and master’s degrees are published in the College’s catalogues, and faculty generally provide criteria for grades in their syllabi. The CEPC approves all new courses, according to well-established criteria and expectations of student learning. When awarding credits for experiential learning, such as academic internships, supervising faculty ensure that the experiences and accompanying reflections enhance course content and follow appropriate pedagogical practices for such courses.

Undergraduate students are occasionally allowed, by permission of the instructor, to enroll in a graduate course, counting it as an elective in the undergraduate major. For instance, advanced students in Religious Studies are permitted to take a Graduate Theology course, some advanced Education undergraduates, especially those pursuing Art Education, are allowed to enroll in Graduate Education courses, and some
undergraduates interested in teaching English abroad after college may enroll in a MATESOL course. In these cases, standards for the graduate course are not relaxed, and undergraduates are expected to meet the same requirements as the graduate students. If there is a cohort of undergraduates and graduates in the same course, the increased expectations for achievement and evaluation are made clear to the undergraduates.

Scholarship, teaching and learning are possible only in an environment of academic integrity characterized by honesty and mutual trust. Simply expressed, academic integrity requires that one’s work be one’s own. As articulated in great detail in the chapter on Integrity, it is the responsibility of every member of the college community—faculty members, students and administrators—to ensure that the highest standards of academic integrity are maintained. A student who believes that course work has been unfairly evaluated, or who has another conflict regarding academic matters less than Academic Probation/Dismissal or the Academic Integrity Policy, may follow an Academic Conflict Resolution procedure.

As mentioned above, the new VPAA has initiated a review process that will require a regularized six-year cycle of review for all major programs, at the pace of four or five per year. This initiative, to be coordinated by the Dean, began with the History department in calendar year 2009, and included four more departments in 2009-20-10. These periodic reviews will involve extensive self-study and assessment, based on standardized rubrics, and will culminate with invited evaluations by faculty from peer and aspirant institutions. Interdisciplinary majors will be included, and minors within departments will also come under review during the six-year cycle. For interdisciplinary minors, a periodic review will occur, absent the required external scrutiny, unless specially requested by either the minor’s coordinator or the administration. Like the interdisciplinary majors, interdisciplinary minors have a small committee of faculty charged with advising the coordinator and overseeing policy and quality control. The objective of these reviews is to encourage continuous assessment and improvement of academic programs. The results will also provide guidance to the institution in terms of appropriate allocation of resources that will lead to attainment of enrollment and student learning outcomes.

**Appraisal**

The College would benefit from a systematic, periodic external review of all major programs. In 2001-2002, all departments were asked to undertake a review of their majors, which resulted in a variety of departmental changes. Previously, such reviews were initiated by departments who independently proposed substantial changes in their majors to the CEPC (e.g., Religious Studies in 2003, Business in 2005, and Music in 2008). These departments would offer a rationale for their proposals, often involving scrutiny of best practices for departments at other colleges. Only in the case of a departmental crisis would external reviewers be invited to evaluate departmental operations.

The College’s LSR is designed to expose students to a variety of disciplines and modes of thought. However, until now, there has been no proactive assessment of the educational effectiveness of this approach, and discussions of the matter have been largely anecdotal. The goals listed in the catalogue for the LSR were not designed with outcomes analysis in mind. More regularized discussion *across* these units would make progress toward a more integrated educational experience for the typical student. To address this concern, the faculty is in the midst of an extensive review of the curriculum.
The faculty is also interested in assessing the effectiveness of the proliferation of minors. While students often say in public forums and advising sessions that they like the credentialing that minors offer, faculty are concerned that a minor on a student's transcript does not always represent sufficient learning beyond what was already required for the major or the LSR. The CEPC is reviewing current practices. Under the newly adopted 4/4 course-credit model, all minors will be set at five courses, and in a new policy, no more than two courses will be able to count for both a student's major and minor. The faculty and administration are working to rectify current practices that allow some of our interdisciplinary minors to require as few as two additional courses (depending on the student's major), or even one in extreme cases.

Although the current levels of student involvement in study abroad, service-learning, and academic internships are good, the strategic plan calls for increased student engagement in all forms of experiential learning. Improved coordination and communication, as well as some additional resources, will help to achieve this goal.

Projection

- Create a comprehensive academic program that is diverse, rich, and attractive to current and new student markets (Strategic Plan B.2.). (VPAA, Dean, and faculty, starting in FY 2010).
- Reorganize the Academic Enrichment Commons to integrate several of the offices into a new Center for Internship and Experiential Learning (Strategic Plan C.1. and C.5). (VPAA, FY 2009-2011).
- Ensure global awareness through the curriculum and experiential learning. Use replacement hires whenever possible to expand the scope of areas of the world studied on campus. Provide resources for faculty development of short-term international course components (Strategic Plan B.5. a., b., c., and d.). (VPAA and Dean, starting in FY 2010)
- Continue to seek articulation programs for graduates (Strategic Plan C.5.c.). (VPAA, ongoing).
- Enhance teaching resources and outcomes assessment as part of reorganization of the administration of Academic Affairs (Strategic Plan B.3.a). (VPAA and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, FY 2010-2011).

GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

Description

Saint Michael's currently offers five master's degree programs, one of which is in the process of being phased out. The remaining four programs—Clinical Psychology, Graduate Education, MATESOL, and Graduate Theology and Pastoral Ministry—contribute to and enhance the academic mission of the College in significant ways. The descriptions below focus on assessment of student learning:

Clinical Psychology
The program offers a 60-credit master's degree that requires the equivalent of two years of full-time study. Vermont is one of the few states that licenses psychologists for independent practice with a master's degree in psychology. To achieve licensing, graduates are required to obtain additional supervised practice and pass the national licensing examination with the same cut-off score required of doctoral candidates. With this as one goal of the program, the curriculum is closely tied to the rules of the Vermont Board of Psychological Examiners, and most courses in the program are required of all graduates. Preparing students to pass the national licensing exam at the same score as graduates of doctoral programs sets very high academic standards. Since 1992, the program has been a member of the Council of Applied Masters Programs in Psychology which sets national standards for practitioner-oriented master’s programs in psychology.
Education

Started in 1940, the graduate programs in Education were the first graduate programs at the College, and they continue to offer professional courses of study leading to a Master of Education, Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study, Initial Teacher Licensure, and Endorsements for Licensed Teachers. Graduate students seeking initial licensure in Special Education, Reading Specialist, Educational Technology Specialist, and ESL have additional requirements. All these requirements provide performance-based assessment that reflects the unique competencies needed for those fields.

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

The Applied Linguistics Department (ALD), formerly the School of International Studies (SIS), has offered graduate study in TESOL since 1962. The program offers theoretical and methodological training integrated with practical coursework, which allows graduates to assume instructional and administrative roles in the field of English-language teaching in the United States and abroad. Program review from 2003-2006 required an intensive curriculum mapping process to differentiate among course goals and objectives and to specify and align outcomes with objectives. A 2007-2008 review of the current culminating experience of an oral exit examination, which had been in place for 30 years, demonstrated that it is not reliable and was discontinued. Assessment of the newly instituted capstone paper as a culminating experience and assessment tool is ongoing.

Theology and Pastoral Ministry

These programs make an essential contribution to the College’s Catholic intellectual heritage and tradition by inviting first-rate scholar-teachers to serve as faculty and guest lecturers and to provide the most current thinking on issues related to the Church, theology and ministry. From its inception in 1962, the Graduate Theology program has used course evaluations to evaluate the classroom teaching and learning experience for every course offered. While these have helped individual teachers and the program as a whole, they have not satisfactorily assessed student learning. Recognizing the need for more adequate information about student learning, Graduate Theology has adopted some of the common competencies or standards for ministry established by several national organizations, including the Association of Graduate Programs in Ministry (AGPIM), National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM) and Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA).

All of the master’s programs, except Graduate Psychology, offer post-bachelor’s or post-master’s certificates of study. Students in each of these programs are generally integrated in with those pursuing master’s degrees; the main difference is that certificate students take fewer courses. The programs include:

- Certificate of Advanced Management Study (being phased out)
- Nonprofit Management Series (being phased out)
- Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Education (post-master’s subfields)
- Licensure in Education (eight different subfields)
- Diploma in TESOL
- Graduate Certificate in TESOL (post-bachelor’s)
- Certificate of Advanced Specialization in Theology (post-master’s)
- Graduate Certificate in Theology (post-bachelor’s)

In addition to these certificates, the College offers two other non-degree programs in Applied Linguistics Department. The Intensive English and Academic English Programs are non-degree programs for speakers of other languages to enhance their skills in English in four-, six-, and eight-week units. Instruction takes place on the Vermont campus. In 2009, these programs were accredited for five years by the Commission on English Language Accreditation (Appendix 4.6) based in Alexandria, Virginia. Also in 2009-2010, the Intensive English Programs are hosting five cohorts of 20 Latin American students in eight-week blocks through a grant received from the U.S. Department of State. The Academic English Program is a bridge program in which a group of speakers of other languages enrolls simultaneously in English instruction and a
regular undergraduate course, with a faculty member helping them negotiate the English used in that discipline. In addition, in the summer of 2009, Burlington area high school students whose native language is not English were enrolled in the College’s Intensive English Programs as part of a workforce improvement initiative. The Intensive and Academic English Programs have long been a source of pride at the College and provide international diversity on the campus.

**Systematic Graduate Program Review**

In 2001, the VPAA called for a review of all academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This request was in direct response to recommendations by the 2000 NEASC reaccreditation report, which noted several areas of concern with regard to graduate programs, specifically their lack of integration into the undergraduate curriculum, and the overall perceived quality of these programs by internal and external constituents. In 2002, each graduate program completed a comprehensive review and analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, along with recommendations for integration in appropriate ways with the corresponding undergraduate department. The results varied with each program, from nearly complete integration to maintaining the status quo with some attention to better collaboration between undergraduate and graduate departments. In 2008, the VPAA asked each graduate program to produce an updated review and analysis, in anticipation of the arrival of a new VPAA.

The 2000 NEASC evaluation team report made special note of SIS which, at that time, was a separate unit with its own Dean. In response to the report’s concern that SIS should be more fully integrated into the College, the position of SIS Dean was eliminated in 2000, and this unit began reporting directly to the Dean of the College, as do all academic departments. In 2003, the administration created the position of Chair of SIS, which brought it into line with the College’s departmental structure. The final step toward structural integration was taken in April 2007, when the former SIS was integrated into the structure of the College as the Applied Linguistics Department, which continues to operate the MATESOL and English Language Programs.

In early 2008, the academic administration recognized that faculty-resource constraints and the substantial investment needed to reverse declining enrollments in Administration and Management prevented them from meeting the NEASC standards for graduate programs. Indeed, such resources could only be drawn from the undergraduate program, which remains the core function of the College. The CEPC endorsed the administration’s proposal to phase out the Master of Science in Administration (MSA) and the Certificate of Advanced Management Study (CAMS) in October 2008. Later that month, the full faculty voted in favor of the measure. Accordingly, both the MSA and CAMS will be phased out over the next three to five years, with provisions for enrolled students to complete their degrees without interruption.

**Appraisal**

The MATESOL is very strong in terms of faculty, as almost all courses are taught by full-time, tenure-line faculty, although the number of students is not as robust as it once was. Enrollment has declined, especially since 9/11, and the College is exploring whether or not this trend can be reversed with a renewed emphasis on international recruiting. The Graduate Theology program has also suffered declines in student population, although the program’s focus on summer courses has allowed it to continue to attract eminent Catholic scholars to teach each year. Both programs enjoy a strong reputation, but are not as successful as they once were in attracting students. Their future financial viability is a matter of intense study for the administration.

The Master of Education and Master of Clinical Psychology programs are both healthy in terms of
student numbers, financial contribution rate, faculty quality, and the benefits they offer to their respective undergraduate programs, such as the important role of graduate students in leadership positions on campus. For instance, graduate students in Clinical Psychology serve as teaching assistants in the undergraduate General Psychology course, and master’s degree holders from that program also form a network for placements for the undergraduate psychology Practicum course. Holders of the Saint Michael's M.Ed. serve as a valuable resource in local schools when it comes to placing undergraduate student teachers in Chittenden County. Satisfied Saint Michael's M.Ed. graduates can be found in most public schools in the area.

The Education department also provides master’s-level contract courses for cohorts of students, usually in public schools in northern Vermont and is the only unit of the College that provides contract courses. The director of the program has a wealth of experience in the region’s schools, and is thoroughly familiar with the work and qualifications of those who teach the contract courses. A high-level of scrutiny and quality control is maintained in granting graduate credit for these courses. Matriculated M.Ed. students, if they happen to be in the target cohort for a contract course, may substitute that credit for a course they take on our campus.

On a more practical level, the directors of the graduate programs are very aware of several problems that graduate students experience in terms of student services. The MATESOL student population tends to be international and suffers from a lack of graduate housing on campus and, since they typically do not own cars, they experience mobility difficulties in the winter. The College is considering options for offering graduate student housing, although historical experience suggests that they are looking for lower rents than the College can offer. Recently, the local free bus pass was extended to graduate students, but full-time graduate students continue to be excluded from some College benefits offered to undergraduates and AEP students, such as the cultural and ski passes. Although it is not possible to offer these services to graduate students in the current financial climate, the College recognizes that these benefits enhance its competitiveness in recruiting international graduate students.

**Projection**

- Assess and report to the Cabinet and Faculty Assembly on the current enrollment and financial status of all graduate programs. *(VPAA, Spring 2010)*.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the College's academic programs are a principal focus of the Strategic Plan 2015. Each strategic goal has several action plans with systematic assessment, using specific metrics, of their effectiveness in improving student learning. At least twice per year the Director of Institutional Research, under the oversight of the Cabinet, will contact the administrator who is responsible for each of the strategic goals to collect information on the status of the action, the measured metric, and any changes in the programs made as a result of the assessment.
Standard Five
FACULTY

The institution develops a faculty that is suited to the fulfillment of the institution’s mission. Faculty qualifications, numbers, and performance are sufficient to accomplish the institution’s mission and purposes. Faculty competently offer the institution’s academic programs and fulfill those tasks appropriately assigned them.

Overview

The Vision 2010 statement (Appendix 1.3) called for a “dedicated faculty who exemplify a serious commitment to excellence, adherence to rigorous teaching standards, openness to pedagogical innovation (inclusive of technology), appropriate contributions to scholarship, and service and leadership in the academic community” and who “embrace faculty-student research and other teaching, scholarly, and professional endeavors that place student learning at the center of their work.” In the last 10 years, Saint Michael’s faculty has responded to that call with talent, energy, and determination; in fact, in the last decade, the faculty has come into its own, with four faculty members becoming Vermont Professors of the Year and leading the College to its current status as one of only four Catholic Phi Beta Kappa colleges in New England (one of 20 in the country) and one of U.S. News and World Report’s “best national liberal arts colleges” (Appendix 1.4).

Perhaps more important, the faculty is coming into its own at a moment when the College is preparing for an exciting future with a new 4/4 course model and LSR, improved academic support with new strategic plans for experiential and global learning, and new efforts to increase diversity in our community and our curriculum. A stronger emphasis on the College mission in the Edmundite tradition of social justice—in fact, as the only Edmundite college in the world—has led to a blossoming of faculty-led programs focused on service-learning, peace and justice, faith and culture, and spirituality and the intellectual life. All this has occurred while the faculty has reached new levels of scholarly, artistic, and research activity.

This chapter draws heavily on the results of the fall 2008 faculty survey—the most comprehensive faculty survey to date, with 136 questions ranging from the mission to facilities. With a 65% response rate, including 72% of tenured faculty and 96% of junior faculty, and an even gender balance, the survey gives a good view of the faculty’s experiences and opinions. Thanks to this instrument and a shorter, less formal survey of department chairs, as well as an extensive student survey and improved data collection on teaching, scholarship, and service, the 2010 appraisal of the faculty is highly detailed. As a result, the chapter is divided into six topics, each of which has separate description, appraisal, and projection sections.

Description

As of fall 2008, the College had 140 tenure lines, of which 137 were filled. In comparison, in 1999, tenure-line faculty numbered 115, including seven graduate faculty. By that count, the College has seen an increase of at least 22 tenure-line faculty in the last 10 years. In fall 2009, the College counted 157 full-time faculty, including 20 full-time non-tenure-line. The chart below shows how teaching has been distributed between tenure-line faculty, non-tenure-line full-time instructors, and adjunct faculty over the past 20 years, with actual faculty numbers in parentheses:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TENURE-LINE</th>
<th>FULL-TIME INSTRUCTOR</th>
<th>ADJUNCT</th>
<th>STAFF*</th>
<th>TOTAL # FACULTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>81.9% (108)</td>
<td>3.8% (5)</td>
<td>15.2% (34)</td>
<td></td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-99</td>
<td>67.5% (118)</td>
<td>11.0% (18)</td>
<td>18.2% (62)</td>
<td></td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>66.7% (126)</td>
<td>14.2% (28)</td>
<td>18.4% (52)</td>
<td>0.7% (5)</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Until 2008-2009, staff-taught courses were included in the adjunct category.

As the chart shows, because the number of students has also increased significantly in the past decade, the percentage of hours being taught by tenure-line and adjunct faculty has remained almost unchanged, while numbers of faculty in all categories have increased (the greatest increase in the last 20 years in the category of full-time instructors). In terms of qualifications, 10 years ago, 79% of undergraduate and 86% of graduate tenure-line faculty had earned doctorates; in 2008-2009, 88% of all tenure-line faculty did. By this measure, both the number and the qualifications of the faculty have increased.

The *Faculty Regulations*, which include detailed descriptions of appointments, rights, responsibilities, policies, and processes regarding every stage and aspect of faculty life, are readily available online through the intranet public folders, as are current articulations of both department and College standards for tenure and promotion. In addition, the *Employee Handbook* (Appendix 3.17), including policies about nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, and alcohol and drug use, is on the Human Resources [web site](http://www.humanresources.washington.edu). Compensation packages are spelled out clearly in annual contracts for full-time faculty, and by semester in contracts for part-time faculty. Part-time faculty contracts include information about benefits and their monetary value, and a clear statement of expected teaching load; also included is a brochure that provides information about part-time-faculty rights, benefits, and criteria for lecturer categories as well as responsibilities to students and the College.

As mentioned in the chapter on Standard Two, all tenure-line faculty undergo rigorous and regular evaluations. An annual Significant Dates Memo from the VPAA’s office reminds all tenure-line faculty of deadlines for important reviews (first-year, second-year, fourth-year, tenure, promotion, post-tenure, merit pay, and sabbaticals), lists required materials for each and describes the process. Tenure reviews occur in the sixth year and post-tenure reviews every five years. Both the Dean and department chairs are charged with guiding junior faculty toward their various reviews. Grievances at any stage are addressed by an elected Dispute Resolution Panel, a neutral body that examines the evidence at hand to assess whether any breach of policy or process has led to unfair dismissal or treatment; the panel is a large group from which three neutral members are chosen to address the grievance. In recent years, the campus chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has worked with the FWC to bring the College’s *Faculty Regulations* into ever better compliance with AAUP guidelines.

