BENNINGTON COLLEGE

SELF-STUDY

prepared for the

NEW ENGLAND COMMISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

August 2019

Bennington, Vermont

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INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS FORM

Date: August 5, 2019

1. Corporate name of institution: Bennington College Corporation

2. Date institution was chartered or authorized: 1925

3. Date institution enrolled first students in degree programs: 1932

4. Date institution awarded first degrees: 1936

5. Type of control:

Public

☐ State

☐ City

☐ Other

Private

☒ Independent, not-for-profit

☐ Religious Group

☐ Proprietary

☐ Other

6. By what agency is the institution legally authorized to provide a program of education beyond high school, and what degrees is it authorized to grant? State of Vermont, Bachelor of Arts, Master of Fine Arts.

7. Level of postsecondary offering (check all that apply)

☐ Less than one year of work

☐ At least one but less than two years

☐ Diploma or certificate programs of at least two but less than four years

☐ Associate degree granting program of at least two years

☒ Four- or five-year baccalaureate degree granting program

☐ First professional degree

☒ Master's and/or work beyond the first professional degree

☐ Work beyond the master's level but not at the doctoral level

☐ A doctor of philosophy or equivalent degree

☐ Other doctoral programs

☐ Other

8. Type of undergraduate programs (check all that apply)

☐ Occupational training at the crafts / clerical level (certificate or diploma)

☐ Occupational training at the technical or semi-professional level (degree)

☐ Two-year programs designed for full transfer to a baccalaureate degree

☒ Liberal arts and general

☐ Teacher preparatory

☐ Professional

☐ Other

9. The calendar system at the institution is:

    ☒ Semester   ☐ Quarter   ☐ Trimester   ☐ Other

10. What constitutes the credit hour load for a full-time equivalent (FTE) student each semester?

    a) Undergraduate   16 credit hours

    b) Graduate   16 credit hours

    c) Professional   n/a

11. Student population:

    a) Degree-seeking students

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
Full-time student headcount	696	76	772
Part-time student headcount	24	—	24
FTE	704	76	780

    b) Number of students (headcount) in non-credit, short-term courses: 0

12. List all programs accredited by a nationally recognized, specialized accrediting agency.

Program	Agency	Accredited since	Last Reviewed	Next Review

13. Off-campus Locations. List all instructional locations other than the main campus. For each site, indicate whether the location offers full-degree programs or 50% or more of one or more degree programs. Record the full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) for the most recent year. Add more rows as needed.

	Full degree	50% - 90%	FTE
A. In-state locations	n/a		
B. Out-of-state locations	n/a		

14. International Locations. For each overseas instructional location, indicate the name of the program, the location, and the headcount of students enrolled for the most recent year. An overseas instructional location is defined as "any overseas location of an institution, other than the main campus, at which the institution matriculates students to whom it offers any portion of a degree program or offers on-site instruction or instructional support for students enrolled in a predominantly or totally on-line program." *Do not include study abroad locations*.

Name of program(s)	Location	Headcount
n/a		

15. Degrees and certificates offered 50% or more electronically: For each degree or Title IV-eligible certificate, indicate the level (certificate, associate's, baccalaureate, master's, professional, doctoral), the percentage of credits that may be completed on-line, and the FTE of matriculated students for the most recent year. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of program(s)	Degree level	% on-line	FTE
n/a			

16. Instruction offered through contractual relationships: For each contractual relationship through which instruction is offered for a Title IV-eligible degree or certificate, indicate the name of the contractor, the location of instruction, the program name, and degree or certificate, and the number of credits that may be completed through the contractual relationship. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of contractor	Location	Name of program	Degree or certificate	# of credits
n/a				

17. List by name and title the chief administrative officers of the institution. (Use the table on the following page.)

18. Supply a table of organization for the institution. While the organization of any institution will depend on its purpose, size and scope of operation, institutional organization usually includes four areas. Although every institution may not have a major administrative division for these areas, the following outline may be helpful in charting and describing the overall administrative organization:

   a) Organization of academic affairs, showing a line of responsibility to president for each department, school division, library, admissions office, and other units assigned to this area;

   b) Organization of student affairs, including health services, student government, intercollegiate activities, and other units assigned to this area;

   c) Organization of finances and business management, including plant operations and maintenance, non-academic personnel administration, IT, auxiliary enterprises, and other units assigned to this area;

   d) Organization of institutional advancement, including fund development, public relations, alumni office and other units assigned to this area.

19. Record briefly the central elements in the history of the institution:

Chief Institutional Officers

Function or Office	Name	Exact Title	Year of Appointment	At Bennington Since
Chair Board of Trustees	Nicholas Stephens	Chair	7/1/2019	7/1/2015
President/CEO	Isabel Roche	Interim President	7/1/2019	2/26/2002
Executive Vice President	Paige Bartels	Senior Vice President for Strategy, Philanthropy, and Partnerships	7/1/2019	1/1/2004
Chief Academic Officer	John Bullock	Acting Provost and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs	7/1/2019	7/1/2002
Deans of Schools and Colleges	Oceana Wilson	Acting Dean of the College and Dean of the Library	7/1/2019	8/23/2001
Chief Financial Officer	Brian Murphy	Vice President for Finance and Administration	6/30/2014	6/30/2014
Chief Student Services Officer	Natalie Basil	Dean of Students	1/1/2019	8/10/2016
Planning Institutional Research Assessment	Zeke Bernstein	Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment	5/1/2017	8/1/2012
Development	Matt Rizzo	Vice President for Institutional Advancement	6/13/2016	6/13/2016
Library	Oceana Wilson	Acting Dean of the College and Dean of the Library	7/1/2019	8/23/2001
Chief Information Officer	Jude Higdon	Director of Information Technology	7/6/2017	7/6/2017
Continuing Education	n/a			
Grants/Research	Ellen Weiner	Manager of Grants and Partnerships	10/29/18	10/29/18
Admissions	Tony Cabasco	Vice President for Enrollment	6/1/2018	6/1/2018
Registrar	Jaime Babic	Registrar and Director of Enrollment Services	6/1/2016	6/1/2016
Financial Aid	Heather Clifford	Director of Financial Aid	5/1/2017	9/29/2003
Public Relations	Duncan Dobbelmann	Chief Communications Officer	9/1/2017	2/1/2009
Alumni Association	Marie Leahy	Managing Director of Alumni Relations	7/1/2018	1/5/2009
Institutional Diversity and Equity	Delia Saenz	Vice President for Institutional Inclusion, Equity, and Leadership Development	7/1/2018	2/20/2017
Campus Infrastructure	Andrew Schlatter	Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Planning	1/19/2016	1/19/2016
Field Work Term	Faith McClellan	Associate Dean of Work Integrated Learning	5/1/2017	12/8/2014
Student Academic Planning	Laurie Kobik	Dean of Studies	7/1/2017	7/15/2002
Human Resources	Heather Faley	Director of Human Resources	1/22/2001	1/22/2001

Board Of Trustees

Isabel Roche
Interim President

John Bullock
Acting Provost and
Associate Dean for
Faculty Affairs

Oceana Wilson
Acting Dean of the
College and Dean of the
Library

Mark Wunderlich
Director of the
Writing Seminars

Susan Sgorbati
Director of CAPA

Paige Bartels
Senior Vice President for
Strategy, Philanthropy &
Partnerships

Charlie Nadler
Director of Presidents
Office

Tony Cabasco
Vice President for
Enrollment

Brian Murphy
Vice President for
Finance &
Administration

Matt Rizzo
Vice President for
Institutional
Advancement

Meredith McCoy
Associate Vice
President for
Institutional Initiatives

Delia Saenz
Vice President for Instit.
Inclusion, Equity &
Leadership Development

Kathryn Montovan
Associate Dean for
Advising

Zeke Bernstein
Dean of Research,
Planning and
Assessment

**Duncan
Dobbelmann**
Chief Communications
Officer

Tonya Strong
Director of
Admissions

Andy Schlatter
Associate Vice
President for Facilities
Mgmt & Planning

Timothy Clemmey
Director of Leadership
Giving and Donor
Relations

Dining Services

Amy Kuzmicki
Director of Budget &
Administration

Laurie Kobik
Dean of Studies

Alex Dery Snider
Director of
Communications

Heather Clifford
Director of Financial
Aid

Vacant
Controller

Marie Leahy
Managing Director of
Alumni Relations

Noah Coburn
Associate Dean for
Curriculum & Pedagogy

Faith McClellan
Associate Dean of
Work-Integrated
Learning

Erin McKenny
Director of Frost House
Museum

Heather Faley
Director of Human
Resources

Sara White
Managing Director of
Advancement Services

Camille Guthrie
Director of
Undergraduate
Writing Initiatives

Ellen Weiner
Manager of Grants
and Partnerships

Jude Higdon
Director of
Technology

Laurey Goldberg
Senior Director of
Planned Giving

Anne Thompson
Director and Curator of
the Suzanne Lemberg
Usdan Gallery

Pamela Mehr
Senior Director of
Annual Giving

Natalie Basil
Dean of Students

Randy Anselmo, MD
Director of Health
Services

April Stein, Ph.D.
Director of
Psychological Services

Ken Collamore
Director of Campus
Safety

**Members of Senior
Staff**

TABLE OF NECHE ACTIONS, ITEMS OF SPECIAL ATTENTION, OR CONCERNS

Date of NECHE Letter	Detailed Actions, Items of Special Attention, or Concerns	NECHE Standards Cited	Self-Study Page Number(s)
12/2/2014	1. Achieving goals for enrollment and financial stability.	Students; Institutional Resources	pp. 59–62, 107–115
	2. Continuing to implement a comprehensive approach to assessment of institutional effectiveness with an emphasis on student learning outcomes.	The Academic Program; Educational Effectiveness	pp. 26–27, 33–35, 40, 138–142
	3. Undertaking the next iteration of strategic planning aligned with revised mission.	Planning and Evaluation	pp. 6–10
10/28/2016	1. Developing a mission statement that captures the institution's "spirit and philosophy."	Mission and Purposes	pp. 1–4
	2. Achieving the goals of its strategic plan	Planning and Evaluation	pp. 6–10
3/19/2018	1. Continuing to achieve the College's enrollment goals.	Students; Institutional Resources	pp. 59–62, 106–115, 142–147
	2. Accomplishing its multi-year financial goals to lower the College's discount rate, achieve its fundraising targets, and meet its debt service and repayment obligations.	Institutional Resources	pp. 60–61, 107–115

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW AND SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Institutional Overview

Bennington College's distinct approach to learning as an interdisciplinary, experiential, and individualized process is as relevant today as when the founders envisioned it nearly 90 years ago. Even as demographic and market forces present challenging headwinds for small colleges in the region, Bennington has demonstrated a cultural and financial resilience that belies the trends.

Bennington College is a private, non-denominational, four-year liberal arts college located in Bennington, Vermont. The College was founded in 1932 as a women's college and became co-educational in 1969. Bennington offers programs of study leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree in disciplines within the humanities, sciences, social sciences, and visual and performing arts. In addition, we offer Master of Fine Arts degrees in dance, drama, music, and writing; and a post-baccalaureate certificate in pre-medical and allied health sciences. Bennington's campus covers 440 rolling acres at the foot of the Green Mountains in southwestern Vermont.

Bennington distinguished itself early as a vanguard institution. Its founders were a group of forward-thinking educators and civic leaders committed to forging a new direction in American higher education. Small by design, Bennington constructed itself as a nimble laboratory for learning and teaching, where creativity and innovation were encouraged from students and faculty alike. The principles of active engagement on the part of students no less than faculty; an emphasis on developing internal sources of discipline and order; and a pedagogy that treats knowing in ways that are multiple, complex, and changing underlie a Bennington education. These tenets were first outlined in a 1929 prospectus and are reaffirmed with each graduating class in the following traditional commencement statement:

> Bennington regards education as a sensual and ethical, no less than an intellectual, process. It seeks to liberate and nurture the individuality, the creative intelligence, and the ethical and aesthetic sensibility of its students, to the end that their richly varied natural endowments will be directed toward self-fulfillment and toward constructive social purposes. We believe that these educational goals are best served by demanding of our students active participation in the planning of their own programs, and in the regulation of their own lives on campus. Student freedom is not the absence of restraint, however; it is rather the fullest possible substitution of habits of self-restraint for restraint imposed by others. The exercise of student freedom is the very condition of a meaningful education, and an essential aspect of the nurture of free citizens, dedicated to civilized values and capable of creative and constructive membership in modern society.

It is this vision that animates a Bennington education. Our academic policies, administrative structures, and community life are designed in keeping with that vision to the end that students learn what it means to discover and pursue an intellectual identity and to develop a lifelong habit of learning. These habits are developed not in isolation at Bennington, but as part of a community of teachers and learners. The dynamism of our community not only pushes students and teachers to greater intellectual and artistic heights; it also nurtures their emotional identities in trying times.

It is important here to state that the Bennington community faced uniquely trying circumstances this past spring as a result of a series of unforeseen tragedies and disruptions. In mid April 2019, a student died unexpectedly on campus. Bennington is a deeply interconnected place, so this tragedy was felt by everyone, even those who did not know the student. In late April, President Silver announced that she would be leaving the College to head the Henry Luce Foundation. The largest fundraising campaign in the school's history had just been publicly launched a month before and we were nearing completion of one of the most ambitious construction projects undertaken on campus (the historic Commons renovation). Both efforts were positive ones, but still unresolved, and it unsettled staff and faculty in particular to face a change in leadership at such a critical moment. Then, on April 30th, a devastating fire broke out in the Barn, a building that contains many classrooms and faculty offices in addition to such central offices and the President's, Provost and Dean's, Academic Services, and Field Work Term offices. While no-one was hurt in the fire, it severely taxed many faculty and staff who were already working extraordinarily hard to support grieving students. Throughout this time, the Bennington community was becoming increasingly sensitive to the steady drumbeat of ominous news about small colleges facing dire futures. The fates of Southern Vermont College (also in the town of Bennington) and Hampshire College, in particular, triggered a round of media inquiries and chatter about where our College fits into this changing higher education landscape. The College community was both reeling and exhausted by the end of the academic year. Thankfully, the summer has been a time of recovery and stability.

It is also important to say that, throughout this time, Bennington remained nimble and adaptive and insistent on the importance of its progressive educational model. The College continued to build on the extraordinary successes of the past several years: expanding our network of meaningful alliances and innovating around fundraising challenges; improving campus spaces to be ever more cross-disciplinary and dynamic; and embarking on ambitious new programs that respond to urgent issues of our time through grants from the Mellon Foundation and others.

To name just a few of these innovative partnerships, Bennington launched the Museum Fellows Term in January 2015 with a pilot grant from the Mellon Foundation, and now runs the New York City-based program in partnership with the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. The Museum Fellows Term is a five-month, study-away program that spans both Field Work and Spring Terms each year. And in 2018, we launched The Lucille Lortel Foundation Fellowships in Theatre, a pilot grant program offering paid internships in off-Broadway non-profit theatre companies for exceptional Bennington drama students. Our Art for Access program, launched last year in collaboration with Christies, has already yielded more than $3.1 million to establish a scholarship fund that will provide financial aid for talented students who otherwise would not be able to afford a Bennington education.

Campus spaces are also flourishing thanks to creative partnering and, beginning in the summer of 2020, Bennington College will host several of the Middlebury Language Schools on campus in an agreement that will enable Middlebury to keep more of their language programs here in Vermont and for Bennington to welcome more visitors to the College and surrounding area in the summer months. As new stewards of the Robert Frost Stone House Museum, a literary landmark, we welcomed more than 3,000 visitors and students during its inaugural season. Guests came for historical tours, events featuring renowned writers, musical performances and more.

We are particularly thrilled that Bennington College was recently awarded a grant of $1 million from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to launch a three-year collaborative effort with local partners to address the systemic causes of food insecurity in our region. The grant builds on the Mellon Foundation's longstanding investment in Bennington College on a number of priority areas, including a just-completed three-year grant to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the College's curricular and advising models, and support for the Consortium on Forced Migration, Displacement, and Education, a multi-college effort of Bennington, Vassar, Bard, and Sarah Lawrence colleges.

Even in the face of tragedy and upheaval—as our community experienced this past year—our vision for the future remains clear.

The Self-Study Process

Since Bennington College completed its last *Self-Study* ten years ago, four interim reports have been submitted by the College, two before and two after the 2014 *Fifth-Year Interim Report*. We have been on a regular review cycle (we say this without complaint) and are familiar with the report writing process. Deepening our familiarity with accreditation review, Mariko Silver, president of Bennington until July 2019, just completed a three-year term as a NECHE Commissioner. Isabel Roche, Bennington's Interim President; Brian Murphy, Vice President for Finance and Administration; and Zeke Bernstein, Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment, have each served on visiting teams for other institutions undergoing accreditation review.

Bennington began preparing for its ten-year accreditation review in the fall of 2017, when Duncan Dobbelmann, Bennington's NECHE liaison since 2011, attended a self-study workshop at NECHE (then NEASC) headquarters. He attended two other workshops, including one for the preparation of data-first forms, over the course of the following year. A Data-First Committee was established at Bennington in late spring of 2018, and met as needed throughout the process. A NECHE Self-Study Committee, consisting of a core group of six people (noted below), was established in August of 2018, and met bi-weekly until the report was completed. As Bennington College is small and has a predilection for conversations—both shallow and deep, challenging and easy—the work of the current *Self-Study* was often furthered by hallway meetings, lunchtime exchanges, and other serendipitous encounters.

As detailed in the narrative for Standard Two, Bennington's board of trustees was informed about the status of the self-study process at each board meeting over the last year and a half; at three of those meetings the trustees were deeply engaged with a consideration of the College's mission statement and with the Standards as a whole. Faculty have been aware of the ongoing process for over a year; they were not, however, substantively engaged until the spring 2019 term, when the College Steering Committee took up the task of soliciting faculty at large for feedback concerning the Standards—an undertaking that was unavoidably compromised because of the tragedy and other challenges that unfolded during that term. We achieved only one meeting concerning NECHE with the (student led) Student Educational Policies Committee—late in the spring term. Drafts of the narratives for five of the nine Standards were sent out to faculty and staff for feedback in mid July; we received several very thoughtful and substantive comments.

Despite unanticipated delays to the self-study writing process and less-than-ideal engagement with our core College constituencies, we believe the *Self-Study* fully and accurately represents

Bennington College and the education we provide, showing both our challenges and our strengths. As with the Plan process that our students undergo as they pursue their inquiries at Bennington, we anticipate this accreditation review to be a fruitful time of reflection, assessment, and recalibration.

NECHE Self-Study Committee

Duncan Dobbelmann, Chief Communications Officer and Chair

Natalie Basil, Dean of Students

Zeke Bernstein, Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment

Leanne Brown, Assistant to the Chief Communications Officer

John Bullock, Acting Provost and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Brian Murphy, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Principal Writers, Editors, and Contributors

Paige Bartels, Sr. Vice President for Strategy, Philanthropy, and Partnerships

Natalie Basil, Dean of Students

Zeke Bernstein, Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment

Leanne Brown, Assistant to the Chief Communications Officer

John Bullock, Acting Provost and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Tony Cabasco, Vice President for Enrollment

Heather Clifford, Director of Financial Aid

Noah Coburn, Associate Dean for Curriculum and Pedagogy, faculty member in Anthropology

Madeline Cole, Digital Communications Manager

Laura Crosslin, Sr. Admissions Systems Coordinator

Duncan Dobbelmann, Chief Communications Officer

Heather Faley, Director of Human Resources

Jude Higdon, Director of Information Technology

Kat Hughes, Designer

Laurie Kobik, Dean of Studies

Amy Kuzmicki, Director of Budget and Administration

Faith McClellan, Associate Dean of Work-Integrated Learning

Xenia Markowitt, former Dean of Students

Brian Murphy, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Charlie Nadler, Director of the President's Office

Robert Ransick, Director of the MFA in Public Action and faculty member in Visual Arts

Natalie Redmond, Associate Writer

David Rees, former Vice President for Institutional Initiatives

Meg Reilly, Writer

David Rekas, Controller

Dana Reitz, faculty member in Dance

Isabel Roche, Interim President

Andrew Schlatter, Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Planning

Mariko Silver, former President

Oceana Wilson, Acting Dean of the College and Dean of the Library

Mark Wunderlich, Director of the Bennington Writing Seminars

DATA FIRST FORMS
GENERAL INFORMATION

Institution Name: | Bennington College

OPE ID: | 368200

Annual Audit

Financial Results for Year Ending:	June 30	Certified: Yes / No	Qualified Unqualified
Most Recent Year	2019	in process	
1 Year Prior	2018	Yes	Unqualified
2 Years Prior	2017	Yes	Unqualified

Fiscal Year Ends on: | June 30

Budget / Plans
Current Year	2020
Next Year	2021

Contact Person:	Duncan Dobbelmann
Title:	Chief Communications Officer
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E-mail address	duncand@bennington.edu

STANDARD ONE: MISSION AND PURPOSES

Description

Bennington College has never had any trouble articulating its purposes. From the moment of its conception, Bennington clearly stated its reasons for coming into existence. Robert Devore Leigh, Bennington's first president, wrote in *The Educational Plan for Bennington College* (1929) that the College was "fashioned in definite response to the general need for a thoroughgoing experiment in higher education along modern lines." The experiment was to determine whether the positive qualities of progressive education at the secondary level—following the philosophies of Dewey et al.—could be realized for young women at the college level. Few (if any) colleges had taken up this challenge.

Just what this kind of progressive education would look like was described in detail in a set of "Aims" published in the very first Bennington curriculum (1932). As we wrote in the "Reflective Essay" in the College's *Fifth-Year Interim Report* (2014):

> The first curriculum states explicitly progressive aims for students who attend the College. Among others: the development of educational self-dependence based on voluntary engagement with work that is meaningful to the individual student (a basis for lifelong learning); education through direct experience—investigating, planning, organizing, making, working (i.e. active learning)—rather than through passive submission; attending throughout to development of the "whole personality," including the physical, psychological, emotional, and not just the intellectual aspects of the individual; and the cultivation of social responsibility through "social participation and cooperation."

Varying expressions of these aims and purposes have been issued over the decades, including during the Symposium (1993-1994), when the College re-asserted, with emphasis, its purposes. Never, however, has the College explicitly designated language to serve officially and exclusively as its mission statement.

In the *Self-Study* submitted to Commission in 2009, we wrote that our Plan process, "through which students design their academic experiences and navigate their Bennington careers, embodies the College's mission." Embodying our mission is of course crucial—but it is different than articulating our mission. In the same Standard of that *Self-Study*, we wrote that our Commencement Statement, "read at the first commencement in 1936" and (we thought) at every commencement since, "continues to express the College's mission and purposes." But this again is a bit of a hedge; it is an expression of the mission, but not the mission. This is revealed in the paragraphs that follow in the *Self-Study*, which cite the "first principles" of the *Symposium Report* (1994), which, "along with the Commencement Statement, comprise the College's mission statement."

This hedge is acknowledged in our Fifth-Year Interim Report: "[A]t Bennington there has long been a reluctance to apply the words 'mission' to any collection of words about the institution." However: "[W]hen pressed, the traditional Commencement Statement . . . can be agreed upon by all as the best representation (so far) of our purposes." The Commencement Statement, we

noted, "is perhaps the only text related to the College—which has always been uneasy with convention and tradition—that could be described as sacrosanct. It is very much admired, both in form and content; at least one current student has part of the statement tattooed on her arm." This sacrosanct quality was complicated by the discovery, in 2014, that the Commencement Statement had not in fact been written by Leigh in 1936— and read at every commencement since—but rather by President Bloustein in 1966, "and later significantly revised."

In effect, in answer to the question "What is Bennington's mission?"—which can be and has been posed by students, parents, faculty, alumni, colleagues, and peers—we have provided different answers, depending on the audience and occasion. All of those answers have spoken meaningfully to our purposes, but they expose the lack of a true mission statement in the conventional sense.

It will likely come as no surprise that this approach has been deliberate. Bennington has had a constitutional resistance to designating a single, static text as its mission statement. In 2016, while addressing the College's strategic planning and the lack of identified mission statement to drive that planning, we wrote in an interim report that "it is not a question of being uncertain of or confused about the College's mission; rather, we continue to find it challenging to embody Bennington's spirit and philosophy in a form that we are satisfied with."

Why is this? Bennington simply does not want to tie its educational philosophy—so heavily reliant on process—to language that would be fixed forever more, as it is with so many of the traditional colleges from which it seeks to distinguish itself. There is real danger in becoming beholden to something static. As Leigh writes in his *Plan*: "Institutions have too often begun well abreast of current educational thought and practice only to become in time stupidly complacent and set in their ways. Bennington is seeking all available means to avoid stagnation, to test its original hypotheses, and to revise its program in the light of its own and others' actual experience."

The 2016 interim report described our mission statement as a work in progress. In 2018, Bennington's senior staff turned its attention fully to the question of whether and how to formulate a mission statement. While not insisting that we produce one, President Silver wanted us to take a clear, formal stance on the question. Do we have a mission statement, or don't we? And, if we don't, why is it that?

At a retreat in June 2018, senior staff were asked to present the mission statements for each of their respective offices or units. Then, through mixed-group work, staff were asked to identify the key characteristics, values, and phrases that describe Bennington and a Bennington education. Finally, the group together reviewed Standard One and the (brief) history of Bennington's responses to that standard. At a follow-on retreat later that summer, senior staff discussed the nature, problems, and benefits of mission and vision statements (including a look at a mission statement generator); the "element match" from the group work at the previous retreat; and, finally, began a close reading of the Commencement Statement to understand just how it functions—and how it does and doesn't match the elements we believe to be essential to Bennington. On the whole, the group felt that, while it contained flaws, the Statement was an extraordinary text that accomplished several important, mission-like objectives—all while retaining a certain literary resistance to the flattening of meaning typically found in mission statements.