Instructors and adjunct faculty are reviewed annually, formally or informally, by their department chairs and, like all faculty, their teaching is evaluated by students through SUMMAs collected at the end of each semester. Starting in 2008-2009, the department chairs will submit annual evaluations of all full-time instructors to the Dean.

### Appraisal

In the past decade, Saint Michael’s has striven to improve its faculty in every dimension, and this effort might be said to have started in 1992, when the College moved from a 24- to a 21-credit load, permitting faculty more time for both teaching and scholarship. This change, as well as revisions of the *Faculty Regulations* in 1996 and 2002, is viewed as having contributed to raising expectations for both teaching and scholarship. Since then, three faculty committees have helped to oversee the improvement of the faculty, in ways delineated below.
Faculty numbers and composition

The appointed CEPC is charged not only with reviewing the curriculum and approving new courses, but with evaluating the need for new faculty and making tenure-line recommendations to the VPAA, ensuring a faculty voice in hiring and a close connection between curricular needs and faculty investment. Despite this, in the survey of department chairs, 10 chairs indicated that they do not have enough faculty and one complained that the CEPC recommended tenure lines for which the VPAA did not approve searches. Some departments report a dire need for additional faculty. For example, Journalism and Mass Communication and Business Management and Accounting report suffering from overloads in both teaching and advising due to high numbers of majors and minors, while Religious Studies deals with large sections in its required LSR courses.

While the academic administration agrees that more faculty positions are needed (see the discussion in the chapter on Standard Two of the VPAA’s approval of additional tenure lines), the College’s financial constraints in recent years have led to continued reliance on adjuncts and instructors. While adjuncts who are experts in their fields allow some departments to enhance their course offerings (for instance, Fine Arts hires professionals to teach dance, oboe, and sculpture; Business hires lawyers to teach business law; Journalism and Mass Communication hires professional journalists), more often, adjuncts are hired to teach introductory courses. The English Department and the FYS program, especially, used to rely on adjuncts at this level. However, since 2005-2006, departments have responded to the Dean’s call, and the number of full-time faculty teaching First-Year Seminars has increased to about 75-80%.

In fall 2004, the VPAA developed a salary scale that increased pay rates for adjunct faculty based on their number of years teaching at the College, and this improved the retention of highly-qualified long-time adjuncts, who are well integrated into their departments. In fall 2008, for instance, the use of adjuncts resulted in an undergraduate student-faculty ratio of 13:1 and an average class size of 18.7. This balance of full- and part-time faculty may well be what enables Saint Michael’s to be a “good buy” in today’s market, providing an excellent education while keeping the College accessible to students who otherwise could not afford it.

However, increasing the number of tenure-line faculty can help the College maintain its competitive edge as well as present opportunities to improve diversity. In 2007, only 10 faculty fit the ALANA category—barely 7%, which is substantially below the national average. In 2008-2009, eight searches resulted in the hiring of five women and three men, but only one provided ethnic diversity. The impediments to recruiting a diverse faculty are obvious and many, and drawing them to Vermont is more difficult than attracting diverse students. Indeed, unless a hiring department specifically advertises for a field that might typically interest ALANA applicants, the search committee cannot guarantee a rich ALANA applicant pool. Although Vermont’s relatively rural character, the size of the College, and budget limitations tend to work against ALANA recruiting, over the years, the administration has occasionally invited specific individuals for visiting professor positions as an attractive option that might lead to more permanent hiring.

However, while there is strong faculty support for attracting a more diverse faculty, it is clear that the term “diversity” varies in meaning and value in different departments. In some, such as Sociology, Journalism and Mass Communication, Religious Studies, and Political Science, racial and ethnic diversity can add genuine educational value. In others, different kinds of diversity are equally or more valuable; for instance, in Biology, gender balance is crucial, given that about half of all Biology majors are women, as opposed to only two of their seven tenure-line faculty. The administration is sensitive to gender balance as well, but stresses the importance of ALANA recruiting: while the percentage of full-time female faculty members has increased from 40% in 2000 to 45% in 2008, the percentage of full-time ALANA and non-resident faculty has increased only from 4.8% in 2000 to 7.8% in 2008.
Compensation and Regulations

The elected FWC keeps the Faculty Regulations updated and provides the administration with compensation data and comparisons with other institutions. It also makes recommendations to the administration in such areas as compensation, leaves, and representation to the Board of Trustees, among many other tasks. Due in large part to the work of the FWC, changes to the regulations with regard to standards and processes for tenure and promotion have improved in efficiency, clarity, and professionalism over the past decade. The survey of department chairs indicated that departmental standards for evaluation meet the revised College-wide guidelines, and the faculty survey found that over 90% of junior faculty feel that they understand those standards and the processes for fourth-year and tenure evaluations, as laid out by the FWC and approved by the faculty.

In the past decade, the FWC has worked with the administration to set agreed-upon goals for salary parity with peer institutions. Yet, according to the faculty survey, 63% of tenure-line faculty are still not satisfied with the College’s progress toward salary parity. Also, while 63% of senior faculty seem largely satisfied with their current salaries, only 42% of junior faculty are. Not surprisingly, 70% of part-time adjunct faculty are not satisfied with their current salaries. And, 48% of junior faculty and 40% of tenured faculty are concerned that the College’s salary and benefit packages are not rich enough to attract the desired new faculty, especially at a time when the College strives to improve the ethnic and racial diversity of its faculty. Currently, in response to the national economic downturn, all salaries are frozen, but the FWC and the administration will return to these conversations once the financial climate improves. In the meantime, the administration notes that results of the AAUP survey, 2008-09 Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, indicate that the average total compensation rating for Saint Michael’s ranked between the 80th and 94.9th percentile in the IIB category (Appendix 5.1). It is also noteworthy that Saint Michael’s total compensation in 2008-2009 was higher than that of the University of Vermont.

Faculty evaluation

The elected Faculty Council meets weekly with the VPAA and Dean, and makes recommendations about sabbaticals, leaves of absence, tenure and promotion, termination, outside employment, and department-chair appointments; it also advises on merit pay and annual College-wide awards for teaching, scholarship, and service. In cooperation with the Dean and VPAA, the Council is responsible for appointing faculty to the non-elective statutory, standing, and ad hoc committees. In addition, a member of the Faculty Council or a recent Council alumnus serves on each tenure-track search committee, ensuring that incoming faculty members have an immediate link to the Council and the College as a whole. Council members are held to the highest levels of objectivity—ethical, legal, and professional. Still, communications between the Council and the faculty at large must improve, since an alarming 17% of tenure-line faculty responding to the faculty survey questioned the fairness of the evaluation process, including 16.6% of the junior faculty who responded. These numbers, while relatively small, indicate a need for greater transparency about Council review processes, especially openness from the Faculty Council. In particular, survey comments stressed the need for the Council to fully understand each department’s scholarship guidelines for tenure. This may be a signal that it is time for the Faculty Council to review the existing departmental scholarship guidelines for tenure and to determine whether or not they need to be revised.

One concern raised by the Faculty Council itself in its 2010 self-appraisal is its workload which, by any measure, is extreme. Given the importance of many of its recommendations and decisions, the faculty might consider the creation of another committee or committees to undertake some of the Council’s tasks.
Projection

- Utilize the Strategic Plan 2015 and the new curriculum program review to determine where new or reassigned tenure lines should be approved. (VPAA in consultation with the CEPC, FY 2010-2015).
- Develop a diversity hiring plan for faculty. Set goals for diversity hiring and provide resources for making diversity hires, including the Visiting Scholars Program. (VPAA, Dean, and Vice President for Human Resources, FY 2010).

Faculty Assignments and Workload

Description

Based on NEASC’s definition of faculty workload, this currently entails the following at Saint Michael’s:

1) Tenure-line faculty have an annual contractual load of 21 hours; full-time, non-tenure-line faculty, 24 hours. Part-time faculty are allowed up to 16 hours per year. The current variable-credit course system has a negative impact on faculty workload because courses range from one to four credits, and thus, counting credit-hours is not sufficient to measure “load.” In many cases, the main difference between a three- and a four-credit course is determined by seat time. The amount of preparation, evaluation, and communication required can be the same per student, regardless of the number of credit-hours a course carries. Additionally, a three-credit course with a cap of 30 students can require as much or more work than a four-credit course with a cap of 15, or vice versa. It is therefore likely that, for instance, a faculty member, teaching four three-credit courses, would have a heavier “load” than another faculty member teaching three four-credit courses, even though their credit-hours are the same; the former might have 12 class meetings a week while the latter could have as few as six; the former might have 100 or more students, while the latter could have 60 or fewer. Number of class preps also plays a role, as does subject matter and teaching style. Thus, at present, teaching “load” is very difficult to measure systematically.

2) Tenure-line faculty and many full-time instructors also do advising. Advising loads in 2008-2009 cover a wide range, with an average of about 20 advisees per faculty. As detailed in the previous chapter, larger loads tend to occur in pre-professional departments, such as Journalism and Mass Communication, Business Management and Accounting, and Education.

3) All tenure-line faculty are expected to be active scholars or creative artists. Such activity is required of junior faculty for continued employment, and necessary for faculty seeking promotion to full professor. While not under similar pressure to perform, senior faculty face reviews every five years, and must be productive scholars if they intend to seek merit pay.

4) All tenure-line faculty are expected to contribute service to the College on committees, administratively, or in numerous other ways, ranging from serving as a residence-hall floor visitor to volunteering at sports events. Many full- and part-time instructors also contribute service. Not all service is equal; valued positions on elected or appointed statutory committees can be difficult to obtain, but they are stressful and time consuming, while other committees may be quite obscure, meet only occasionally, and require little work. Course reductions enable some faculty to serve in a variety of administrative positions, from department chair to director or coordinator of programs, such as the Writing Center or FYS Program.
Appraisal

The fall 2008 faculty survey asked 17 questions related to workload, an emphasis that emerged from a concern about faculty burnout, especially among “rising” junior faculty striving for tenure, and associate professors seeking promotion. In the past decade, it has become clear that the College’s growing emphasis on scholarship combined with heavy course loads and a culture of service has caused frustration and even fear among junior faculty. Indeed, the self-reporting provided in the survey confirmed these concerns.

1) In the survey of department chairs, 10 indicated that they need additional full-time, tenure-line faculty. One chair mentioned that a major impediment to bringing “diverse” faculty to her department was the excessive workload, which could only be relieved by added faculty.

2) Junior faculty report spending a mean of 43.6 hours on teaching and teaching-related activities per week, with the range being 30-60 hours; senior faculty report a mean of 40.3 hours; and the average for all full-time faculty, including full-time instructors, is 41.3. An unofficial 2004 Academic Affairs document (Appendix 5.2) estimated a 54 hour-workweek and recommended that tenure-line faculty spend 60%, or 33 hours on their teaching, leaving at least 21 hours a week for advising, service, and scholarship. While only the Board of Trustees can change the official faculty workload, the FWC is developing a workload document to accompany the new 4/4 course model.

3) Although the Faculty Council gives no more than two college-wide committee assignments to faculty members—and no first-year tenure-track faculty is assigned to committees—of the 27 junior faculty responding to the survey, seven indicated they served on two, one reported serving on three, one said four, and two indicated more than four. It seems clear that although many faculty members serve at their own discretion on ad hoc and special-interest committees, this overload contributes to frustration and burnout. This tendency to take on too much service work is not sustainable. The Dean and department chairs must be diligent in ensuring that junior faculty, especially, set clear priorities. To address this issue, the VPAA has noted the need to review and limit the number and size of non-statutory faculty committees.

4) A more significant contribution to junior faculty frustration appears to be a growing fear of the College’s expectations regarding the “proper” balance among teaching, scholarship, and service. Only 29.1% of junior faculty and 45.1% of senior faculty felt that this was clear. While junior faculty tend to ask how much time they are expected to invest in their teaching, service, and scholarship for tenure and promotion, the administration, department chairs and senior faculty must convey in very clear terms that the answer is not about time invested, but about outcomes. Addressing a related issue, 67.4% of tenure-line respondents indicated that their teaching “negatively impacted” their scholarship “frequently” or “usually.” To the question asking whether faculty were concerned that the teaching of junior faculty might be “adversely impacted” by the College’s expectations for scholarship, 47.8% of junior faculty thought it might be, as did 36.3% of senior faculty. All these answers reflect a faculty sense that they are asked to perform a juggling act in which teaching, scholarship, and service are to be kept in the air at all times. As the College moves from a regional university model to one of a national college, this lack of clarity needs to be addressed. Even a perceived lack of clarity in the College’s guidelines for teaching, scholarship, and service can cast a pall over the workplace, and this inevitably affects the faculty’s teaching effectiveness.

5) Interestingly, when asked about teaching and service in later survey questions, faculty showed the strong commitment to teaching, for which Saint Michael’s is so well known, reflecting the faculty’s wholehearted embrace of teaching as the College’s core mission.
A review of the faculty survey data confirms that perceptions of workload must be addressed, whether or not they are grounded in fact. Indeed, the long-term health of the College may depend on it, as faculty workload affects the quality of teaching, improves faculty retention, and makes Saint Michael’s more attractive to future faculty.

Projection

- Implement the 4/4 course-credit model through existing faculty governance procedures (Strategic Plan B.2.b.). (VPAA, Dean, and CEPC, starting in fall 2009).
- Resume annual or semi-annual open discussions to clarify expectations of outcomes-based assessments of faculty for tenure and promotion. (VPAA and Faculty Council, in consultation with the FWC, starting in fall 2009).
- Develop a comprehensive mentoring program for junior faculty. Improve new faculty orientation and design an extended, coordinated, and effective system for orienting all new faculty to workload expectations, teaching methods, and advising tools during their first four years. (Dean and Dean’s Council, FY2010).

TEACHING

Description

Teaching is at the center of the College’s mission, and in the Strategic Plan 2015, five of the six goals focus on students. While both teaching and learning happen through all of a student’s experiences at Saint Michael’s, what happens in the classroom and between faculty and students is, and should be, paramount.

The College has assembled an excellent teaching faculty. For whatever reason—careful hiring practices, improvements in the tenure-review process, or just reputation—Saint Michael’s has attracted and retained faculty who love to teach. The “institutional mean” in any set of SUMMAs over recent years shows few, if any, scores below 3.5 out of 5. These results may be traceable to the ways in which many faculty have gone far beyond traditional classroom teaching in recent years to enrich the education we offer. For instance, student/faculty research and collaboration has increased, especially in the sciences and social sciences. Faculty receive more external grants (VT EPSCoR and NASA EPSCoR) that provide funds for student research, and a growing number of students have successfully secured external funding, especially from the Vermont Genetics Network. Financial support for student summer research also comes from the office of the VPAA, and the Social Science Research Center.

Other pedagogical innovations include many noteworthy projects, of which only a few are highlighted here:

1. The Teaching Gardens of Saint Michael’s, a collaboration between Biology and Education, has produced beautiful new gardens in the space between St. Edmund’s Hall and McCarthy Arts Center, but has also turned the entire campus into a classroom by labeling the many varieties of trees and shrubs that grace the landscape.
2. To increase students’ access to summer courses, the 2009 Summer Session launched a hybrid-course pilot, with five classes beginning with a three-day foundation in the classroom with a faculty, then completing the course with four or five weeks of online instruction.
3. Since 2002 Instructional Technology Services, a branch of Information Technology, aided by the faculty’s Educational Technology Committee, has overseen a faculty mentoring program, a popular weeklong summer Teaching With Technology workshop, a half-day workshop in January just before spring semester, and many other support programs to help faculty improve their teaching through technology.
4. For several years, the FYS program has chosen a “common text” that is read by all new students along with many upperclass students, faculty, and staff, creating a strong sense of community for incoming students.
5. Service-learning was successfully institutionalized in 2005, with an increasing number of courses, from some FYS to upper-level courses such as Political Science’s “HIV/AIDS in South Africa,” which prepares
students for a summer service study trip to Tanzania, and “Biology in Elementary Schools,” in which students develop lesson modules for use by a local elementary school.

Saint Michael’s is in its fourth year of using eCollege, an online course-management system. It has grown to the point where all students have at least one class on eCollege, and many have their course materials available through the system. Some features—like the drop box, document sharing, and webliography—help to extend learning, while others (like the gradebook), enable students to keep better track of their assignments. In fall 2009, eCollege became mandatory for all courses, providing the means for continuing classwork in the event of a widespread flu outbreak.

The fall 2008 faculty survey showed that individual faculty are constantly updating both content and pedagogy in many ways, from writing their own textbooks to attending workshops on learning disabilities, from team-teaching to chatting with others in their departments. Aside from Instructional Technology, institutional support for teaching comes primarily from the Teaching Resource Committee (TRC), which offers faculty opportunities to share their insights and methods through lunchtime discussions and presentations throughout the year. The TRC also organizes a Pedagogy Day every January.

To help new faculty transition to the demands of teaching in general and to Saint Michael’s students in particular, all new tenure-track faculty participate in an orientation through the Academic Dean’s office: a series of five sessions in the fall introducing the faculty to basic information, followed by a spring seminar of 10 sessions focusing on readings about pedagogy and the liberal arts. New faculty receive one paid course release in their first year to enable them to participate in this orientation. Some departments—notably Education—have strong “in-department” support for teaching, with mentoring and systematic classroom visits. Other faculty rely on classroom visits from their chairs and colleagues and on the SUMMA evaluations administered at the end of each semester. Yet others create more specific instruments for course evaluations, even using midterm course evaluations to adjust their methods within a course in progress.

In recent years, teaching has become much more labor-intensive, partly because of higher expectations among parents and students, and partly due to an increased focus on Saint Michael’s mission and our desire to provide what the Vision 2010 statement calls “a transformative residential learning experience.” Yet, faculty continue to rise to the challenge, and are, as the Vision statement puts it, “engaged in the complete life of the students.”

**Appraisal**

As indicated in the discussion of faculty workload, some faculty occasionally teach more than a full load—e.g., Education and Science as well as Modern Languages faculty occasionally accumulate overloads because they supervise student teaching, labs, and teach Applied Language Components (ALCs), respectively. In addition, many find that the demands of scholarship impinge on their teaching. Nonetheless, the fall 2008 faculty survey indicates that teaching remains the faculty’s top priority.

Student perspectives on the faculty are very telling, as evidenced in the fall 2008 student survey. Ten questions related directly to teaching, showed these results:

- 93.8% said they find it “easy to learn” from Saint Michael’s faculty.
- 82.6% said faculty make “difficult subjects accessible.”
- 95.8% said faculty are “enthusiastic about their subjects.”
- 96.5% said they are confident that faculty are “knowledgeable about their discipline.”
- 92% said their teachers are “well organized and well prepared.”
- 73.6% indicated that their teachers have “convenient office hours.”
• 89.4% said faculty offices were “easy to find and visit.”
• 69.4% said they “take advantage” of those office hours.
• 91.7% indicated they found their teachers “easy to talk to.”
• 83.2% said their teachers are “easy to get to know.”

Clearly, these results indicate strong student satisfaction with the faculty and their teaching methods.

The College encourages diverse approaches to teaching, recognizing that both personality and discipline influence how a given course can and should be taught. Control over the content and methods in a particular course is valued by both faculty and the administration, and is effective for students. Nonetheless, the emerging junior-faculty concern about the Faculty Council’s increased emphasis on scholarship in tenure and promotion decisions, finds expression in the concern that the emphasis on teaching is waning. This is illustrated by the survey results that show that while teaching is still accepted as the core of the College’s mission, only 44.7% of faculty survey respondents agreed that they have “adequate support for professional development in the area of teaching.” This may translate a feeling among faculty that whereas scholarship is essential to ensure that they keep up with their fields and enter the classroom with energy, interest, and focus, it does not ensure that they will be able to deliver good teaching. A Center for Teaching and Learning, proposed by the VPAA, will provide support for faculty teaching and address these concerns.

To begin to know what “good teaching” at Saint Michael’s will mean in a new 4/4 course model, the institution will need to establish goals at every level, from the mission and purposes of the College to the individual course. We will need to encourage a culture of experimentation, including valid measures for assessing teaching methods and the means for developing new ones, either to replace those that are ineffective or to give faculty new energy and interest.

It is clear from the student survey that the vast majority of Saint Michael’s faculty are reaching their students. SUMMAs, too, indicate that Saint Michael's faculty teaching is above the national mean. But students are neither objective nor experienced enough to be the only means of assessment. Neither are a few class visits from colleagues sufficient. To remain competitive in the changing environment of higher education, the College’s most important initiative for the next decade must be in the realm of improving teaching. Quality of teaching, academic rigor, outcomes assessment, and teaching evaluation are all linked and will need to be addressed in a significant, systematic, and visible way, in order to deliver a value-added education.

Projection

• Develop a plan for a systematic, College-wide approach to evaluating, promoting, and supporting good teaching, and incorporate the TRC and Educational Technology Committee into this new structure. (VPAA, starting in FY 2010).
• Pilot a new course evaluation system in 2009-2010, with full implementation in 2010-2011. (VPAA and Dean, FY 2010).

ADVISING

Description

Saint Michael's College has always been committed to thorough one-on-one academic advising for all students, and all are advised by full-time (usually tenure-line) faculty members or, occasionally, by para-academic professionals—librarians in particular. New tenure-track faculty are not assigned advisees until the beginning of their second year, at which time they are required to attend a three-hour training session that is also available to all advisors who want to sharpen their skills and refresh their knowledge. Advisors are
trained to be attentive to the concerns of the whole student, and this includes discussing aptitudes, larger life goals, and career plans, beyond just selecting coursework for the following semester.

At the time of the 2000 NEASC review, the evaluating team noted concerns about the academic advising process, and a number of steps have been taken to address them. Summer orientation days for first-year students have been streamlined, and training for faculty who run them has been substantially enhanced. Training for new advisors has undergone a shift to longer sessions, more technical hands-on training with KnightVision, the College’s advising software/database, and greater focus on the advising relationship beyond simple course selection. Each fall, the College offers workshops for advisors, held just prior to pre-registration meetings with students.

Most importantly, the Dean of the College has taken steps to reduce the average advisee load for faculty in two departments where they would otherwise be extraordinarily high—Business Administration and Accounting, and Journalism and Mass Communication. This process began in 2007-2008, when two faculty volunteers from Philosophy were trained to advise first-year Journalism students, and a cohort of 10 faculty volunteers from a variety of fields was specially trained to advise first-year Business students. The fields from which they were chosen are often those cognate to Business, especially Economics, Computer Science, and Math, but scientists in Chemistry and Physics have also participated as well as some librarians. In each case, faculty members were drawn from service departments with fewer majors, where advisee loads are generally much smaller than in Business or Journalism. For the past three years, these faculty advisors have been relieved of their exploratory-student advising assignments, and received Journalism or Business first-year students instead. At the end of the first year, these Business and Journalism students (assuming they have stayed in the major) are assigned to a faculty member from their respective departments.

Assessment of New Advising Program

In spring 2009, the Business and Accounting Department conducted a survey of sophomore business majors (Appendix 5.3) to assess the new advising program. This was the first cohort to experience the transition from a non-Business advisor in their first year, to a Business department advisor in their second year. All 43 respondents had declared a Business major before entering the College. While 65% said they would have preferred a Business department advisor in the first year, the same percentage also reported that they received adequate advising for both the LSR and Business major from the non-Business faculty member; 55% discussed overall academic goals with the non-Business advisor during the first year; and 29% reported discussing career goals. The latter figures rose to 67% and 35%, respectively, with the new Business advisor during the sophomore year. It is clear, then, that students would prefer not to have to make the transition, and appear to have more in-depth career discussions with a Business advisor, although this may simply reflect the developmental differences between first-year students and sophomores. Unfortunately, the survey cannot reveal whether they would have fared better as one of 40 advisees rather than 30 with a particular Business advisor. Still, the new first-year advising program reduces the average advisee load for both the Business and Journalism faculty by about 10 advisees, which is an appreciable difference. The College-wide average remains 20 advisees per advisor.

Appraisal

Currently, new faculty are introduced to KnightVision, the online registration system, and advising through the orientation offered by the Dean’s Office. Starting in April 2002, most paper forms of traditional advising materials—from print-outs of course listings and times to the catalogues themselves—have been replaced with online equivalents. While this makes advising technology-dependent, it does mean that changes to the schedule, course descriptions, and seat openings are updated in real time, making them more accurate.
Online registration is now spread over several days, with seniors registering first, then juniors, and so on, which means a longer lead time before registration and less pressure on advisors to “fit” all advisees into a short registration period. Additionally, since students now register for courses at their own computer, advising sessions with faculty no longer focus on the mechanics of registration (e.g., which section, which teacher), but on educational issues (What does the student want to learn? How does the student learn best? What kinds of courses go well together?). Advisor and advisee can look together at the student’s current progress toward the degree, and test various changes. At the end of such a session, a student has a vision for the next semester and how it fits into a plan. The faculty advisor has less control over what happens when the student actually sits down to register, but that is as it should be, if the goal of advising is to help students learn to make wise decisions on their own.

The fall 2008 student survey, which garnered 712 respondents, asked five questions about faculty advisors and indicated that:

- 79.2% of students surveyed said it was easy to find a time to meet with their advisor.
- 83.7% agreed that their advisor was “easy to talk to.”
- 82.5% said their advisor helped them to make their own decisions.
- 84.6% indicated their advisor answered their questions about courses, requirements, and related topics.
- 81.3% felt their advisor gave good advice or “point[ed] them toward someone who [could].”

Clearly, this high percentage of satisfied students indicates that improvements to the academic advising program since the last reaccreditation visit is yielding good results.

**Projection**

- Resume workshops on good practices for student advising with all faculty, on an annual basis, to ensure ongoing quality advising. *(Dean, FY 2011).*
- Continue the new advising program for at least one more year and modify it according to the results of the survey conducted in FY 2008-2009. *(Dean of the College and Assistant Dean of the College, FY 2010).*

**SCHOLARSHIP, RESEARCH, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

**Description**

Saint Michael’s expects its faculty to be active scholars or creative artists. Institutional expectations, revised and adopted in 2002, are listed in section II.D.2.c of the *Faculty Regulations* (Appendix 5.4). The current departmental guidelines were reviewed by the Faculty Council, Dean, and VPAA to ensure that they conformed to institutional expectations. They vary across departments—as they must, given the differences among disciplines, teaching, and advising loads—but all departmental guidelines were approved in 2004, and the Faculty Council uses them for tenure evaluations, and promotion as well as post-tenure reviews.

With the hiring of a Director of Institutional Research in 1999, the College began to keep detailed records on scholarly activities of the faculty; each year, faculty are invited, via email, to submit a list of new achievements. Each spring, at the end of classes, the President holds a celebration of the year’s scholarly productivity with an exhibit and reception at his residence. While scholarly activities vary in scope, the chart below shows an impressive increase in successful research grant applications (for more complete data for 2008-2009, see Appendix 5.5):
Faculty Scholarship Highlights, 1999-2008 (self-reported)

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<td>Conference presentations</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research grants received</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2007-2008 alone, the total number of scholarly and artistic activities for the year was 603, including 55 research grants. External grants have seen a great increase since 2004, when the College subscribed to the SPIN/SMARTS database for grants opportunities: all faculty seeking grants through the College, both internal and external, are required to participate in this service, and currently 60% of the faculty are enrolled. In 2005, at the encouragement of the FDC, the College hired a Director for Foundation Relations and Sponsored Programs, who oversees faculty and institutional grants as well as foundation relations. The director’s work has improved both the grant process and tracking of external grants: between 2005-2006 and 2008-2009, there were 79 such grant applications involving 87 faculty, with a steadily increasing success rate.

To supplement those external grants, the College offers competitive internal support for research, teaching, and curriculum development. The FDC annually distributes funds from a budget of $25,000 for expenses incurred by faculty related to their work. In 2007-2008, for instance, 22 grants totaling $25,922.54 were approved. The FDC also oversees applications for junior faculty summer research stipends, which give untenured faculty a $4,000 stipend. Since 2007-2008, the FDC has received recommendations from the Service-Learning Advisory Board to award service-learning grants, and CUR has distributed grants to students for faculty-sponsored summer research.

Funding for travel to conferences is available through the Dean of the College, with a budget of about $85,000 a year. The average award is $1,100; junior faculty tend to receive more than that amount, and full-time instructors may request up to $750. In addition, donated funds earmarked for international travel currently provide five $1,000 supplements per year. All travel funds are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Internal support for scholarship is also demonstrated by an array of talks and presentations, including two long-standing annual series—the Humanities Colloquium and the Social Sciences Research Series—and a new series offered by the FDC featuring their grantees. These forums provide faculty a welcome opportunity to keep abreast of one another’s work, as does the in-house online newsletter and FDC web site. The most significant support that the College offers for scholarship is the sabbatical program. Currently, upon receiving approval of a scholarly project, tenured faculty may be granted sabbaticals after at least five years or 10 semesters of teaching. A sabbatical may be for one semester at full pay or a full year at half pay.

Appraisal

By any measure, the scholarly work of Saint Michael’s faculty demonstrates talent, energy, and professionalism in its quantity and quality. Many members of the faculty are nationally published and recognized, as the stream of reports from the Marketing and Communications office attests. College faculty
are called on as experts, both locally and nationally, to comment on issues that range from the economy to the psychology of teenage girls. Faculty publish with many of the best publishers in their fields, and in many of the best peer-reviewed journals. However, this success has not been without its downside, primarily for junior faculty. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, expectations for scholarship have risen over the past decade. Prior to the mid-1990s, it was rare for a faculty member who successfully navigated the first six years to be denied tenure, but the days are long gone when all that was required for tenure was that faculty stay abreast of changes, and pursue interests in their discipline. Tenure denials are infrequent and, since the reasons cannot be made explicit or public because of confidentiality, speculation abound that the decision results from a failure to meet scholarship expectations.

This has resulted in an increasing sense among junior faculty that neither the faculty regulations nor departmental guidelines about scholarship are reliable guides for faculty seeking tenure or promotion. Although this apprehension is hardly surprising at an institution in transition from a regional university to a nationally competitive liberal arts college, it led to the formulation of 16 questions regarding scholarship in the fall 2008 faculty survey. The responses are telling:

- 50% of junior and 53.3% of senior faculty respondents feel that the expected level of scholarship is appropriate in terms of the mission;
- only 33.3% of junior and 43.3% of senior faculty feel that the expected level of scholarship is appropriate in terms of the teaching load;
- 47.8% of junior faculty and 59.3% of the senior faculty respondents feel that the College supports their scholarship;
- only 29.2% of junior and 41.4% of senior faculty respondents feel that they can find enough time for scholarship during the school year;
- among senior faculty respondents, 64.4% said the current sabbatical policy meets their needs, and 72.7% of junior faculty were uncertain; and
- 91.3% of the junior and 86.4% of senior faculty support a full-year sabbatical with 75-80% pay.

It is clear that over the past two decades, scholarship has become a more important part of faculty life at Saint Michael’s, as it has at peer institutions and throughout academia, and although the transition to the world of nationally competitive liberal arts colleges may be particularly unsettling for our faculty at this point in time, this transition will not last indefinitely. Whether it is in fact due to the College’s stated goals to increase academic excellence in a more competitive national arena or a cultural trend among younger faculty who come to the College with a rich research agenda, Saint Michael’s is poised to provide clarity on this issue, as it moves forward on the implementation of a new curriculum and strategic plan. Indeed, the academic administration fully embraces the faculty’s call for clarity in communicating its expectations for scholarship as well as plans to support that level of scholarship.

**Projection**

- Revise department guidelines, where necessary, to clarify expectations for scholarship and ensure that they are comparable (if not equivalent) across departments. *(Departments, in association with the Faculty Council and Dean, FY 2010-2012).*
- Review grants processes and policies to enhance faculty applications and chances of success *(Strategic Plan B.3.)*. *(VPAA, Director for Foundation Relations and Sponsored Programs, and others, as needed, FY2011).*
- Enhance development funds as well as flexibility for use of internal funds *(Strategic Plan B.3.)*. *(VPAA in association with the FDC and Dean, FY 2012).*
SERVICE

Description

Standard Five alludes specifically to “service” only twice, once in regard to allowing enough time for it within the workload and again in regard to its inclusion in faculty evaluation. At Saint Michael’s, however, service is a major component of faculty life, on which they are evaluated in major reviews. Faculty are expected to be active, responsible, productive participants in governance, academic ceremonies, and committees; in short, to “provide substantial service to the College and the academic department,” as stated in the Faculty Regulations (Appendix 5.4).

Although such service is expected at all academic institutions, the culture of service at Saint Michael's is energized by the College’s Edmundite example. Appropriately, faculty take service very seriously, from serving on multiple committees to organizing speakers to interviewing student applicants to serving food at holiday student dinners to participating in MOVE on local and international service trips. Since 2002, faculty-reported information about service includes six categories: internal academic leadership, mission-related service, out-of-class involvement with students, civic involvement, College administrative support, and external academic leadership. And, of course, many faculty who perform service ask for no recognition; unlike scholarship, service is an area in which under-reporting might be expected.

Appraisal

In response to questions about service in the fall 2008 faculty survey, 76% of the respondents stated that the College’s mission influences their service on campus, and 57% indicated that it also influences their service off-campus; 61% of tenure-line faculty felt the administration “respects, supports, and values” the work of faculty committees, and 80% were satisfied with the level of service expected of them. In general, then, in spite of faculty concerns about their general workload, they seem quite willing to serve, and do serve, on a level perhaps more generous than might be expected at a different type of college.

Given this positive assessment of faculty service at the College, it is troubling that the survey reveals serious dissatisfaction with the academic committee structure, as discussed in the chapter on Governance. Over 60% of junior and over 56% of senior faculty are uncertain about or dissatisfied with the process for composing committees; 60.8% of junior and 46.7% of senior faculty are uncertain or disagree that the committee selection process is fair; and 68.6% of all faculty are uncertain or disagree that the process for deciding the composition of committees is effective. These statistics are troubling because service on committees—whether they be statutory, standing, ad hoc, or self-formed special-interest groups—is essential to the effective operation of the College. Committee service also enables junior faculty to learn the inner workings of the institution and get to know senior faculty, within and outside their departments, further integrating them into the College community. This service is also essential for rising faculty seeking tenure and promotion, as it demonstrates collegiality and commitment to the College.

Projection

- As already projected in the chapter on Standard Three, the Faculty Executive Committee will assess the current committee structure, including the appointment and reporting process, and will make recommendations to the Faculty Assembly. (Faculty Executive Committee, FY 2011).
- Replace the SUMMA evaluations by FY 2011. (VPAA and Dean, FY 2011)
Institutional Effectiveness

The primary way in which the tenure-line faculty’s effectiveness is measured is through our system of reviews: first-year, second-year, fourth-year, tenure, promotion, post-tenure (every five years), and merit pay. In each, teaching, scholarship, and service are addressed. The inclusion of post-tenure reviews in 1998 and the addition of merit pay in 2005-2006, both ensure that senior faculty are regularly evaluated. The College’s 2002-2003 review by Phi Beta Kappa was an excellent external measure of the faculty’s quality. In addition to the current use of SUMMAs, by which individual faculty teaching is evaluated, other ways in which the College evaluates overall faculty performance include annual status reports prepared by the Office of Institutional Research; senior, alumni, and bi-annual advising surveys; and NSSE.

Faculty involvement is integral to the College’s structure of planning and evaluation, whether in department or College-wide committees. The Faculty Regulations provide for the systematic, rigorous, and regular evaluation of faculty by the Faculty Council; ongoing review and assessment of faculty compensation, and working conditions by the FWC; and the development of curricular policies by the CEPC.
Standard Six
STUDENTS

Consistent with its mission, the institution defines the characteristics of the students it seeks to serve and provides an environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students. It recruits, admits, enrolls, and endeavors to ensure the success of its students, offering the resources and services that provide them the opportunity to achieve the goals of their program as specified in institutional publications. The institution’s interactions with students and prospective students are characterized by integrity.

Overview

Students are at the center of the College’s mission and the Strategic Plan 2015. Faculty and staff across the campus create a rich academic and personal environment that supports students’ personal and intellectual development during their four years on campus. While the academic elements of that environment were discussed in chapter four, this section focuses on services provided by the Office of Admission and Student Life, whose staffs work with students outside the classroom to enhance personal growth as well as academic success. The chapter is divided according to the three subheadings provided by Standard Six, with a description, appraisal, and projection section for each topic.

ADMISSIONS

Description

The mission of Saint Michael’s College guides the Admission staff in their efforts to identify, recruit, and enroll highly qualified students from diverse ethnic and geographic backgrounds, who desire an undergraduate liberal arts education in an environment faithful to the Catholic tradition, and who will grow personally, thrive academically, and embrace the mission through service within the College community.