While we were preparing a presentation on the subject of Bennington's mission for a quarterly meeting with the Board of Trustees in September 2018, Crossett Library staff discovered through archival research that the Commencement Statement had a yet more complicated history than we had supposed only a few years ago. Parts of the longer version of the Statement (i.e. the one actually delivered at our commencement) had indeed been composed very early on in the College's history; other keywords, phrases, and sentences were layered in over the years and decades by a number of different presidential hands, creating a web of traces that formed the palimpsest we have today. The development over time is remarkable to see, as each writer incorporated elements of his or her era; yet the document remains of a piece, complete with the slightly elevated diction (appropriate for the occasion and its uses). It is a powerful embodiment of how Bennington functions, through process and reflection, with an eye on beauty, creativity, and community.

We presented this rich history to the trustees, then asked them to discuss in groups and answer three questions:

1. What elements of the Commencement Statement do you find most important and compelling?

2. Are there elements of the Commencement Statement you are hesitant about or find problematic?

3. Is there anything missing?

The results of this were fascinating. Cited as both important and problematic were words such as "citizens," "civilized," and "sensual"; cited as missing were words and concepts such as community, inclusiveness, and participation. The trustees and leadership concluded that while the Commencement Statement was beloved, it was not in fact sacrosanct, as its history demonstrated, and it would be perfectly appropriate for us to revise the statement to reflect the mission and purposes of Bennington College today. Since revision of the Commencement Statement had already been a practice at Bennington, revising it again (and again in the years to come) would allow us to evolve and adapt in response to what we have learned—just in the way that Leigh had hoped.

Appraisal

Important and meaningful discussions have been had about our purposes, the nature of and need for mission statements, and the meaning of Bennington's Commencement Statement. While we have not yet decided whether to adopt an official mission statement or, if so, whether a version of the Commencement Statement would suffice, we are on the verge of doing so. In fact, the recent adoption of our version of college-wide learning outcomes—called the Capacities, another embodiment of our mission, discussed in detail in Standard Four—points favorably to our ability to articulate the education we provide in direct and concrete terms. However, we may continue to deliberately keep away from adopting a mission statement, instead re-affirming our understanding of the purposes of Bennington College, which can be done through a variety of less-fixed expressions that evoke the meaning and intent of a Bennington education. The Commencement Statement is one of the most favored of such expressions. Other expressions,

including the Capacities, can be found elsewhere, on the College's website for example, where we say that our aim is "to place students at the helm of their own education, to guide them in the direction of their greatest potential, and to expand and deepen their contribution to the world." Several trustees, perhaps a little impatient with the belaboring of the question during the board meetings over the past year, wrote quick drafts of one-sentence mission statements on the spot, which may serve us as well. As noted above, it is the process of discussion and analysis here that has the most merit, as is entirely appropriate for the kind of education that we value and provide. It is vital, however, that we now extend the discussion to students, faculty, and staff, carrying forward this central question: Even if Bennington's purposes are crystal clear to us here at Bennington, are they equally clear to the world outside—to prospective students and parents, to our peers, to the local community, to the higher-education community, and to the general public? And, as a NECHE supporting document puts it, can the Commencement Statement—or any other statement we settle on—effectively be used "to guide the institution in making choices, setting limits, allocating resources, or developing opportunities?" This last question, of course, points to Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation, which is an especially important one for Bennington.

Projection

- Over the coming year, we will bring forward a revised version of the Commencement Statement (something along the lines of the below) for review and input from the community and pose the question of whether it will serve as our mission statement—if a mission statement is in fact needed. Not incidentally, this will generate discussions that will be especially germane to Bennington's presidential search.

———

Revised Commencement Statement (sample)

Bennington regards education as an ethical no less than an intellectual process. A Bennington education seeks to liberate and nurture the individuality, the creative intelligence, and the ethical and aesthetic sensibility of its students, to the end that their richly varied natural endowments will be directed toward self-fulfillment and toward constructive social purposes.

We believe that these educational goals are best served by demanding of our students active participation in the planning of their own programs and in the regulation of their own lives on campus. Student freedom is not the absence of restraint, however; it is rather the fullest possible substitution of habits of self-restraint for restraint imposed by others. The exercise of student freedom is the very condition of a meaningful education and an essential aspect of the nurture of those who choose to become ethical, creative, and constructive participants in the varied communities to which they belong and to which they will belong.

STANDARD ONE: MISSION AND PURPOSES

Attach a copy of the current mission statement.

Document	Website Location	Date Approved by the Governing Board
Institutional Mission Statement	NA	NA

Mission Statement Published	Website Location	Print Publication
NA		

Related Statements	Website Location	Print Publication
Bennington Aims (1932)	https://drive.google.com/open?id=1t6hr-5aHURuGE2y5ottbWOMazo-IIPVI	
The Educational Plan for Bennington	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SqfzjHraJmTmf48CVLORHT7P6N6L9kO9/view	
Commencement Statement	https://www.bennington.edu/about/vision-and-history	
Bennington College: A Prospectus	https://drive.google.com/open?id=1-EULTMBI6ex62wLPmQOqLzOlcAMzQ_1yEULTMBI6ex62wLPmQOqLzOlcAMzQ_1y	

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Bennington College does not have a formally adopted mission statement. A full explanation is given in the narrative for Standard One.

STANDARD TWO: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

"Institutions have too often begun well abreast of current educational thought and practice only to become in time stupidly complacent and set in their ways. Bennington is seeking all available means to avoid stagnation, to test its original hypotheses, and to revise its program in the light of its own and others' actual experience." Robert D. Leigh, *The Educational Plan for Bennington College* (1932).

Notwithstanding Leigh's "Plan" and the thorough planning that preceded and followed the founding of the College in 1932, strategic planning at Bennington was once called a "relatively informal" and even an "ad hoc" process, descriptions to which we took some umbrage at the time—just about nine years ago.

It's not, of course, that planning didn't exist at Bennington, but rather that it always exists and never rests; it is always ongoing and evolving in response to concurrent evaluations. There is a deliberate correspondence between this approach to planning and the education we enable through our students' own Plan processes (see Standard Four); a certain nimbleness is necessary fully to take advantage of specific opportunities and resources available to students, faculty, and staff at any given time (see, for example, our pop-up courses). Circumstances at Bennington change rapidly, and so planning (and evaluation) has to be a process, with more or less formal markers along the way.

A small college that called out adaptability as a founding principle—to agitate against the bureaucratization and subsequent stagnation toward which institutions seem perpetually drawn—could hardly be expected to adopt planning and evaluation practices that would appear formal or "strategic" even to keen outside observers. As with our mission statement (or lack thereof), at Bennington there is a constitutional reluctance to embrace formulaic approaches. Instead, Bennington poses questions—to itself, as well as to its students and employees—in order to find the most authentic, meaningful, and effective way forward. Answers to those questions have typically been given only provisionally, over the short term—until six years ago, when we posed the question of why we couldn't put a longer term plan in place, with regular intervals for evaluation that would allow the plan to be adapted appropriately.

Planning: Description

When Mariko Silver became President of the College in 2013, we were nearing the end of the strategic plan developed by President Coleman. As described in our *Fifth-Year Interim Report* and the report that followed in 2016, President Silver began to lay the groundwork for a new, more extensive strategic plan almost immediately upon her arrival. In her very first year, she held over 30 group conversations with students, faculty, staff, and alumni "in the effort," as we wrote in the *Fifth-Year Interim Report*, "both to better understand the various communities associated with the College and to present a clear vision for how the College will continue to grow into its natural... role as a vital liberal arts institution on the vanguard" (21). What resulted (and was formally approved by the trustees in 2015) was a document we refer to not as a strategic plan but rather plainly as the *Ten-Year Goals*. It will be noted that the first (and, really, the central) goal, "Fulfill the Promise of a Progressive Education," follows directly from our mission and purposes (as discussed in Standard One).

This document was compiled and edited by senior staff, largely for the benefit of internal audiences. It is a rather complex spreadsheet from which we have drawn over the years to make presentations. A snapshot of this spreadsheet was included in our 2016 report and is included for reference in the digital files that accompany this report. What follows below is a key to the map that the spreadsheet creates, drawn from the 2016 report. While it is impossible to recreate the spreadsheet in narrative form here, we can describe the central goals and the approach to meeting them. The three overarching goals (or "pillars") of the strategic plan are:

1. Fulfill the promise of a progressive education

2. Build the Bennington network to extend our reach and expand our resources

3. Ensure Bennington's financial stability

Each of these goals has central "arenas for action," each with an articulated vision. Should there be "sub-arenas for action," these have vision statements as well. For example, the central arena for action, "integration of the student experience," has as its stated vision:

Students' curricular, co-curricular, fieldwork term, and other experiences at Bennington are integrated and oriented to a set of collegewide learning outcomes that are clearly described and rigorously assessed.

Within this arena, however, exist a number of sub-arenas, among which is "curriculum," which has the following vision: "Bennington's curriculum formally includes all of the opportunities for learning, both inside and outside the classroom, that we imagine contributing to the realization of a student's Plan." In the column dedicated to the curriculum—as with all the arenas and sub-arenas—we present the actions necessary to achieve the vision, with markers at years one, three, five, and ten and metrics identified when possible. By year three under the "curriculum," for example, we state (in part) that "courses will be tagged with learning outcomes in the curriculum." It will be noted that each arena identifies (by initials) senior staff responsible, as well as the relevant board committee. You will also see that not every space in every column and every row is filled in; the Ten-Year Goals spreadsheet is meant to be a regularly updated, living document.

Simplified versions of the goals have been shared and discussed with the board of trustees, faculty, and staff, but not with students or alumni. Here is a general timeline, which does not include all presentations to all stakeholders (more on that below):

Summer	2014	Began the process of articulating ten-year goals for the College
Winter	2015	Adopted the *Ten-Year Goals*; shared with stakeholders
Winter	2016	Reviewed progress on one-year goals with trustees; refined longer term goals
Summer	2018	Reviewed progress on three- and four-year goals with trustees
Summer	2019	Assessed progress and affirmed five- and ten-year goals with trustees

Planning: Appraisal

That Bennington College has a detailed, long-term strategic plan—with explicit goals toward which we orient our individual and collective work and concrete measures to evaluate progress made toward those goals—is something of an achievement, even an unprecedented achievement over the lifespan of the place. This may seem like faint praise, given that it often seems as if our peers regularly produce extensive strategic plans. But recall, first, the College's endemic reluctance to fix anything in writing for too long—"to avoid stagnation," per Leigh, and to preserve the ability "to revise its program in the light of its own and others' actual experience"—and, second, that strategic planning at Bennington has been designated by NECHE an "area for emphasis" for most of the last decade, benefiting as a result from four separate reports on that subject (as well as a few others) following our 2009 self-study. As we wrote in the last report (2016): "We hope to demonstrate here that strategic planning at Bennington is serious, thorough, and characteristic of how the institution now operates."

Progress has been made on a number of the *Ten-Year Goals*. Salient achievements and shortcomings will be noted in the Standards to which they are most relevant. A sample selection is provided here to give a better sense.

Under the pillar of "Fulfill the Promise of a Progressive Education," there are three sub-arenas whose goals are deeply intertwined:

Curriculum	Bennington's curriculum formally includes all opportunities for learning, both inside and outside the classroom.
Co-curriculum	The contributions of all dimensions of the living/learning environment are formally recognized.
Work experiences	Work experiences are comprehensively integrated with the curriculum and with student development structures.

While an enormous amount of thought and work (including by the Mellon Fellows, as described in Standard Four) has been directed towards these goals, progress has been uneven. College-wide learning outcomes (the Capacities) have been established—a major accomplishment—but we have only one year left to meet the five-year goal of tying those outcomes to syllabi, discipline expectations, and courses in the curriculum. Similarly, we have the same amount of time to make visible to the community "all opportunities (on and off campus) for co- and extracurricular learning." Work experiences, too, need to be more fully and visibly intertwined with the other learning experiences that Bennington makes available (see Standard Four). The grand vision for this central pillar, "the integration of the student experience" along progressive lines, is very much in process, even if the challenges have been somewhat unexpected.

On the other hand, under the arena of "new environments and programs," which is closely tied to "institutional partnerships" and "foundations" in the "Build the Bennington Network" pillar, we are well ahead of projections.

New environments and programs	Bennington expands the student experience by opening to and extending into the world through partnerships and programs of different kinds.
Institutional partnerships – programmatic	Programmatic partnerships are diverse, strategic, and appropriate to our mission.
Institutional partnerships – foundations	The College has a diverse set of funding partners, including foundations, government agencies, and private-sector partners.

The College has significant achievements to point to in this area, including support from national foundations (The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, the Lucille Lortel Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, National Science Foundation, the Endeavor Foundation, the Lumina Foundation); engagement with a range of museums and theaters in New York City; and partnerships with peer institutions like Middlebury College and other nonprofits like the Robert Frost Stone House Museum. Each has already contributed to these goals—while, crucially, also expanding learning experiences for our students (more on this in Standards Four and Seven).

The "Build the Bennington Network" pillar has also seen advances under the arenas of "thought leadership,"—with many articles, essays, and columns by President Silver and others, published in the *Chronicle* and on *Forbes.com*, for example—and "alumni"—with a large number of alumni actively engaged with the College and our fundraising campaign. The campaign, called "The World Needs More Bennington," has already met its five-year goal, under "Ensure Bennington's Financial Stability": "launch campaign publicly, with 50-75% of total raised" (see Standard Seven). Again, under "physical plant," "complete renovation of Commons"—our central dining, curricular, co-curricular, and community space—was not projected to have been accomplished until 2025. It is done six years early and will be a powerful force in helping us to achieve the "integration of the student experience" so vital to our mission and purposes.

One final, more complex example that speaks to the times: In the arena of "recruitment and enrollment," we had projected 1,300 applications and 700+ undergraduates by end of year one (June 2016) and 1,500 and 750+ (respectively) by the end of year three (June 2018). We achieved the first goal, and flirted with the second, but over the past couple of years we, like many other colleges across the country, have seen a shift in the trend of the number of applications received, such that we do not now expect to meet the 1,750+ applications goal by year five. Similarly, our retention rates have shifted, sometimes to the good and sometimes not, making it more challenging to stay on the path of growth that we had charted when we began the planning process. (These subjects are addressed more fully in Standards Five, Seven, and Eight.)

Achievements and shortcomings are to be expected when evaluating a planning process; adjustments need to be made along the way. We will accordingly revise the *Ten-Year Goals* document, which is due for a thorough update and re-presentation: staff and board committees have changed, goals have necessarily shifted, and the form and expression of the goals themselves need to be more legible and accessible.

To the last point: It appears that many at the College—and particularly faculty—are either unaware or only faintly aware that we have a strategic plan (whether or not called the "Ten-Year

Goals"). This was discovered during discussions of the accreditation process with the College Steering Committee (CSC) during the spring term of 2019. Feedback from faculty at large, solicited by faculty on the CSC, made evident that knowledge of the College's strategic planning efforts was decidedly uneven. Some faculty felt that there was no strategic plan, by any name, while others felt there was a partial one or a whole but unrevealed one; yet others effectively shrug or suggest that strategic plans are overrated. Some seem to have felt left out of the construction of a plan, while others felt included but (perhaps) unheard. A number felt that goals were only discussed if all was going well.

Much of this came as a surprise to College leadership, who presented regularly on the *Ten-Year Goals* at faculty meetings—and who often heard afterward about how faculty meetings shouldn't be taken up with such things. The *Ten-Year Goals* were explicitly discussed, for example, during the September 2018 faculty meeting, at which then-Provost and Dean Roche presented to the faculty a detailed plan for the year ahead that explicitly called forth the three goals and went into depth on "Fulfill the Promise of a Progressive Education." Several faculty leaders were part of that presentation.

Nevertheless, the confusion and frustration on the part of the faculty is understandable. We do not have a publicly accessible strategic plan than can be read or referenced by our stakeholders. The spreadsheet that documents our ten-year goals, which includes the vision, the arenas, the milestones, and the metrics, is difficult to read and understand, which is why it was never broadly shared in that form. Instead, PowerPoint slides listing the three main pillars and their main sub-areas were presented at the meetings mentioned above (as well as at staff and trustee meetings). This format made the goals much easier to see and parse and also allowed us to add areas and subjects (such as diversity and inclusion) that had not yet found a home in the spreadsheet. However, the PowerPoint left out much of the detail. Further, when detail on fundraising or enrollment, for example, was presented (as it often was), it was done so as part of presentations by Institutional Advancement or Admissions—and so perhaps not recognized as part of the "Ensure Financial Stability" pillar in the strategic plan. Additionally, slide decks are ephemeral. Even when they are preserved and shared post-meeting, they lack the often-rich context the speaker provides; slide decks are simply not designed to contain the depth and detail of a report, essay, or long-term plan. Posting a slide deck on the College's website, for example, would not have helped much, but having a proper document describing our ten-year goals would serve the purpose.

Planning: Projection

- Over the coming year, the *Ten-Year Goals* spreadsheet will be converted into a legible and widely accessible public document.
- This document will be shared and discussed with students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and posted on the website.
- The document will reflect updates and changes based on an evaluation of metrics and priorities.

Evaluation: Description

Our efforts to clarify, document, and disseminate our mission and purposes have been coupled with a significant and intentional shift toward using data to inform evaluation of our educational aims. Since the time of our 2009 self-study—in response to which the Commission requested ongoing updates regarding the status of our efforts to monitor institutional effectiveness—we have worked diligently to fortify and expand our institutional research and assessment practices in an ongoing quality improvement/quality assurance cycle. These efforts have taken place in at least three ways: first, the creation of one revamped and one new FTE dedicated almost entirely to the collection and analysis of institutional data; two, the development of a culture of data-informed decision making, which now permeates throughout the institution, from individual staff, to the faculty, to senior leadership, and even to students; and three, a strengthening of the institutional infrastructure for data collection, analysis, and governance. The result is an institution that is much more data-aware, that uses qualitative and quantitative information in systematic ways, and that bases its most important decisions on research and data in addition to anecdote and story (which are existing strengths). Indeed, this self-study describes a number of new and/or reformulated ways that Bennington is using data to understand what we do, including the use of student and faculty input in the creation of a new first-year advising structure (see the narrative for Standard Four), the implementation of mental health and substance abuse surveys to inform wellness programming (Standard Five), peer research to benchmark our faculty salaries (Standard Six), and, of course, the development of a comprehensive educational effectiveness framework (Standard Eight).

Our evaluation activities are principally focused on the nature and quality of our academic mission, and are coordinated—appropriately—out of the principal academic unit on campus, the Office of the Provost and Dean. Specifically, the Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment leads a team of four staff members in an administrative unit that combines the Office of the Registrar with a comprehensive institutional research and assessment program that collects and manages institutional data, conducts or consults on surveys, supports evaluation activities of other academic units and the institutional overall, and facilitates good data use and governance practices across the institution. This work is outlined below in table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Mechanisms to evaluate mission and purpose, and realization of educational objectives

Focus Area	Representative Examples	Relevant Standard(s)	Ten-Year Goals "Arena for Action"
Surveys	• First-year survey • Senior survey • Alumni survey • National Collegiate Health • Assessment • Faculty climate survey • Advising surveys	4, 5, 6, 8	Curriculum Alumni Employers Support Structures Teaching and Advising

Focus Area	Representative Examples	Relevant Standard(s)	Ten-Year Goals "Arena for Action"
Evaluation and assessment activities	• Discipline Group reviews • Graduate school analysis • Curricular needs assessment • Integration of Capacities language into Plan, other assessments • Field Work Term / Work • Integrated Learning research	4, 8	Curriculum Teaching and Advising The Co-Curricular Work Experiences
Data use / governance	• Populi Users Group • Slate Team Meeting • Ad hoc data governance meetings	5, 8	Assessment
Ad hoc / other	• Faculty salary report • Enrollment tracking and projection / retention • Course enrollment analytics	4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Teaching and Advising Recruitment and Enrollment Curriculum

Examples of the above are described in more detail in subsequent standards, but there is one particular activity that illustrates a comprehensive process for both planning and evaluation—one that is focused on our educational objectives and unique circumstances, that involves feedback from students (current and former) and other relevant constituents, and that employs both quantitative and qualitative data to inform resource allocation.

Every one to two years, Bennington engages in a comprehensive academic needs assessment to inform sabbatical replacements and new faculty hires, with important implications for the overall shape and scope of our curriculum. This self-study is commissioned jointly by the Provost and Dean of the College and by the Academic Policies Committee and is executed by the Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment, in collaboration with many others. A number of data points feed into this needs assessment—registration, course enrollment, and Plan data; new, current, and former student survey data; and faculty survey data. The results are summarized and presented to the Academic Policies Committee as it contemplates faculty hiring decisions for the coming year. This report has helped in various ways throughout the years. At times, it has brought another axis of consideration into the hiring process—for example, emphasizing diverse perspectives in the hires that we make, or identifying interdisciplinary themes that might be incorporated in some way in the search process. It has also been useful for soliciting feedback from current students in the form of a broader "curriculum survey"—we have gotten helpful feedback over the years, for example, on the various structures we employ in the curriculum, the course scheduling grid, and the scaffolding of courses within and across Discipline Groups. In our work with the Student Educational Policy Committee (SEPC), we have heard from students that this mechanism for feedback is crucial for their sense that the institution is working to improve their learning and overall experience on campus.

Evaluation: Appraisal
We are in a fundamentally different place now—relative to 2009—with regard to our evaluation and assessment practices. We collect and analyze more data than ever before and have become

adept at using that data to reflect and improve on our educational mission; our planning activities are stronger for all the ways we track our progress, and faculty have expressed appreciation for the many ways we bring data into our institutional discourse around important issues. Still, there is room to improve. In particular, we are working to formalize our evaluation cycles to ensure the design, administration, analysis, and dissemination of our evaluation practices are part of an integrated process that puts the most useful data in the hands of decision-makers. This effort requires a level of intentionality and planning that we are just beginning to implement. We also want to make survey and other data more visible and available—both internally and externally—which we believe will have a reifying effect on our evaluation practices; it will also add a layer of institutional accountability and transparency that we believe is important in today's higher educational marketplace.

We also strongly believe there are aspects of the student experience (curricular as well as co- and extracurricular) into which we have limited visibility, aspects that will be important for evaluating our educational effectiveness. For example, a principal—and as yet untested—question is what exactly students learn through the individualized Plan process that Bennington holds at the center of its mission and purpose. We address this in part in the narrative for Standards Four and (especially) Eight. Though we have made great progress in establishing an institutional framework for learning assessment (the Capacities), we still have much work to do to clarify and understand where (and how) these Capacities are taught, learned, and assessed. This is the work of educational effectiveness in general—and of learning assessment in particular—but we also know it will take a comprehensive evaluation program that leverages good data collection and management practices, a variety of surveys and other assessments, and broad engagement of constituents across the institution. This work cannot take place exclusively within the classroom, nor can it engage only faculty; it must be all of us together, measuring student process, and employing a common language to describe what students gain as a result of their education.

Evaluation: Projection

- We will continue to "close" our assessment loops—developing a process for the collaborative design of evaluation practices.

- We will share and make data more visible to constituents both internal and external to the institution, particularly in relation to our *Ten-Year Goals* (or other strategic plan).

- The Capacities will continue to be the primary evaluation framework for the institution, as we work to develop and embed meaningful assessments (learning and otherwise) into all aspects of the student experience.

STANDARD TWO: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Planning

	Year Approved by Governing Board	Effective Dates	Website Location
Strategic Plans			
Immediately Prior Strategic Plan		2008-2014	NA
Current Strategic Plan	2015	2015-2025	NA
Next Strategic Plan	NA	NA	

	Year Completed	Effective Dates	Website Location
Other Institution-Wide Plans			
Master Plan	NA		
Academic Plan	NA		
Financial Plan	NA		
Technology Plan	NA		
Enrollment Plan	NA		
Development Plan	NA		

Plans for Major Units (e.g., Departments, Library)

See note below	NA		

Evaluation

Academic Program Review

Program review system (colleges and departments). System last updated:	2011
Program review schedule (e.g., every 5 years)	Every ten years

	Website Location
Sample program review reports (name of unit or program)	
Science and Math	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f_yG6sDk8pcipI8yyrRziSECSlchyKYd/view
Society, Culture, and Thought	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xyfDAnwqs2aD3rPF8L5SNpvD5aUkNzrq/view
Literature	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NuHW6AUjy3U7fBl3yeuGuLkCOOqei8Mq/view

System to review other functions and units

Program review schedule (every X years or website location of schedule)	NA / ad hoc

Sample program review reports (name of unit or program)

Other Significant Institutional Studies (name and web location)	Date
Positioning Study https://drive.google.com/file/d/17BdhxFFNrp9s9PAIEd WWbd1D1MSFHm1d/view	2015

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

A number of analyses and plans have been undertaken internally over the years, as needed for various areas and offices, but none of them intended for an outside audience. See narrative for Standard Two. A folder with completed program reviews is included in the digital workroom.

STANDARD THREE: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

Bennington's was a complex beginning, starting in the early 1920s and taking formal shape in 1929 on the eve of the Great Depression. It then took several more years to re-raise the funds necessary to build a small campus for 300 young women. In the Fall of 1932, Bennington College began. Details of the College's governing documents, including its 1929 prospectus, its charter, and its by-laws can be found in the digital workroom. These documents guide the College's institutional structures and practices to facilitate the accomplishment of Bennington's mission and purposes.