Admission staff is involved in a number of efforts to attract prospective undergraduates, graduate students, and non-degree international students. They travel extensively throughout the year to college fairs/night and individual high schools from Maine to Virginia and west to Colorado and even internationally to target countries to promote the College. They conduct information sessions for students and parents on campus, direct tour guides, oversee phonathons, organize campus host-visit programs, recruit and support ALANA students, and create and disseminate publications, new media and social networking web sites as well as online newsletters. They also spend a considerable amount of time reading applications and making recommendations for admission decisions. Additionally, great emphasis and effort go into developing relationships with high-school guidance counselors, alumni, parents, teachers, and coaches.

The Office of Admission is supported by the Faculty Committee on Enrollment Management as well as the Enrollment Management Committee, both of which meet monthly to review current data and monitor progress in various areas. In addition, the latter group gathers and interprets data concerning enrollment figures to provide greater predictability in enrollment.

Since the fall of 2000, the College has offered the Saint Michael’s College Book Award, a program that identifies high school juniors of exceptional character, high academic achievement as indicated by membership in the National Honor Society or some similar organization, and who possess a strong record of meaningful community service. High schools are invited to nominate one male and one female junior to receive the award as well as an application-fee waiver.
Appraisal

Student enrollment has grown significantly since the College’s 2000 NEASC reaccreditation. Nonetheless, students have been retained and graduated at a very high rate. The 2004 admission strategic goal to increase the number of applications to 3,000 (Appendix 6.1) was exceeded in 2006. The effort to increase geographic diversity has resulted in a greater number of applicants from outside New England, but has not yet yielded a significant increase in the actual enrollment of those students. The international marketing and recruitment strategy developed in fall 2008 to increase international undergraduate enrollment to 5% is currently underway and is expected to show positive results in the next two years.

As discussed in the chapter on the College’s mission, enrollment and retention of ALANA students is a perennial issue. The staff of the Admission Office develops strategies for increasing the current number of ALANA students, and the Strategic Plan 2015 has set optimistic goals. The appointment of an Associate Director of Admission and Multicultural Enrollment to mainstream ALANA recruitment within the existing Admissions Strategic Plan has already yielded positive results for fall 2009. ALANA students represent 7.6% of the entering class—a remarkable improvement, even within a smaller class size than in previous years.

And finally, since the last reaccreditation, technology has significantly changed the work of admissions. The department communicates electronically with all constituents: students (domestic and international), guidance counselors, parents, and alumni. KnightSpace, student blogs, and a regularly updated web site are also effective new means of communication. The staff relies on the Datatel Colleague administrative system to locate information instantly and generate many types of reports. Image Now, a program first used in 2008-2009, is a paperless system in which all admissions applications and supporting documents reside in electronic files. However, increased technology has not replaced the “personal touch” with which staff meets prospective students and their parents.

Projection

- Identify, attract, enroll, and retain a strong student body that has a passion for learning, compassion for others, and interest in exploring ways in which their academic study translates into purposeful lives. Maintain the current academic quality of incoming classes at the discount rate set annually by the Board of Trustees (Strategic Plan A.1., 2., 3., and 4.). (Admission Office, ongoing).
- Develop and fund more creative methods of introducing the College to prospective students and families, like the successful “Smuggs Saturdays” and the “Coffee with a Counselor” programs. Provide funding for other recruiting services such as the Student Search Service and Royall & Company to help improve results from direct mail. (Admission Office, FY 2011).

RETENTION AND GRADUATION

Description

For some students, the ability to afford college influences their attendance through graduation. Thus, financial aid can impact retention. The financial aid function is currently centralized in the Office of Student Financial Services, which reports to the Vice President for Finance.

Over the last four years, Maguire Associates has assisted in determining Saint Michael’s grants and scholarships for incoming students. The aid students receive upon entrance follows them all four years. The College uses Maguire to better manage the distribution of the discount rate to achieve desired characteristics
in the incoming class. Working with Maguire, the College sets enrollment priorities and distributes financial aid based on those priorities including, but not limited to, merit, need, geographic diversity, gender, and ethnic diversity.

The College recognizes the high cost of a private education and attempts to fill the gap between family resources and the cost of attendance, using a variety of resources, including federal, state, and institutional funding. The three types of financial assistance include grants and scholarships, loans, and student employment. In 2007-2008, the College administered over $37 million in assistance, of which approximately $21 million was scholarship or grant funding. This is an increase of over $11 million within the last 10 years.

**Appraisal**

Saint Michael’s is committed to creating a diverse community through its admissions processes as well as retaining students through successful graduation. Although there is reason to be optimistic about ALANA recruitment in the future, any assessment of success in this regard must be placed in context. Retention and graduation rates for ALANA students in recent years present a rather uneven pattern, as shown in the following table, which compares benchmark data from the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) for 34 private institutions with selectivity ratings similar to Saint Michael's. The data shows that the College’s retention and graduation rates are generally above consortium averages for Black and Hispanic students, while they fall short of the benchmark averages for all other ALANA students, particularly Asian students. This is the context in which the College is increasing efforts to recruit and retain ALANA students and increase diversity generally, as one of five guiding principles of the Strategic Plan 2015.

The CSRDE data provided here is for degree-seeking first-year student cohorts from fall 2000 to fall 2006. Fields where Saint Michael’s performed lower than the benchmark are shaded in gray:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student and Institutional Characteristic</th>
<th>Cohort Years Included</th>
<th>First-Time Freshmen</th>
<th>Continuation Rate (Avg.)</th>
<th>Continuation Rate (Avg.)</th>
<th>Continuation Rate (Avg.)</th>
<th>Graduation Rate (Avg.)</th>
<th>Graduation Rate (Avg.)</th>
<th>Graduation Rate (Avg.)</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8,917</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11,996</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
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<td>82.7%</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,382</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>90.4%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Amer.Indian/Alaska Nat.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White. Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>14,317</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonresident</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

59
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student and Institutional Characteristic</th>
<th>First-Time Freshmen</th>
<th>Continuation Rate (Avg.)</th>
<th>Continuation Rate (Avg.)</th>
<th>Graduation Rate (Avg.)</th>
<th>Graduation Rate (Avg.)</th>
<th>Graduation Rate (Avg.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Years Included</td>
<td>To 2nd Yr (2000-06)</td>
<td>To 3rd Yr (2000-05)</td>
<td>Four Year (2000-03)</td>
<td>Five Year (2000-02)</td>
<td>Six Year (2000-01)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saint Michael's College</td>
<td>Average Headcount</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male 241 88.2%</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female 297 90.1%</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic 5 91.9%</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic 6 84.4%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander 7 76.0%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amer.Indian/Alaska Nat. 2 71.4%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic 510 89.6%</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonresident 5 86.5%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of Pell Grant recipients at Saint Michael's has grown by 9.2% between 1993 and 2008, placing the College 23rd within a cohort of the 121 “best” liberal arts colleges (U.S. News and World Report) while the total number of Pell Grant recipients for the 121 schools actually declined by 8.4%. Graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients at the College are, on average, several percentage points higher than the overall graduation rate, a noteworthy outcome.

The retention of all undergraduates has received more focused attention since the 2000 reaccreditation, much of it resulting from the Retention Committee’s 1998 recommendations to improve positive student outcomes and retention. The committee collaborates with both Academic Affairs and Student Life to enhance communication between these areas and lead to a more effective “team effort” in identifying and dealing with issues of student retention. Retention and graduation rates are part of the dashboard reports provided to the Board of Trustees during on-campus meetings. Presentations regarding student retention are also periodically conducted for the Board and Enrollment Management Committee.

According to the dashboard indicators, from 2000 through 2007, an average of 88.7% of entering students continued to their second year. From 2000 through 2006, an average of 83% of entering students persisted to their third year.
For the 2002 cohort, 81.4% graduated from Saint Michael’s College in six years (see the graph below). Clearly, there is a strong correlation between retention to the second and third year and graduation. Programming efforts during students’ first two years also coincide with improved graduation rates during the last several cohort years, as is shown for the 1999 cohort year through 2002 below. Nevertheless, such efforts need to continue, and the changing dynamics of student persistence require consistent attention, analysis, and evaluation in order to promote continued positive outcomes.

Specific improvements in the recommended areas as well as in other major initiatives correlated well with improvements in retention during the last several years. In addition to initiatives to improve academic advising, reorganize academic support services, and strengthen the academic culture on campus, the Student Life Office has increased its weekend programs for students. Also, unique offerings such as the Ski Pass (a free season pass to all undergraduates in good academic and disciplinary standing) and the Cultural Pass (free access to cultural and artistic events at the Burlington Flynn Center’s regular season and select special events) are examples of enhancements that enrich the overall quality of the college experience for current students, and also attract prospective students. All new and first-year students participate in a fall orientation with
meetings and programs to assist them as they transition from high school to college. The Offices of Multicultural Student Affairs and New Student Programs provide complementary programs that build on faculty advising and academic support services.

Projection

- Develop retention strategies focused on the needs and challenges of all students in order to increase graduation rates and improve educational outcomes (Strategic Plan A.3.1., 2., and 3.). *(VPAA and Academic Affairs, FY 2011).*
- Design an aggressive and multifaceted strategy to recruit an ethnically and geographically diverse student body. Increase ALANA enrollment every year (Strategic Plan A.2., 1, 2, 3, and 4.). *(Admission Office, FY 2010).*
- Investigate, develop, and implement new forms of technology that are appropriate and relevant to enhance the education of students, meet the residential demands of increasingly tech-savvy students and ensure efficient business operations (e.g., to become paperless) (Strategic Plan: Stewardship of Resources, goal 5). *(Student Financial Services and IT, ongoing).*

STUDENT SERVICES

Description

Student services related to Academic Programs are covered in the chapter on Standard Four. The programs that come under the umbrella of Student Affairs are Athletics, Multicultural Student Affairs, New Student Programs, Personal Counseling, Public Safety, Residence Life, Student Activities, SA, Student Health Services, and the Wilderness Program. The MOVE program is part of Campus Ministry. All these programs are designed to complement and enhance the academic programs and contribute to the personal development of students (see Appendix 6.2 for a detailed description of these services).

Appraisal

As noted in the chapter on mission, students believe that the College is a caring community, as evidenced by responses to the fall 2008 student survey: 93.4% of the respondents agree that they are provided with an environment that encourages intellectual and personal development, and 79% feel that Saint Michael's has helped them develop a deeper respect for all individuals, regardless of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. It bears noting that although 82.6% feel that the College's curriculum introduced them to different cultures, ways of life, and meanings, when asked to identify the two most prominent weaknesses of the College, 22% pointed to the lack of diversity on campus and 52.9% said that Saint Michael's must work harder to increase diversity among faculty, staff, and students.

Survey questions also focused on safety and the residential experience: 95.3% of the students shared that they feel safe on campus and 83.9% believed that administrative personnel at the College adequately meet the needs of the student body; 88.8% felt that there are enough ways to get involved in extracurricular activities on campus; and 76.3% felt that an adequate number of campus student-leadership positions are available. These are impressive numbers, given that these support systems have operated with limited budgets, staffing, and professional training opportunities for the past five years. In the same vein, the 2003 Athletics Task Force (Appendix 6.3) revealed that over 90% of students are involved in some form of intercollegiate, intramural, club, recreation, personal fitness, or Wilderness Program offerings; and student-athletes report their athletic participation as a positive and satisfying experience, in spite of budget cuts affecting personnel, facility improvements, and equipment additions.
MOVE offers leadership opportunities for an average of 65 students who coordinate various programs and serve on the Core Team; however, women continue to comprise the large majority of the 70% of students who participate in service activity. New programs have been instituted to help with the transition and retention of ALANA students as well as to engage the larger College community, but resource limitations have reduced the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs’ ability to develop a large number of broader institutional outreach programs. The Director of New Student Programs attempts to meet with all first-year students at some point during the first year, but given time constraints, lack of staff, and large class sizes, this has not been possible.

Since the last accreditation, three new residence halls have been constructed, although the growing number of students at the College prevented any significant reduction in residential density. Although roughly 80% of surveyed students said that Residence Life staff members adequately meet their needs and are attentive to student concerns, the office is still lacking technological resources and diversity. While 79% indicated that they knew the type of information contained in the Code of Conduct, and 84.6% knew that it contained guidelines regarding probation/dismissal procedures, alcohol continues to be the most common violation.

The Office of Student Activities strives to provide students with opportunities to develop as ethical leaders in the spirit of the mission of the College. The Student Activities budget was bolstered significantly with a budget increase of $100,000 in FY 2007, allowing for the organization of a wide variety of programs and activities designed to address the needs of the growing student population. However, this infusion of funds for programs does not address the office’s staffing limitations.

While 71.4% of surveyed students indicated that they felt comfortable going—as often as necessary—to Student Health Services (SHS), the location is inconvenient, and the space is inadequately heated, has limited natural light, and small exam rooms (which hinder those in wheelchairs). There is also a lack of diversity among SHS staff and limited advanced technology in the office, as medical records are still handwritten. While the Personal Counseling Office provides one-on-one sessions for 16% of undergraduates, the office is challenged by the increasing number of students with pre-existing conditions and from a lack of funds for training and support to address the increasing legal implications of the work done in this office.

**Projection**

- Strengthen athletics and recreation programs, according to the 2003 Athletics Task Force recommendations, to promote life lessons such as participation, wellness, team-building, success and the value of competition. Given the College’s membership in NE-10, and the limited opportunity for divisional/conference change, address athletically-related financial aid in order to improve our competitive stature within NE-10 (Strategic Plan D.5). (Athletics Department, FY 2011-2015).
- Continue to aggressively explore avenues to co-locate Personal Counseling and Student Health Services. Continue the current development of one set of mental health protocols. (Vice President for Student Affairs, FY 2011).
- Develop a plan to support an optimal living and learning environment. Remove students from some housing areas to enhance North-Campus living options and address accessibility and density issues in the quad residence halls. Improve academic support services in residence halls, and improve the Alcohol Task Force, among other measures (Strategic Plan D.1. a., b., c., and d.). (Cabinet and Vice President for Student Affairs, FY 2011-2015).
- Support the residential and academic experiences of students by improving physical facilities and enhancing safety and security. Review the College’s Public Safety Prevention and Emergency response efforts. Pursue initiatives to provide electronic access to exterior residence hall doors; install more cameras campuswide; attend to classroom safety needs; provide electronic access to classroom areas; and continue to educate students about the RAVE emergency notification system. Move forward in developing improved...
fitness areas, and an expanded student center for meeting space, offices, and recreation (Strategic Plan D.6.). (VPAA, Public Safety, Facilities, Student Affairs Offices, FY 2010).

- Expand summer orientation for first-year students to include a residential component to provide an opportunity for a greater percentage of students to prepare for the academic and social transition in the fall (Strategic Plan D.1.3.). (Vice President for Student Affairs, VPAA, Office of New Student Programs, Residence Life Offices, Wilderness Programs, MOVE, Multicultural Student Affairs, Summer 2010).

- Participate in campus-wide sustainability efforts by developing new means of becoming paperless, while still protecting confidentiality, disseminating accurate information, and communicating with students (Strategic Plan, Initiatives F.2. and F.5.). (Student Affairs Offices, ongoing).

Institutional Effectiveness

The College is engaged in ongoing efforts to assess student learning both in and out of the classroom. Most departments and programs that offer student services ask for feedback from participants through quantitative and qualitative evaluations, focus groups, and reflective components. The structures for self-evaluation of the SA were recently tested and were found adequate. Survey data from the CIRP, given each year to first-year students before the fall semester, from NSSE, administered to first-year students and seniors each spring semester, as well as data from the Five-Year-Out Alumni Survey, all guide policy decisions made in Student Life and Academic Affairs.
Standard Seven
LIBRARY AND OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES

The institution demonstrates sufficient and appropriate information resources and services and instructional and information technology and utilizes them to support the fulfillment of its mission.

Overview

Library & Information Services (LIS) and Information Technology (IT) have complementary roles in meeting the information needs of the Saint Michael’s College community, and they work in partnership to support the fulfillment of the College’s mission.

The library’s strengths are its communication and collaboration with other campus constituencies, responsiveness to the needs of the academic programs, data-driven decision making processes, technological assets, and the high level and quality of service the staff provides to the campus community. Its weaknesses are an uneven level of information literacy instruction in different academic disciplines and some specific deficits of an otherwise generally sufficient building.

The IT department has made dramatic improvements in recent years in classroom technology, teaching resources, training and support, and overall network stability. However, it continues to struggle with the high cost of maintaining and upgrading infrastructure, the reliability of specific pieces of hardware and software, integration of systems, and the challenge of supporting burgeoning technology across campus with a relatively small staff.

Library & Information Services

Description

LIS provides students, faculty, and staff with the information resources and services they need for study, teaching, and research. The library strives to determine community needs and respond to them by shaping its resources and services to provide the best possible support for the academic program. Communication with the campus community is one key to determining needs, so the library maintains a variety of channels to gather input from its constituents, including the library liaison program, Library and Instructional Materials Committee, regular meetings with a variety of committees, and user surveys as well as more informal feedback from students, faculty, and staff. Another key to assessing needs is thoughtful analysis of library-use statistics, so the library collects a broad array of data on exactly how its resources and services are used. Circulation figures, database searches, gate counts, interlibrary loan requests, reference questions, and other data are regularly analyzed to determine how the library is being used and to discern unmet needs.

Student and faculty needs drive library planning at all levels. The library’s broad initiatives for 2005-10 were laid out in its strategic plan, “Library & Information Services Vision 2010” (Appendix 7.1), which established objectives in the areas of collections, information literacy, technology, physical space, and archives. Institutional support for library resources and services continues to grow. The library budget for 2009-2010 is over $1.6 million, with a materials budget of $681,000. To ensure the continued development of information resources the College has built an annual 6.3% inflationary increase for library materials into its budget model.

Library resources are focused on meeting the research needs of students and the teaching needs of faculty. Collection development is a shared responsibility of librarians and faculty, who are encouraged to submit
requests for materials for use by students in their courses. Statistics are employed to make evidence-based decisions on the allocation of funds, areas for enhancement, and subscriptions. The result is a library collection specifically tailored to the needs of the academic program at Saint Michael’s, including over 240,000 print volumes, 10,000 audiovisuals, and access to over 45,000 online periodicals and 12,000 ebooks. In the past five years, the number of periodicals accessible online has increased by a factor of nine, while expenditures for books have increased from 24% to 33% of the library’s materials budget. Among its most distinctive resources, the library has a noteworthy archive due to its role as the repository for the SSE which includes official records, rare books, manuscripts, and artifacts.

In recent years the library has collaborated with IT to make great strides in the technologies that give the campus community access to these resources. These include a new web site, link resolver, federated search, information literacy classroom, wireless network, off campus proxy access to online resources, and an enhanced Voyager catalog with links to tables of contents, reviews, and full-text content when available. To further support the work of students, faculty, and staff the library offers a full range of services provided by nine professional librarians and 11 paraprofessionals (18 FTE total); 60 student workers provide an additional eight FTE. The library’s curriculum-integrated information literacy program has grown dramatically in recent years. In 2008-2009, the library conducted 156 instruction sessions reaching 2,312 students. Each year, 80% of new students receive an introductory library orientation prior to the start of classes, and approximately 50% receive basic information literacy instruction in a first-year seminar. Annual library gate count averages 220,000 and circulation averages 40,000 per year. In recent years, circulation has been stable while use of digital resources has grown dramatically. During 2007-2008 students, faculty, staff, and visitors viewed the library homepage 175,000 times, searched research databases 217,000 times, and downloaded 157,000 full-text articles.

The physical component of LIS is the Jeremiah K. Durick Library, which is open 105.75 hours per week during the academic year. This 60,000 square-foot facility provides seating for over 500 patrons. The virtual component of the library is available via the campus network and from off campus 24/7.

**Appraisal**

LIS is largely successful in meeting the needs of the academic program. Most of the goals laid out in the library’s strategic plan for 2005-2010 (Appendix 7.1) have been achieved. Library resources are regularly benchmarked using NCES data; both spending on library resources and total volumes are at the median of our peers (5th out of 10) (Appendix 7.2). In the fall 2008 faculty survey, 96% of faculty indicated that students have access to the library and information resources needed for their courses; less than 2% indicated they did not (Appendix 7.3). The needs of more advanced student and faculty research are supported through interlibrary loan; in 2008-2009 patrons received 4,313 items.

The library’s technological assets are a significant strength. In particular, the integration of research databases, online catalog, federated search, and link resolver with the library web site has made searching easier and leverages the library’s online and print resources. In the 2008 student survey, 83% indicated that they were satisfied with the library web site; only 6% said that they were dissatisfied (Appendix 7.4). Results from that survey and usability tests have been used to optimize the web site to best meet student needs and expectations. Online access to library resources is convenient and robust both on and off campus. The implementation of EZProxy in 2008 represented a dramatic improvement in the ease of off-campus access.

The library prides itself on the high quality of its services. The best single assessment of library
services is the opinion of students and faculty. In the faculty survey 91% indicated that they were satisfied with the library services available to their students; less than 1% said that they were not (Appendix 7.3). Likewise, in the student survey, 90% of the respondents indicated that they used library services; of those, 88% identified them as “very helpful” (58%) or “helpful” (29%), while fewer than 3% of students indicated that they found library services to be unhelpful. The library staff is comparable in size to that of peer institutions and highly regarded by constituents. A 2008 Library Student Survey asked a series of questions regarding the knowledge, availability, approachability, and helpfulness of the library staff. On all questions 86-90% of students responded positively; only 1-3% responded negatively (Appendix 7.4).

The library’s information literacy program is strong and growing. In the 2009 senior survey 88% of students reported that their “ability to locate, access, evaluate, and effectively use information” increased at Saint Michael’s (Appendix 7.5). However, the library staff is concerned about the number of students who fall through the cracks. At present, approximately 50% receive basic information literacy instruction in a first-year seminar; the ideal would be 100%. The amount of higher-level instruction varies considerably among disciplines; some appear to be underserved. Student use of library and information resources is robust. The college ranks 3rd in gate count and 4th in circulation per capita among 10 peer institutions (Appendix 7.2). In the fall 2008 faculty survey 75% of faculty reported that their courses require students to attain or increase proficiency in finding, using, and evaluating information resources (Appendix 7.3).

In the 2008 Library Student Survey, library hours were the only area of significant dissatisfaction: 73% of students said that the library should make longer hours a high priority, and 78% indicated the creation of a 24/7 study area somewhere on campus should be a high priority. When asked which they preferred, 56% chose a 24/7 study area, and 39% chose expanded library hours (Appendix 7.4). At that time, Durick Library was open 99.75 hours per week; the median for peer institutions was 104 (Appendix 7.2). The college has undertaken two actions to address this shortfall. In January 2010, library hours were expanded by one hour each weeknight to 1:00 a.m. and by one hour on Sunday morning, for a new total of 105.75 hours. In addition, a secure 24-hour study area is planned for Alliot Student Center in fall 2010.

The library building is generally adequate for the needs of the campus community. It provides seating for over 20% of the student body, and with recent changes and judicious weeding, the stacks should be sufficient to accommodate collection growth through 2020. However, the facility has a number of specific shortcomings—an insufficient number of group study rooms, lack of an archives research room, and a children’s literature room that is too small to house that growing collection.

Projection

● Continue to shape LIS resources and services to meet the needs of the academic program. The library will develop a new strategic plan in 2010 supporting the goals of the new institutional Strategic Plan 2015 and the anticipated curriculum revision. (Director of LIS, FY 2011).
● Attempt to maintain current levels of acquisition of library resources through inflationary increases. The college has committed to a 6.3% annual inflationary increase for library materials, allowing sustained growth of collections. (Cabinet and VPAA, FY 2011-2015).
● Continue to expand LIS and IT collaboration to enhance the technology available for research. (LIS staff and IT staff, ongoing).
● Work with faculty to enhance student research and increase use of library resources as part of a renewed college-wide emphasis on academic challenge in all programs. (Library Staff and Faculty, FY 2011-2015).
● Collaborate with faculty to expand the information literacy program to provide all first-year students with the basic skills needed for coursework and provide students in all majors with the discipline-centered skills required for research. The library will seek opportunities to expand instruction in FYS above the 50% mark, and will begin a special outreach to academic areas that currently receive minimal instruction and whose students appear to be underserved. (Library Staff and Faculty, ongoing).
● Work with other campus departments to create a 24/7 study area on campus. *(VPAA and Director of LIS, FY 2011).*

● Integrate the expansion and/or renovation of the Durick Library to address specific shortcomings of the facility into the Campus Master Plan. This will include group study rooms, an archives research room, and an adequate children’s collection room. *(VPAA and Director of LIS, FY 2015).*

**Information Technology**

**Description**

The IT Department is committed to creating a robust technology environment for the College’s students, faculty, and staff. The department has a budget for 2008-2009 of $2,651,000 and a total staff of 20 divided into five units: Administrative Applications, Instructional Technology Services, Systems and Networking, Telecommunications, and User Services, all of which support the mission and goals of the College by providing its constituents with a reliable, secure, and fast campus network; support for the appropriate integration of technology into teaching and research; and technology support for administrative operations.

Before the department was reorganized in 2002, network and telecommunications staff were housed in one administrative unit, while instructional technology and user services were in another. Merging them into a single department allowed a higher level of communication, coordination, and unified planning, which resulted in greatly expanded technology resources and improved services to the campus community. One of the first outcomes of the reorganization was a strategic plan that guided the department’s priorities for projects and annual budget requests (Appendix 7.6). The plan was updated and revised in 2006 as progress has been made on nearly all of its objectives. The next version of the plan is currently under development (Appendix 7.7).

Ongoing IT priorities are developed with substantial input from campus constituencies. The Cabinet and Trustees approve strategic direction and annual budgets. The Educational Technology and Technology Steering Committees recommend annual capital projects and operating budgets and help set project priorities. The department’s leadership holds regular meetings with the SA Technology Committee, to discuss issues of interest to students. The department also solicits feedback from the whole campus community using both general and service-specific surveys.

The department provides a wide range of instructional technology in support of the academic program; 57 classrooms are equipped with presentation technology, compared to eight in 2002. All 11 computer labs on campus provide access to Microsoft Office and internet tools. Over 60 different discipline-specific software packages are provided for student and faculty use, including SPSS, Minitab, ChemDraw, and ARC GIS. The Language Learning Resource Center, administered by IT, provides access to a variety of language-learning programs and serves 600 classes and 4,500 individual students each year.

One of IT’s central instructional technology resources is eCollege, the course management system that the college has used since 2005. Faculty use has increased each year; in 2008-2009 it was used in conjunction with more than 60% of all courses. An eCollege component is required of all courses beginning in fall 2009.

IT staff provide training to faculty, students, and staff in the effective use of campus technology. At the start of fall semester IT orientation sessions are offered to all new and returning faculty. More advanced training is provided to faculty in the Teaching with Technology Workshop, a week of intensive training for 10-12 faculty members conducted each summer. Participants serve as formal or informal technology mentors for their departments. Many also showcase potential uses of technology during Pedagogy Day programs in January. Additional training sessions on specific topics are offered to faculty and staff throughout the year. One of the
most important facilities for ongoing technology training and support for faculty is the Faculty Development Lab, a space that provides faculty an environment with instruction and support from IT staff as they use technology with which they may not be familiar. Media Services and User Services personnel also provide technology support to the campus community. User Services manages the help desk and labs and provides desktop support to faculty, staff, and students. Media Services sets up mobile equipment and provides video recording of classes on request.

Student use of information technology is predictably high; 99% of students bring their own computers to campus, but labs remain busy. IT works to provide secure, fast, and reliable access to network resources from anywhere its constituents work or live. Off-campus access to academic software is provided via Citrix; access to library resources is available via EZ Proxy.

The College ensures legal and ethical use of technology by students, faculty, and staff by posting policies on Computer Use, Copyright, IT Security, Service Level Agreements, Software Procurement, and Virus Protection on the College web site. Information on these policies is also available in the IT Student, Faculty, and Staff Handbooks. Violations of these policies can include all regular College sanctions. Compliance with copyright and intellectual property laws is also supported through packet shaper settings.

Datatel Colleague is the college’s primary administrative system, used for admissions, financial aid, fiscal management, human resources, registration, and student records. The Datatel web interface was implemented in 2001 and is locally branded as “KnightVision.” IT also supports specialized administrative systems for a number of departments, including Datatel Benefactor in Alumni Relations and Institutional Advancement; a document-imaging system in Admissions and the Registrar’s office; and Voyager, Ariel, and Clio in LIS.

**Appraisal**

Since reorganization in 2002, IT’s technology resources have expanded dramatically, while both network reliability and user satisfaction have improved substantially. Progress has been made on nearly all of the technology objectives established for 2010 (Appendix 7.6).

IT spending has increased significantly in recent years—11% in the past year alone. This reflects the College’s substantial capital investment in improving classroom technology and network infrastructure, which is well above the average for our peers, while the College’s total spending on IT is comparable to peer institutions reporting figures to Educause (Appendix 7.8). Total IT spending per FTE is at the median of peer institutions and thus typical for institutions of our kind, and Saint Michael’s ranks 4th out of 11 peers in IT spending as a percentage of the total institutional budget. On the other hand, spending in other aspects of IT has not kept pace, particularly with regard to personnel. When capital expenditures are factored out, the College ranks 8th out of 10 among peers in IT spending, but in regard to personnel, the College falls at 9th out of 11 in the number of IT staff per student served; factoring in student workers, that number falls to 11th out of 11 (Appendix 7.8). The department is therefore in the position of supporting much more infrastructure with fewer staff than in 2002, which places significant constraints on the level of service IT can provide.

Several major technology initiatives that directly support instruction have been successfully implemented in recent years. Classroom technology is on par with or better than most peer institutions; 57 classrooms have equipment for presentation. The faculty recognize the improvements that have taken place in classroom technology in recent years, and 83% of the fall 2008 survey respondents reported that they are now satisfied with the technology available to them in the classrooms in which they teach; 13% indicated that they were not. A remarkable 98% of faculty reported that they were satisfied with the discipline-specific software tools available to them (Appendix 7.5). Use of eCollege has grown to over 60% of all courses on an entirely voluntary basis; reaching the ideal level of 100% would provide additional benefits for students.
Initiatives such as the Teaching with Technology Workshop and expansion of the Faculty Development Lab have enhanced the training and support available to faculty. In the fall 2008 faculty survey, 92% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the training available to use technology in the classroom; only 2% were dissatisfied. Use of the Faculty Development Lab has increased dramatically in recent years, and it receives high marks—81% of faculty expressed satisfaction with the assistance they receive there, and only 2% were dissatisfied; just 17% indicated they had never used the lab. Faculty are generally satisfied with classroom technology: 83% were satisfied with access to classroom technology, and only 13% expressed dissatisfaction. Figures are similar regarding its reliability: 75% were satisfied and 20% dissatisfied. Faculty particularly appreciate IT personnel’s responsiveness to classroom problems—90% expressed satisfaction, and only 5% dissatisfaction; the Help Desk averages an overall customer satisfaction rating of 4.44 out of 5 (Appendix 7.3).

Access to network resources has improved significantly in recent years. Network outages were commonplace 10 years ago; general service interruptions are now relatively rare, although specific applications inevitably fail from time to time. Network availability is now above 99.5%. Off-campus access to instructional and research resources has also improved dramatically through the implementation of Citrix and EZProxy, both of which have proven valuable and reliable means of remote access for students, faculty, and staff.

The College’s experience with the Datatel Colleague administrative system has been mixed. Implementation of the Datatel web interface, locally referred to as KnightVision, for course registration and administrative functions has been largely successful. Initial problems with system crashes during registration have been overcome. Efforts to better integrate Datatel with other campus systems and implement data reporting and analysis tools have been hampered by the lack of personnel with the specialized expertise and time necessary to address the system’s problems. The performance of the Datatel Active Admission and Active Alumni portals has been unsatisfactory.

**Projection**

- Collaborate with the Dean, TRC, and Educational Technology Committees to provide faculty support in an expanded range of classroom software, such as Pinnacle, instant class polling, and class capture. Begin exploring the potential use of eportfolios, social networking, and virtual worlds. (IT, FY 2011).
- Continue to promote the use of eCollege with a goal of participation by 100% of classes. Students will increasingly come to expect a hybrid of physical and virtual instruction, and eCollege will continue to serve as a primary vehicle for this instruction. Saint Michael’s will remain a residential college, but has already piloted summer low-residency “hybrid” courses using eCollege as the platform for the off-campus component. (VPAA and Dean, FY 2011).
- Expand technology training and support for faculty. The Faculty Development Lab and instructional technologists who support faculty should eventually be housed together in one physical space to create a Center for Instructional Technology, possibly as part of a Teaching and Learning Center. (VPAA and IT, ongoing).
- Develop a long-range plan with a central focus on the pursuit of strategic outsourcing of applications and hardware support in order to make the best use of financial and personnel resources. To contain costs and allow IT staff to focus on supporting instruction, administration, and institutional effectiveness, the College will contract with third-party partners in cases where they can supply these services economically and reliably (Strategic Plan, Stewardship of Resources 5.1). (IT, FY 2011).

**Institutional Effectiveness**

The library uses a variety of mechanisms to conduct ongoing evaluation and assessment of its resources and services and uses the findings to make changes and improvements to best meet the needs of the academic
program. The library regularly collects student feedback through surveys, focus groups, usability studies, and
meetings with the SA Academics Committee. Faculty feedback is solicited via surveys, the library liaisons
program, and the Library and Instructional Materials Committee. Results are used to make evidence-based
adjustments to best meet the needs of the academic program. Budgets, collections, and use statistics are
regularly benchmarked against peers. Finally, gate count, reference, and other use statistics are monitored on
an ongoing basis to assess the optimal scheduling for library services; both library and reference hours have
been adjusted in recent years as a result. Information literacy instruction sessions are regularly assessed by
instructors with a variety of instruments aimed at both students and faculty. Each instructor formally assesses
at least 10% of their instruction sessions each year; in 2007-08, 23% of sessions were formally assessed.
Broader assessments of the information literacy instruction program were conducted in 2006 and 2008 and
will continue to take place biennially.

The Department of Information Technology evaluates its performance in a variety of ways and uses the data
collected to improve service and align IT goals with College goals. Each of the five IT teams has its own
balanced-scorecard report that tracks measures important to that team. The scorecards have been very
effective, and data collected for these reports are used to improve performance. Teams also get feedback
from users, as help-desk calls are randomly sampled for satisfaction and follow up; these surveys are
administered by the Help Desk Institute. The department also surveys all faculty and staff each year, and the
results are used to set annual service improvement priorities. IT resources and services are regularly
benchmarked using the Educause Core Data Service.
Standard Eight
PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The institution has sufficient and appropriate physical and technological resources necessary for the achievement of its purposes. It manages and maintains these resources in a manner to sustain and enhance the realization of institutional purposes.

Overview

While the College has made significant investments in its physical resources in the past decade, its physical plant faces ongoing challenges that the current Strategic Plan is addressing. These challenges include academic facilities and learning spaces, improved student residential spaces, updated technology in classrooms and residence halls, recreational spaces such as an ice rink, and additional parking. The Facilities Department is working on a master plan, and IT is developing the technology plan. Strategic planning team members are working with facilities and IT to coordinate plan objectives and identify priorities and interdependencies of implementation. One comment from the College's 2000 Self-Study still applies: “There is no lack of ideas within the College community about how to make the institution a better place, only a lack of money to implement these ideas.”

Description

Saint Michael’s is situated on a plateau in Winooski Park, a section of Colchester, Vermont. The College comprises two campuses: the main campus and, about a mile away, the smaller North Campus. The land—once owned by a holding company that had the brothers Ethan and Ira Allen as its principals—abuts the Winooski River, and it overlooks Mount Mansfield, Vermont’s tallest peak, and the Green Mountains to the east, and the Adirondack Mountains to the west.

The College owns 480 acres of land and 76 buildings, containing approximately 1.42 million square feet. The campus is landscaped with grass and ornamental plantings, and over 50 species of trees. Its woods and fields are used for recreation purposes and as “classrooms” for courses in the natural sciences. College property is classified into three categories: land that is needed for current or near future needs (roughly 80 acres); land reserved for future, undefined needs or purposes of conservation; and land that may be used to produce income, including rentals, leases, and joint development projects.

The buildings on the main campus, mostly brick and consistent in style, include five academic buildings, ten residence halls, a performing arts center, student center, the library, sports and recreation buildings, Chapel, administrative buildings, and four clusters of townhouse-style residences for students.

The integrated intellectual and religious character of the College is symbolized by the central green anchored at one end by the Chapel of Saint Michael the Archangel and Durick Library at the other. The buildings on North Campus include three residence halls, a Visual Arts center, four apartment buildings, trades shops, the College’s Early Learning Center, and buildings currently rented to outside organizations. North Campus is part of a decommissioned military base that was known as Fort Ethan Allen when it was in operation from the 1890s to 1960.
Campus Facilities

The College has about 74 classrooms or spaces used for classes that accommodate between 10 and 110 students (34 regular classrooms, 19 seminar rooms, 2 lecture halls, 4 art studios, 9 computer labs, and six specialized instructional spaces). Of these, 57 are designated technology level II classrooms or higher, offering at least a networked computer, podium, DVD and VCR with ceiling-mounted projectors and screens. The IT web site and Registrar’s Office identify the classrooms and the technology in each level. Classrooms in Cheray Science Hall, Jeanmarie, and St. Edmund’s all have wireless network access and are supported by 100 laptops deployed on carts for occasional classroom use.