From the outset, Bennington College was designed to enable the active participation of its students in shaping their educational lives with an insistence that self-governance be a driving value in that educational enterprise. This commitment to an even more comprehensive (and often challenging-to-realize) idea of shared governance (Board, administration, faculty and students) has continued to permeate all aspects of life at Bennington. The College began as an idea led by a group of forward-thinking educators and civic leaders who believed that America needed a new college that at its center would prepare its students to respond to and build upon changes in society, technology, and culture.

Governance at the College includes formal structures that involve the board of trustees, senior administration, faculty, alumni, and students—as well as ad hoc forms of governance, such as faculty working groups. The ongoing commitment of these various bodies is to the shared institutional ideals of collaboration, communication, clarity in decision-making, as well as to ongoing self-reflection. By participating in and continuously advancing the College's commitment to active shared governance, each of the constituent bodies described below is committed to furthering Bennington's broadest educational ambitions.

Since our 2009 Self-Study, continuous work on the part of the President, the Board of Trustees, faculty, senior staff, students, and alumni, has resulted in significant changes to enhance and align governance structures and practices.

Board of Trustees: Description
The Bennington College board of trustees is responsible for overseeing the entirety of the College, particularly for Bennington's academic excellence and fiscal wellbeing. Membership of the board of trustees consists of not fewer than 15 or more than 35 voting members. Currently there are 24 voting members with a broad mix of non-alumni and alumni members, including two recently (within the last two years) graduated trustees who are elected to serve two-year terms. New members of the board participate in a comprehensive orientation led by senior administrators, where the new trustees receive a variety of materials and information about the College and about broader higher education issues and trends. The full board of trustees meets four times each year, with two meetings taking place on the Bennington campus. These meetings provide time for executive and general sessions for the board, as well as social gatherings. Standing and ad-hoc board committees meet independently prior to or in conjunction with each board meeting (and via email and/or conference calls in addition to their in-person meetings). The board also meets formally and informally with faculty and students during their on-campus meetings every year.

The structure of the board and obligations of the trustees are set out in the by-laws of the Bennington College Corporation. In addition to providing strategic oversight, actively promoting and fundraising for the College, the board's obligations include appointment of the president, regular reviews of presidential performance, fiscal oversight, hiring and termination of faculty, prescription of admissions and graduation requirements, conferring of degrees, setting of tuition and fees, and review of the academic programs and standards. The trustees also review and approve any other policies with substantial financial, contractual, or legal implications.

Board of Trustees: Appraisal

In 2011, trustee Alan Kornberg '74 assumed the position of board chair, succeeding Deborah Wadsworth, who had led the board for 11 years. Mr. Kornberg held this role until last month, when he was succeeded by trustee Nick Stephens '77. During his time as chair, Mr. Kornberg guided the Board and the College in its focus on steady growth, renewal, long-term planning, and sustainability. The board has overseen a number of major initiatives during this period including the construction of the Center for the Advancement of Public Action; the complete restoration of the College's iconic original building Commons; the College's first (and very successful) presidential search in 25 years with the appointment of Mariko Silver in 2013; and the planning and public launch in April 2019 of the College's historic $150 million comprehensive capital campaign, which aims to bring Bennington's endowment to $100 million and raise $50 million for immediate investment in critical College priorities.

After a year-long, College-wide process to establish the framework of the *Ten-Year Goals* (see Standard Two), the board of trustees held a retreat in December 2014 to review its own processes and realign Board committee structures to meet, most effectively, the ongoing and future governance needs of the College. The goals of the retreat were: to determine structures that would maximally leverage each trustee's skills and networks; to identify areas of unmet or additional skill sets needed on the Board; and to clarify trustee roles and responsibilities (in the boardroom, on standing and working committees, and in support of the College) as we looked to realize the *Ten-Year Goals*, expand Bennington's network, and launch the next comprehensive campaign.

As a result of the retreat, in February 2015, the Board reevaluated its committee structure and focus, reconstituting and creating new committees. The former Trusteeship Committee was renamed the Nomination and Governance Committee to more explicitly address its role in trustee recruitment as well as in board and presidential assessment and other significant governance matters. Given the significant investments in the College's physical plant over the past decade, the trustees saw a need to shift their focus from a campus renewal perspective to longer term campus planning, so the Campus Building and Renewal Committee was reconstituted as Campus Planning. The trustees also formed a new standing committee, Audit and Risk, to ensure that the Board was focused on the challenges facing higher educational institutions. The trustees also established a new committee on investment to formally oversee the College's growing endowment; formerly, the Budget and Finance Committee oversaw this task. In addition, following guidance from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, the board instituted new charters describing responsibilities for each committee, and outlined job descriptions for each committee chair.

Since the committee redesign process, the Investment Committee underwent a thorough RFP process (which included a student representative on the committee) to select a new investment management firm. The Audit and Risk Committee also switched the College's audit firm through a similar comprehensive RFP process. Beginning in 2017, the Nomination and Governance Committee instituted a formal bi-annual board self-assessment and a presidential assessment process. The board continues to establish ad hoc committees from time to time for specific purposes as necessary to address any emerging issues that need particular focus or attention.

Since the retreat in 2015, with an aim toward diversification of the board and in an effort to build the governance team needed to guide the College and realize our Ten-Year Goals, we have appointed eight new trustees (not including rotating recent graduate trustees) who bring a wide range of ages, backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.

The new Board structures, together with continuing work to keep board membership always under review, has supported a highly engaged group of trustees with varied experiences, diverse backgrounds, and a deep commitment to the College. During a reflective exercise involving the NECHE Standards in the spring of 2019, trustees expressed that they are an "active and involved" group with a "mix of education practitioners and relevant other professions." They also expressed that they "have a clear understanding of Bennington's mission and stay current on Bennington's activities" while "taking pride in the institution's historic identity."

As mentioned above, Nick Stephens, a member of the Board since 2015, was elected to succeed Alan Kornberg as board chair in July 2019. Alan Kornberg will continue on as a trustee, leading the search for the College's next president, just as he did successfully in 2012-2013.

Board of Trustees: Projection

- Over the 2019-2020 academic year the board of trustees, engaging substantively with the campus community, will conduct a successful search for Bennington's next president.

- The board will continue to engage at the highest level as both donors and advocates for the comprehensive campaign, "The World Needs More Bennington."

- The board will continue to play a leading role in realizing the second of the College's *Ten-Year Goals*, "Expand the Bennington Network," by activating and extending their networks in support of the College's mission, specific initiatives, and for our students, including through *Field Work Term*, Art for Access, and New York-based programs like Museum Fellows Term and Lucille Lortel Theatre Term.

Staff: Description

The president is appointed and evaluated by the board of trustees, and serves as an ex officio member of the board and all of its committees. As chief executive and administrative officer of the College, the president is responsible for budgetary management, institutional advancement (including development, external relations, and student recruitment), planning and evaluation, and administrative organization. The president makes recommendations to the board on certain administrative appointments, employment policies for faculty and staff, faculty contracts, and academic matters such as standards and curriculum.

The president regularly meets individually with students, faculty, and staff. In addition, she has weekly open hours for student conferences, presides over faculty meetings, and co-chairs the College Steering Committee. She also serves as an academic advisor to students and teaches courses. The president oversees a committed group of senior administrators who serve as the College's senior staff.

Over the past ten years, Bennington has made significant additions to its administrative structures. President Silver increased senior staff membership to include essential institutional perspectives, including the Director of Human Resources, the Director of Information Technology, the Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Planning, and the Dean of the Library. The group meets weekly and twice a year for day-long dedicated planning retreats. In addition, President Silver has added two new senior administrative positions crucial to realizing Bennington's mission and ambitions: a Senior Vice President for Strategy, Philanthropy, and Partnerships, filled by the College's former Vice President for Institutional Advancement; and a Vice President for Institutional Inclusion, Equity, and Leadership Development.

Senior Vice President Bartels aims to ensure that Bennington has the resources, reputation, and the network to fulfil its mission and goals in the long term by developing relationships with mission-aligned partners to launch new programs and initiatives that extend Bennington's reach and impact. Over the last three years this work has led to the creation or enhancement of several major programs and partnerships, including the acquisition and re-development of the Robert Frost Stone House Museum (five minutes from the main campus), the establishment of the Lucille Lortel Theatre Fellowships (for student Field Work Term experiences; see Standard Four), the creation and launch of the Art for Access initiative, and the expansion of the New York-based Museum Fellows Term. This work is closely aligned with the trustees and as such, Bartels also serves as secretary of the board. As described in Standard Two, each of these programs or initiatives contributes to the *Ten-Year Goals*; in fact, the work is unique in that it directly supports all three pillars—"Fulfilling the Promise of a Progessive Education," "Expanding the Bennington Network," and "Ensuring Financial Stability."

In the latter role, Vice President Delia Saenz, who was recruited from Arizona State University in the summer of 2018, works across constituencies to facilitate a climate in which all are treated with respect and have equal access to the full array of education and employment resources that Bennington College provides. This role was designed to avoid the traditional model of chief diversity officer, which centralizes liability on one office or position, and grew from work previously undertaken in the Provost and Dean's Office (see Standard Five). Over the past year Vice President Saenz has led educational and training sessions, advised on internal and external initiatives, worked with key offices to ensure that College communications reflect a commitment to inclusion, and helped to diversify applicant pools for staff and faculty positions. She has also developed and administered a faculty climate survey, the results of which have begun to be analyzed and shared.

Staff: Appraisal
The addition of the two positions described just above are critical to the College's continuing health and success, especially as the College community continues to become more diverse and as we continue to seek alternative revenue streams that contribute to our mission and purposes.

During the upcoming transitional year, with the departures of President Silver and long time senior staff member David Rees (whose last position was Senior Vice President for Institutional Initiatives and who also served as secretary of the board), more staff realignment will surely need to take place as needs are reassessed.

Staff in all areas at Bennington are, like faculty, deeply committed to the mission and purposes of the College. Most have very consciously chosen to work at Bennington because of its culture and pedagogy. Staff are in fact also teachers and mentors to students. The support, generosity, and care that staff across the College demonstrated during extremely trying months last year (as described in the introduction to this self-study) was simply extraordinary, and showed the true spirit of this community and what it can do. But it was exhausting for all, and morale suffered.

As noted in Standard Two, while staff across the College have been informed of College goals and aspirations—specifically the *Ten-Year Goals*—deeper and wider engagement is necessary to maintain and build morale, especially during a year of leadership transition following upon a difficult term, and with the drumbeat of "challenges" in higher education regularly in the news.

Staff: Projection

- Re-imagine regular staff meetings and staff communications generally to more fully engage the College community and build morale.
- Use the opening of Commons, and the beautiful, new, shared spaces in the building, to create new ways for staff and faculty to come together informally.

The Faculty: Description

Bennington's commitment to shared governance unfolds in a variety of ways. The faculty have the responsibility for the content and integrity of the curriculum and for the setting and maintenance of academic standards at the College. The faculty are also responsible for making recommendations to the provost and dean about academic programs, faculty appointments and reappointments, and academic budgeting. This responsibility is exercised through members of the faculty participating in the governance of the College through their work and independent voice on committees, their deliberation in various meetings, including regular faculty and Faculty Forum (faculty-only) meetings, and in the review of their peers. The faculty meets formally each month of the academic year to conduct elections for committees, review and discuss policy recommendations, and report on committee work and other academic and administrative items. The various committees are described in full on the College's website.

We dwell here for a moment on the most recently instituted mechanism for shared governance, the College Steering Committee, created in the spring of 2015. The idea for this committee was initiated by then-Provost and Dean Roche, in consultation with President Silver and several faculty on the Academic Policies Committee, in order to address the nature and range of work that the APC, the central decision making body related to the academic work of the College, found itself overseeing. There was really no existing venue for faculty to have access to and provide input on the many non-academic matters that also drive the direction of the College. The charge of the committee is as follows: The CSC is responsible for participating in College decision-making concerning administrative policies and procedures; admissions and market

position; financial position; advancement and alumni engagement; faculty affairs; health and safety; and diversity and inclusion. The CSC is also charged with co-setting the faculty meeting agenda, running the faculty-only meetings, and meeting regularly with the board of trustees.

Additionally, in order to establish further shared governance, in 2017 then-Provost and Dean Roche developed two hybrid faculty-administrative positions, adding a third in 2019. Separately, the $800,000 Mellon Foundation grant, "Progressive Education for the 21st Century," allowed us to create roles for five faculty fellows (known colloquially as the M5) to help design and carry out the major initiatives described therein.

Faculty: Appraisal

Despite major shifts to improve shared governance over the past several years, and despite increased transparency on the part of the administration—sharing goals, plans, and budgets in various committees and meetings—there remains among faculty a degree of unease about plans administrators may be keeping to themselves. This may be a habit developed over many decades, handed down from generation to generation since the Symposium, which has become difficult to shake even as the College has for many years been stable and fundamentally healthy. Or there may be a desire for independence and autonomy endemic to Bennington's culture—and even to Bennington's pedagogy as it has historically focused on the individual more than the collective. Or there may simply be an opposition inherent to faculty and administrative roles that is difficult to overcome—just as there appears to be between students and administrators. Few want to believe this, of course, and many attempt to bridge the divide, often successfully. But distrust and occasional virulence return almost predictably and with the persistence of weeds, even as faculty become more and more involved in governance and decision making. There is, additionally, real ambivalence among faculty about just what kind of decision making they want to or should be involved in. This is most evident on the College Steering Committee, which vacillates between wanting to be a consultative body and wanting to be a decision making body. President Silver explicitly left this question open to the faculty on the committee. Some faculty recognize that, while they have insights to share, their role is precisely not administrative, on the whole—that they were hired to be teachers, advisors, scholars, and artists. Others, however, believe that they should routinely have a hand in administrative decisions large and small.

These tensions exist because faculty care deeply about their work and about the College. They want their work to be recognized and supported, and they want the College to maintain and grow its success. The same is true for staff, as it is for students. Bennington is a collection of small communities passionate about their work and the institution that makes that work possible. Some degree of infighting will always exist, even (and perhaps especially) among people who live and work in close proximity and whose world views are extraordinarily similar; this may be an instance of the "narcissism of small differences."

Faculty: Projection

- The College Steering Committee, through the leadership of the Interim President and the faculty co-chair, must discuss and define what shared governance means for faculty at Bennington, and revise the CSC charge accordingly to eliminate ambiguity.

- When projects, initiatives, or problems arise, we must continue to create ad hoc working groups that involve multiple constituencies—faculty, students, and staff. Current examples of this include the Art for Access Committee (working alongside trustees and alumni), the Materials and Supplies Task Force, and the Judicial Committee.

- The College's efforts large and small need to be explicitly linked to a publicly available strategic plan (see Standard Two) that is reviewed with faculty at regular intervals so that the allocation of resources (including time) can be widely understood and endorsed.

Students: Description

Student governance structures are described in full on the College's website, and considered in more detail in Standard Five. The central, formal governance structures are two: House Chairs and the Student Educational Policies Committee (SEPC). Self-governance is at the core of residential life, and house chairs play a pivotal role in providing leadership and assistance to students residing in their house communities. Two house chairs for each house work collaboratively to foster community development and cooperative living. They are selected and supervised by staff in Student Life. The Student Educational Policies Committee is a group of students—two for each academic discipline—who represent the student body in issues affecting academic life at Bennington. These SEPC representatives, elected by the student body, serve as a liaison among students, faculty, and administration, and facilitate mid-term and end-of-term course evaluations (see Standard Six). The SEPC also considers larger questions of academic policy and articulates its concerns and interests to the campus community. The head of the SEPC speaks at Convocation. Informal student organizations abound, driven by student interest and supported by the Office of Student Life.

Students: Appraisal

The house chairs and the SEPC are critical to student self-governance and have proven quite successful over the years—to such an extent that it is almost impossible to imagine Bennington without them. Where student governance has fallen short, however, is in the area of what is typically termed "student governance"—that is, governance outside of the exclusively academic that the SEPC addresses. A number of attempts have been made over the decades to create such a structure, but all have faltered. This is discussed more fully in Standard Five; however, a pertinent example can be explored here.

Several years ago a few students took the lead in developing a student government structure that would be complementary to the SEPC. Voluntary meetings and long discussions were held, open to all and with specific invitations to faculty and administrators. One student in particular researched everything having to do with student government at Bennington, and even wrote extensively about it; he met with senior administrators regularly to discuss ideas. Staff and faculty supported the effort without interfering; this was about student agency. The whole process was extraordinarily thoughtful, inclusive, open, and ambitious. The student group, however, did not want to create a hierarchy, and refused to appoint leaders. There were of course de facto leaders—the most active in the group—but these turned out to be seniors. Once the seniors graduated, the group and the initiative dissipated. No formal student government structure has so far been able

to sustain at Bennington. This may be our own doing, since we select (and students self-select) for an individualized education, which can—though it need not—agitate against collective efforts.

On the other hand, students in the Sustainability Working Group several years ago successfully worked with faculty, staff, and trustees to push for reconsideration of the College's investments—advocating specifically for socially responsible investing. After much discussion and research, the trustees implemented the recommendations.

Students: Projection

- Students will continue to contemplate their role in governance, with open avenues to forming effective, new organizations, and with guidance from staff in Student Life.
- As with faculty, students will more often be given roles on committees, task forces, and working groups so that all constituencies can work together across a range of topics.

STANDARD THREE: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE (BOARD AND INTERNAL GOVERNANCE)

Please attach to this form:

1. A copy of the institution's organization chart(s).

2. A copy of the by-laws, enabling legislation, and/or other appropriate documentation to establish the legal authority of the institution to award degrees in accordance with applicable requirements.

If there is a "sponsoring entity," such as a church or religious congregation, a state system, or a corporation, describe and document the relationship with the accredited institution.

Name of the sponsoring entity	
Website location of documentation of relationship	

Governing Board	Website Location
By-laws	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zee_ky3HacoB_TQOEmF69io_Xx6jH2V4/view
Board members' names and affiliations	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1We1DrxP1fYFCx2Knl_sB7mP7rQ599hrp6BbWA_bnwzs/edit

Board Commitees	Website Location or Document Name for Meeting Minutes
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RQeXnK8FcSPbqPNWBaOAQRICr449_ECaNQUXD2DTyIQ	NA

Major institutional faculty committees or governance groups	Website Location or Document Name for Meeting Minutes
https://www.bennington.edu/staff/committees	NA

Major institutional student committees or governance groups	Website Location or Document Name for Meeting Minutes
https://www.bennington.edu/staff/committees	NA

Other major institutional committees or governance groups	Website Location or Document Name for Meeting Minutes
https://www.bennington.edu/staff/committees	NA

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Organizational chart can be found here.

STANDARD THREE: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE (LOCATIONS AND MODALITIES)

Campuses, Branches and Locations Currently in Operation

	Location	Date Initiated	Enrollment*		
			2 Years Prior (FY 2017)	1 Year Prior (FY 2018)	Current Year (FY 2019)
Main campus	Bennington, VT	1932	887	915	896
Other principal campuses					
Branch campuses (US)					
Other instructional locations (US)					
Branch campuses (overseas)					
Other instructional locations (overseas)					

Educational modalities

	Number of Programs	Date First Initiated	Enrollment*		
			2 Years Prior (FY 2017)	1 Year Prior (FY 2018)	Current Year (FY 2019)
Distance Learning Programs					
Programs 50-99% on-line					
Programs 100% on-line					
Correspondence Education					
Low-Residency Programs	1	1994	102	98	99
Competency-based Programs					
Dual Enrollment Programs					
Contractual Arrangements involving the award of credit					

*Enter the annual unduplicated headcount for each of the years specified below.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Main campus numbers are inclusive of Prison Education Initiative (PEI) students and low residency MFA students (the latter are also counted in lower section).

STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Bennington's primary academic activity is undergraduate education leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree. The College also offers graduate degree programs in writing and literature, the performing arts, and public action. A postbaccalaureate premedical program for college graduates is offered as well. The description in the section immediately below, which describes the Bennington Plan process and other structures that support our educational mission, is primarily relevant to the undergraduate program, although a similar underlying philosophy informs our MFA programs. The Post Baccalaureate program is organized around a set curriculum and is not guided by a structure akin to the Plan process.

In this Standard, as well as in several that follow, we will emphasize how students work with our Plan process and how we, as faculty and administrators, facilitate that work and evaluate its effectiveness. Because the academic program at Bennington does not involve general education requirements or declared majors, and because our academic organization is not designed around traditional departments, we organized this Standard somewhat differently than the NECHE guidelines suggest. Specifically, we first describe our underlying academic structures generally (addressing Standards 4.1-4.4) and how they serve general education and liberal arts goals (Standards 4.13-4.19) in a single section; we then go on to discuss our graduate programs (Standards 4.20-4.28), how we maintain academic quality (Standards 4.5 - 4.12) and the integrity of academic credit (Standards 4.29-4.49).

The Academic Program: Description

Capacities: The Five Specific Goals of a Bennington Education

Student-centered liberal education is Bennington's raison d'etre. Founded on a progressive vision that eschewed tradition for tradition's sake, we maintain that spirit with an ongoing commitment to renewal and reflection. We constantly scrutinize our structures and practices as we seek to refine and improve how we educate our students or, more accurately, how we guide our students as they pursue their educations. Likewise, we instill in students an appreciation for the value of self-reflection when it comes to designing their education. That design, referred to as each student's Plan, evolves over their time at the College, and builds on their existing strengths as first-year students while giving them the freedom to pursue their own academic and artistic pursuits. With ongoing feedback from their advisor and other faculty, students create for themselves a challenging and integrated program that includes curricular and co-curricular work along with Field Work Term experiences, distinct threads that they weave together as they craft their Plan. This Standard address the curricular and Field Work term dimensions, and the co-curricular work is presented in Standard Five.

While the Plan is the most visible manifestation of how students advance through their education at Bennington, it is not an end in and of itself: it is the means by which students become critical thinkers and original makers. Since our previous self-study we have articulated more concrete goals, referred to as the Capacities, that are specific skills that we want students to develop as they work through their individual Plans. Specifically, a Bennington education will strengthen in each student the capacity to:

- Inquire: to construct a substantive and meaningful line of questioning that is informed by relevant work;

- Research: to develop their knowledge and familiarity with the ideas that are particularly relevant to their inquiry;

- Create: to create and revise work, in collaboration with others and individually;

- Engage: to develop an awareness of, and the skills to meaningfully participate in larger intellectual, artistic and civic communities, and;

- Communicate: to develop the skills to effectively share their work with the world and respectfully respond to critiques thereof.

Each of these Capacities intertwines with and builds on the others, and is described more fully on our website. It is our hope that in encapsulating our goals so concisely we will communicate to students, their families, and the outside world the aims of a Bennington education, making the ideals of a liberal arts education more tangible and their application to a lifelong career less abstract.

The process by which we articulated these Capacities goes back to a series of faculty discussions held during the 2006-07 academic year. At those meetings, faculty were asked to describe and prioritize the goals they have for their courses, and the common threads that emerged—framed at the time as "The Expectations of a Bennington Education"—were included in our 2009 self-study report. Subsequently, faculty on the Academic Policies Committee took this work further, working with administration to articulate specific institutional outcomes for every student. Some of this was outlined in our *Five-Year Interim Report*, in which we described the various forms of research and consensus building we engaged around the Capacities, including surveys to students and alumni. Since then we have begun to refer directly to the Capacities in student assessments, including in Plan Meeting Assessment Forms (see the "Sample Student Plans" folder in the digital workroom), and we are currently developing prompts for narrative evaluations to make them more visible there as well. They are increasingly becoming part of the language we use to describe Bennington to current and prospective students and their families.

Before shifting focus to the specifics of our academic program, it is worth noting how the Capacities fit in to the Bennington education generally. All of our academic structures—from the Plan process to the means by which students achieve their goals defined within it, namely the curriculum, Field-Work Term, and co-curricular work—are intended to further develop the Capacities. Indeed, any meaningful professional work, when considered from its inception to execution, must involve all five Capacities in very tangible ways. Thus, given the importance of "learning by doing" in the Bennington ethos (discussed below), the Capacities are not arbitrary or artificial headings for particular life-skills; they are the pillars of any successful work, and their emphasis in the Bennington education arises quite naturally and organically from what we ask our students to do. As such, our emphasis on them is intended to make students cognizant of skills required to successfully pursue substantive work in all contexts, and how developing them is critical to their success after graduation. Far from being a new concept for us as an institution, using the Capacities as an organizing theme around a Bennington education is completely consistent with our founding ideals: they are critical to student (and professional) success because they provide a foundation for a meaningful, self-directed education.
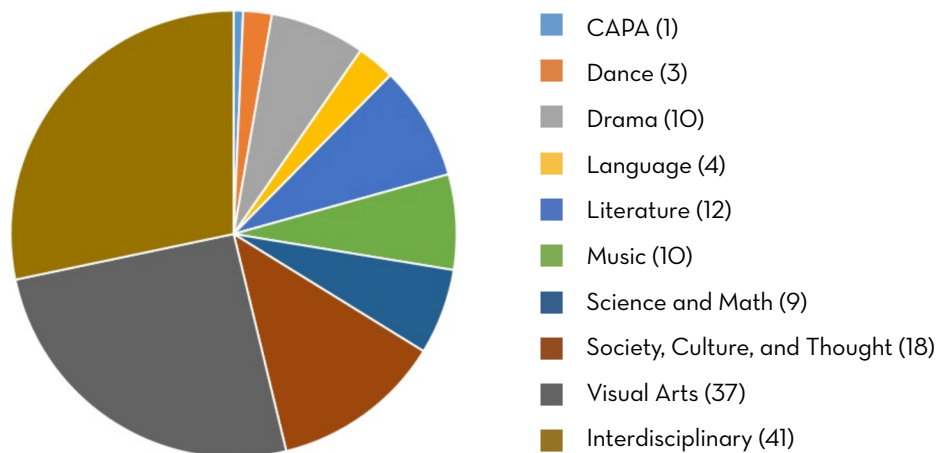
Areas of Student Work

The Capacities are the clearest articulation of a Bennington education in a general sense. Students can develop them in any area of study and they serve to reinforce student learning across disciplines. In that sense, they provide an excellent foundation for students to pursue post-graduation work in many areas, regardless of whether or not it is related to their advanced work at Bennington. With respect to the latter point, this section provides a glimpse of the sort of work our students pursue in the context of their Plans.
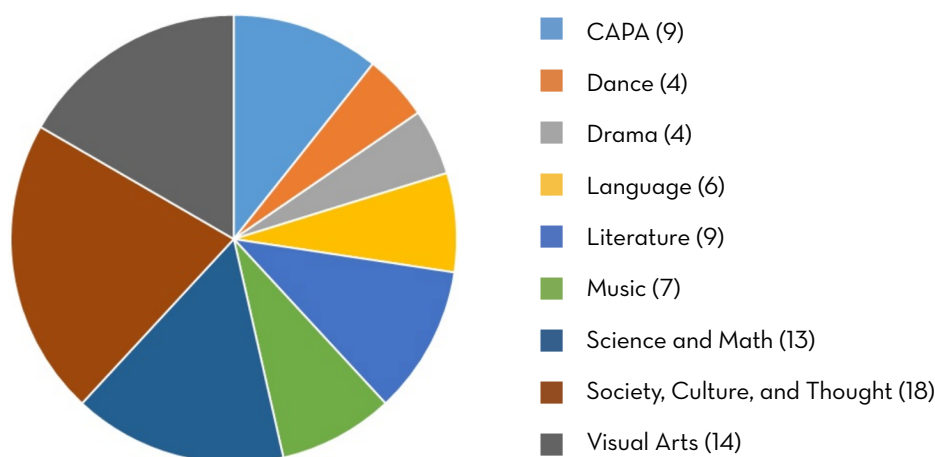
As explained more fully below, direct oversight of a given student's progress is provided by their advisor. Advisors are responsible for seeing that specific requirements that are generated during the student's Plan Meeting are met, for both ensuring breadth and depth of their coursework and the completion of advanced work. While any given student's advisor can be, and often is, from a field unrelated to their Plan, students' work is often aligned with one or two particular discipline groups. Faculty from these groups typically oversee the work, helping students develop their ideas and providing critical feedback.

To provide a sense of the focus of student plans, the figure below shows the distribution of discipline groups within which student work was "housed" for the 2017-18 graduating class. While there is inevitably some yearly fluctuation in these numbers, this provides a reasonable picture of the general focus of our student work during the period of this review. The largest wedge of the graph represents interdisciplinary Plans—those student Plans that do not fall neatly within a single discipline group and which are guided by faculty from different groups. Specifics about which areas are represented in these interdisciplinary plans is illustrated in the second figure below. Taken together, these show that roughly one-third of Bennington's students pursue work in the visual arts, with the remaining two-thirds being roughly evenly split in the humanities (Literature, Languages, part of Society, Culture & Thought), the natural and social sciences (Science & Math, part of Society, Culture & Thought), and the performing arts (Dance, Drama, and Music). The manner by which the College oversees the large number of interdisciplinary plans is evolving. For current purposes, it suffices to say that a number of structural requirements have emerged that actually serve to _dis_course students from pursuing interdisciplinary work. As such, student interest in such plans is likely understated by these data. We explain our current thinking on facilitating interdisciplinary work below in the Appraisal section.

Areas of Concentration
2017-18 Graduates (December and June); 145 Total

- CAPA (1)
- Dance (3)
- Drama (10)
- Language (4)
- Literature (12)
- Music (10)
- Science and Math (9)
- Society, Culture, and Thought (18)
- Visual Arts (37)
- Interdisciplinary (41)

Areas Representation in Interdisciplinary Plans
December 2017 and June 2018; 41 Plans

- CAPA (9)
- Dance (4)
- Drama (4)
- Language (6)
- Literature (9)
- Music (7)
- Science and Math (13)
- Society, Culture, and Thought (18)
- Visual Arts (14)

The Plan Process and Advising

To convey Bennington's academic program, we must first describe the Plan process in greater detail. Our emphasis on "student-centered" at the beginning of this section is deliberate but requires some explanation as the term is frequently used by other colleges to mean something very different. At Bennington, "student-centered" encapsulates a key—*the* key—focus of our underlying philosophy. Student questions guide a Bennington education, questions that arise out of the genuine interests and passions of each individual who matriculates here. The role of the faculty (including especially faculty advisors), therefore, is not to pose challenging questions for students to answer; depending on how such a relationship is implemented, that could be legitimately described as "student-centered"—but it is not our model. At Bennington, the role of the faculty is to help students refine their own questions, to give them the tools they will need to adeptly and diligently pursue the subjects of their inquiries, and to guide them as they create truly original works characterized by informed insights. This approach undergirds all student work at the College—from the dance studio to the biology lab. The Plan process, described below, is intended to have students design a coherent and rewarding education for themselves that leverages their existing talents and pushes them to realize their potential. By having students reflect on what the Capacities mean to their unique Plan, the institution has implemented a system that uniquely challenges each student.

The Plan process is the blueprint of how students progress through their Bennington education. It is the vehicle by which they iteratively formulate, articulate, and refine the questions that center their individual academic programs, bringing them to fruition in sophisticated academic and creative works. The Plan process is described at length on the College website, as well as in the Student Handbook. Without going into too much detail, particularly important points in the Plan process are:

- 3rd Term (Plan Proposal): after taking exploratory coursework, reflecting on their interests and strengths in their First-Year Essay (described more fully below), and developing their ideas in conversation with their advisor in their first year, each student articulates their academic plans. In essay form, they describe the specifics of the question that will drive their study, place it in a broader intellectual context, and outline what their investigation will entail.

- 6th Term (Plan Progress and Advanced Work): students refine or re-define or re-direct their questions and direction, and specify how they will culminate their investigations. Referred to as "advanced work", this culmination requires that students demonstrate a synthesis of their coursework and other work in the context of the focus of their Plan.

- 8th Term (Senior Reflective Essay): students reflect on the evolution of their educational path in an introspective essay that deals not only the substance of their Plan, but what they have learned about themselves and their intellectual or artistic processes.

Integral to the key milestones in the Plan process delineated above is each student's academic advisor and plan committee. The faculty advisor's role is essential in every student's development: they work with students to give their plans specific form and structure, and providing meaningful context and critical feedback about the direction, scope, viability, and sophistication of their work. Such ongoing relationships makes possible deep connections and rich discussions that require sustained attention between individuals. Variations in advisors' approach to that work, however, has afforded inconsistent results; recent and proposed changes in advising structures to address this issue are presented in the Appraisal section. While advisors play a key role in helping students formulate their Plans, it is worth noting that students don't actually have advisors when they begin the Plan process. This is because the Plan process, in a very real albeit informal sense, actually begins prior to their matriculation. During admissions interviews, admissions office personnel engage applicants in conversations designed to initiate a process of reflection about their education; we're not interested in what students want to study per se but, rather, what motivates them. By encouraging students to go beyond simple likes and dislikes of various academic fields, we want them to consider what gives them satisfaction and what drives their enthusiasm; for many, it is the first time they are asked to consider their own intellectual and creative impulses that deeply.

Plan committees consist of three or four faculty members, one of whom is the student's advisor. The primary function of the Plan Committee is to broaden the feedback students get with respect to their Plans. It is empowered to require specific coursework that it deems crucial to a student's development. In addition, Plan committees give each student specific advice to focus or redirect their line of inquiry. The intent is to challenge each student and to frame their Plan in such a way that it has a high likelihood of success. Here success is defined as the student developing a rich body of work that sheds light on, but does not necessarily answer, their core question.

Effective advising plays another role critical function in Bennington academic program. As mentioned at the outset of this Standard, Bennington has no major or general education requirements. Advisors and plan committees are the means by which the College assures that

each student's education achieves both breadth and depth. With respect to breadth, ingrained in the ethos of the College is the importance of broad study, a defining feature of any liberal education; in our current language, the Capacities are most effectively developed by an exposure to a broad range of perspectives, methodologies and content. Working with the student in an ongoing way, advisors not only consider the specifics of a given student's primary line of inquiry, they also review the coursework and Field Work Term experiences, and work with students to ensure that adequate breadth is achieved. The efficacy of this approach is described in Standard Eight.

Depth in student work at Bennington is achieved without formal major requirements. The "advanced work" each student is expected to produce presupposes a deep understanding and familiarity with a wide-range of relevant materials. Students must understand the context for their line of inquiry and incorporate it into work that is uniquely their own. A given student's advanced work is regarded as evidence that they have achieved a level of rigor and sophistication that justifies the awarding of their degree. As part of the proposals, students specify to the Plan Committee a well-defined body of work that they will execute in their final terms at Bennington, along with details regarding how such work will be evaluated and by whom; while the advisor or a member of the Plan Committee are often directly involved in supervising the advanced work, it is not required and in many instances is not the case.

To summarize, the Plan process is the central (but not only) means by which we foster the development of Capacities in each student. In consultation with their faculty and academic advisors, students create a rich liberal education, one that is tailored to their interests and needs. At its best, it is intentional in terms of its substance and challenge. As students proceed through their plans they delve deeply into their intellectual and/or artistic passions. They are encouraged—required, in fact—to reflect on their plans as they progress, refining their questions in light of their developing sophistication and deepening appreciation of how various perspectives can inform their work. Thus breadth and depth are mutually reinforcing. As their inquiry becomes more focused, they are challenged to frame it within broader contexts—to consider how their deepening understanding of a problem, subject, or craft might matter to the rest of the world.

In the sections that follow, we describe the primary means by which students access their Bennington educations: the Curriculum and Field Work Term. Students also make use of co-curricular activities to shape and inform their Plans; these are presented in Standard Five.

Curriculum
Ours is an open and responsive curriculum in that we have no uniform or general education requirements and the specific courses our faculty offer are usually determined with current student interests and needs in mind. It is the major pathway that students use to frame their work and focus on their Plans. The process by which we develop our curriculum has evolved over time and continues to do so, as technology increasingly makes possible direct faculty input into the process and greater coordination amongst them. What has not changed is the fact that the Curriculum is a dynamic collection of intellectual and creative efforts, reflecting the current interests of faculty and students alike.

Produced by faculty annually, our curriculum arises out of discussions between faculty and students. Roughly 50% of the courses offered each year are new, where "new" means that the course in that specific incarnation has not been offered before. "New" is not meant to imply that there is a corresponding turnover in material taught, however. Faculty will frequently update courses, providing different contexts in which they present material, and updated course names make that visible to students. There are also many courses in the curriculum that repeat, but even in these cases faculty rarely use the same material year after year. Part of our faculty review process (see Standard Six) explicitly asks faculty about how they reflect on and modify their curricula over time, so our curriculum is in a constant state of flux.

Courses in our curriculum are categorized by the discipline groups that comprise the College: Literature; Society, Culture & Thought (referred to as Social Science prior to a program review in 2015); Science, Mathematics & Computing; Language and Cultural Studies (referred to simply as Languages prior to a program review that was completed in 2019); Dance; Drama; Visual Arts; Music; and the Center for the Advancement of Public Action (CAPA). While these groupings serve to present the curriculum in a navigable manner, the faculty is committed to an interdisciplinary approach to curricular planning and faculty members have developed various interdisciplinary curricular groupings, such as our environmental studies program, which facilitate cooperation of faculty with overlapping interests.

A second organizing structure of our curriculum relates to the level of courses. There are only two types: 2000-level and 4000-level, with the former having no prerequisites and the latter having at least one. Thus the stratification of students by class that often results from 100-, 200-, 300-, and 400-level courses is largely avoided. This has the very tangible benefit of younger students engaging in seminars and discussions from their first year forward, providing them with peers who model developed seminar skills in addition to several years to practice and hone their extemporaneous communication and analytical abilities. Faculty coordinate with each other to design a curriculum that supports students at all levels, with readily identified and recurring entry points, as well as courses that build on previous knowledge. Our small size presents unique challenges to faculty as they design paths through their disciplines for students: with several single-person or two-person disciplines, faculty need to forego the coverage-based approaches that nearly all encountered in their own backgrounds in favor of more content-based, flexible pathways. As we discuss below, this is an ongoing challenge and we are incorporating ways that we can address this aspect of curriculum development into our work managing the term-to-term aspects of curriculum production.

Beyond the published curriculum, faculty also offer between 40-60 tutorials each term. These are vehicles for students to pursue independent academic work under the guidance of faculty. Individual and group tutorials exist. The main distinction between a group tutorial and a regular course is that the degree to which they are student-organized and driven: tutorials are intended to be proposed and shaped by students, with the specific learning objectives and assessment mechanisms developed jointly by students and faculty; faculty provide critical feedback, but much of the focus and work of group tutorials come from student initiatives.

Field Work Term and Career Development

If the Curriculum is the skeleton of a Bennington Education, in the sense that it gives it structure and form, Field Work Term is the animating spirit; it breathes life into students' on-campus studies though its application toward practical, outward-looking endeavors. A core piece of Bennington's academic structure since its founding, Field Work Term exemplifies one of our core pedagogical principles: *students learn most effectively by doing.* To that end, each student is required to successfully complete a qualifying field work experience—a job, internship, apprenticeship, fellowship, research opportunity, or entrepreneurial venture—for six weeks each year. Through four field experiences, our students develop the Capacities in a manner that complements their on-campus experiences. In the context of executing the mission of a particular organization, students develop the ability to effectively contribute and collaborate in team-driven enterprises, the confidence to productively navigate ambiguities, and an understanding of trade-offs and uncertainties—all qualities recognized by employers as essential for innovation in the future of work. The value of Field Work Term to students' educational success, to say nothing of eventual career success, is hard to overstate: 72% of alumni surveyed in 2017 reported Field Work Term to be "very important" in shaping their life after Bennington— and this is typical from year to year. We know of no other College that has maintained such a program as an academic requirement since its founding.

The Curriculum and Field Work Term are inextricably connected. Each student is expected to weave these two threads together into the arc of their Plan and to further refine their plans based on the insights each reveals about their line of inquiry. It is the added value of four academically integrated work-learning experiences, punctuating each academic year, that supports a robust developmental trajectory for our students. A brief explanation of how Field Work Term is typically integrated by students into their Plans is provided below.

In the first year students are encouraged to build a foundation of work success. This entails the development of a variety of skills related to finding and securing internships, budgeting and living independently, and navigating professional workplaces. Recognizing that the first year of college is a big adjustment in its own right, we encourage students to be realistic about their plans for their first Field Work Term; about half of first year students go home or to a location with a friend or relative in their first year, providing useful support for their first college-to-work transition.

The second and third Field Work Terms afford students the chance to examine various ways in which their academic studies relate to different professions and with the world. In addition, Plan committees emphasize that well-chosen Field Work Term positions can immeasurably complement student work on campus. Students use these Field Work Terms to expand their professional networks, develop skills in their fields of interest, and challenge their own assumptions about career preferences and goals. The final Field Work Term is the capstone of Bennington's work-based learning trajectory and is aimed at building strong, relevant connections for students' future success.

Assessment for each Field Work Term is consistent with other modes of student assessment at Bennington. The student's immediate supervisor for their Field Work Term experience provides detailed information about their strengths and weaknesses in their position, providing invaluable feedback for their long-term growth. We are currently developing a new set of prompts to

help supervisors frame their feedback to make it more aligned with the skills identified in the Capacities. For their part, students write a reflective essay on how the experience fits into their Plan and their individual development in the Capacities; these are used by advisors and plan committees as they work with each student to refine their Plan.

Co-Curricular Activities

As a residential liberal arts college, Bennington students spend far more time outside of the classroom than inside. Much of this time, of course, is spent on activities directly related to their coursework—our art studios, for example are open 24 hours a day and are usually always occupied by students creating pieces. But students also pursue a host of substantive and intellectually engaging work, much of it related to their plans, that fall outside what is traditionally considered the academic realm. Whether it is performing in a play, volunteering in the broader community, or donating time to support a fellow student's performance, we encourage students to seek out activities that engage them with the campus community and develop the Capacities in ways that complement their Field Work Term experiences and formal coursework. These opportunities are more fully presented in Standard Five, but we mention them here because we do not see them as wholly divorced from the academic program. As we write in the preamble to the description of the Capacities, "education at Bennington is necessarily integrative and holistic: inquiries can be pursued, and capacities developed, by way of the curriculum, the Field Work Term, and relevant residential and co-curricular experiences." We have as yet to develop the means by which much of this work is recognized—in terms of academic credit or in other ways—but we are cognizant of its value. Current thinking about how we can integrate students' co-curricular work into their Plans is discussed in the Appraisal section below.

The Academic Program: Appraisal

Capacities

As mentioned above, our implementation of the Capacities serves as an organizing principle for a Bennington education. Compared to the diffusely defined Expectations that preceded them, articulating the Capacities as succinctly stated institutional learning objectives makes the assessment of them simpler, and they are more easily connected to the trajectories of student work. As described in Standard Eight, we have encouraged faculty to refer directly to the Capacities in narrative course evaluations and in documents related to student progress in their Plans. Similarly, we have also encouraged students to use this language in their Plan Essays, other reflections on their work overall, and in how they document their co-curricular activities (Standard Five).

The shift on the part of faculty to emphasize the Capacities is proceeding slowly. For example, the framing we encourage faculty to use in their narrative evaluations does not align neatly with the Capacities. A recent audit of narrative evaluations showed that very few described student work in ways directly related to the Capacities. Moreover, direct reference to them in Plan Meeting Assessment forms, for which there is an explicit prompt, is not consistent. The reasons for this are several, not least of which is that a way of using the Capacities language in this context has yet to be fleshed out. Students, in turn, have also not adopted the language of the Capacities consistently.

The advantages of having students and faculty use a shared language to describe the work of the College are clear, and our adoption of the Capacities represents an attempt to achieve that end. To develop a culture in which that shared language flourishes, we are using First-Year Forum, our recently implemented program for first year students (see below) as a vehicle to accomplish, among other things, some specific goals involving the Capacities. Specifically, by introducing incoming students to the language and organization the Capacities afford, it is our hope that it becomes a routine aspect of how they describe their work. Simultaneously, the faculty leading each section of First-Year Forum, regardless of the extent of the initial skepticism behind the Capacities, become more familiar with how they can be usefully employed to guide students. Enculturating the Capacities into the work of the College is an unfinished project, but the clarity they promise makes continued efforts in this area a priority.

The Plan Process and Advising
We are keenly aware that designing and implementing one's own educational Plan can be daunting for students, especially in light of the rigidity of secondary school structures from which most of them are coming. As such, we attempt to assist them with a variety of institutional supports, the most critical of which is their academic advisor. Students work closely with advisors, not only to choose courses, but to give shape, direction and focus to their overall education. Advisors get to know students well and ask probing questions that instill a habit of deep self-reflection. Their role is to help students develop their own intellectual voice so they can make the difficult transition from being a passive recipient of information to critical thinkers who create their own work.

The institution understands that advising, if executed as described above, is quite time-consuming and we have historically recognized it as carrying roughly the same weight as a full course. As part of a three-year grant funded by the Mellon Foundation, a group of faculty, dubbed the Mellon Fellows, have recently investigated how we can formalize this recognition by reducing course loads so that faculty can have more time to work with advisees at a deeper level. Although still under study as to its broader impacts on the curriculum, we are considering a scheme wherein our current standard teaching load of five courses per year is reduced to 4.5, or nine courses over two years. The curricular impacts of this change need to be carefully considered by the (Academic Policies Committee) APC and the Curriculum Planning Committee (CPC), especially as it will affect certain discipline groups more than others for reasons of staffing and differing needs concerning the maintenance of curricular continuity.

The manner in which advisors work with students in the first year has undergone considerable refinement in recent years for a number of reasons. The bolstering of the College's Office of Academic Services with First-Year Advisors and other support staff over the past ten years (see Standard Six) served to ease the burden on academic advisors of helping students with their transition to college. A much more significant development in terms of a cultural shift at the college has been the recent implementation of First-Year Forum, a year-long course designed to achieve multiple aims, not least of which is to help students begin the difficult work of designing a coherent path for their own education and to meaningfully engage in the work of Plan development. In addition, this structure will address an issue that we discovered in recent surveys of first-year students: a large majority report that have only infrequent meetings with advisors. Many advisors take a hands-off approach to working with students, working on the assumption that if students need to meet they will proactively arrange to do so, but many incoming students

are reluctant to ask for meetings, resulting in frustration and the perception that they are not supported. By providing a structure that includes weekly contact with advisors, students will establish a more robust relationship with their advisors and faculty more generally, a shift that we see as key to their eventual success.

An outcome of the work of the Mellon Fellows, First-Year Forum has undergone a number of structural changes in light of our experience with its pilot renditions. In addition to helping students develop the academic and personal skills that the Plan process demands, it also aims to develop a sense of community among its students, helping them form relationships with faculty, staff, and other students to address some of the isolation first-year students can feel. Each section of this course is led by a faculty member who also serves as the faculty advisor to each student enrolled; there is also an upperclassman co-leader, who teaches alongside the faculty member during class and who helps students in the role of a more experienced peer. The course aims to familiarize students with campus resources, to facilitate the process of finding Field Work term positions, and to provide a framework for student engagement in the first formal step of the Plan process, the First-Year Essay, described in the paragraph below. Advisors also initiate discussions and exercises designed to have students self-assess their proficiency in each of the Capacities and to set goals for their further development.

The College has asked students to prepare some version of a First-Year Essay for many years but, regardless of how it has been framed and explained by advisors, the style, substance, and emphasis of them varied widely. As a result, this exercise was not a consistently effective entry point to the Plan process for students. In contrast, by embedding this work in First-Year Forum, we inform students as to the intent of the essay, explicitly emphasizing its role as a precursor to their actual plan and having it serve as a low-stakes version of what will become a map of their trajectory through Bennington. Moreover, we also build in supporting assignments that develop students' ability to write reflective essays of the type that will be expected throughout the Plan process. This has proven to be an effective change: students' approach to this essay has become more serious, and they more substantively reflect on their experiences and think in more concrete terms about the educational paths possible for them.

To further support students in the Plan process, we initiated Plan Writing Groups in Fall 2017 and are building on their early success. They typically involve three to four faculty members and their advisees in their 3rd terms, i.e., those who are writing Plan Proposal Essays. It functions almost as group advising, albeit with the very specific goal of helping students craft their Plan Essays. Groups meet once per week for the first several weeks of term. This provides students opportunities to hear from faculty as well as older students and, critically, with a series of low-stakes writing milestones that help them develop their Plans intentionally and with ongoing feedback from faculty and peers. These Writing Groups have been exceptionally well-received by advisors and advisees alike, and have successfully alleviated much of the student anxiety around this phase of the Plan process.

With respect to the efficacy of the Plan process more generally, we remain convinced that it simultaneously provides a structure for students to meaningfully pursue their own work and an inherent flexibility for students to imagine possibilities that fall outside of traditional disciplinary boundaries. In that sense, it continues to function very much in the spirit it was intended. That said, advisors have observed that the process is more effective and less frustrating for students

who adeptly advocate for their ideas; passive students tend to pursue work that resembles more conventional majors. We see this as a deficiency, not in our vision of progressive education, but in its execution in some cases. We develop the evolution of this aspect of the Plan process below.

Since the College's reorganization in 1994, when the previously existing "Divisions" were replaced by Discipline Groups, the role of each Discipline Group in supervising the work pursued by students, especially advanced work, has been in tension with that of the Plan Committees. To oversimplify a bit, Plan Committees approve student proposals but typically leave it to Discipline Groups to oversee it. In the interest of defending the rigor of the work done within its purview, Discipline Groups have slowly, but steadily, developed mechanisms to ensure the quality of student work. However, the mechanisms themselves can be crude and, in some cases, are in their implementation largely indistinguishable from major requirements at other institutions. This makes it difficult for students to pursue work that falls outside or in between discipline groups—the very type of interdisciplinary work we otherwise encourage students to pursue. It is often difficult for students to have such advanced work plans of such interstitial nature approved by Plan Committees because it does not conform to, or is not compatible with, existing requirements. To make matters even more confusing for students, the requirements for advanced work are not as publicly shared or commonly understood as typical major requirements, leading to student frustration with what they refer to as "hidden requirements." With mixed success, faculty advisors combat this by urging students (sometimes repeatedly) to engage faculty in discussions about what the relevant expectations are.

To address the above confusion and impediments to student plans that don't align with our discipline group structure, we have undertaken a review of the College's academic organization. This coincides not only with the preparation of this self-study report, but the completion of our first round of discipline group reviews (see Standard Six). Before initiating a second round of such reviews, we thought it an opportune time to re-evaluate how well our structures serve student needs before, in essence, locking them in place for another ten-year round of reviews. This "meta-review" is charged with taking stock of what our current structures provide (organizationally, intellectually, and logistically) and how they may work at cross-purposes to the intent of the Plan process. While the initial intent was to determine if the composition of the groups themselves serve student work, it was quickly recognized that the more fundamental tension concerns the relationship between Plan Committees and Discipline Groups with respect to how student work is defined and supervised. It is expected that the group will make specific recommendations to the Academic Policies Committee during the fall 2019 term.

Finally, as stated above, it is the opinion of many advisors that First-Year Essay had mixed success as an entry to the Plan process. Likewise, the complementary Senior Essay— designed to be the culminating piece of each student's Plan—has not consistently served its purpose either. The intention has been that the final term provides an opportunity for students to deeply reflect on their academic trajectories, learning from successes and failures alike in their courses and Field Work Term experiences, and developing an appreciation for what it means to mature intellectually. Too often, however, the essays lacked substance, served as vehicles for petty complaints, or otherwise failed to actively engage students on an intellectual level. In the past year APC, working with the Mellon Fellows, has reworked framing of the Senior Essay with the explicit goal of making it an integral part of the Plan process, a capstone moment for each student. As of this writing, we are still reviewing the first set of essays written with these revised prompts so it is too early to comment on the success of this initiative.