A multidisciplinary group of faculty and staff designed a special type of seminar room to support the FYS program and other small discussion-oriented courses. Six of these “Harkness” rooms, suited to a discussion-based instructional model, were constructed during the Design for Learning program. Five others now have specially designed tables and chairs so instructors may reconfigure the room for different activities, and two large lecture halls in Cheray Science Hall were upgraded in summer 2009. The seating capacity for each classroom is posted and is in line with the Fire Marshal’s code. IT and the Registrar’s Office collaborate annually to identify the classrooms to be upgraded with the capital funds available.

The evolution of pedagogy and the curriculum is blurring the line between classroom computer and traditional laboratories. Wireless laptops meet the need for occasional computer users or applications in class. However, physical sciences and other departments are heavy users of specialized equipment for research in their disciplines. The Biology Department uses five laboratories; Chemistry and Physics, three each; and Psychology currently has two. Most labs are used for both teaching and research purposes. Journalism and Mass Communication has three dedicated computer labs and Computer Science has one. In addition, the College operates the Holcomb Observatory that is suitable for casual observation of planets, the moon, and some prominent deep-sky objects. The observatory is often open to the public during noteworthy sky events.

In 2003, the Board of Trustees affirmed the residential nature of the College by endorsing a 100% residency requirement. While a small number of carefully chosen students lived off campus in 2008-09 because of capacity issues, the requirement has been applied consistently since its adoption. The completion of three suite-style residence halls increased capacity from 1,715 beds in 2000 to 1,885 in 2004, and allowed the College to demolish or repurpose older houses on the campus periphery. Residence Life staff categorizes housing into traditional and apartment-style housing; space reserved for the ALD’s international programs is also apartment style. Residence Life Staff also differentiates between ideal- and expanded-capacity beds. Expanded-capacity beds include doubles converted to triples, lounges converted to rooms, and rooms in older buildings with environmental challenges. According to the most recent Cabinet scorecard report (CQIN) (Appendix 8.1), the College’s residences are currently occupied at 100.8% of ideal capacity.

The College has two athletics facilities: the newer Tarrant Center with four indoor courts for tennis, volleyball or basketball, one-eighth (1/8) mile track, racquetball and squash courts, aerobics and dance studios, climbing wall and fully equipped fitness center, and the adjacent, older, Ross Sports Center with a 2,400-seat gymnasium with three basketball courts and two volleyball courts, and a competition-size swimming pool with diving boards. Nearby are fields for soccer, baseball, lacrosse and softball, and lighted tennis courts. The College leases land owned by the Vermont National Guard for these fields in exchange for access to recreational facilities and tuition waivers for Guard members. Saint Michael's completed the installation of an artificial turf field in 2005.

The College also owns real estate that currently produces income: 10 College properties adjacent to campus, on Florida Avenue in Winooski, serve as transitional housing for staff or visiting scholars, and generate approximately $180,000 per year; the land between the main and north campuses is leased to a condominium development (Winchester Place), office space in North Campus buildings is also leased, and fields further
away from the campus are rented to a farm. In addition, quarries located on College land offer income potential: A quarry located east of campus has already been filled to improve safety and creates three acres with the potential for development; and the College has obtained permits to fill another quarry. Tipping fees for the west quarry could result in $650,000 in revenue and, when full, the quarry will provide five additional acres of land.

Since the 2000 NEASC reaccreditation, the College has built several new buildings to add ideal-capacity beds as well as much-needed meeting spaces. The new Sutton Fire and Rescue building brought together the College’s Fire and Rescue Squads with the Office of Public Safety.

New Construction Since the 2000 Reaccreditation

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Project</th>
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<td>Cashman Hall (Residence Hall)</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Hoehl Welcome Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Pontigny (Residence Hall)</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Sutton Fire and Rescue</td>
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In the past decade, the College also completed a substantial renovation of one of its oldest academic buildings, Jeanmarie Hall, in which administrative offices have been converted to classroom and laboratory space. Subsequent renovations to a number of other buildings relocated the academic administration to Founders Hall, finance office to Salmon Hall, and created the Klein Academic Enrichment Commons. Finally, the Alliot Student Center bookstore has been expanded and the dining space renovated to provide an open dining experience.

Faculty and staff collaborations have led to meaningful additions to the campus. Collaboration between Biology and Education faculty, along with hard work by Facilities Services staff and many volunteers created an arboretum and the Teaching Gardens. Another campus-wide collaboration resulted in a multiyear drive to improve the location of the College’s Early Learning Center (ELC). In January 2009, this was accomplished with the ELC’s move to a building specifically renovated for its use.

The College has improved its parking facilities in the past decade by adding and redesigning several parking areas. Also, the College has leased three acres of land from the National Guard in anticipation of the possible construction of a connector road between main and north campuses. This leased land will provide connective circulation for two existing large dead-end parking lots and a much-needed additional 30 parking spaces.

**Campus Access, Safety, and Security**

All the College’s new construction and renovations comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition, Saint Michael’s has made efforts to bring older buildings into compliance with ADA accessibility standards, and at present 70% of the space in public buildings is fully accessible. While not all residence halls are totally accessible, there are a sufficient number of handicapped-equipped townhouses. The campus is also well-lit at night, and has 58 emergency call boxes. All buildings are equipped with smoke detectors, and most have sprinklers; 2,000 smoke/CO sensors are connected to the campus fire-alarm system. The volunteers of the College’s Fire and Rescue Squads are highly trained and provide emergency medical and fire services for the campus and surrounding towns and villages (students respond to 1,500 emergency calls each year).
The College is committed to fostering a campus environment that exemplifies sustainable practices, and is in compliance with federal, state, and locally required health, safety, and environmental programs. It also monitors campus energy usage and identifies opportunities for conservation, partnering with Efficiency Vermont to pilot a number of conservation efforts. In IT a substantial server virtualization also earned the College a monetary rebate from Efficiency Vermont. The College’s Safety and Risk Management Committee, a broad-based team with representation from many units, works with the Environmental/Energy Coordinator to ensure campus safety.

A recently appointed Sustainability Coordinator now manages sustainability efforts, recycling, and education and awareness programs. This position expands the role of the former recycling coordinator to support a number of sustainability programs, and she participates in the campus Environmental Council. Some new College-wide programs include lighting upgrades, classroom energy conservation, underwriting local bus travel for students, faculty, and staff; and a community vegetable garden.

College properties are maintained by departments that comprise Facilities Services (formerly the Physical Plant): Building Trades (e.g., carpenters, painters, glazier, upholsterer, and locksmith), Technical Trades (HVAC and electricians), Custodial Services, and Grounds (grounds, special services, transportation, vehicles, and receiving). Together, these departments create a clean, safe, aesthetically pleasing and comfortable physical environment. Facilities Services is currently updating the deferred-maintenance program and has made significant progress in this regard since the last reaccreditation. About $750,000 per year is allocated to deferred maintenance, along with $500,000 for equipment replacement. The current value of the 1.4 million square feet of the College buildings is roughly $500 million at a replacement cost of $350 per square foot. About 40% of deferred maintenance is related to North Campus properties. Over the years, several plans have emerged for the best use of North Campus, but those plans remain in flux.

**Technology and Information Security**

The College has made significant investments in its network infrastructure and computing resources for instruction and administration. For example, the switch infrastructure has been replaced in the last three years. In summer 2009, all residences and most academic and public meeting spaces were fitted with wireless network access. By the end of the academic year 2010, the College will have a business continuity site off campus to maintain network services. Development of the off-campus site will include an upgrade of storage and server infrastructure. These projects follow the substantial renovation of Jeanmarie Hall and the introduction of technology to 57 classrooms.

Information security, an increasingly essential responsibility, is overseen by the information security team comprised of the Director of IT, Director of Finance, and Senior Network Engineer. Access policies and procedures are established and enforced by IT. The procedures were upgraded as a consequence of a controls audit conducted by an independent third party in 2005-2006. Gramm-Leach-Bliley compliance is the responsibility of the Director of Finance. College systems are not PCI-compliant; all credit-card transactions are handled by third-party processors who are compliant. FERPA and HIPPA compliance is monitored by the Registrar’s Office and Human Resources, respectively. The Board approved the College policy for the new FTC Red Flag rule in April 2009. Information-security programs are reviewed by KPMG, the College auditors, on an annual basis.
Appraisal

The College has made significant investments in its physical resources in the past decade, all of which were guided by the strategic plan for that period. With the exception of the construction of the Sutton Fire and Rescue building, every major construction and renovation projection undertaken in the last decade was identified by the 2000 NEASC reaccreditation report—and the strategic plan that resulted from it—as an institutional priority.

The recent Hoehl Welcome Center and new Pomerleau Alumni Center enhance the College’s ability to attract students and serve alumni, and the Sutton Fire and Rescue Building supports the highly-appreciated services that the student emergency squads provide to the campus and local communities. Yet, the College needs to create or improve facilities for other student interests and activities: 24/7 study areas, additional fitness space, equipment in the Tarrant Center, and more space for student activities in the Alliot Student Center. In addition, adequate space is needed to bring the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs and other international student programs together, and similarly, the SHS and personal counseling need to co-locate to enhance student privacy and service availability.

The institution of the 100% on-campus residence policy has created enduring housing problems. Density in the first-year quadrangle is greater than desirable. Sophomores and juniors reside in large and small residence halls, single rooms, apartments, suites, and townhouses, but since seniors live in four- or six-person townhouses, the large graduating classes of 2009 and 2010 placed more demand on the apartment-style residences than available capacity. This pressed lounges into service as rooms and forced some doubles to be used as triples. The reduction of programming space and additional students put pressure on the quality of residential life. While the three new residences expanded the housing capacity and enabled the 100% campus-residency policy, higher than expected enrollment in 2005 forced the College to permit a small number of students to live off campus. Nevertheless, density in the quad dorms inhibits improvements in programming and general quality of life for students, and the College continues to use expanded-capacity beds in Founders Hall. Quad dorms are also not ADA compliant; while renovations to improve density and achieve ADA compliance would be costly, they would also represent a substantial step toward the College’s residential objectives.

The need to provide students with optimal residential space is followed by the need to satisfy student demand for technology services. Students have had wired internet access in their rooms for 14 years, but they now desire the convenience of wireless network access, which has been the top student technology priority in recent years. Completion of that project leaves electronic card-swipe access as the remaining student residential technology objective. Improved availability, capacity, and reliability of technology in the student residences have occurred simultaneously with the dramatic improvement of technology in classrooms. The renovation of Jeanmarie Hall centralized and increased classroom capacity and provided substantially more flexibility to a number of classrooms. Seminar-style classrooms have also been well received.

Faculty and staff demand for other technology services has increased as well. A new web site and portals for admission and alumni were created, but are now already in need of significant upgrades. With the shift to Datatel’s Colleague Advancement product to replace the end-of-life Benefactor, the College has the opportunity to begin to address these outstanding issues. Strategic Plan 2015 calls for substantial reliance on technology to improve operational efficiency.

While deferred maintenance is under control, new buildings and structural updates of the older ones require an increase in resources allocated for maintenance. Through cross-training and capital investment, Facilities Services maintains the additional square footage added in the past 20 years with the same or fewer staff. North Campus facilities continue to age, but have not received the resources needed to maintain them to the
same degree as the main campus. New classroom furniture supports new modes of instruction, but also requires a systematic program for replacement and maintenance.

A major facilities challenge faced by the College is Founders Hall. The building currently houses most of the academic administration as well as Student Financial Services, and the upper floors are student residences, predominantly single rooms. The cupola of the building is central to the College logo and, as the name implies, it was the first building constructed by the Edmundite fathers when they arrived in Winooski in 1903. The state’s historical preservation department has regulations that cover requirements for building of this age and significance. The immediate concern is roof repair, but most of the major systems in the building need substantial amounts of work. Facilities Services estimates that repairing the building would cost substantially more than razing the structure and starting over. Of course, the symbolic and historic significance of the building precludes that alternative, but no other financially sound alternative has emerged.

**Projection**

- Develop a new facilities master plan as part of a campus master plan. All the physical resources to be included have been mentioned in previous projections, especially in the chapter on Standard Six (improved and increased space for co-curricular activities; expansion of the Alliot Student Center, co-location of SHS and personal counseling, improvement of fitness facilities, reduction of the density of students in quad dorms, etc.) (Strategic Plan D.6). *(President and Cabinet, FY 2011).*
- Finalize the IT plan and review the structure and practices regarding information security. Beyond the completion of the programs currently in process, major initiatives will include development of a data warehouse and movement of business processes to the web, including a web site upgrade and a campus portal. *(CIO, Director of Finance, Director of IT, FY 2011).*

**Institutional Effectiveness**

Improvements in facilities and technology have been guided by the 2000 NEASC reaccreditation process, campus strategic planning, and the annual planning and budgeting process. Facilities Services and IT have departmental systems to develop, assess, propose, and prioritize projects. These processes give the Cabinet the data necessary to modify and adjust priorities, as necessary.
Standard Nine
FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The institution's financial resources are sufficient to sustain the achievement of its educational objectives and to further institutional improvement now and in the foreseeable future. The institution demonstrates through verifiable internal and external factors its financial capacity to graduate its entering class. The institution administers its financial resources with integrity.

Overview

The College is financially healthy and stable, and has made tangible improvements in its reporting systems since the last reaccreditation to facilitate data-driven decision-making. Since 1998, when then President vanderHeyden authored Vision 2010 (Appendix 1.3), the College has employed “fiscal responsibility” as one of its core institutional principles. The related standards prescribed by NEASC closely mirror the College’s goals to maintain sound fiscal policies and practices, with a special focus on financial and management reporting, budgeting and forecasting, balance-sheet management, revenue generation, institutionally funded financial aid, and internal controls. These fiscal policies and practices are described and assessed in this chapter, and include not only a consideration of financial planning, reporting, and budget management, but also capital assets, debt, endowment funds, and fundraising efforts. The challenges presented by the College’s resource limitations and current market environment as well as the fiscal implications of the emerging strategic plan are covered in the appraisal and projection sections.

Description

Financial Planning, Budgeting, and Reporting

Whereas a campus-wide strategic planning committee coordinated strategic and financial planning through 2004, these functions and budget prioritization are currently consolidated in the President’s Cabinet. Budget discussions address the qualitative aspects of strategic and budgetary planning, with quantitative aspects developed by the Finance Office under the leadership of the Vice President for Finance. The Strategic Plan 2015 will continue where the 2010 Strategic Plan ends, and eventually guide resource allocations to reflect the College’s mission and focus on student learning.

The annual financial plan is led by the Vice President for Finance in the fall, using enrollment targets and other macro-level guidelines developed in collaboration with members of the Operations and Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees and the Cabinet. The Director of Finance prepares this five-year planning model with specific input from enrollment management, institutional advancement, information technology, human resources, and other key functional areas. The plan also incorporates revenue estimates, recent and emerging expenditure trends, and compensation targets. The Vice President for Finance coordinates the Cabinet’s efforts to prioritize budget requests in accordance with the College’s strategic goals. Working with a well-defined timeline, the Cabinet agrees on the financial plan and presents it to the Board at its winter meeting for approval of the proposed tuition and fees as well as planned compensation strategies. From these approved parameters, the Director of Finance develops a detailed operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year based on current activity levels, projected revenues, and historical budget data. Cabinet members and budget managers provide input during this process; Trustee approval is sought at the Board’s spring meeting or June retreat. Copies of the College’s most recent budget and financial plan are included as Appendix 9.1 and Appendix 9.2.
Budget monitoring and control is the responsibility of the Director of Finance and is achieved through monthly departmental and college-wide status reports, an online system for departmental budget monitoring, investigation of emergent budget variances, and periodic forecasts of fiscal-year results (Appendix 9.3, 9.4, and 9.5). When projections indicate that midyear corrections are required due to enrollment levels or other revenue and expense fluctuations, the Cabinet takes remedial action and approves temporary adjustments to the operating budget; the Vice President for Finance then presents these revised projections to the Board.

The Vice President for Finance submits the annual Capital Budget (Appendix 9.6) for Cabinet and, ultimately, Board approval. The capital-budget process considers the impact of depreciation expense on the operating budget, based on the useful life of each proposed project, and the full amount of annual depreciation expense (approximately $6 million) is covered in the operating budget each year. Planning for capital-asset acquisition is closely tied to the operating budget as well as to physical resource planning through the Vice President for Finance, in accordance with the priorities established in the current strategic plan and the most urgent needs identified by Facilities Services. Most “bricks-and-mortar” requests are submitted through the Director of Facilities and, as a result, are coordinated with the annual facilities planning process.

The Finance Office is also responsible for accounting and financial reporting systems that complement the budget management functions described above. Formal financial statements are prepared by the Financial Accounting Manager once a year in conjunction with the College’s annual audit, and internal reports are published on a monthly basis. Managers in the Finance Office meet regularly to discuss emerging trends and variances, and present year-to-date financial statements to the Cabinet several times each year for further discussion and analysis (Appendix 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, and 9.7).

The annual audit is performed by KPMG, an international CPA firm, which has issued “unqualified” opinions (Appendix 9.8). The audit report is presented annually to the Operations and Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees, and there have been no management letter comments in recent years.

**Fiscal Condition and Operations**

Operating results have been strong, and net assets have continued to increase steadily over the past 10 years. Total operating revenues have grown at a compound annual rate of 5.06% since 1998, with net tuition, fees, and room/board increasing at 5.62%. The College measures overall financial health using the Composite Financial Index; the recent score of 2.99 in 2008 barely meets the commonly defined “threshold” score of 3.0 for fiscal health. For comparison purposes, our score of 5.91 in FY 2007 compared poorly to scores ranging from 7.3–9.0 for a small group of peer institutions. Nationally, using comparative data from FY 2006, a score of 4.28 compared favorably to the 50th percentile (3.8) and New England (3.4) groupings using the Council of Independent Colleges FIT data set, but less favorably in categories of enrollment size (1,501-2,250 FTE, with a CFI of 4.6) and for the Carnegie classification BA Arts & Sciences (CFI 5.1) (see Appendices 9.8, 9.12 and 9.14 for further analysis of annual operating results).
Since the last reaccreditation, the College has issued two new bonds for the construction of residence halls. As of June 2008, the College had a total of $34.5 million in bonds outstanding, maturing at various dates through 2028. Interest rates range from 2.875% to 6% (all fixed-rate indentures), and annual debt service was approximately $3.9 million in FY 2008 (approximately 5.3% of total operating revenues).