Curriculum

As stated above, ours is an open, living curriculum. Each and every term our faculty offer new courses that simultaneously reflect their evolving interests as well as the academic aspirations of students. However, there are a number of ways that our development and presentation of the curriculum could be more effective. For example, there exists a tension between the responsiveness of the curriculum and the faculty's ability to be familiar enough with it to optimally advise students. Specifically, the process by which we assemble each year's curriculum does not build in adequate time for faculty to sufficiently acquaint themselves with the content: each spring discipline groups assemble their courses for the next year and submit them about four weeks into the term, and the full curriculum is made available for review by the faculty less than one month before registration. For a curriculum with a turnover of about 50% per year, that represents a very short timespan for faculty to absorb the new information. Students face a similar dilemma with the new curriculum and our presentation of the curriculum, which is primarily done using discipline groupings, serves to reinforce traditional discipline boundaries. Metrics of the curriculum website show that most searches (>90%) of its content are done via discipline group classifications, meaning the interdisciplinary work we encourage, and the broad liberal education we require, is not shaping how students interact with the curriculum itself.

A number of potential refinements to address the above have been discussed in CPC and elsewhere, including developing a more robust tagging system that will make the content across the curriculum more visible to students and advisors alike. Along similar lines, we also plan to implement a novel faculty "self-tagging" scheme, much like the keyword search feature in many academic journals. The initial impetus for this was to make more effective use of faculty interests and expertise in the assignment of plan committees, but the obvious extension into curriculum presentation make this a promising avenue for students to understand the myriad of connections they can make across discipline groups. Finally, it has also been suggested that the curriculum be presented to faculty as part of a faculty meeting, giving space for faculty to ask questions of each other regarding the many connections across disciplines that would be useful in their advising but which remain obscured by our current presentation.

We are currently addressing another issue related to curriculum visibility. As mentioned earlier, individual and group tutorials make up a significant portion of the total curriculum, with 40-60 offered each term. But these are often arranged directly between faculty and students and not publicized in any systematic way (or any way at all in many cases). The result is that students who might benefit from certain opportunities miss them simply because we do not make it a priority to disseminate the relevant information. As such, tutorials have become known internally as "the hidden curriculum" and represent missed opportunities on several levels: current students are unable to benefit from a wealth of rich content, and we as an institution say nothing of this important aspect of the Bennington curriculum to prospective students and other external audiences. Primarily through the work of APC, we have modified the tutorial application process that will, among other things, enhance the visibility of these significant learning opportunities. Related reforms of our tutorial process the impact faculty workload are discussed in Standard Six.

Related to this, there has also been an awareness that our curriculum needs to bring in a greater diversity of perspectives and that the diversity that is already there needs to be more visible, both to other students and to faculty advisors. Discussions around these issues took place at CSC, as well as APC, and recent Needs Assessment, for instance, highlighted the need for Critical Race Studies and a great focus on Latin America, among other needs.

An additional issue is that due to the constantly evolving nature of our curriculum, some of the diversity of perspectives and voices on a syllabus, for instance, is not always immediately clear to students. For instance, the college has many courses that discuss race, though, until recently, only a few have actually had race in their course titles. As part of the wider tagging initiatives, CPC is proposing in 2019-20 to look more critically at how diversity is represented in the curriculum.

Beyond this, the College has drafted a proposal that would provide two faculty members time to work with Delia Saenz, CPC and Student Educational Policies Committee (SEPC) to conduct a more rigorous, in-depth review of syllabi. This would ultimately result in a clear articulation of College-wide goals for student learning around diversity and inclusion; a content analysis and indexing of current course offerings so as to identify strengths and areas in need of development; and an elucidation of a conceptual frame that will specify key parameters for defining relevant course topics, primary and secondary source materials, and other resources (e.g., use of guest speakers/faculty, synergistic external training opportunities) that can be utilized to achieve diversity across the curriculum.

Field Work Term and Career Development

Learning through work has a powerful impact on students' education and long-term success. As we explained previously, it is that founding premise that led to the integration of Field Work Term in the Bennington education since the College's beginnings. We are cognizant, however, of the need to adapt our Field Work Term practices to meet shifting student needs, financial and otherwise. On average, less than half of individual student need is met through Field Work Term grants, and student surveys point to the issue of financing field work as a key source of stress. In response, the Field Work Term Office has worked diligently to seek out and promote fully-funded field work opportunities, including the Lucille Lortel Foundation Fellowship in Theatre, the expansion of the Newman Fellowship in Global Public Action, and the launch of the Arts and Technology Fellowship. Concurrently, we are working to increase the availability of paid opportunities for Field Work Term, particularly in the STEM fields, the demand for which is rapidly increasing. The College has named funding for field work one of the top priorities of its current campaign and, based on the success of a need-based stipend model implemented in 2019, the College is committed to awarding stipends of $500 in support of Field Work Term experiences for high-need students who have not secured funded opportunities.

Another strategy for promoting equity of opportunity has been to leverage contact with the 74% of students engaged in jobs on campus each year. Last year, Campus Employment was folded under the umbrella of Work-Integrated Learning in response to research indicating a strong correlation between access to campus work and College retention. We have had notable success in this area, including a 12% increase in student access to work, a 100% success rate with placing and tracking first years in jobs, an overhaul of administrative systems and hiring processes to support equity and efficiency, and an incorporation of reflective and evaluative practices similar to Field Work Term for all students holding campus jobs. This work has gained the College national recognition and invitations from more than ten schools to further develop this work.

In addition, in partnership with faculty member Debbie Warnock, Career Development staff are actively collaborating with the Field Work Term Office and FLoW student leaders (i.e., those who are first-generation or from either low-income or working class backgrounds) to improve access to career networks among affinity groups for first-generation, international, and women

in STEM fields. Proposed for pilot launch in the Spring of 2020, the Bennington College Alumni Mentor Program is a direct response to student requests for technologically-driven, self-guided opportunities to connect with mentors in their disciplines and industries. The forthcoming mentor program represents a close partnership between the offices of Field Work Term and Career Development, Alumni Relations, and Institutional Advancement. The Alumni Mentor Program is designed to grow through user-driven content offered on PeopleGrove, a widely used platform. This will allow alumni and current student users to pose or respond to a career-oriented question, share knowledge of a particular industry, or forge a one-on-one mentoring match. Through informational interviews and job shadows, we hope that students will engage in authentic, exploratory conversations about the realities, challenges, and rewards of about possible career paths—and foster opportunities for those historically afforded the least access to key social networks.

In addition, Associate Director of Career Development Mike Gonzales has recently launched a course that aims to leverage the skills students develop through their Field Work Term experiences to life after graduation. The course, entitled *Life Design: Work Beyond Bennington*, wrapped up its pilot run with strong student reviews. Grounded in a rich conceptual framework about the history and evolution of work in the US, the course also offers a space for advice and dialogue about navigating early-stage career decisions. Given the dynamically changing environment of the world of work, the course provides a space to encourage students to critically reflect on how their scholarly pursuits at Bennington can enhance their professional pursuits and career trajectory.

The Academic Program: Projections

- Bennington will continue to place student-centered education at the core of its educational structures, focusing on the central pillar of our *Ten-Year Goals*, "The Integration of the Student Experience." To do so we will:
- Continue to layer in the Capacities in all aspects of student work and Plans, including advising, narrative evaluations, Plan Assessment Forms, Field Work Term evaluations, and the co-curricular work, to accentuate and reinforce the more holistic view of the progressive education we offer;
- Continue to refine the structure of First-Year Forum to prepare students to succeed at Bennington, such as self-direction, assertiveness, and resiliency, and to acquaint them with the language of the Capacities;
- Increase support for faculty advising by recognizing that it is a time-intensive process and needs to be acknowledged as such for purposes of faculty evaluation;
- Enhance financial access to field work opportunities and career networks;
- Increase academic resonance connections between in-class and field-based learning by developing fall and spring term courses that leverage FWT learning;.
- Determine purposeful FWT reflection projects and assessment standards that deepen learning and promote workplace readiness;
- Develop structures that support and encourage interdisciplinary work and that deemphasize traditional discipline boundaries, especially with respect to how students propose, design and execute their Plans and advanced work;

- More effectively align faculty interests and expertise with student Plan Committees by implementing a "self-tagging" scheme for faculty that will also serve to clarify curricular connections;

- Raise the visibility of individual and group tutorials in the curriculum;

- Review the curriculum to better understand the diversity of perspectives currently in Bennington courses, while making that diversity more visible to students and faculty and simultaneously exploring ways to further expand the diversity of perspectives in the curriculum;

- Assess the effectiveness of recent changes to the scope and prompts for the Senior Reflection Essay;

Graduate Programs: Description

As mentioned at the outset of this Standard, Bennington has a number of graduate programs, some of them long-standing and one of which, the MFA in Public Action, has been recently implemented. Since the previous self-study in 2009 we have also discontinued two graduate programs, the Masters of Arts in Teaching a Second Language in 2015 and the Masters in Arts in Teaching in 2013. In both cases, the determining factor was dwindling enrollments; the programs were phased out, with admitted students given time to complete their degrees after new applications were no longer being accepted.

MFA in Writing

Founded in January of 1994, the Bennington Writing Seminars is a two-year graduate writing program offering the Master of Fine Arts degree in the areas of fiction, nonfiction and poetry. As a low-residency program, students attend two ten-day residencies on campus in January and June each year, and engage in a five-month-long period of correspondence with a faculty mentor each term. Consistently ranked as one of the top low-residency MFA programs in the country, the program has a long track record of student achievement and publication. We employ approximately 25 faculty members across the genres, and currently enroll around 100 students, with a twice-annual graduating class of 25 to 30 students.

Since its inception, the Bennington Writing Seminars have emphasized our students' relationship to reading and scholarship as the basis for their own creative growth and achievement as writers. Every year sees numerous student works finding their way into print, and our alumni have published hundreds of critically acclaimed books over the past twenty-five years. Students produce original creative work while reading, studying, and writing critically about contemporary and canonical texts. Recently, the faculty agreed to place greater emphasis on the importance of the critical writing requirement, and will offer more in-depth instruction in this area. Our faculty members are known nationally and internationally, and a handful has remained with the program since its early years. In the past two years, we have hired nine new faculty to meet our goal of diversifying the faculty demographic and esthetic range. Our alumni remain loyal to our program and to the college, and are eager to engage through social media, continuing education, and networking opportunities.

MFA in Dance

Bennington's Master of Fine Arts in Dance Program is designed to give accomplished artists the time, space, and focus to develop new work. It is a two-year commitment and is largely self-directed; candidates work closely with faculty to design plans that best suit their individual strengths, interests, goals and creative process. Over the past decade, the Program has been able to accept one or two new candidates per year.

For this highly selective program, MFA candidates are expected to have substantial professional experience, well beyond undergraduate studies. The program provides multiple opportunities for creating new work and encourages everyone to participate in an ongoing community dialogue that is fundamental to advancing one's artistic practice. In a supportive and challenging environment, candidates collaborate with expert faculty members and other students, including undergraduates, to deepen their artistic passions and hone their production and technical skills. The program actively encourages collaborative and cross-disciplinary ventures.

Most MFA candidates enter as Teaching Fellows and develop their teaching in a range of courses for all levels of undergraduates. The nature and focus of these courses are collaboratively determined with the dance faculty and there is ongoing dialogue regarding pedagogy, undergraduate student issues, expectations and assessments. They also work to develop organizational and administrative skills applicable to a variety of practical contexts. As integral members of the overall Dance program, candidates are expected to contribute to all aspects, participate in weekly Program meetings, attend workshops and performances, etc. MFA graduates who have gone on to academic positions (as program directors, chairs, faculty) or positions in professional venues (directors, management staff) have mentioned their appreciation of the organizational and administrative skills they witnessed and gained while working as part of the Dance Program.

Each term the MFA candidate must complete a minimum 16-credit schedule, which includes both research work in dance and other coursework. As a core requirement, candidates must create and perform new work during each of the four terms as part of the course "Graduate Research in Dance". This 6-credit course is the basis of the individual's studies. As part of this, candidates are expected to attend Dance Workshop, a forum including faculty and students of all levels; MFA candidates are a vital part of this group.

The Center for the Advancement of Public Action (CAPA) recently initiated a similar MFA, described immediately below. As sister programs, the MFA in Dance and the MFA in Public Action work together to identify opportunities for creative exchange, collaboration, and discovery.

MFA in Public Action

In the fall of 2018 the College, through its Center for the Advancement of Public Action, launched a Master of Fine Arts in Public Action program. As part of the review process for realizing this program, various groups of faculty were consulted regarding its proposed goals, structures and outcomes, as were relevant faculty committees, including APC and CPC. Moreover, we did extensive research concerning the viability of such a program and the unique role it would serve in the broader context of socially and civically engaged art.

This highly selective graduate degree program is designed to give accomplished artists working as agents of social change the time, space, and focus to conduct research and develop new work. MFA candidates are expected to have substantial professional experience in socially or civically engaged public art or related areas. We recognize the achievements of artists who have had significant careers and encourage them to apply in order to continue their creative research.

The MFA in Public Action is a two-year program, wherein each candidate completes 16 credits of coursework each term, comprised of 6 credits in the course Graduate Research in Public Action, 4 credits in the course Pedagogy of Public Action, 2 credits in the Graduate Assistantship, and then through a combination of tutorials (2-4 credits each). Each candidate teaches the equivalent of one 4 credit course for undergraduates each term they are enrolled.

The program celebrates accomplished artists and provides a space for further development of their work while being in dialogue with peers and faculty about the challenges and opportunities for artists working in socially engaged artistic practices today. This work carries over into the undergraduate program with an array of courses offered each term by the candidates, significantly expanding the curriculum in art and public action at the college. In addition, each candidate brings their expansive network of creative peers beyond the Bennington College campus to bear on their work as MFA candidates. These voices manifest in our tutorials and their research—and at many times during the year peers have joined us virtually to weigh-in on particular subjects of research and work. This ongoing peer engagement—encouraged by the program as part of their professional research and practice—has been enormously rich and expansive for the candidates and the further development of their work.

The MFA in Public Action is a sister program to Bennington's MFA in Dance and we have begun to work together to identify opportunities for collaboration while leveraging the strength of both programs and the extraordinary candidates they attract.

Post Baccalaureate Program

Bennington's Post Baccalaureate Program for medical school preparation remains largely unchanged since the 2009 self-study. It is a one-year program that accepts students with no science backgrounds, usually between 8-10 each year, and provides them with the scientific background required for admission to medical or veterinary schools. With the exception of the summer session, in which the post baccalaureate students are the only students enrolled in their courses, they are otherwise integrated into our regular science courses, taking them alongside undergraduates. Successful completion of the program is contingent upon the completion of at least eight courses in the physical and biological sciences, most of which have laboratory components. Research and lab work are fully integrated into these programs, as they are in the science curriculum more generally, so students develop a deep appreciation of the scientific process rather than simply acquiring a body of knowledge relevant to future studies in medicine.

Graduate Programs: Appraisal

MFA in Writing

When the program was founded in 1994, there were only three low-residency MFA programs in the nation; now there are over seventy. The competition to recruit and retain the best students

has increased exponentially while the pool of students applying to graduate writing programs has remained the same, or by some reports, has begun to shrink. More and more residential MFA programs have moved toward a fully-funded model. With the shrinking of humanities programs at colleges and universities, we remain concerned about declining application numbers of qualified students in an educational marketplace that has reached levels of saturation. The low-residency format has proven an effective model for educating writers and helping them reach their goals, but the correspondence model feels less fresh than it once did in an environment in which students expect and seek ways of engaging across different digital media platforms. Students also seek opportunities for greater professional development and teaching experience—a piece that has proven difficult for many low-residency graduate writing programs.

In order to meet some of the challenges, we have instituted a number of changes, some of which are established, and some of which are in earlier stages of development.

- *Diversification of faculty and student body.* It is our goal to inform faculty hiring decisions with our goal of creating a more broadly diverse literary landscape. During the past two years, we have hired nine new faculty who have helped us meet that goal. We have also begun working with a number of literary organizations that work with underserved populations, and have offered scholarship awards to writers affiliated with those organizations. We currently partner with the PEN Emerging Voices Fellowship Program, and we have begun discussions with Cantomundo, Kundiman and Lambda Literary.

- *Teaching opportunities and professional development for students.* In 2018, we created the Residential Teaching Fellowship. This competitively-awarded fellowship is offered each term, and brings one of our graduate students to campus for a semester to assist one of our college literature faculty members in the classroom. In exchange for their work, the teaching fellow receives full tuition remission and room and board on campus. The teaching fellow leads discussions, assists with grading, holds office hours and guest teaches in a college classroom, and so gains teaching experience at the college level.

- *Digital media as teaching tool.* We are currently exploring ways in which we can use digital technology to provide instruction for our students when they are not on campus. In addition to developing an archive of the recorded lectures and readings, we plan to develop a series of video lectures which will provide instruction in a variety of areas, from craft concerns to critical writing.

- *Alumni engagement and fundraising.* One of our program's great strengths is its positive relationship to our alumni, many of whom have made significant financial contributions to the Bennington Writing Seminars. We recently began offering workshops for our alumni during the summer MFA residency on campus, and those have proven a useful tool for structured engagement with alumni. We are now considering offering workshops specifically for alumni in other locations where we have a concentration of BWS alumni: Los Angeles, the Bay Area, New York City. We have also created an Alumni Council which acts as an advisory board to the BWS administration, and to act as quasi ambassadors for the program.

- *Communications and outreach strategy.* A new communications strategy has proven successful for both engaging alumni and as a recruitment tool for prospective students. Through social media channels, we provide information about student publications and prizes, and we publicize various opportunities of interest to our students. This active engagement with social media has created a greater sense of the larger community of students and alumni, and has created greater awareness of our program generally.

MFA in Dance

Peers in the professional field and graduates from previous years talk of the strength of the Program structure that is uniquely geared to what candidates actually need. The program challenges them to better articulate their thoughts, redefine their work, and promote it. Candidates immerse themselves in not only the creative development of their work but also in production, somatic awareness, interdisciplinary studies, administrative experience, and their teaching. Graduates have been engaged in a wide range of opportunities: professional venues, here and internationally; academic positions; immersive theaters; and performance projects of their own or that of others.

MFA in Public Action

With the first cohort of admitted MFA candidates still in the program, it is too early to provide an overall appraisal of this program. That said, it enrolled two extraordinarily accomplished artists in each of its first two years. As part of the implementation of the program, we outlined several assessment mechanisms that we will undertake to evaluate the effectiveness of our structures.

Post Baccalaureate Program

A review of the program was conducted in 2016-17 and was very positive. External reviewers provided several specific recommendations on how we might increase our applicant pool to stabilize of enrollment numbers which have historically fluctuated quite a bit and continue to do so. The suggestions primarily focus on how we market the program, but also include other ways we can support students in the program and how we work with them during the medical school application process. We have already implemented some of these ideas and, with the hiring of a new Program Director in 2018 (longtime director Janet Foley intends to retire in 2020), we intend to continue building the program with a goal of having 12-14 students enrolled annually.

Graduate Programs: Projection

- MFA in Public Action intends to continue to enroll up to two candidates each year, while continuing to refine and improve the program. Implement the assessment tools specified as part of the review process the program underwent.

- Explore the viability of a new low-residency version (summer and winter intensives on campus with distance learning in-between) of the MFA in Public Action.

- Continue to improve the marketing of the post baccalaureate program to increase and stabilize enrollments.

Assuring Academic Quality: Description

To maintain the high academic standards our faculty have historically held, we currently employ four distinct modes of internal and external review at different levels: individual courses are proposed and coordinated in the discipline groups and then vetted by the Curriculum Planning Committee; the quality of teaching is one of the key criteria for faculty reviews; discipline groups are reviewed on a ten-year cycle; and, at the individual student level, Plan committees monitor progress and provide feedback for strengthening their work. The role of each of these is discussed briefly below.

As already explained, Bennington's is an open and responsive curriculum; assembled by the Curriculum Planning Committee (CPC), the content is driven primarily by faculty interests. This body does not micromanage the content of faculty courses but, rather, it examines the curriculum prior to registration to ensure that it reflects the mission of the college and makes good use of faculty resources. To provide a predictable structure for students, each discipline group works together to make sure that there are adequate entry points and a variety of advanced courses to satisfy student needs in each term.This ensures that students will not face long delays before beginning introductory courses in their chosen fields and that they will have access to necessary advanced courses, both of which are crucial factors for the timely completion of their Plans and graduation. In fields for which we have only a single faculty member, those in closely aligned fields work together to provide suitable breadth and depth for students by leveraging theoretical or practical commonalities. In this way students at all levels have access to suitable foundational courses as well as advanced offerings that serve to develop the depth of their understanding in fields relevant to their Plans and advanced work.

The Curriculum Planning Committee is primarily a forward-looking body; it does not routinely get anything more than anecdotal information (except for enrollment data) about the relative success of courses offered in terms immediately prior. That information is collected by the Faculty Performance Review Committee (FPRC) and is used, along with other information, in the review of faculty. Student evaluations, course syllabi, reports from classroom visits, and statements on pedagogy are used by the FPRC to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of each faculty member under review, to provide feedback and, when appropriate, recommendations concerning how teaching can be improved.

Prior to our 2009 accreditation report, we initiated a series of periodic discipline group reviews specifically to provide a mechanism for faculty in each area to deeply reflect on their practices and to get feedback from external sources about the scope, design, and effectiveness of our undergraduate program as implemented by the discipline groups. As of this writing, we are in the final such review and will begin a second round in Fall 2019. Each of these area reviews lasts more than a year and involves the preparation of a self-study report, meetings with various internal constituencies, and visits from external reviewers. We are especially focused on the structures and strategies of our teaching, and the quality of our assessment of student work is centrally situated in these studies. Thus the self-study reports highlight the work of students, soliciting the input of alumni concerning their experience at Bennington and how it prepared them for professional work after graduation. External reviewers visit the campus, meet with students, faculty, and staff to gauge the effectiveness of the discipline group, as well as the level and appropriateness of the College's support of its faculty in all facets of their work. Oftentimes the reviews yield highly specific recommendations and action plans. For example, the Social Science group reconsidered how they approach curriculum questions and guide student work, adopting the name "Society, Culture and Thought" to more effectively convey the nature of their work; external reviewers made a compelling case for hiring an additional math faculty during that review, which we did, and; the review of Languages included recommendations that their introductory level courses be more suitably accommodated in our course structure, a task CPC addressed during a revision of our course scheduling grid.

Finally, because the heart of a Bennington education is the Plan process, we are cognizant of the need to provide students adequate feedback as they progress through their academic plans, and

to ensure that student work in the context of their Plans has the requisite depth and sophistication. To that end, we explicitly charge Plan Committees with providing students with the necessary feedback to: continually develop their skills with respect to the Capacities; achieve the requisite breadth that will inform their work with multiple and disparate viewpoints; achieve sophistication and depth in their investigation of the central question or theme as described in their Plan Essay; ensure that they have or are developing competent communication skills, especially with respect to their writing. Plan Committees are the ultimate arbiters on whether satisfactory progress is being made in a given student's Plan. At each Plan Meeting, committees review the courses students have taken and make recommendations for future terms based on gaps in their studies and with particular attention to courses that may be outside a student's direct interest but might be particularly transformative. They take into account narrative evaluations, especially in courses that are key to a student's plan, the quality of the plan essay, and their proficiency and growth in the Capacities. Plan Committees will note the trajectory of student work as it specifically relates to the focus of their plans, ensuring that their questions evolve in terms of their sophistication and subtlety, and that they show increasing adeptness in using the analytical tools to address those questions. Finally, faculty on Plan Committees pay particular attention to any patterns that emerge in student evaluations, especially in regard to communication skills, and use that to inform their recommendations to the student.

Assuring Academic Quality: Appraisal
CPC was initially formed with the rather limited charge of assembling the curriculum each term; the need for that restricted focus arose from the time- and labor-intensive processes used at the time. With the implementation of a variety of technologies, especially the WordPress platform adopted in 2014, this task is much stream-lined and gives the committee more time to consider the larger, institutional view of the curriculum. Thus its charge now includes the vetting of courses and more active curricular planning. That said, its composition, because it is a representative body for the various discipline groups, sometimes gets in the way of adopting an institutional perspective. Faculty are understandably loathe to reject course proposals from colleagues and may not feel they have the expertise to meaningfully weigh in on course proposals from different areas. The committee also spends considerable time on the mechanics of curriculum production, making it a challenge to have sustained discussions on curriculum design or direction. To make better use of committee time, and to provide space for curriculum planning that explicitly takes an institutional perspective, we are considering reorganizing CPC. This will require the development and implementation of additional supports for faculty to participate directly in curriculum production, as well as the delegation to certain aspects of that process to academic support staff.

The faculty review process, described in greater detail in Standard Six, remains essentially unchanged since our *Ten-Year Report*. It is worth emphasizing at this point, however, the critical role FPRC plays in assuring academic quality: the committee review a wealth of information concerning the quality of teaching and carefully consider each faculty member's approach in the classroom. It also reviews the quality of advising, an aspect of faculty work that we see as directly connected to teaching. The diligence and care with which this faculty-elected committee executes its work is widely respected by the community and is seen as crucial for the long-term health of the College.

With respect to reviewing the discipline groups, as mentioned previously we are presently completing the first round of these studies. Although they require considerable time and energy

(Program Review Guidelines are linked here) on the part of faculty, these reviews have proven to be useful mechanisms for us to reflect on our practices and their effectiveness (a library of self-study reports and external reviews is in the Digital Workspace). In recognition of the time required on the part of the faculty coordinator for each review, we have recently implemented a modest stipend that goes along with the role. In addition, the previously mentioned meta-review of academic structures is underway. Preliminary work of a task force and a retreat dedicated to this work has been illuminating: while the desire to reorganize the discipline groups is not widely shared, there is an emerging consensus that our discipline group structures have created obstacles to interdisciplinary student work, particularly with respect to how discipline groups oversee advanced work. Accordingly, recommendations coming from the metareview will likely focus on how discipline groups and plan committees will work cooperatively in overseeing student work, and not on major reorganization of the discipline groups themselves.

Finally, we obviously need to assess the effectiveness of the Plan process itself in an ongoing way. To do so meaningfully, we must understand the trajectory of each student to ensure that our educational model delivers on its potential. Our lack of traditional structures, not least of which is the articulation of major requirements, gives rise to unique challenges on how we determine how any given student is progressing through their Plan. One such challenge concerns the inevitable unevenness that individual faculty bring to the plan committees; differences in priorities, expectations, and recommendations can be confusing to students and make articulation of uniform standards elusive. This was, in fact, one of the drivers for articulating the Capacities of a Bennington Education: it provides a common framework that all faculty can share about what characterizes acceptable student work. To encourage its routine use, APC recently restructured Plan Meeting Assessment Forms by prompting advisors to explicitly consider student work in the context of the Capacities; they devised paradigms for each type of plan meeting (Plan Proposal and Plan Confirmation) that directly tie student progress to the capacities in such a way that committees use a shared language.

Assuring Academic Quality: Projection
Bennington will continue to refine how it monitors and maintains the quality of its academic programs and individual student Plans. This will include:

- The structure of CPC will be reconsidered and its focus will shift to a more institutional view around curriculum planning and development;

- Discipline groups will begin a new cycle of self-studies to ensure curricula and methodologies are current and effective;

- The ongoing meta-review will recommend specific mechanism to facilitate interdisciplinary plans;

- Incorporation of the Capacities into the design and assessment of student plans will be emphasized to a greater degree;

- Questions related to work-integrated learning will be integrated into the Plan process;

- Discipline groups will begin a new cycle of self-studies to ensure curricula and methodologies are current and effective.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit: Description

Bennington College adheres to all relevant NECHE policies and practices regarding the award and transfer of academic credit. This section describes our current policies regarding the determination of credits for transfer students, prior learning, and study away. We also discuss related aspects of our academic program, such as the academic review process and policies regarding plagiarism.

Students and external audiences are informed of the required number of credit hours for graduation along with the corresponding definition in the Student Handbook and other documentation. To earn a Bachelor's Degree students must earn 128 credits in addition to:

- formulating a program of study that reflects both breadth and depth in the liberal arts;
- completing the Plan process successfully;
- successfully complete four approved Field Work term experiences.

Bennington offers one-, two-, and four-credit courses that meet for 13, 26 and 52 hours of in-class time per term. The awarding of credit for specific courses is at the discretion of the responsible faculty member and is awarded in its entirety or not all; the number of credits earned is not used as a proxy for grades. That is, a student earning only a marginal pass in a course will still accrue all of the credits for that course and they will be counted in full toward their graduation. Faculty use the criteria they specify in course syllabi to determine whether or not a student has met the minimum requirements to earn credit. The clarity, consistency, and appropriateness of each faculty member's course outcomes are reviewed by FPRC for full- and part-time faculty (Standard Six), or by the Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs for visiting faculty, instrumental instructors, and technical instructors as part of each faculty member's periodic performance review.

Transfer Credits

Bennington does not admit a large number of transfer students. Roughly 5% of each incoming class are transfer students; we require at least half of the required 128 credits for graduation be earned at Bennington, amounting to what is essentially a two-year residency requirement. The policies guiding the awarding of transfer of credit are published on our website. To briefly summarize, credit for courses is limited to those in the liberal arts; credits from college preparatory courses, and those in technical engineering, nutrition, physical education, speech or study skills are not eligible for transfer to Bennington. We do offer credit for AP courses, international baccalaureate, and other college-level courses offered at the secondary level. Transfer students must complete the Plan process to graduate, including the advanced work requirements expected of other students.

Bennington also allows students to transfer credits from study-away opportunities at foreign or domestic institutions. Students must propose and discuss such study away plans with their advisors and Plan Committees prior to approval; they also need to complete an application that requires them to discuss how studying away fits into their Plan.

Prior Learning Assessment

Beginning with the Fall 2019 entering class, we have initiated a pilot program to facilitate gap-year experiences for students who had been admitted but who deferred matriculation. The goal is to encourage in each student a reflective approach to their work over the year and to ask them to

connect their activities to the arc of their studies, having them consciously consider the role of the Capacities in that process. There are several points during the year that Bennington faculty speak to them, usually by video meetings, to get updates on their work, answer questions, and give them feedback on progress. Upon matriculation they will present their work to select faculty, staff, and each other and will earn up to four credits for their work.

Credits Awarded Off-Campus

Nearly all of the credits Bennington awards, other than transfer credits, are associated with courses taken on-campus. The notable exceptions to this are:

- Prison Education Initiative (PEI). Courses in literature, computer science, history, and other disciplines are offered (often by current Bennington faculty) at the Gray Meadow Correctional Facility in Comstock, New York; currently these do not accrue toward a Bennington degree but there are plans to implement an Associates Degree in this program. Because these courses are taught primarily by Bennington faculty, the standard and learning outcomes are consistent with courses offered on campus.

- Arava Institute. Bennington College has a School of Record agreement with the Arava Institute in Israel, making it possible for students there to obtain a Bennington College transcript. The Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs reviews the course content of Arava offerings each term, as well as credentials of Arava instructors, to ensure the compatibility between their programs and Bennington's curriculum. In addition, there are periodic site visits to the Arava campus by members of the Bennington's Provost and Deans Office.

- Burr and Burton Academy. Periodically, faculty members offer college-level courses at Burr and Burton Academy, an independent secondary school in Manchester, Vermont; these have similar content and learning outcomes as the on-campus versions.

- Low-Residency MFA in Writing. A description of this program was provided previously in this Standard. Most of the credits required for the degree are earned off-site via correspondence with MFA faculty.

Student Progress, Academic Standing, Plagiarism, and Cheating Policies

While it is the responsibility of the advisor and the Plan Committee to work with students to ensure they make satisfactory progress toward successfully completing their Plan and otherwise make progress toward graduation requirements, we have a variety of administrative mechanisms that support them in this role. In addition, we have other policies in place to support faculty in their roles as the primary guarantors of academic integrity. These are briefly outlined below.

The College publishes on its website and in the *Student Handbook* the policies and procedures surrounding student academic standing. Students can be placed on academic warning or dismissed from the College if adequate progress toward graduation is not maintained. As presented, there are quantitative and qualitative standards; the former involves earning credits at a pace that ensures graduation in ten terms, while the latter focuses on progress in the Plan process and earning a minimum number of credits in any given term. Also published is information on appeals of decisions concerning academic standing.

We also have clear policies in place that deal with incidents of plagiarism and other types of academic dishonesty and ethical issues. In a broader sense, however, we try to instill, as much as possible, a sense of ethical responsibility surrounding the issue, embedding it in the language of our community

standards. Moreover, we encourage faculty to discuss with students at the beginning of each term, what plagiarism and academic dishonesty look like in the context of their particular courses. We do this for the simple reason that there is much confusion on the part of students around just what is and isn't considered plagiarism or recognizing ethical questions in academic contexts.

When instances of academic dishonesty are suspected, faculty discuss the issue directly with students to determine whether or not an ethical violation has actually occurred. If so, the faculty member notifies the Associate Director of Academic Services who will determine the specific consequence, usually a failing grade in the specific course, but which could also include the student being placed on academic warning or dismissed from the College. The appeals process is published in the student handbook along with the other aspects of this policy.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit: Appraisal

In a 2013 Interim Report we wrote the following: "It is interesting to note...that the entire Plan process—which demands a great deal from students and faculty and is the core of a Bennington education—exists wholly outside of the credit system. Successfully completing the Plan process is required in order to graduate from Bennington—but it is measured in terms of outcomes (as sketched above), not in terms of credits. The same is true for the Field Work Term, another essential component of the education provided here. So why is it that only our courses adhere to the conventional credit system?" (6).

Along with most of higher education, Bennington uses the credit hour as the unit for quantifying the relative workload each course entails. We adhere to relevant federal regulations that define the credit-hour but are aware of the limitations of this approach—credit hours are a poor measure for student effort, the extent of their learning, or even how much time is devoted to their courses. As such, we have begun to consider alternative approaches, but this work has barely started and we will be using the credit hour for the foreseeable future.

As of this writing, our Prior Learning Assessment program is concluding its first cycle. At the beginning of the next academic year each student who participated will present on their work and a new group of students will begin the process. We will closely monitor this group to determine how such engagement during the gap year impacts student success, although with the small numbers of students involved we will not overinterpret any trends we see. Nevertheless, qualitative feedback from these students will be valuable as we consider any expansion of this program.

The value of the Prison Education Initiative was recently acknowledged by a grant from the National Science Foundation to support computer science education for incarcerated individuals. This work builds on the interest of several faculty and we have held several related conferences on campus dealing with issues related to Incarceration and are cultivating considerable student interest in the topic through CAPA.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit: Projection

- We will continue to explore the ways in which we award academic credit in order to make sure such processes provide the freedom and flexibility needed for a Bennington education.

STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM
(SUMMARY - DEGREE-SEEKING ENROLLMENT AND DEGREES)

Fall Enrollment* by location and modality, as of Census Date

Degree Level / Location & Modality	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Clinical Doctorates	Professional Doctorates	M.D., J.D., DDS	Ph.D.	Total Degree-Seeking
Main Campus FT	0	696	4	0	0	0	0	700
Main Campus PT	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	24
Other Principal Campus FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Principal Campus PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branch Campuses FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branch Campuses PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Locations FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Locations PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overseas Locations FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overseas Locations PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distance Education FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distance Education PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Correspondence FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Correspondence PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low-Residency FT	0	0	72	0	0	0	0	72
Low-Residency PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unduplicated Headcount Total	0	720	76	0	0	0	0	796
Total FTE	0.00	704.00	76.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	780.00
Enter FTE definition:		FT + (1/3 PT)	FT + (1/3 PT)					
Degrees Awarded, Most Recent Year		152	34					186

Notes:
1. Enrollment numbers should include all students in the named categories, including students in continuing education and students enrolled through any contractual relationship.

2. Each student should be recorded in only one category, e.g., students enrolled in low-residency programs housed on the main campus should be recorded only in the category "low-residency programs."

3. Please refer to form 3.2, "Locations and Modalities," for definitions of locations and instructional modalities.

* For programs not taught in the fall, report an analogous term's enrollment as of its Census Date.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Prison Education Initiative (PEI) students are counted as main campus.

STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM
(SUMMARY - NON-DEGREE SEEKING ENROLLMENT AND AWARDS)

Fall Enrollment* by location and modality, as of Census Date

Degree Level / Location & Modality	Title IV-Eligible Certificates: Students Seeking Certificates	Non-Matriculated Students	Visiting Students	Total Non-Degree-Seeking	Total Degree-Seeking (from previous page)	Grand Total
Main Campus FT	0	8	0	8	700	708
Main Campus PT	0	7	0	7	24	31
Other Principal Campus FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Principal Campus PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branch Campuses FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branch Campuses PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Locations FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Locations PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overseas Locations FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overseas Locations PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distance Education FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distance Education PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Correspondence FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Correspondence PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low-Residency FT	0	0	0	0	72	72
Low-Residency PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unduplicated Headcount Total	0	15	0	15	780	795
Total FTE	0.00	10.33	0.00	10	780.00	790.33
Enter FTE definition:		FT + (1/3 PT)				
Degrees Awarded, Most Recent Year	0					

Notes:

1. Enrollment numbers should include all students in the named categories, including students in continuing education and students enrolled through any contractual relationship.

2. Each student should be recorded in only one category, e.g., students enrolled in low-residency programs housed on the main campus should be recorded only in the category "low-residency programs."

3. Please refer to form 3.2, "Locations and Modalities," for definitions of locations and instructional modalities.

* For programs not taught in the fall, report an analogous term's enrollment as of its Census Date.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM (HEADCOUNT BY **UNDERGRADUATE** MAJOR)

For Fall Term, as of Census Date

	Number of Credits*	3 Years Prior (Fall 2015)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2016)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2017)	Current Year (FY 2019)	Next Year Forward (Goal) (Fall 2019)
Certificate						
Total		0	0	0	0	0
Associate						
Undeclared						
Total		0	0	0	0	0
Baccalaureate						
BA Degree	128	683	701	742	720	715
Undeclared						
Total		683	701	742	720	715
Total Undergraduate		683	701	742	720	715

* Enter here the number of credits students must complete in order to earn the credential (e.g., 69 credits in an A.S. in Nursing)

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Bennington has no formal majors; all students counted under single Bachelor of Arts degree. Prison Education Initiative students are included as baccalaureate degree-seeking, though do not ultimately earn the degree.

STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM
(HEADCOUNT BY **GRADUATE** MAJOR)

For Fall Term, as of Census Date

	Number of Credits*	3 Years Prior (Fall 2015)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2016)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2017)	Current Year (FY 2019)	Next Year Forward (Goal) (Fall 2019)
Master's						
MFA in Writing	64	83	79	73	72	90
MFA in Dance	64	2	3	3	2	4
MFA in Public Action	64	–	–	–	2	4
Total		85	82	76	76	98
Doctorate						
Total		0	0	0	0	0
First Professional						
Total		0	0	0	0	0
Other; Specify						
Total		0	0	0	0	0
Total Graduate		85	82	76	76	98

* Enter here the number of credits students must complete in order to earn the credential (e.g., 36 credits in an M.B.A.)

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM
(CREDIT HOURS GENERATED AND INFORMATION LITERACY)

Credit Hours Generated By Department or Comparable Academic Unit

	3 Years Prior (Fall 2015)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2016)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2017)	Current Year (FY 2019)	Next Year Forward (Goal) (Fall 2019)
Undergraduate					
Advancement of Public Action	1,291	1,577	1,589	1,323	1,400
Dance	817	1,008	975	882	900
Drama	1,811	1,801	1,946	1,939	1,900
Environment	138	4	328	104	100
Languages	1,209	1,257	1,410	1,523	1,500
Literature	2,730	2,452	2,479	2,206	2,200
Music	2,394	2,477	2,580	2,152	2,100
Science and Mathematics	2,111	2,205	2,254	2,164	2,100
Society, Culture, and Thought	4,084	3,718	3,740	4,007	4,000
Visual Arts	4,449	4,903	4,947	5,136	5,000
Total	21,034	21,402	22,248	21,436	21,200

	3 Years Prior (Fall 2015)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2016)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2017)	Current Year (FY 2019)	Next Year Forward (Goal) (Fall 2019)
Graduate					
MFA in Writing (Fiction)	1,424	1,280	1,168	1,216	1,400
MFA in Writing (Nonfiction)	752	816	800	848	950
MFA in Writing (Poetry)	528	448	448	464	500
MFA in Dance	50	60	61	40	40
MFA in Public Action	–	–	–	64	80
Total	2,754	2,604	2,477	2,632	2,970

Information Literacy Sessions

Main Campus

Sessions embedded in a class	23	31	20	28	30
Free-standing sessions	–	–	–	–	–

Branch/other locations

Sessions embedded in a class	–	–	–	–	–
Free-standing sessions	–	–	–	–	–
Online sessions	–	–	–	–	–

URL of Information Literacy Reports:

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

STANDARD FIVE: STUDENTS

A Bennington education—and Bennington College itself—holds several principles in creative tension: freedom and responsibility, individuality and community, independence and collaboration, reflection and action, rigor and flexibility. Bennington aims to create for our students a culture of excellence and resilience guided by an impulse toward meaning and truth. We seek students who are curious, creative, reflective, able to assume responsibility for their education, and oriented towards active community participation and self-governance. As our commencement statement asserts, "We believe that these educational goals are best served by demanding of our students active participation in the planning of their own programs, and in the regulation of their own lives on campus." Commensurate with that philosophy, we strive to foster an environment that supports students holistically, reinforcing the fundamental connections between and among academics, and their residential and social lives.

Admissions: Description

Bennington College seeks to enroll creative, intellectually curious students who have been engaged contributors in their community. As stated in the *Ten-Year Goals*, the College aspires to build a talented community of students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse perspectives who will benefit from and contribute to the academic and social fabric of the Bennington community. Bennington draws applicants from nearly all 50 states and from over 100 countries. The College had an average annual enrollment of 714 undergraduates for 2018-2019 (728 in Fall 2018, and 699 in Spring 2019) and approximately 100 graduate and post baccalaureate students.

Bennington's admission and outreach recruitment efforts employ many of the industry-standard practices and tools. Like many colleges, Bennington relies on the purchase of student names from the College Board for a large portion of inquiries, but travel by Admissions staff members, self-initiated inquiries, and recommendations from alumni, high school counselors, and other influencers are important sources of interest in the College. The College receives about 10,000 inquiries each year with approximately 35-40% searched from the College Board, 20-25% from admission travel, 20-25% from the Common Application, and the remainder coming primarily from student initiated inquiries and miscellaneous sources. The Admissions staff communicates with prospective students during their college search process through multiple channels, from email, print materials, and web pages to face-to-face meetings at school visits, interviews, and admission events hosted both in and outside of the United States. Over 1,200 prospective students each year visit Bennington on personalized campus visits and during several campus open-house days.

Bennington is test optional and eliminated its application fee for first-year students in an effort to increase access for students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. The College provides students with two application options: the Common Application or Bennington's Dimensional Application. Applicants who choose to submit the Common Application (which includes high school transcripts and letters of recommendation) will also submit several supplemental essays and are invited to submit supplemental materials (art work, writing, videos, etc.) that allow students to highlight specific talents or interests. While the majority of applicants choose to submit a Common Application, the Dimensional Application allows an applicant to choose the materials and format that best represents the students work and preparedness to be successful

at Bennington. This option is aligned with the College's pedagogical approach to self-directed learning and engages the applicant in several Bennington values: creativity, self-reflection, and self-curation.

The Bennington Admissions staff adheres to high standards of integrity in its practices and processes as dictated by the Code of Ethics and Professional Practices established by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), of which the College is a member. Admissions staff members have participated in professional development opportunities provided by NACAC, the College Board, and other organizations to ensure that the Bennington Admissions Office is engaged with the profession and current on best practices and approaches to serve students.

The Admissions staff practices a holistic admission approach that considers all aspects of an applicant's academic record and non-academic accomplishments and circumstances. The Admissions committee looks for academic preparedness, intellectual curiosity, writing ability, creativity, engagement and involvement in an applicant's many communities, concern for others, and diverse perspectives that a student may add to the campus community based on their background or socioeconomic status.

When applicants disclose learning differences or other circumstances that may indicate additional need for support in college, Admission staff members will note relevant information which is used for informational purposes. These notes of interest for student services are shared with appropriate staff (see below in Standard Five as well as Standard Six) to assist enrolled students in the transition to Bennington. This process is one starting point among many other entry points for enrolling students to connect with Bennington staff and faculty to ensure a successful academic career at the College.

Bennington offers both need-based and merit-based aid to students, awarding over 90% of students with some form of aid. Approximately $24 million of institutional scholarships were awarded to students in the 2018-2019 academic year. Bennington practices a need-aware admission and financial aid policy given its reliance on tuition revenue for a significant portion of the budget. The use of merit-based scholarships assists the College in attracting applicants and enrolling talented students.

A dedicated financial aid staff works closely with prospective and current students to assist them in the financial aid process. The financial aid staff are stewards of the College's resources and champions for students while ensuring that the College complies with all federal regulations in the assessment, calculation, and disbursement of aid.

The financial aid award letter was redesigned to offer better transparency of costs and to clarify the anticipated bill for the student and family. The net financial aid, specifically the student loan amount, after origination fee, is subtracted from the sum of billable costs to show the actual anticipated bill amount at the time of awarding. This detail is provided before a student has committed to Bennington, and long before the student has borrowed.

Vermont does not yet require the Annual Student Debt Letter, but the College has begun notification efforts for all borrowers through a secure financial aid portal of their student debt,

repayment plans, and resources to begin reviewing debt prior to graduation. The College will be voluntarily implementing the Debt Letter prior to Vermont regulations.

All borrowers are required to complete federal entrance counseling at studentloans.gov prior to a loan being originated or disbursed. Descriptions have been expanded to inform students of origination fees, interest rates, repayment options, as well as financial implications should a student withdraw during term.

The College has a 2.9% cohort default rate, indicating graduates of Bennington are informed, prepared, and honoring their commitment to repay student loans at a significantly higher rate than the national average of 11.8%.

Admissions: Appraisal

Bennington College has been able to develop a relatively robust applicant pool over the last decade despite the challenges facing small, rural, liberal arts colleges, especially in the competitive Northeast region and amidst declining demographics in several of the College's primary markets (New England and New York). Notwithstanding three years of application declines from 2013 to 2015, the College has seen applications grow from 1,058 in 2009 to 1,4742 in 2018, a 39% growth during that period. The College has long recognized the need for a larger and more diverse applicant pool to help achieve its enrollment goals—as noted explicitly in the *Ten-Year Goals*. The tremendous growth in international applications (from 185 in 2013 to 507 in 2018) has been the primary driver in the overall application pool growth.

The success of the application growth for Bennington can be attributed to a number of strategies and initiatives launched and implemented in recent years that focused on expanding the reach of the College, creating new partnerships, enhancing access for low-income students, investing in the admission operations and staff, and continued enhancements in positioning Bennington in the higher education landscape. The approach was implemented as a direct result of the College's *Ten-Year Goals*, developed in 2014-2015. One of the goals articulated was to ensure the College's financial stability, and enrollment growth was a key strategy towards that end. The list below provides a summary of key initiatives.

- International travel was expanded with the addition of a full-time international admission counselor in 2011 and a second position focused on China/Asia in 2016.
- The implementation of a best-in-class CRM software tool in 2012 allowed the Admissions office to integrate outreach, communications, and inquiry management as well as create efficiencies in application processing and support. The new tool also provided better data collection and reporting, allowing staff to benchmark admission data, monitor the recruitment funnel, and maximize outreach efforts.
- Regional admission counselors were added in California, Austin, TX, and Boston, MA, which increased Bennington's presence with students and high school counselors. (Currently, Bennington has regional admission counselors in Los Angeles, CA, and Boston, MA).
- Enrollment of students through Bennington's partnership with the United World College/Davis Scholars was expanded.

- The College established a partnership agreement with the KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) Foundation schools in 2015, making Bennington a preferred college for KIPP students throughout the U.S.

- The introduction of the Dimensional Application in 2015 provided an opportunity for Bennington to demonstrate its distinctive liberal arts approach in the application process.

- The elimination of the application fee in 2016 made the application process to Bennington College more accessible to students and families.

During the last five years, Bennington has made great strides in diversifying its student body, and is most evident in the results for students of color and international students. For the entering classes from 2008 to 2013, Bennington was enrolling 8-18% students of color (averaging about 12% per entering cohort) and 4-9% international students (averaging about 7% in each entering class). For the entering class of 2019, 21% of the incoming students are students of color, and 21% of the new students are international students. The College has also been successful in increasing access for students from a broader socioeconomic background as measured by Pell-eligible and first-generation students. Pell Grant-eligible students made up 14% to 21% of enrolling classes from 2008 to 2013 and reached 25% for the fall 2019 entering class. Bennington continues to outpace many of its peer colleges and many liberal arts colleges in the enrollment of Pell-eligible students. Since the College began tracking first-generation students in 2013, the percentage of enrolling first-generation students has steadily grown from 11% in 2013 to 21% in 2019.

Bennington's commitment to access has meant an expansion in the financial aid support for students. During the last few years, the discount rate has increased from around 45% to 56% (calculated on the basis of tuition, room & board, and fees) or approximately from 59% to 73% on tuition discount. The competition for students is keen, and Bennington's competitors include institutions with much larger endowments that may be able to offer more merit- and need-based aid and/or compete on their market position. The College continues to strive for the optimal balance between enrollment, yield, aid, revenue, and the composition of the entering class.

The 2018-2019 admission cycle represented a major transition for the Admissions operations with the arrival of a new Vice President for Enrollment, a new Director of Admissions, and six other new staff in Admissions and Financial Aid. New leadership and new staff are re-energizing the admission operations and has led to a fresh assessment of the outreach and recruitment efforts of the College. Staff implemented several new initiatives during the course of the year in an effort to sustain the College's recent momentum and to mitigate potential challenges with the staff transition. Additionally, the quantitative strategy position in Admissions was restructured and moved under the Provost and Dean's Office, improving the integration of admission, enrollment, and retention data and analysis. This new configuration will allow the Admissions office to develop recruitment strategies that are aligned with the College's enrollment goals but also closely tied to retention (see Standard Eight).

Despite the dedicated efforts of the Admissions and Financial Aid staff, the number of applications declined about 11% in 2019 to 1,324 applications, driven primarily by a sharp decline of about 18% in the number of international applications (and about 6% for domestic students). The global trend of declining enrollment from international students affected Bennington this

year. The enrollment of new international students in the U.S. declined by 9% from 2015-2016 to 2017-2018 according to the Open Doors Survey conducted by the Institute for International Education, and preliminary indications are that new international applications are continuing to decline. In addition, one of the staff transitions was the admission counselor responsible for international recruitment, and the new hire started in September, which curtailed the fall travel schedule for international recruitment.