On June 30, 2008, the College’s long-term investments totaled $79.7 million, including $72 million in endowment funds. The $18 million total endowment growth since 1998 includes $12.6 million of cash received during FY 1998-2005, with the remainder attributable to market growth less annual endowment spending. The Office of Institutional Advancement (IA) concluded the Visions Campaign at the end of June 2005, raising a total of $52.8 million in gifts and pledges—surpassing its $52 million goal. However, IA currently reports a campaign total of $46.5 million due to unfulfilled pledges on several lead gifts (Appendix 9.9a).

Ongoing fundraising efforts contribute nearly $2 million annually to the operating budget, with additional resources provided in the form of temporarily and permanently restricted gifts. In the 10-year period ending in FY 2008, the College’s endowment has been used to fund approximately 4.4% of annual operating expenses. Gifts are solicited based on agreed-upon institutional priorities, and promptly and accurately directed toward donor intentions using a system of internal controls that is under continuous review and enhancement (Appendix 9.9b and Appendix 9.10).

Recent turmoil in the financial markets reduced the College’s endowment to approximately $62 million in December 2009. The newly combined NACUBO-Commonfund Study of Endowments (NCSE) indicates an average negative return of -18.7% as compared to the College’s return of -22.71% for FY 2009 (Appendix 9.11a).
The endowment funds consist of 11 individual funds, managed by outside investment managers and monitored by an independent reviewer, Evaluation Associates, as well as the Investment Subcommittee of the Board. This committee meets quarterly and is responsible for the College’s investment policy as well as portfolio oversight. Approximately 33% of the portfolio is invested in hedge funds, private equity and private real estate as of June 2009. Refer to (Appendix 9.11b) for more current endowment information. The College’s annual endowment spending policy is 4.5% of the lowest of the following, but not less than $2 million: A rolling average for the three-year period ending two years prior to the fiscal year in which the spending occurs; the market value as of June 30 of the fiscal year ending two years prior to the fiscal year in which the spending from the endowment occurs; or the market value as of October 31 of the preceding fiscal year.

Virtually all revenue generated by Saint Michael’s is devoted to the support of its students in their pursuit of higher education. With its focus on residential education, the College funds few activities that are not linked in some way to the education of students. Instruction and auxiliary enterprises (e.g., room, board, and bookstore) are the two largest expense categories. A trend analysis of functional expenses over time and a comparison to relevant peer/aspirant schools is shown in Appendix 9.12.

Operations of the Finance Office are guided by a system of policies that support the ethical oversight of our financial resources. Recent enhancements to College policies include an updated conflict of interest statement for Trustees and senior management, a code of conduct and whistleblower policy, an identity-theft program related to the FTC’s “Red Flag” rule, and certain practices for review of executive compensation.
Appraisal

Saint Michael’s is financially stable and sound. The College’s net assets have grown considerably in recent years, and it has consistently reported net increases in unrestricted net assets from operations during the past 10 years.

In FY 2006, the College was challenged by an unfavorable financial aid variance of approximately $2 million. This situation was exacerbated by declining revenues in certain graduate programs, and optimistic revenue estimates for special events. The College responded by immediately taking steps to reduce operating budgets in a coordinated manner across campus, attempting to limit reductions in areas most closely related to serving students, with larger cuts in ancillary services. In the current national and global economic downturn, the College recently faced a similar situation with regard to the fall 2009 entering class, due to both a higher than budgeted discount rate and a shortfall in the number of new students, requiring adjustments to the FY 2010 budget – which already included a salary freeze for both faculty and staff. However, as of January 2010, the administration is once again reviewing FY 2010 projections for the remainder of the fiscal year, to consider the impact of favorable revenue and expense trends on spending plans for the spring semester as well as any impact these trends may have on the FY 2011 financial plan that is currently under development.

As mentioned in the chapter on Standard Six, the College engages Maguire Associates to assist with a more structured financial aid awarding strategy, in order to avoid any recurrence of the events of FY 2006, when a large entering class required a significantly higher discount rate than budgeted. In addition, the CIO and a faculty member with expertise in statistics have developed in-house modeling capabilities to assist the Cabinet in understanding the impact of strategic decisions on the enrollment management model developed by Maguire. The Financial Aid Office is now incorporated in the office of Student Financial Services, under the Vice President for Finance.

These process refinements were responsible for a dramatic reduction in the financial aid discount rate to 27% in fall 2006. However, that rate has been increasing since then and was 40% for the fall 2009 incoming class—partially as a result of the College’s decision to more explicitly incorporate family need into the awarding model, but also to work toward goals for ethnic and geographic diversity, gender balance, and Vermont representation while maintaining student quality, as measured by predicted GPA and SAT scores.

These enrollment challenges served as a catalyst for many improvements in financial management functions. Financial planning, forecasting, and budgeting techniques were refined, and additional monthly analysis reporting was implemented, as part of a comprehensive financial management process redesign project (Appendix 9.13). A cross-functional biweekly scorecard was implemented to enable the Cabinet to monitor emergent trends in both financial and other quantitative data in a timelier manner (Appendix 9.10). One specific outcome of this project has been an enhanced collaboration between the IA and Finance departments to coordinate and redesign certain fundraising reports to best capture the unique reporting needs of each area, while developing common data definitions (Appendix 9.9b). These two projects demonstrate the College’s continuous focus on excellence, and response to the financial aid variance in FY 2006 and again in FY 2010 is indicative of the institution’s ability to address unexpected financial problems.

The administration recognizes that continued growth in both enrollment and tuition levels at the pace of the last decade is unlikely. Declining numbers of college-age students in the Northeast, the area from which most of Saint Michael’s students are drawn, will make maintaining enrollment a challenge. Competitive pressure and increasing political scrutiny are likely to limit tuition increases. And, while the discount rate is in the range of the College’s peer institutions, it cannot be drastically reduced— both as part of the College’s mission but also as a practical, competitive, matter. Saint Michael’s is sensitive to the competitive environment and understands the impact of these exogenous pressures. In response, relevant Cabinet members and their teams address issues of class size, enrollment management, marketing, competitive trends, retention, and tuition
discounting to develop predictive models to strategically manage admissions, enrollment, and financial aid.

Recognizing the role of fundraising in institutional strategy, the IA leadership team analyzed the results of the Visions Campaign to clearly define the outreach and development programs necessary to secure increased support for key programs in the future. The issues being addressed currently include: the effort to continue growing the endowment, the urgent need for student financial aid, sustaining new relationships developed during Visions, identifying new potential benefactors, and the increasingly competitive market for charitable gifts. Annual-fund contributions have averaged $1.8 million annually during the past 10 years (1999-2008), but annual-giving revenue has not increased consistently during this period and provided only 3% of the annual operating budget on average. This compares to 6.3% overall for institutions participating in the annual Commonfund Benchmarking Study during FY 2008 (5.4% for institutions with similarly sized endowments), during a year in which annual-fund earnings provided 3.3% of the College’s operating budget.

While fundraising is important, the College has ultimately depended on tuition and the residence fee for approximately 79.8% of its total revenue during the past decade. However, the tuition dependency percentage for 2008 was 81%, rising consistently each year since the 2000 ratio of 77.6% (Appendix 9.14). The College has raised tuition and the residence fee an average of 5.48% over the past five years, compared to 5.68% for a selected group of peers.

During the 10 years ending in FY 2009, the College’s tuition increases have exceeded the fiscal-year CPI by 3.4 points on average, and the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) by an average of 2.2 points, excluding FY 2005 when the College reconfigured its fee structure by combining room and board fees into a combined residence fee, resulting in an unusually large one-time increase in the tuition component of the comprehensive fee.
The Board examines dashboard indicators (Appendix 9.15) to monitor the financial status of the College and other non-financial indicia throughout the year. In the past several years, a tremendous amount of effort and resources (including IT support) have been dedicated to developing more sophisticated reporting to provide information to senior administrators and budget managers. The College has also made several major enhancements to the long-range financial planning model and in certain accounting and financial reporting processes, and a more robust cost-accounting model is currently under development. However, the information that is available in the biweekly CQIN scorecard (Appendix 9.10) needs to be more widely dispersed, as should be information that is needed to make specific, effective financial decisions. CQIN needs to be evaluated and reviewed to determine how this tool can best answer questions that arise in the College’s Planning process, and especially to make it a useful tool that supports and aids in tracking the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan 2015.

In spite of the hard-earned gains in the endowment that resulted from the campaign celebrating Saint Michael’s Centennial, recent market conditions have eroded the endowment and created financial challenges as we craft a strategic plan in the face these emergent market realities. External economic factors will continue to impact marketing efforts already complicated by the demographic challenges of New England higher education and increasing expectations for financial assistance on the part of students and parents.

Late in 2008, the College first felt the impact of what became a severe and complex global economic downturn when, due to liquidity constraints, we were unable to redeem cash held at Commonfund. That situation affected many institutions and was widely reported in the popular media, prompting questions and concern on campus about the College’s financial situation. The Vice President of Finance issued a memo to the community commenting on the impact of the financial system’s liquidity crisis on the College. That memo has been followed at various intervals by several others (Appendix 9.16), and what began as a description of the College’s liquidity and investment position, has evolved into a discussion of key factors affecting the College’s finances. This form of communication has provided an opportunity to educate the broader community about the interaction of tuition, discount rate and enrollment on revenues, and about the size and composition of the overall cost structure of the College. By providing transparent explanation in this manner, the community is better-equipped to support the difficult decisions that have been, and may yet be, taken in response to the economic downturn.

**Projection**

- Coordinate the financial plan for 2011 with the Strategic Plan 2015. Synchronize long-range financial, endowment, and cash-flow plans to coordinate operational and financial planning efforts across the College. *(Vice President for Finance and Cabinet, FY 2010).*
- Utilize existing longitudinal and comparative measures to make decisions about the College’s operational and strategic goals. Assess financial results in relation to strategic goals, student outcomes assessment, and tuition discounting goals. *(Vice President for Finance and Cabinet, FY 2011 and ongoing).*
- Prepare a case statement for the next capital campaign that is consistent with Strategic Plan 2015. *(Trustees, President, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, and Cabinet, FY 2012).*
- Revise gift-acceptance policies in preparation for the next capital campaign. *(Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Vice President for Finance, FY 2011).*
- Create a strategic staffing and operational plan to provide appropriate support for fundraising and stewardship of philanthropic support and alumni relations. *(Vice President for Institutional Advancement, FY 2011).*
Institutional Effectiveness

The College has established a system of fiscal planning, controls, and reporting to help assure sound financial decisions. Internally, the College uses an integrated system of management reporting, internal financial statements, forecasts, and non-financial metrics reported in a biweekly “scorecard,” quarterly dashboard reports, and annual Fact Book to monitor institutional results across all functional areas, on a consolidated basis. Overall performance is compared to a selected group of peer/aspirant institutions using data sets available from IPEDS, specifically, tuition discount rates, functional expenses, and operating surplus, among other measures. The College also monitors tuition discounting against a custom comparative group using NACUBO’s online benchmarking tool. The institution compares endowment performance to averages from the combined NACUBO-Commonfund Study of Endowments), and this information is included in reports to the Board’s Investment Subcommittee. Leaders from Finance and IA are currently developing a uniform measure of cost-per-dollar raised to assess fundraising effectiveness (Appendix 9.3, 9.10, 9.13, 9.14, 9.15 and 9.17).

The College is periodically rated by both Moody’s and Standard & Poors (S&P). The most recent S&P rating action occurred in spring 2008, at which time S&P upheld the College’s A-/ Stable rating. The most recent action by Moody’s occurred in October 2009, at which time Saint Michael’s was downgraded to Baa1, with a stable outlook, due to an increasingly competitive market for enrollment. The College is beginning to refer to online comparative resources offered by rating agencies, although these still lack enough depth and functionality to be meaningful. These investment-grade bond ratings provide evidence of the College’s prudent financial management (Appendix 9.18a, 9.18b and 9.18c).
**Standard Ten**  
**PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

*In presenting itself to students, prospective students, and other members of the interested public, the institution provides information that is complete, accurate, accessible, clear and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions about the institution.*

**Overview**

The nature of information dissemination has changed rapidly over the past 10 years, and the College has worked hard to ensure that all its audiences have easy access to accurate information. Saint Michael’s continues to communicate policies, assessments and messages in both print and electronic formats, with an increasing focus on using the web for the greater accuracy, expediency and economy that this medium affords. A more centralized marketing and communications function on campus has resulted in increased oversight and consistency across all college communications.

A number of advisory bodies ensure that this centralization does not stifle input from the larger College community. The Director of Marketing and Communications works with a committee of faculty, staff, and students to develop a marketing direction that is both attractive and organic to the institution’s strengths. Similarly, the Director of Publications works with a Magazine Advisory Board of faculty and staff to develop story ideas and also address any difficult editorial decisions. Finally, the Director of Web Site Development convenes a faculty and staff Web Council for major decisions regarding the direction of the College’s Web Site. As listed in the CIHE form for this standard, all the expected information is available either on the web site or, as appropriate, in College publications.

**Description**

**Publications**

In fall 2006, the marketing and communications units were centralized in the Office of Marketing and Communications, bringing together personnel from Enrollment Management and IA. While other staff members on campus also work on marketing and communications, most College communications are at least reviewed by the Office of Marketing and Communications to ensure a greater level of consistency and accuracy in information dissemination for all audiences and across various media.

In 2007, the College contracted with Acalog to move from publishing hard copies of the undergraduate and graduate course catalogues to posting them exclusively online. All departments and relevant offices on campus review their respective sections for accuracy and make desired changes in February/March of each year. Subsequently, the catalogue undergoes a number of full reviews by all interested parties before it is “locked” in for the following academic year. Once a catalogue has been locked, it remains archived so future graduates will always be able to refer to the correct academic catalogue content relevant to their tenure at Saint Michael’s. The online catalogue contains policies concerning admission, student financial services, degree and LSR requirements, and academic regulations.

In recent years, most of the printed materials produced for admissions (logistical, policy, and procedure-oriented content) have been posted on the College web site. While still containing basic information on applying and where to find more details, printed recruiting materials are primarily marketing pieces intended to give prospective students a glimpse into the Saint Michael’s experience through narrative and photography.
Admissions publications for undergraduate, graduate, and international students include three viewbooks, an undergraduate travel piece, individual brochures on the master’s degree programs, a brochure highlighting alumni accomplishments, and a publication targeted toward prospective ALANA students. These publications typically have a two- to three-year shelf-life, and their content is developed broadly to ensure accuracy over their intended life span. In addition, Admissions produces an eight-minute video for prospective undergraduates. All this information gives an accurate and compelling representation of academic and residential life experiences at Saint Michael’s.

A New Student Manual was developed and published for the first time in the summer of 2007, to respond to a need for more coordinated communication to incoming first-year students. This annual publication replaced all the letters, brochures and forms previously sent to incoming students from multiple offices at various times throughout the summer. This cohesive manual provides new students and their families one convenient location to find policies and procedures regarding course selection, advising, orientation programs, housing, health services, student accounts, and IT.

Other major publications produced by Saint Michael’s include: The Student Code of Conduct and College Policies Handbook, published annually by the Student Life Office, is the official college document of policies and procedures governing student conduct; the handbook is linked as a pdf document from the “Residential Experience” section of the college’s web site; The Graduate Student Handbook (Appendix 10.1), a practical guide for newly accepted graduate students, includes degree requirements, general college information and program contact; The Saint Michael’s College Magazine, published four times per year, is sent to alumni, parents and friends; in 2008, an interactive online version was launched; The Report of Philanthropy, first sent to the donors in the winter of 2009, will continue on an annual basis.

The College’s current web site design and content management system, provided by Datatel, were implemented in 2005. During the migration to our new site, all content and the entire navigational structure were evaluated, and many changes were made to improve the site.

The Director of Institutional Research and Assistant Dean share responsibility for updating the College’s assessment web site, which includes statistical data and assessment reports from academic programs/departments. The Director of Institutional Research regularly uploads data concerning Saint Michael’s performance in the areas of retention, entering students (CIRP), academic advising, student engagement (NSSE) and alumni outcomes. A selected summary of institutional NSSE results have been pulled together into a web site that is accessible publicly from within the academics area of the web site.

While the web site is overseen by the Director of Web Site Development, all members of the Office of Marketing and Communication take responsibility for keeping top-level pages as up-to-date and accurate as possible, and significant human resources are dedicated to producing new content to keep it current. As the web site has grown over the past 10 years, this has necessarily meant that more individuals on campus have been trained to update the areas of the site for their respective departments, offices or programs. Currently, approximately 20 active “web authors” around campus regularly make updates to the web site. One advantage of the content management system installed in 2005 was additional functionality that allows for centralized review of all changes before they are published live. The Director of Web Site Development and the Director and Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications check the publishing “queue” daily to review any page updates that have been submitted by web authors on campus.
Saint Michael's has dramatically increased the number of e-publications sent to external and internal audiences over the past five years. While these have not totally replaced traditional print materials, they do embody the College’s desire to send out more timely information to targeted groups. In 2008 Saint Michael’s contracted with Fire Engine Red to handle all e-mail broadcasts, and they have mechanisms in place to ensure the College complies with the CAN-SPAM Act.

**Compliance Reports**

**Campus Security Act of 1990**
The Department of Public Safety publishes an annual report including statistics on certain reported crimes, a description of Public Safety’s role and authority, and information on campus policies and facilities. A link to the report is available from the web sites of both the Registrar’s Office and the Department of Public Safety, and the report is sent via e-mail to the entire campus community in October each year. A reference copy is maintained in the Public Safety public folder, accessible to all MIKENET users.

**Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act of 1994**
Saint Michael’s Athletics Department tracks varsity participation numbers annually (by sport and gender) as well as coaching FTE assignments and salaries, operating and recruiting expenses, athletically related student aid and revenues. The report is sent to the NCAA and the Department of Education, and the information is maintained on an annual basis by the Athletics Department and the Finance Office. The report is readily accessed via a link from the Athletics web site.

**Financial Information**
Financial information about Saint Michael’s is available for public review to the extent required by federal regulations. The last three years of the College’s IRS tax form 990 are posted on the web site. Printed copies of this form and the College’s IRS determination letter are provided upon request. The College conforms to generally accepted accounting principles issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) and others, as applicable. General financial information, employment status, and student profiles, within the limits of FERPA, are provided in response to various requests for information.

**Student Right-to-Know**
The College posts information regarding graduation/completion rates in compliance with the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. A link to this information is available from the Registrar’s Office web site.

As indicated in previous chapters, the Director of Marketing and Communications worked, during the 2008-2009 academic year, with the GDA consulting firm on an Image Development Initiative intended to focus the way in which the College projects itself, especially to prospective students and their families. Part of this initiative involved testing various messages for accuracy with current students, faculty, and staff as well as for appeal with prospective students and guidance counselors. The research enabled the Image Development Initiative Committee to identify aspects of the Saint Michael’s experience that are “organic” to the College and considered to be true statements by the campus community, ensuring “truth in advertising.”