The 2019 application result is still the third largest applicant pool in the College's history, and the overall trend over the past five years is positive. International students constituted 31% of the applicant pool, remaining a key population for Bennington. With the enrolling cohort of 180 students for the fall 2019, the College was still able to achieve goals for diversity and access as noted above.

While there has been much to celebrate in recent years, more focused work and thoughtful approaches are required for Bennington to continue to improve its market position and to attract the talented, creative students who want to be part of the Bennington community. The College has refined financial aid and enrollment models to help better manage enrollment, net revenue, and financial aid discount rates. But more work is required to continue to optimize the balance between need-based aid and merit aid, yield, revenue, and enrollment targets.

Admissions: Projection

As the enrollment team turns its attention to the class entering in the fall of 2020, the Admissions and Financial Aid team is implementing a number of strategic initiatives to increase applications, increase the number in the entering cohort to 200 to 205 first-year students, and increase net tuition revenue in the process.

The non-applicant survey that we completed in the spring of 2019 helps guide our work. In the survey data we collected from students who were engaged with Bennington but ended up not applying, we received feedback that 1) concern about cost and affordability was the primary reason students stated for not completing their application; 2) students needed more information about Bennington's curriculum or how their academic interests could be fulfilled; and 3) students expressed concerns about the length of the Bennington application.

The overall strategy is to expand the number of inquiries at the top of the admission funnel, improve our conversion of students from the prospect stage to applicants and to matriculants, engage more students to visit campus (as our data shows that yield increases significantly with a campus visit), and improve our overall yield with earlier notification and additional touches during the yield stage. Staff are implementing a number of strategies for the 2019-2020 admission cycle; a selection follows here:

- Expand the number of student test takers purchased from the College Board and the ACT by an additional 25,000 students.
- Leverage the Raise.me micro-scholarship platform, where Bennington has gained about 2,000 followers over the course of three months.

- Implement a new high school visit strategy based on a ranking system that allows us to identify high schools that send us applicants who are likely to enroll and retain—and cross-reference that data with our high school visits in the last three years.

- Create "mini open houses" available on five saturdays in the fall that feature faculty engaging with prospective students.

- Lower the barrier to applying to Bennington by reducing the number of required short answer supplemental essays from four to two.

- Enhance communications focused on cost and affordability.

- Send out admission notifications earlier for both Early Action and Regular Decision applicants.

- Develop a strategic communications plan to create integrated campaigns that build upon each other, lead prospective students through the college search, and guide them to applying to and enrolling at Bennington.

Beyond the 2019-2020 cycle, the College will need to continue to expand its recruitment territories beyond the traditional markets in the Northeast; increase "lead generation" efforts beyond the traditional approach of purchasing names to expand the recruitment funnel; seek new partnerships with community-based organizations that work with high school students; and enhance the high-school counselor outreach program. The College will also need to continue to expand international recruitment in new areas to seek applicants and enrollees who can afford more of the cost of a Bennington education—while maintaining the existing relationships such as the United World College/Davis Scholars program.

Lastly, the Admissions and Financial Aid teams will need to continue to enhance analysis of admission and financial aid data to find the balance among the key variables—enrollment, aid, net revenue, yield, and class composition goals—that allows the college to find growth in tuition revenue (as discussed in Standard 7). This will be a major focus of the office in the coming years.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences: Description

Introduction

Bennington College offers a responsive educational model that adapts to meet students' concerns as they evolve, both inside and outside the classroom. The self-governance of the residential and student experience has been a hallmark of a Bennington education since the College's founding in 1932. Complementing the educational pedagogy, we foster an environment of inquiry and dialogue in our approach to community living. As in their academic work, there is an expectation that self-reflection be a fundamental practice of the student experience. It is also the approach used by Student Life staff to stay flexible and nimble in responding to students' needs. As described in the *Fifth-Year Interim Report*, the departure of the Dean of Students provided the opportunity for a period of self-reflection and focus on how to better support the student experience. In July 2015, a new Dean of Students was hired who focused on the realignment of the student services model toward a student affairs model that positions learning outside the classroom as an intentional and integrated corollary to the academic enterprise.

The new Dean began by building capacity in the area of student life: restructuring staff roles; conducting professional development for staff who had minimal exposure to student affairs

and student development theory; and establishing identity for student life as an area with an educational pedagogy of its own. Positions were realigned to develop middle management and to bring a depth of experience of Residential Life that would support growth plans outlined in the *Ten-Year Goals*. A new position, Assistant Dean of Students, was filled in Fall 2016 to provide more support to the campus residential experience.

In summer 2017, Campus Safety, Health Services, and Psychological Services migrated to the department, allowing for a more streamlined crisis-response protocol and integrated-support model. These functional areas benefit from being members of Student Life, improving communication and coordinating response that is focused on the reduction of harm and risk over punitive discipline.

Bennington has 30 staff members who support the student experience under the umbrella of Student Life including campus safety officers, therapists, coordinators, assistant directors, directors and deans. Staff in more administrative roles typically hold Bachelor's degrees, with those in dean level and most director level positions holding advanced degrees.

The Residential and Student Experience

Bennington provides students with an intimate community experience that we believe is essential to and works in tandem with Bennington's classroom experience to develop the progression of Capacities to support a Bennington education. The place and space of our campus has been, since our founding, an important piece of a Bennington experience and, as such, the College has a residency requirement. While some exceptions exist (age; geography; accommodation), 98% of students live in campus housing—a requirement that encourages engagement with campus resources, events, and supports.

To this end, all students living in campus housing participate in a board plan offered through our dining hall which, as of Fall 2019, has been returned to our Commons building. A cafe in the lower level of Commons will provide additional food options.

As described in Standard Seven, the renovation of the Commons building has been important to our campus community as its physical space allows the intersection of role (faculty, staff, students) along with work (academic, co-curricular, social) to converge in a visible way. The loss of the Commons building and the reconfiguration of our Student Center to serve as the dining hall over the past two years was felt deeply by our students as opportunities to find connection and community outside of our residential house structure is limiting. We share this example as a way to reinforce the importance of place and space as essential to the Bennington experience.

Bennington has a primarily house-based residential model where 30-40 students live in a combination of doubles and singles. Students are not separated by class year, and live in mixed communities for all four years. Many students live in the same house for their entire career at Bennington. Each house offers kitchens and common areas (most with fireplaces), where students relax, study, and hold weekly *Coffee Hours* to discuss together campus and house issues as well as overall community matters.

In response to experienced and projected growth, and new since the last report, Bennington has added additional housing in the form of apartment-style living located a ten-minute walk from

center Campus. Paran Creek Apartments provide, for the first time in Bennington's history, an alternative style of living for students who wish for a quieter residential experience with fewer students, and with increased flexibility for dining. We are currently leasing this property in a partnership with a local real estate developer with the option to purchase. The launch of this new housing has been well-received. Paran Creek Apartments adds potential faculty and staff apartments and up to 90 new beds for returning students (first-year students are not eligible). In addition to the creation of a walking/biking path connecting the complex to campus, we have also increased shuttle transportation to accommodate this new complex.

Self-Governance

Residential self-governance centers on the house chairs—undergraduates (excluding first-year students) who are selected and trained by Student Life staff with the support of other College staff. Two students in each house, one in Paran Creek apartments, and one representing the three semi-independent houses work with their residents to assist in creating a healthy, supportive, and community-minded living environment. House Chairs undergo a 10+ day training prior to each term to learn how to practice inclusivity, nurture community engagement, and facilitate or mitigate concerns regarding health, safety, and community standards. Additionally, house chairs meet with a Student Life supervisor on a regular basis (in pairs, each with their "co," every other week, weekly in "street meetings" which are organized by geographic location of the residential houses, and once a month as a full body). These meetings provide consistent support, problem-solving, and provide for feedback loops which are essential to the College's understanding of what is happening in the social and residential spaces that may support or impede students' sense of belonging and wellbeing.

At the start of each term, house chairs facilitate a *Community Living Agreement* and encourage residents to conduct a *Roommate Agreement* to underscore the importance of being intentional about community living and to agree on terms for co-existing in harmony. House chairs facilitate weekly *Coffee Hour* meetings, usually on Sundays, during which residents may raise any concerns in a group-setting, and for important information to be shared on behalf of Student Life staff, as well as from other College staff and faculty. Notes for these meetings, called Coffee Hour Minutes, may include information from any staff member or department that makes the weekly deadline. House Chairs are relied upon to share this information to better help students navigate expectations. Residents may also communicate individually with house chairs at any time they are concerned.

Through the arrival of the new Dean and hiring of the Assistant Dean, a focus on developing intercultural competencies in Student Life professional staff and paraprofessional staff (house chairs) to meet expectations regarding inclusive *practice* matched a moment of growth in varied demographics in the student body. As described in the sections on admissions growth, the student body at Bennington shifted quite dramatically in a short period of time. The incoming class of 2014 was distinctive in its composition that included a greater percentage of international students, and of high need. Understanding and responding to the complexity of the needs of international (high need) students created an accelerated period of learning for staff and faculty additionally affected by governmental actions regarding travel bans. Concerns about taxes, health insurance, travel, student safety, and visa implications identified areas where we were underprepared to support students. Following our *responsive* educational model relying on

nimbleness and flexibility, we pattern our administrative efforts to move in small-school fashion toward meeting these concerns.

Specifically, the College sought to increase intercultural skill-building to better serve not only this international demographic of students, but also an increasingly diverse body of students by race, class, religion, and geography. Sessions focused on understanding difference and power dynamics are now imbedded in house chair training, as well as those trainings of other student leaders, and positions in Student Life.

The visible commitment to inclusion and equity at the College was imagined through a full-time position, Coordinator for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, in Fall 2015 and was initially filled by Lydia Brassard, who graduated from Bennington in 2008 and continued to work with the college developing her undergraduate thesis, "Alumni Perspectives on Race at Bennington College." Lydia returned to Bennington in Fall 2015 to develop infrastructure to support diversity, inclusion, and equity work at the College in direct response to the changing demographics of our student body. This position reported to the Associate Provost and Dean of Studies. When this position became vacant, the College took the opportunity to move this work to a broader level and, in Fall 2018, Delia Saenz began as Vice President for Institutional Inclusion, Equity, and Leadership Development and reports directly to the President (as described more fully in Standard Three).

Beginning with the hiring of a Coordinator of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion in Fall 2015, Student Life has worked closely with staff who held positions related to diversity and equity to create these opportunities and also to imbed such topics into new student orientation. A number of retreats and professional development workshops were delivered to Student Life staff, and opened up for participation from other staff. One session on student development theory attracted over 80 staff from across the institution.

Social life at Bennington also appeared to be driven by a seemingly monolithic house party system. To assist house chairs in creating a more manageable set of social responsibilities (they often decried their positions as being expected to provide house parties), in the 2017-2018 academic year, the Assistant Dean of Students implemented a new leadership position of "social chair" for each house community, allowing for a separate intentionality to recreational house activities, as well as more integrated oversight by Student Life staff in thinking about themes, advertising, health and safety for house gatherings. The focus on increasing inclusive understanding and practice meeting students' needs and hopes for their living and social lives has created a cultural shift in the student body around understanding difference and living in community.

While self-governance has been more directly taught and expected as part of roles, there remains ample opportunity to help students understand the difference between being left alone to their own governance and being guided to implement a system of inclusive shared governance. One important example was the review and revision of house selection which was predominantly under the direction of students and employed favoritism, social pressure, and short-sighted problem-solving. Myths such as house seniority, doubles acting as singles, and accommodations were dispelled, and house chairs were integrated into the decision making and policy changing processes that made for a more equitable and fair selection process.

Self-governance within our student organizations, recreation, and social events outside of the house spaces continues to be developed. Our commitment to providing student-initiated and created opportunities means our clubs and organizations vary greatly from year to year and ebb and flow based on the individual interests of our student body. One of these areas is within student government or council. Without a Dean of Students for two years, the student council that was referenced in the 2009 self-study folded. When the new Dean of Students arrived in Fall 2015, she began a number of initiatives to re-engage with the student body to develop a student governance body or organization. Unfortunately, very little engagement and attendance occurred. In Fall 2017, Student Life piloted a student government model, based on the model that was in place for the student council in 2009, and asked for houses to nominate, select, or elect a member to serve in this capacity. The group, which averaged six students, was advised by Student Life staff and had a student intern position that was funded by Student Life to move the initiative forward. This group did not sustain. As such, the Office of Student Life has utilized House Chairs to serve as our guage of student voice and opinion on matters related to the College and will continue to do so until a student governance structure for nonacademic life can be created and sustained.

The Student Educational Policies Committee (SEPC) is a group of elected students who represent the student body on issues affecting academic life. There are two representatives per discipline and one first year at large representative. These students serve as liaisons between students, faculty, and the administration. Along with being a peer resource for discipline related questions, SEPC coordinates mid-term and end-of-term course evaluations. The SEPC also considers larger questions of academic policy. A mission statement along with a list of subcommittees is available on SEPC's website (linked above). The SEPC is advised through the Provost & Dean's Office working closely with the Assistant Dean for Advising.

Students also serve on the Judicial Committee for non-academic cases that involve community impact and repeated violations of community standards and policies which enables students to hold their peers accountable for behavior and conduct within the community.

Student Activities and Community Engagement
As noted above, the self-governance model of our campus allows for student interest and input, and for students to forge their own recreational activities and groups to support their lives on campus in and out of the classroom. Additionally, we believe involvement in campus clubs and organizations allows for further development of skills related to Bennington's capacities. As with most campuses, the Bennington campus can feel as if it functions in its own bubble, so over the past four years, the College has endeavored to extend community outreach in myriad ways to connect students to the local community. Campus Safety has increased shuttle service, including a shared car taxi-like service that helps students get on and off campus with more ease and frequency. A pilot program to allow students to participate in team sports with Southern Vermont College programs for those not offered on campus was implemented (ended in Spring 2019 due to closing of SVC). A formal connection to the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MOCA) was established to allow free entry for students. And a focus on developing community service learning opportunities created a list of over 30 local and regional organizations where students are able to volunteer or otherwise engage. Twice a month we offer scheduled trips to a

community partner for volunteer service (food pantry, animal shelter) and several times during the year we offer trips at no or reduced fare to regional towns and cities—including Albany, Boston, NYC, Providence, Portland, Burlington, Brattleboro and Northampton. These are a sampling of initiatives created to reduce the sense of isolation of our campus.

Dedicated student space has decreased considerably in recent years. In preparation for the Commons renovation, the Student Center Cafe, which offered pub and grill fare from lunch through late night, was closed in April 2017 and the dining hall (which had been located in Commons) was relocated to the Student Center in summer 2017. This impacted our two major buildings available for students to use for performances, events, and meeting space; and it eliminated our late night eatery. The Down Cafe, a small space in a building adjacent to the Student Center, had served as a small performance and event venue. It continued to serve in this capacity, but also added an evening student-run coffee shop with a pool table that helped to fill some of the gap that was left when the Student Center cafe closed.

Recreation and club sports has changed in the past few years. The coordinator of recreation, a new position as of Fall 2008, developed a program that included a number of student recreation assistants and broadened the scope and frequency of recreational options, focusing on outdoor, intramural, and fitness-based programs. In Fall 2016, this position was folded into the Assistant Director of Student Engagement portfolio and included management of the Meyer Recreation Barn (Rec Barn). The Meyer Recreation Barn houses an aerobics room, climbing wall, free weights, sauna, and showers, and offers aerobic and weight-training equipment. In Fall 2018, the Director of Health Promotions' position was expanded to include supervision of the Rec Barn to align this resource with our focus on holistic wellbeing including promoting the idea that health is more than the absence of illness and is an integral part of students developing into their best selves. With this shift in leadership, the student employees at the Rec Barn, who previously only monitored usage, now receive training to serve as resources for students on health-related topics. Student interns have replaced the former recreation assistants and create consistent programming activities that are open to all students. Club sports, such as ultimate frisbee, equestrian club, soccer, along with intramural opportunities such as basketball and boxing continue to be offered, and are advised by staff positions in the Office of Student Life. In support of this shared vision of holistic wellbeing, staff in Student Engagement, Residential Life and Health Promotions meet on a weekly basis to collaborate on the collective programming happening on campus within their areas.

Community Standards

In the previous report, a review of student conduct and judicial processes was described premised upon a risk/harm-reduction model rather than a punitive one. Since then, we have conducted further review toward creating further learning opportunities for students, transparency, consistency across processes, and equitable impact in sanctions. The one-on-one meetings for low-level violations of policy was maintained, and the number of "hearing officers" conducting these meetings in pursuit of a learning opportunity has been expanded to include Assistant Directors in Student Life, and there are plans to train additional staff to take on this role. The judicial committee (student conduct committee) comprised of staff, faculty, and students is trained every term and reviews cases that have a community impact and recidivism. The Administrative Review Committee (ARC) is chaired by the Dean of Students who appoints two

other dean/director level staff to participate in review of violations, for which separation of any kind (college suspension or expulsion) is under consideration. The Associate Dean of Students meets with the Director of Campus Safety on a regular basis to review reported violations and to determine which of these three levels of response is required. Additionally, they determine if a case that has come to Student Life (instead of the Title IX Coordinator) is to undergo the Title IX process and refers it to that process.

Bennington College does not have a serious problem with student violations. Recidivism is low, and violations are almost exclusively at the lower levels requiring a session with a hearing officer. Both the Judicial Committee and the Administrative Review Committee hear 1-3 cases per term on average.

Students are made aware of expectations of behavior, community standards, and policies along with information about the process of adjudication of any violations through the Student Handbook each year. The document was moved to a web-based format in Fall 2018 to allow for easier access and availability for student review.

Student Transition and Support
The Bennington student experience outside the classroom has been the focus of many departments and areas of the College with an explicit eye toward aligning the curricular and co-curricular experience. While administrative and academic offices might divide the experience into these realms, students are less compartmentalized in their understanding of their lives—especially at Bennington. Bennington students refer to "doing their work" and this is often a part of their social, recreational, and residential experiences. Wherever functional areas or offices can collaborate in aligning their work to support the whole student experience is of paramount importance and is a working paradigm at Bennington. We begin description of our approach early in the admissions process and continue to reinforce these messages through orientation of new students each fall and spring.

Once on campus, structures align to support students academically, with medical and psychological assistance, and with ADA accommodations across housing, dining and classrooms. A weekly gathering of stakeholders in the "Students of Concern" meeting ensure that connections are made and support for struggling students happens in a well-informed and intentional way.

Like other institutions across the nation, Bennington has experienced an increase in the demands for support connected to mental health. Thirty percent of our student body is seen by our Psychological Services staff in therapeutic appointments. It is arguably the most challenging issue affecting Dean's office staffing and potential for growth. Increased parent expectations about levels of support is increasingly taxing as well as the demands of first-year students in the transition period of the first year.

Student Life collaborated with the development of the First-Year Forum to enhance comprehensive support for first year students and their transition. The First-Year Forum, described in Standard Four, is mentioned here in recognition of the collaborative effort to enhance alignment between the experiences of the curricular and the co-curricular.

Toward this end, Orientation has included new and expanded programs to help students in their transition to college. House Chairs have replaced Orientation leaders to function as guides and mentors during the arrival and settling-in process, creating a strong sense of house community earlier. Expanded programs on alcohol use, abuse awareness, and bystander intervention have been implemented, as well as community-based sessions regarding understanding of inclusivity and communication across differences. Most importantly, Orientation has incorporated the start of the First-Year Forum seminars to create a smooth transition between and among activities. In lieu of Pre-Orientation trips that were only available to those self-selected arriving first-years who knew about and could afford them, First Year Forum cohorts provide every incoming student with a smaller group in which they can create a bond in addition to their house community. This equalizes the potential for additional group bonding so that more students benefit.

One Pre-Orientation program, facilitated by staff in Academic Services who support International Student Services, remains for new international students who arrive to campus before domestic new students. During these days, returning international students serve as mentors for their peers. Sessions are provided to help students transition to the country, the campus, and college life—both academically and socially. As described in Standard Six, staff in Academic Services provide ongoing support for International Students throughout the academic term and during all years of enrollment at Bennington.

During the academic terms, the staff in the First Year Experience and International Student Services (under Academic Services) collaborates with the Office of Student Engagement (Student Life) to offer "collective care" programming open to all students, but targeted towards first-year students. This programming focuses on topics related to stressors and skills that many first-year students face during their transition to college with an emphasis on self-care. Programming is offered weekly, during lunch, where students can engage with staff around self-care activities including the creation of journals or generating notes of gratitude for other community members.

Additionally, in efforts to better support the needs of our first-generation, low-incoming, and working class (FLoW) students, a FLoW working group was formed to include staff from Student Life, Academic Services, faculty, and students. For the past two years, this group has funded a student intern position that helps with programming, facilitates regular student group meetings, and assists with administrative tasks related to these initiatives.

In Fall 2016, ADA accommodations were divided between the Office of Student Life and Academic Services. The former managing all non-classroom based accommodation requests and the later managing all classroom and academic based accommodations. As mentioned in Standard Six, there has been consistent growth in the number of accommodations requested by students and for student life—especially requests for single rooms and for approval of Emotional Support Animals (ESAs).

Student Safety, Health, and Wellbeing

Bennington has long supported students in a holistic manner. Our small residential house system facilitates a campus environment of close connection. The Campus Safety Office is open 24 hours

a day, seven days a week. The Campus Safety Office is staffed with one Director, one Associate Director, one Field Supervisor and 12-15 campus safety officers. Campus safety officers serve as a resource to students in need and enforce the rules and regulations outlined in the student handbook. Officers also monitor violations of state laws regarding underage drinking and the use of illegal and controlled substances, all of which violate College disciplinary policies as well. Campus safety has always worked closely with Student Life staff and, in Fall 2017, shifted its reporting to the Dean of Students, along with Psychological and Health Services, to create a smoother crisis response system. Officers are trained in first aid, AED, CPR, blood-borne pathogens, Slip and Fall Prevention, SDS Right to Know, Emergency Preparedness, and fire safety. Bennington's Campus Safety has established itself as the resource to which House Chairs and other students turn with little reluctance in seeking assistance. Campus Safety officers are considered allies in student wellbeing especially in the eyes of students, creating a reliable safety net for students.

Psychological Services, Health Services, and the Health Promotion office joined together in a newly-renovated stand-alone building to become the Student Health Center in Fall 2017. Occupying a shared space has allowed these programs to function in tandem with each other and support the physical, emotional and overall well-being of our students through referrals and collaborative programming. The staff of the Student Health Center (SHC) meet weekly to discuss the smooth integration of services and offices at the Center, and to discuss the wellbeing initiatives as a group.

The Psychological Services Office provides individual and group therapies to our students as well as ongoing medication management and 24-hour on-call services. The service is staffed by seven clinicians (two psychologists, one psychiatrist, three social workers, and one licensed mental health therapist) who are trained in various approaches in order to suit different students' needs. These include cognitive behavioral therapy, psychodynamic therapy, mindfulness, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR). Several groups including a DBT skills group, a recovery group, a mindfulness group, and a psychiatric education group are offered on a weekly basis. Additionally, the psychological services staff offers consultation to Bennington staff and faculty, and works with house chairs and campus safety officers to offer ongoing support.

Beginning in the Spring 2018, Psychological Services and Student Health Promotion began working closely to offer psycho-educational groups as an extension of prevention and counseling. This is an example of programming that has allowed for connection with students who may not require counseling on an ongoing basis, but benefit from continued connection with Student Life staff.

The College provides health care and education to students through our Health Services program which also works closely with Student Health Promotion. The staff of Health Services include a physician and a part-time nurse practitioner, and the service is available five days a week with on-call availability when the service is closed. The Health Services staff provides checkups and physicals, evaluation and management of acute and chronic medical problems, coordination of care with home physicians, health counseling, specialist referrals, some laboratory tests, and prescriptions. Nutritional consultants and gynecological specialists are also available. The services of Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington are used as needed for emergency care, laboratory tests, x-rays, and specialist consultation.

The Director of Student Health Promotion, a new position as of Fall 2016, works to support students around wellbeing through recreation opportunities, prevention efforts, and awareness training on the range of health issues, and also functions as the victim advocate in supporting survivors of sexual misconduct.

Student health promotion follows a wellbeing model that uses five dimensions to help guide the activities of the office: environmental; intellectual; mind & body; social; and meaning & purpose. Student Health Promotion has conducted educational trainings; awareness-raising; tabling; one-to-one and group counseling and has covered topics regarding alcohol and other substances use and abuse; healthy relationships; sexual health; mental health; sleep hygiene; sexual assault; disordered eating; smoking cessation and other topics. Orientation has also increased the amount of programming that covers health concerns specifically around alcohol and other substances, as well as bystander intervention for promoting a safer campus social scene.

With the enhancement of Student Life, Campus Safety, Health Services, and Psychological Services migrated to the Department in 2017, allowing for a more streamlined crisis-response protocol and integrated-support model. These functional areas benefit from being members of Student Life, improving communication and coordinating response that is focused on harm and risk reduction over punitive discipline.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences: Appraisal
Student Life and the Residential Experience continues to be integral to the foundation of a Bennington education and, as we are learning through our work with retention, plays a critical role in student success. The Office of Student Life team continues to be lean and nimble, but will need to assess its staffing numbers in the next few years to meet the changing needs, supports, and efforts of growing a healthy and thriving student body.

Because our house system provides small, intimate community-style experiences, students often identify with their house communities as strongly as their class year or academic study peers, and the residential experience continues to be an area of emphasis and growth for the College.

As the majority of our housing inventory is double rooms, students often express the tension they feel as junior and senior students who want the opportunity to live in individual living spaces (singles), but want to remain a part of their house community and the tough decisions they need to make when a single is unavailable in their preferred house community.