**Appraisal**
The shift to put more College information on the web site and reduce hard-copy publications has several advantages that cannot be ignored—environmental stewardship as well as an increased propensity toward distributing more accurate and timely information due to the ease of updating information on the web—but it has been slow. Nonetheless, Saint Michael’s is moving much of its detailed, policy-based information to the web.
As noted earlier, the centralization of the Marketing and Communications functions has made a remarkable difference in the way information is disseminated, both on and off campus. Although the office is independent from Enrollment Management and IA, the three departments work very closely to ensure that all communications with prospective students, parents, and alumni are accurate, compelling and consistent. Content management systems for publications and the web site have resulted in greater control and review of content development, photography, visual identity, and editorial processes for all the College’s messages.

The desire of many offices to expand their area’s content, make it as interactive as possible, and/or move some business processes to the web has increased exponentially over the past five years—a challenge that is shared by IT and the Office of Marketing and Communications. However, while needs have increased, personnel dedicated to the web site have not. Currently, the Director of Web Site Development is the only full-time staff member who focuses solely on the site’s marketing content and functionality. There is also one full-time Instructional Technologist, housed in IT, devoted to helping faculty manage and enhance their courses online. In addition, the Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications spends 75% of her time making updates to the web site, helping faculty and staff translate information to the web, and producing e-communications of various sorts. An illustration of this staffing problem is the Faculty Enrollment Management Committee’s campaign in fall 2008 to encourage faculty to update and enhance departmental web pages. While the effort was worthwhile, and indeed long overdue, it resulted in a flood of new content that the Office of Marketing and Communications had difficulty putting online in a timely manner.

Another area deserving of attention is the integration and relationship of the online College catalogues with the rest of the web site. Some academic policies and general information contained in what used to be the front matter of the catalogue are replicated elsewhere on the site, but there is no automatic process in place to cross-check that information or to evaluate whether such duplication is necessary. Moreover, the navigation and categorization of this information needs assessment and revision. Currently, these pages of the online catalogue look very much like a print publication that was translated directly onto a web site, with long sections of information on multiple topics. A new navigational system would make it easier to cross-link policies and academic requirements to and from the College’s main web site. Similarly, the web site currently includes information that is difficult for most prospective students, parents, or other interested constituencies to find, unless they know exactly where to look, or specific search terms to use.

**Projections**

- Plan the next generation of the College’s web site. As the current content management system will no longer be supported by Datatel at some point in the near future, this change will eventually be necessary. *(Office of Marketing and Communications, FY 2011).*
- Replace the very outdated 2004 recruitment video. *(Office of Marketing and Communications and Admissions, FY 2011).*
- Review and update the online College Catalogues to improve their navigational structure in relation to the College’s main web site. While content for the online Catalogues is managed well, it needs to be improved to make it easier for users to find information on academic policies and requirements, regardless of whether they are seeking that information from within the online catalogue or through the main web site. *(Office of the Dean of the College, FY 2011).*
- Reformat the assessment web page and make it easily accessible on the College’s main web site. The new formal review of all academic programs, mentioned in the chapter on Standard Four, will result in clear learning outcomes for each major, which will be included on assessment web pages. *(VPAA and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, FY 2011).*
- Publish an Institutional Research web site to increase accessibility to some data currently included in the annual *Fact Book*, such as HERA requirements. The accessibility of this type of information—including our
various compliance reports—will be evaluated as part of an institutional evaluation of HERA requirements. (Director of Institutional Research, FY 2010).

Institutional Effectiveness

The College has developed a number of initiatives to help gauge success in disseminating information to various audiences. There has been a conscious, data-driven effort to determine marketing messages that accurately portray the Saint Michael’s experience. Centralization of the Marketing and Communications functions has meant much greater efficiency, collaboration, and accuracy across all college communications, and two content management systems—one for publications and one for the web site—ensure a centralized overview of every web page and external printed piece produced at the College. These two systems have made an enormous difference in the professionalism, accuracy and consistency in all the College’s messaging. The Office of Marketing and Communications, together with the Offices of Admission and IA, conducts surveys of prospective students and alumni to gauge the effectiveness of communications, in terms of method and content. This cycle of research includes periodic participation in the College Board’s Accepted Student Questionnaire, which provides good feedback on how prospective students felt about communications during the application process.
Standard Eleven
INTEGRITY

The institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in all of its dealings with students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. Through its policies and practices, the institution endeavors to exemplify the values it articulates in its mission and related statements.

Overview

The seven topics covered in this chapter demonstrate that the College places the highest priority on achieving institutional integrity. This strong commitment flows from the mission and leadership of the College, reflects the history and ongoing traditions of its founders, represents the hopes and ideals of the community, and influences the way its members work together and how they respond to current challenges in higher education.

Description

Mission and Community

As the beginning of Saint Michael’s second century unfolds, 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.

Saint Michael’s is inspired by the history and tradition of integrity and strong ethical values of the SSE, which founded the College in 1904. Another, strong part of this tradition was born in Selma, Alabama, in the era of civil rights, when members of the Edmundite community practiced ministry and solidarity with the African-American community there and elsewhere in the South. This was a time of segregation and poverty, but also of hope. The values demonstrated at this time and throughout the Society’s history have influenced the College as it strives to build an academic community of integrity, with respect for the fundamental dignity and worth of each person.

The commitment to integrity and ethical conduct is often expressed in terms of the Saint Michael’s “community.” This notion 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. An average of 92% of alumni from five-year-out surveys and 84% of seniors agree or strongly agree that Saint Michael’s is a “caring community” (see Table 1 in Appendix 11.1). As discussed in the chapter on mission, the College takes measures to perpetuate the ideals of the founders, while confronting the very real challenge of their diminished presence on campus.

The mission—which seeks “to contribute through higher education to the enhancement of the human person and to the advancement of human culture”—is revealed through opportunities to address topics of ethics, integrity, justice and the human condition in its course offerings. The College lists nearly 90 undergraduate and graduate courses (nearly 7% of all courses offered) that specifically cover such topics. In addition, the Office of Conferences and Special Events works with sponsoring departments at Saint Michael’s and interested outside parties to coordinate conferences, institutes, workshops, and other instructional or enrichment activities to ensure organizational effectiveness and compatibility with the policies and values of the College.
Institutional Authority

The Saint Michael's College Corporation acts under a charter granted by the Vermont State Assembly in 1913. Since 1939, the College has been accredited by the NEASC and is committed to honesty and integrity in all its relationships with the CIHE, including compliance with the Commission’s standards, careful completion of the Annual Report, and all other requirements or requests.

As discussed in the chapter on Standard Three, the governing document for the Board of Trustees is its Bylaws, according to which the Board has the final authority to determine policies affecting the College. In 2002, the Trustees, working with the FWC and the Faculty Assembly, approved the “Appeals and Grievances” section of the Faculty Regulations.

Since 2000, the College has endeavored to establish and revise policies and procedures to support its mission and a campus environment of high ethical standards and integrity. The many documents that define Saint Michael’s governance structure also lay the framework for communicating clear policies and expectations on integrity which guide the daily business of the College. In particular, the Employee Handbook for Faculty and Staff, Faculty Regulations, Board Bylaws, Student Code of Conduct and College Policies, College Policy on Academic Integrity, Nondiscrimination Policy and Multicultural Vision, Library and Information Services Policies, Information Security Plan, Privacy Policy and Computer Usage Policy—all address these expectations and are widely available in print and/or on the web site.

Academic Integrity

Early in the decade, the Campus Culture Committee explored the possibility of establishing an “honor code” for students and subsequently proposed a less formal alternative. At the beginning of each new academic year since fall 2003, the incoming first-year class takes the Saint Michael's College Academic Pledge (Appendix 11.2) as part of the New Student Convocation. This pledge acknowledges the high and serious expectation that academic integrity is an essential part of the learning and growth that takes place at the College. It is expected of faculty in their own scholarly work as well as of students, and a substantial effort is made to educate students about the meaning and process of academic integrity. Policies on academic honesty, including a new policy on grade disputes, are described in the undergraduate College Catalogue and Student Code of Conduct and College Policies. A separate brochure outlining the policy on academic integrity is provided to each first-year student at orientation. Student compliance with the standards of academic honesty is managed through the Assistant Dean of the College and the Judicial Review Board (Appendix 11.3).

The College maintains high standards of academic integrity, and all FYS are required to devote class time to discuss this topic. The FYS coordinator provides training to the faculty for seminars so the College can ensure that every first-year student has been introduced to academic integrity and given specific instruction on how to maintain it. The library’s educational efforts to deter plagiarism include instruction sessions and a web site, and faculty are strongly encouraged to specifically outline the consequences for violations of academic integrity in their course syllabi.

In addition, the Assistant Dean has recently updated a number of provisions associated with the policy on academic integrity: wording of the policy on academic integrity was revised in 2006 to explain more accurately the process for an academic Judicial Review Hearing and its distinction from disciplinary judicial review hearings convened by the Office of Student Affairs; a template for faculty to use in filing a formal academic integrity charge was placed in the College’s public folders in 2007 to increase the clarity and uniformity of the
process; and a list of possible academic sanctions available to a Judicial Review Board was compiled in 2007, and is now distributed to Board members at the beginning of all convened hearings. These changes have led to an improved understanding of the chain of responsibility for dealing with these issues and have eliminated possible miscommunication of confidential academic integrity information among offices.

The fall 2008 faculty survey reveals strong faculty satisfaction with the College’s statements regarding academic integrity and support for dealing with violations (Appendix 3.23). Additionally, it is clear from the fall 2008 surveys of students and employees that there is substantial agreement among those constituencies about the College’s expectation that members of its community will act responsibly and with integrity. Nonetheless, while 65.4% of faculty respondents indicate satisfaction with the academic integrity of students, 10% are not satisfied. At the same time, only 1.8% of student survey respondents thought there was more cheating here than at most other colleges (see Table 4 of Appendix 11.1). Indeed, the number of violations of academic integrity has generally trended downward in recent years, from 41 in 2005-2006 to 24 in 2008-2009.

The 2008-2009 Student Code of Conduct and College Policies can be found on the College web site and is the official document outlining policies and procedures governing student conduct both in and outside the classroom. It highlights student responsibilities, expectations and individual rights as a member of the Saint Michael’s community, and expressly outlines policies on non-discrimination, fairness, and equal treatment.

In addition to academic integrity, the Student Handbook includes clear polices and expectations for student conduct that seek to formalize the community’s deeply-held respect for the dignity and rights of each individual. These include policies on freedom of expression, harassment, hazing, privacy rights, gender-fair language, sexual misconduct, and use of alcohol and drugs on campus as well as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, conflict mediation, and judicial procedures. As an educational community, the College seeks to promote an environment of learning even in the context of specific breaches of the student code. Policy violations are taken very seriously by the administration and are viewed as a challenge to the institution’s foundational ideal of a welcoming and caring community.

Saint Michael's commitment to integrity can also be seen through its support of academic freedom, as clearly defined in section II.F.1-2 of the Faculty Regulations, which guarantee freedom in research, publishing, planning courses, and discussion of subjects as well as the freedom to speak, write or act on public issues as citizens without institutional censorship or discipline. A statement outlining these principles is given to all candidates for tenure-track positions, and they are discussed with the Dean during the campus visit. The fall 2008 faculty survey indicated that 87.9% of faculty surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that academic freedom in the classroom is protected at Saint Michael’s, while 9.8% were uncertain and 2.3% disagreed (Appendix 3.23). The College is also strongly committed to the principles of academic freedom for students, which is also outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and College Policies.

**Copyright and Privacy**

The College Copyright Policy (Appendix 11.4) was substantially revised in 2007-2008 by an ad hoc committee of faculty and staff. The new policy was presented to the Faculty Assembly for further review and comment, and adopted by the Cabinet in October 2008. In support of the new policy, the committee developed a copyright resources web site to provide faculty with information regarding copyright, fair use and ethical decision making. A new Privacy and Confidentiality of Library Records policy was adopted in January 2009, and is found on the library web site.
The Institutional Review Board

The Saint Michael's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (previously called the Human Subjects Committee) has undergone significant change since 2000, with improvements in the standards and professionalism of the entire review—the application process, review forms, instructions associated with the approval process, and communications—to provide more clarity and efficiency for researchers as well as to ensure that all campus research involving human participants receives appropriate oversight. Substantial progress has been made in recent years in increasing campus awareness of the IRB mandate and procedures as well as furthering campus-wide compliance with federal regulations. In 2008, the IRB reviewed 27 proposals from eight departments, compared to only nine in 2005; while the increase may be partly due to a general increase in faculty research activity, the larger portion appears to be attributable to better compliance.

Non-Discrimination Policies

Saint Michael's is committed to non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of its operations. Policies prohibiting discrimination and harassment are included in the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, Faculty Regulations, and Employee Handbook, and are prominently displayed on the web site, which states that the College is committed to equal opportunity, does not discriminate against students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment on the basis of “race, color, gender, age, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or physical characteristics.” A more detailed treatment of this policy in terms of employment-related decisions, such as recruitment, evaluation, disciplinary action and advancement, is available in Section IV of the Employee Handbook (Appendix 3.17). College policies regarding non-discrimination also apply to practices in student recruitment, admissions, athletics and financial assistance, where there is also an expectation of adherence to professional codes of conduct and statements of good practices promulgated by NACAC, NCAA and NASFAA.

Since the 2000 NEASC reaccreditation, the College has made extraordinary strides in complying with Title IX and gender-equity requirements. With the addition of women’s hockey as a varsity sport in 2000 and through team roster management, Saint Michael’s has been able to meet the Title IX participation requirement by way of the first prong of proportionality. Last year, the College demonstrated a -0.36% disparity and was recognized nationally by the NCAA with the 2007-2008 Diversity in Athletics Award for Gender Equity Compliance. All program component areas (facilities, schedules, travel, locker rooms, etc.) are evaluated regularly for fair and equitable treatment of both genders. Saint Michael’s awards exactly 50% of scholarships to men and 50% to women, and with a 53% female athlete population is 3% out of compliance. Operating expenses for women athletes were at 52.7%, within .3% of the 53% female athlete population.

Integrity and Employment Conditions

The Employee Handbook describes the policies and practices, working conditions, and benefits available to employees at Saint Michael's and outlines clear expectations for integrity among employees. All policies and practices related to employment are written to reflect the mission of the College as well as the spirit and the letter of all applicable legal requirements.

The College provides an extensive range of benefits for employees and this is one factor that has allowed the College to attract and retain talented and highly qualified faculty and staff. Saint Michael’s has traditionally had a reputation for being an excellent employer—one that truly cares about its employees—and this was confirmed when it was named one of 10 Great Colleges to Work For in a 2009 survey conducted by The Chronicle of Higher Education. In addition to healthcare and retirement plans, the College offers a number of
other benefits, including dental coverage, life and disability insurance, paid time off, and tuition remission and exchange programs. All benefit plans are available to all eligible employees, and no differentiation is made in the benefit plans based upon differing categories of employees (e.g., faculty versus staff). This year the College implemented the Dorothy Day Fund—administered by the Office of Campus Ministry, Human Resources, and Finance—that makes small grants of a few hundred dollars to employees experiencing financial hardship.

Appraisal

With rare exceptions over time, the relationship between the Board of Trustees and College employees has been one of mutual respect, open communication, and commonality of purpose. For instance, the last decade began with a degree of apprehension and uncertainty for some employees when in 2000, the College hired Watson Wyatt, a human resources consulting firm, to study and suggest improvements in faculty and staff compensation. This study, along with discussion of possible outsourcing of certain positions, led to feelings of vulnerability and low morale within the community. The administration responded with renewed efforts to improve campus dialogue. In time, then President vanderHeyden's efforts to promote communication among the administration, faculty, and staff led to improved understanding and resulted in important compromises. In the current economic climate, and at a time of administrative transition, President Neuhauser and the Cabinet are developing a number of initiatives to improve communication and open dialogue, but the effectiveness of these mechanisms is yet to be determined.

A 2001 in-depth evaluation of the Office of Human Resources resulted in the appointment of a new head of Human Resources who reports to the President and is a member of the Cabinet. This strategic decision was a recognition of the importance of human resources to the institution’s overall success. President Neuhauser also recently appointed the Vice President for Human Resources as co-chair of the SPC. Indeed, no single administrative function at the College has undergone more significant change during the last 10 years than the Office of Human Resources. These changes have helped solidify the College’s strong commitment to integrity by raising the profile of the human resources function, and through extensive updates of policies within the Employee Handbook, including Non-Discrimination, General Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Professional Conduct in Relationship, and Conflict of Interest Policies as well as Privacy Rights and Resolution of Grievances—all of which were last updated in January 2008. All employees must take an online “Preventing Sexual Harassment” seminar upon the commencement of employment.

Between 2000 and 2005, the Catholic Bishops of the United States continued their dialogue with representatives of Catholic colleges and universities in the United States concerning the application of the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, issued by Pope John Paul II in 1990 to Catholic institutions of higher education. In November 2005, the Bishops adopted a final version of the norms for implementation. The mandatum, a recognition by the local bishop that a Catholic theologian is teaching in communion with the Church, initially raised concerns within the College community about academic freedom. However, the issue was resolved once it became clear that the request for a mandatum only concerns Catholic theologians and is purely an individual faculty choice, not a requirement.
Projection

● Increase awareness and understanding among faculty, students and administrators of the growing ethical and legal challenges relating to plagiarism and copyright infringement. *(VPAA and Dean, ongoing).*

● Implement a staff compensation program as well as a revised/improved performance management system. *(Vice President for Human Resources, FY 2011).*

● Establish a biennial evaluative process to review College policies for relevance in an ever-changing regulatory environment, and assess overall employee satisfaction with the work environment. *(Vice President for Human Resources, FY 2011).*

Institutional Effectiveness

Saint Michael's will continue to assess the experiences and perceptions of its students, faculty and staff through standing committees, surveys, and an institutional culture dedicated to openness and transparency. The College regularly examines the data from its various assessment methods—annual Senior Surveys conducted in capstone courses, the NSSE, Self-Study surveys of students, faculty and all employees, Annual Five-Year-Out Alumni Surveys, 2007-08 Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange survey report, and IPEDS Peer Analysis—to evaluate campus culture, student experiences, learning outcomes, and employee perceptions, and to use these findings to better realize its mission.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>ALANA</td>
<td>African, Latino, Asian, Native American</td>
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<td>ALC</td>
<td>Course with an applied language component</td>
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<td>ALD</td>
<td>Applied Linguistics Department</td>
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<td>CEPC</td>
<td>Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee</td>
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<td>Cooperative Institutional Research Program</td>
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<td>Continuous Quality Improvement Network</td>
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<td>Diversity Working Group</td>
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<td>Environmental Council</td>
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**Updated 4.8.2010**

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