Further, the nature of our house system allows development of house cultures and traditions that can be beneficial for students in developing strong connections to peers across class years and academic interests, but also problematic in developing unhealthy relationships to substances, hazing, and interpersonal boundaries.

The House Chair program, as noted in the previous self-study, maintains its strength and sustainability within the self-governance structure. Additionally, its ability to provide students with skills and experience working within a team and in developing community aligns directly and provides many learning opportunities that strengthens students' Plan development and work. This year a pilot program of student positions (House Chair, Admissions Intern) was

offered to a few students to utilize these roles to earn their Field Work Term experience during the academic year rather than during the winter or summer months. We hope to continue developing this opportunity, and others, to better weave the Bennington capacities through the holistic student experience. House Chairs pride themselves on their accessibility to their house community. One of the challenges is helping them to establish healthy boundaries regarding their own wellbeing, as well as to understand when an issue must advance to professional staff. Additionally, and not unique to Bennington, but perhaps more impactful due to our size and structure, our students are coming to campus with fewer skills and experiences in interpersonal communication, difficult conversations, and conflict resolution. We are seeing this within the classroom, within our houses, and throughout campus. The overuse of social media along with anonymous location-based apps has also been a serious challenge at times for our community. We see the need for increased support and sustainable infrastructure for interpersonal conflict resolution along with formal mediation and restorative justice models for alleged violations of community standards.

Creating equitable access to resources and developing inclusive practices across the student experience continues to be a priority and focus for the College. Strides have been made in this area in the past few years as staff have been hired with focus and emphasis on moving the College forward on these initiatives. This spring the College issued a campus climate survey to faculty to begin the collection of data to better understand how issues of identity, equity, and inclusion are perceived and experienced by faculty. Using this survey as a base, plans are in place to conduct campus climate surveys for staff and students in the years ahead. Data from these surveys will be used to develop programming, create resources, and to implement changes in policies and practices, such as the current development of the discrimination and harassment policy within the College structure to better realize a more equitable experience for all.

Creating a campus where students who hold marginalized identities can find belonging and voice within our community is essential to the Bennington experience. Although we have made efforts in these areas in regards to supporting FLoW and international students, we see the need to expand these efforts and in creating support for students of color. In the past few years, student organizations created to support students of specific identities (International Student organization, Black Student Union, Interfaith) have ebbed and flowed with interest. Students have expressed a desire to have a dedicated physical space available for identity-based organizations and groups to gather for social and support purposes. The College has encouraged students to see the entire campus as available and open to them, but we believe that this request will continue to be raised and are hopeful that with the renovation of the Student Center we may be able to help create opportunities for student-controlled space that could meet some of this need.

In the past two years, with the renovation of Commons and reconfiguration of the Student Center as the dining hall, the pressure for our house system to be the center of the student social and community space has increased. House common rooms have become the only spaces that students can consistently use for social spaces, event spaces, study spaces, and gathering spaces. At a small institution, the ability to find connections beyond your house community is essential, and the loss of the buildings where these other types of connections occurred has been impactful in ways we are only beginning to understand—such as retention of our students. We anticipate the opening of Commons to help mitigate some of this pressure, but know that the need for

student-centered and student-specific space—such as what the Student Center would bring—is essential.

The Office of Student Life continues to involve students in necessary decision making processes to develop their understanding of how institutional change can be beneficial in meeting their evolving needs in a fair way. Our challenge has been to create ongoing and sustainable interest within the student body to serve in this capacity. Our students often struggle to identify themselves as leaders and, as such, do not naturally step into these roles. Additionally, and as mentioned in Standard Three, we are curious if and how our attraction of students who are seeking, and our focus on, an individualized education may or may not be influencing student involvement in this area and, more so, how do we equally emphasize the importance of community and peer leadership within our campus structures.

Anxiety and depression continue to be major factors impacting students' success at Bennington. And, although not unique to Bennington as this is a national trend, we continue to struggle to keep up with mental health service needs. Unlike some other campuses, our students do not feel stigmatized for seeking mental health services and are open about their experiences, diagnoses, and need for support. Our Psychological Services model does not limit the number of sessions students have (we do limit visits to one per week), but in order to do this, we support a model in which students use their individual insurance plans to pay for their appointments. Depending on their type of insurance, they sometimes have a co-pay or a deductible to meet. For some students, the use of their insurance, which is often linked to their parents, and the associated fee, is a deterrent to seeking support. Further, our therapists' caseloads begin to fill before the end of the term and, for the past two years, we have had to ask for additional funding for our budget to hire an additional therapist for 8-16 hours/week in order to keep our waiting time for new appointments to one week or less. Full caseloads of individual appointments of our therapists also means that we are limited in our ability to offer peer groups and do outreach to specific communities—such as faculty and staff—to provide additional education and support.

The creation of a position to support Student Health Promotion increased Student Life's focus and ability to collect and analyze data related to the behavior health of our students. Beginning in Fall 2017, we ask all incoming students to complete two online modules supported through EverFi (AlcoholEdu and Haven) prior to arriving on campus. In 2018-2019 we managed a 96% compliance rate of first-year students completing EverFi's modules, and garnered data that has been instrumental in generating conversations within administration, and with student groups about our campus culture, and the prevalence of alcohol and substance use. Comparison of data outcomes between the 2014 and 2017 National Collegiate Health Association (NCHA) survey for all students and EverFi for incoming first-year students has shed light on a number of cultural practices and realities that impede students' ability to thrive at Bennington specifically related to substance use. This information has guided Student Health Promotion's response in collaboration with Residential Life, Campus Safety, and other Student Life areas to respond to perceived trends, and concerning outcomes. By utilizing this data collaborative trainings and programming, shifts have already begun to be seen in our campus community in a short time.

Additionally, in January 2019, Bennington was named a JED campus and has begun working with the JED foundation to strengthen our mental health, substance-use, and suicide prevention efforts.

The potential of the student co-curricular and residential experience within the College, particularly as it layers with the classroom experience, has yet to be fully realized. The Office of Student Life and staff are a support structure and mechanism to students' academic experience, and a partner with initiatives that support the goals of a Bennington education. Although this underutilization is not unique to Bennington, it does have a different impact on our campus than it may elsewhere. Our individualized and progressive education focus gives our students an opportunity to move beyond traditional ideas, notions, and structures about where and when learning happens. As described in Standard Four, the learning and development of the Bennington capacities happen through campus employment, in house common rooms, in student organization involvement, and beyond. Developing a way to capture this learning has not yet emerged.

Over the past few years, the connection and collaboration between the Office of Student Life and the Academic Services Office has strengthened, supporting the Integration of the Student Experience pillar of our Ten-Year Goals. This is made visible through our work supporting the whole student. Members of the Department meet weekly in a Students of Concern meeting to discuss students who are having difficulties in the classroom and the residential system. A plan is made to outreach and follow up with each student and it is often a team approach that is solicited. It is also made visible in how we have restructured the orientation and on-boarding of new students, as outlined in sections above. Further, the decision to have the staff who most directly support the First Year Experience and International Students (supervised through Academic Services) to have offices directly adjacent to staff in the Office of Student Life has made visible, to students and others, the many ways that our work interfaces and overlaps. Additionally, in Fall 2016, the evaluation process of those students who seek to re-enter from medical withdraw began to include Student Life staff. This change was made to help assess readiness for return to campus life beyond just readiness for academic work. It also allows for integrated support between Student Life and Academic Services for students upon return.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences: Projection

- Root the capacities into the student residential experience. Create clear pathways where students and faculty can see the learning that is taking place beyond the classroom experience.

- Bring online the Student Center to support student-designed and controlled space that will allow for the visible convergence of student community and connection in similar ways to how we imagine Commons will bring our broader community to life. This project is anticipated to begin this winter with completion by Fall 2020.

- We anticipate recommendations from the First-Year Retention Task Force (referenced in Standard Eight) to inform changes we implement within residential experience to address the impact that the student social experience and fit, including the house system, have on the success of our students—particularly in their first year.

- Expand leadership opportunities within the house structure. The Social Chair position, which is referenced earlier, is a first step in this model. We will introduce a wellness or well-being student position in each house beginning in Fall 2019. We hope this position will both bring information into the house communities about healthy behaviors and well-being and be a conduit to the Office of Student Life in ways we can better support students in these areas.

- Conversations between staff in CAPA, Equity and Inclusion, and Student Life have resulted in planning for restorative justice and mediation training opportunities during the 2019-2020 academic year to support our strengthening of skills related to conflict resolution. Further, we are looking to embed specific skills and training in Social Justice Mediation (program from UMass-Amherst) into the House Chair position.

- In partnership with the Vice President for Institutional Inclusion, Equity, and Leadership Development, we will use information from the campus climate survey to create an action plan to support changes within the student experience to allow for a more accessible and equitable campus community for all students.

- Expansion of the role that students have in holding peers accountable for behaviors by forming house peer boards to adjudicate cases related to house-based incidents and agreements.

- As SCoPE and the Third Floor Forum in Commons breathes new life into the physical Commons structure, we imagine it to breathe new life into students' idea of leadership experience, as well. Having a space where formal and informal opportunities to step into teacher roles, we believe, will reinforce the idea that although your academic path at Bennington may be individualized, we exist within a collective community of learners who influence, shape and, from time to time, share this path with us. We see this as an opportunity to reignite the fire of peer advocacy to shape a sustainable student government model.

- In efforts to address concerns related to accessibility to mental health services and strengthen our student's well-being, we plan to adjust our current model in Psychological Services to include a triage structure, provide on-going training and learning opportunities for therapist and increase the amount of outreach services provided to campus.

- We anticipate information gained through our work with the JED foundation, Healthy Minds survey, and campus assessment will provide us with insights and recommendations on ways to strengthen our resources and services for student well-being.

STANDARD FIVE: STUDENTS
(ADMISSIONS, FALL TERM)

Credit Seeking Students Only - Including Continuing Education

	3 Years Prior (Fall 2016)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2017)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2018)	Current Year (Fall 2019)	Goal (specify year) (Fall 2020)
Freshmen - Undergraduate					
Completed Applications	1,236	1,456	1,472	1,324	1,400
Applications Accepted	741	820	830	797	850
Applicants Enrolled	196	219	198	179	205
% Accepted of Applied	60.0%	56.3%	56.4%	60.2%	60.7%
% Enrolled of Accepted	26.5%	26.7%	23.9%	22.5%	24.1%
Percent Change Year over Year					
Completed Applications	NA	17.8%	1.1%	-10.1%	5.7%
Applications Accepted	NA	10.7%	1.2%	-4.0%	6.6%
Applicants Enrolled	NA	11.7%	-9.6%	-9.6%	14.5%

Average of Statistical Indicator of Aptitude of Enrollees: (define below)

Transfers - Undergraduate

Completed Applications	55	46	46	56	60
Applications Accepted	38	32	28	24	35
Applicants Enrolled	13	18	15	6	15
% Accepted of Applied	69.1%	69.6%	60.9%	42.9%	58.3%
% Enrolled of Accepted	34.2%	56.3%	53.6%	25.0%	42.9%

Master's Degree

Completed Applications	131	146	121	109	
Applications Accepted	70	74	84	71	
Applicants Enrolled	42	42	46	41	
% Accepted of Applied	53.4%	50.7%	69.4%	65.1%	–
% Enrolled of Accepted	60.0%	56.8%	54.8%	57.7%	–

First Professional Degree

Completed Applications					
Applications Accepted					
Applicants Enrolled					
% Accepted of Applied	–	–	–	–	–
% Enrolled of Accepted	–	–	–	–	–

	3 Years Prior (Fall 2016)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2017)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2018)	Current Year (Fall 2019)	Goal (specify year) (Fall 2020)
Doctoral Degree					
Completed Applications					
Applications Accepted					
Applicants Enrolled					
% Accepted of Applied	–	–	–	–	–
% Enrolled of Accepted	–	–	–	–	–

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Freshman undergraduate applications excludes students who defer from the previous year. Note that Master's Degree include candidates for MFA in Dance, Music, Writing, and Public Action. For each year, cohorts include students who entered the program during the current academic year. For example, Fall 2016 includes student data from Summer 2016, Fall 2016, Winter 2017, and Spring 2017. For the Fall 2019 data, note that Winter 2020 and Spring 2020 are not included yet.

STANDARD FIVE: STUDENTS
(ENROLLMENT, FALL TERM)

Credit Seeking Students Only - Including Continuing Education

Undergraduate

		3 Years Prior (Fall 2015)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2016)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2017)	Current Year (Fall 2018)	Goal (specify year) (Fall 2019)
First Year	Full-Time Headcount	225	211	240	207	190
	Part-Time Headcount	0	1	0	0	0
	Total Headcount	225	212	240	207	190
	Total FTE	225	211	240	207	190
Second Year	Full-Time Headcount	171	183	183	185	190
	Part-Time Headcount	0	0	1	0	0
	Total Headcount	171	183	184	185	190
	Total FTE	171	183	183	185	190
Third Year	Full-Time Headcount	126	167	154	163	155
	Part-Time Headcount	0	0	0	1	0
	Total Headcount	126	167	154	164	155
	Total FTE	126	167	154	163	155
Fourth Year	Full-Time Headcount	158	118	139	140	160
	Part-Time Headcount	3	1	0	0	0
	Total Headcount	161	119	139	140	160
	Total FTE	159	118	139	140	160
Unclassified	Full-Time Headcount	11	15	8	9	10
	Part-Time Headcount	22	29	50	30	30
	Total Headcount	33	44	58	39	40
	Total FTE	18	25	25	19	20

Total Undergraduate Students

	3 Years Prior (Fall 2015)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2016)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2017)	Current Year (Fall 2018)	Goal (Fall 2019)
Full-Time Headcount	691	694	724	704	705
Part-Time Headcount	25	31	51	31	30
Total Headcount	716	725	775	735	735
Total FTE	699	704	741	714	715
% Change FTE Undergraduate	NA	0.7%	5.2%	-3.6%	0.1%

	3 Years Prior (Fall 2015)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2016)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2017)	Current Year (Fall 2018)	Goal (specify year) (Fall 2019)
Graduate					
Full-Time Headcount	85	82	76	76	98
Part-Time Headcount	0	0	0	0	0
Total Headcount	85	82	76	76	98
Total FTE	85	82	76	76	98
% Change FTE Undergraduate	NA	-3.5%	-7.3%	0.0%	28.9%
Grand Total					
Grand Total Headcount	801	807	851	811	833
Grand Total FTE	784	786	817	790	813
% Change FTE Undergraduate	NA	0.3%	3.9%	-3.3%	2.9%

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Unclassified undergraduates includes PEI, nondegree, and post-baccalaureate students.

STANDARD FIVE: STUDENTS
(FINANCIAL AID, DEBT, DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES)

Where does the institution describe the students it seeks to serve?

https://www.bennington.edu/about

	(FY 2014)	(FY 2015)	(FY 2016 draft)
Three-year Cohort Default Rate	3	2.8	2.2
Three-year Loan repayment rate (from College Scorecard)	73	74	76

	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Goal (specify year)
	(2015-16)	(2016-17)	(2017-18)	(2018-19)	(2019-20)
Student Financial Aid (all programs)					
Total Federal Aid	$5,404	$5,183	$5,620	$5,122	$4,631
Grants	$864	$866	$963	$1,017	$916
Loans	$4,237	$4,062	$4,351	$3,816	$3,435
Work Study	$277	$229	$276	$265	$259
Total State Aid	$26	$26	$30	$24	$21
Total Institution Aid	$18,791	$20,203	$23,235	$23,586	$23,822
Grants	$18,747	$20,125	$23,162	$23,507	$23,742
Assistantships	$44	$78	$73	$79	$80
Loans	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Total Private Aid + Other Aid	$1,352	$1,688	$2,070	$2,566	$2,310
Grants (UWC + outside scholarships)	$638	$940	$1,530	$2,038	$1,834
Loans	$714	$748	$540	$528	$476

All dollar amounts indicated in thousands

	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Goal (specify year)
	(2015-16)	(2016-17)	(2017-18)	(2018-19)	(2019-20)
Student Financial Aid (Undergraduate only)					
Total Federal Aid	$5,244	$5,096	$5,443	$4,836	$4,353
Grants	$864	$852	$960	$1,007	$906
Loans	$4,077	$3,989	$4,177	$3,541	$3,167
Work Study	$277	$229	$276	$264	$259
Total State Aid	$26	$26	$30	$24	$21

(cont. on next page)

	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Goal (specify year)
	(2015-16)	(2016-17)	(2017-18)	(2018-19)	(2019-20)
Student Financial Aid (Undergraduate only) (cont.)					
Total Institutional Aid	$18,687	$19,926	$22,972	$23,255	$23,488
Grants	$18,687	$19,926	$22,972	$23,255	$23,488
Assistantships	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Loans	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Total Private Aid + Other Aid	$1,221	$1,635	$1,969	$2,469	$2,222
Grants (UWC + outside scholarships)	$629	$928	$1,526	$1,997	$1,797
Loans	$592	$707	$443	$472	$425

	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Goal (specify year)
	(2015-16)	(2016-17)	(2017-18)	(2018-19)	(2019-20)
Student Debt					

Percent of students graduating with debt (include all students who graduated in this calculation)

Undergraduates - including PEI	52%	56%	48%	50%	50%
Graduates - including MFA and PB	42%	48%	41%	61%	50%
First professional students	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

For students with debt:
Average amount of debt for students leaving the institution with a degree

Undergraduates - including PEI	$25	$24	$25	$24	$0
Graduates - including MFA and PB	$30	$32	$27	$30	$0
First professional students	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

Average amount of debt for students leaving the institution without a degree

Undergraduates - including PEI	$12	$3	$5	$9	$0
Graduates - including MFA and PB	$6	$4	$0	$0	$0
First professional students	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

Percent of First-year students in Developmental Courses (courses for which no credit toward a degree is granted)

English as a Second/Other Language	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
English (reading, writing, communication skills)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Math	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

The first set of data contains all aid to all students in all programs. The second section above represents only the traditional undergraduate population.

STANDARD FIVE: STUDENTS
(STUDENT DIVERSITY)

For each type of diversity important to your institution (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, first generation status, Pell eligibility), provide information on student admissions and enrollment below. Use current year data.

Undergraduate Admissions Information	Completed Applications	Applicants Accepted	Applicants Enrolled
Total Domestic Students of Color	263	170	37
Asian	32	24	4
Black or African American	58	33	2
Hispanic	114	69	21
Two or More Races	56	41	10
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	2	
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander		1	
International Students	414	168	35
First-Gen	330	147	37
Pell-Eligible Students	153	145	44
Graduate Admissions Information	**Completed Applications**	**Applicants Accepted**	**Applicants Enrolled**
Total Domestic Students of Color	19	17	13
Asian	5	5	3
Black or African American	3	3	2
Hispanic	7	5	5
Two or More Races	4	4	3
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0	0
International Students	4	2	2

Undergraduate Enrollment Information	Full-Time Students	Part-Time Students	Total Headcount	FTE	Headcount Goal (specify year)
Students of Color	125	9	134	128.00	
International Students	125	0	125	125.00	
Male	233	24	257	241.00	
Female	463	0	463	463.00	
First-Gen	73	0	73	73.00	
Pell-Eligible Students	178	4	182	179.33	

Graduate Enrollment Information	Full-Time Students	Part-Time Students	Total Headcount	FTE	Headcount Goal (specify year)
Students of Color	11	0	11	11.00	
International Students	0	0	0	0.00	
Male	22	0	22	22.00	
Female	54	0	54	54.00	

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Undergaduate Admissions data above inlcude only first-year students who applied in 2019. Students who defered from 2018 are excluded. Enrollment information is for degree-seeking students only; First-Gen data is inconsistent prior to 2017 and for PEI students in general.

STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP

One of the defining characteristics of Bennington is the nature of its faculty. Since the College's founding, we have upheld the teacher/practitioner model; we do not see the professional or scholarly work of faculty as being separate from their work in the classroom. On the contrary, our faculty review criteria emphasize that faculty are expected not only to be actively engaged in their fields, but to bring that engagement into the classroom, informing their teaching and modeling professional activity for students. In so doing, faculty actively involve students in their creative, scientific, or scholarly processes, demonstrating what it means to create original works that will become part of a global enterprise of similarly motivated professionals. This is part of the same progressive vision of education that shapes the College's Field Work Term and provides students with a multifaceted exposure to the possible means by which important work is generated and shared with the world.

Just as we do not see the faculty's professional work as being wholly separated from their work in the classroom, neither do we see their advising as being divorced from their teaching. Rather, we view advising as a distinct type of teaching—not based on the content of any particular field, but nevertheless requiring an effective pedagogy. This is because both teaching and advising at Bennington have a common goal: the development of the Capacities in each and every student. Work in the classroom achieves this by having students engage in work that is largely organized and planned by the faculty, but advising does so in the context of the Plan process, with advisors working with students on their individual paths.

Academic staff also play key roles for students as they progress through their Plans. Nearly all students make extensive use of the library and its expert staff throughout their time at Bennington. Likewise, Field Work Term staff are invaluable in helping students secure rich internships and similar positions. The Academic Services staff work with students to secure fellowships, help in the first-year transition, work with them on accommodations, provide support services for international students, coordinate study away plans, as well as other crucial services

Faculty and Academic Staff: Description

Responsibilities of Faculty and Types of Faculty Appointments
The faculty at Bennington have neither academic ranks nor tenure. This is another manifestation of the progressive philosophy underlying the design of Bennington. The original vision was that the College would attract active professionals to teach, but appointments would be short-lived, at least relative to the entire professional careers of those hired. Faculty, it was envisioned, would regularly move into and out of the College. While that particular feature of the College was never fully realized, the egalitarian ethos of providing faculty equal status was. This has the very real benefit of allowing for the participation by newer faculty in our governance structures, including leadership roles of elected committees.

As of June 2019, Bennington has 78 FTE undergraduate faculty, translating to a student:faculty ratio of 9:1. This is consistent with our long-held practice of having students work closely with faculty; introductory courses rarely exceed 20 students, while more advanced courses are held to 12 to 16 students and are frequently smaller than that. The responsibilities of all faculty are delineated in the *Faculty Handbook* and are briefly described below. *The Handbook* also

includes stated policies, procedures, and ethical guidelines for faculty, as well as a statement of educational principles that gives coherence to our curriculum and articulates key aspects of our shared paedagogy.

In the absence of tenure and rank, we classify faculty according to how their individual contracts are structured. The *Faculty Handbook* lists the following types of faculty appointments, along with the responsibilities for each: full-time, part-time, visiting, administrative/faculty, and instrumental music appointments. Full-time faculty have contracts of three years or more and are normally responsible for teaching 20 credit hours of formal coursework per year in addition to maintaining an active program of professional work, service duties, and advising. Part-time faculty have the same responsibilities but teach fewer than 20 credit hours per year while maintaining advising obligations.

As a group, renewable faculty are analogous to faculty who are either tenured or who are on a tenure-track (T/TT) at other institutions; they are the intellectual foundation of the College and have the most extensive interaction with students. Their performance is reviewed by the Faculty Performance Review Committee as explained in more detail later in this Standard. Visiting faculty, who have neither service nor advising responsibilities, usually have appointments between one and four terms, although both shorter and longer term appointments have precedent; they serve the critical role of continuing curricular continuity in place of faculty on sabbatical. Administrative/faculty positions represent a fairly new type of position for the College and include faculty who perform substantial administrative responsibilities as a regular part of their positions. These currently include the Curator of the Usdan Gallery, and the Director of Undergraduate Writing Initiatives. Like full-time faculty, these positions involve advising and service responsibilities but have a lower teaching load, usually three courses per year. Finally, faculty holding instrumental music appointments are responsible only for music lessons, often one-on-one with students; they typically are budgeted for a set number of hours per term, usually less than ten; they do not have service or advising responsibilities.

It is worth noting that Bennington does not and never has made routine use of adjunct faculty, i.e., faculty who are serially awarded short-term contracts. In the past, however, we occasionally awarded some faculty with one-year contracts that were renewed over time-spans much longer than would typically be given to visiting faculty. As illustrated below, we have made a conscious decision to convert such positions to regular full- or part-time positions. Shown are the number of faculty holding renewable contracts as individual faculty members, not FTE (visitors not shown). In addition to the four classifications of faculty listed above, students can also take courses

Faculty Count by Classification
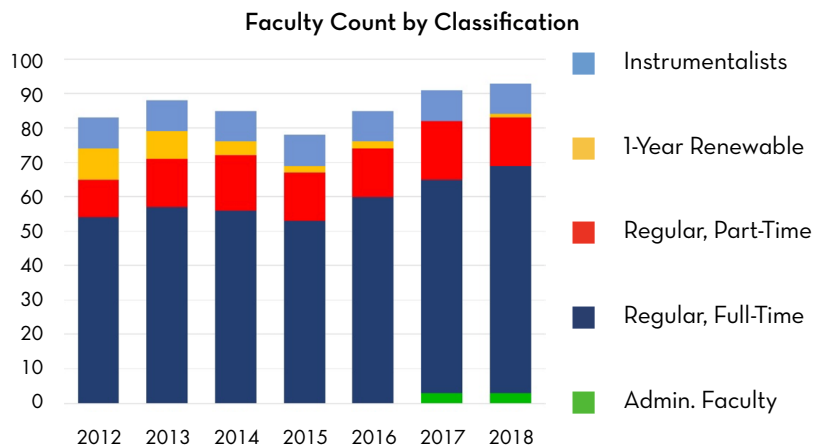
focused on specific skills with technician instructors, most often but not exclusively in the visual arts. The relative presence of the different types of faculty is illustrated below; of the roughly 22,000 credits attempted in the 2018-19 academic year, 76.4% were with full- or part-time renewable faculty, while visiting faculty, instrumentalists and technical instructors offered 19.1%, 2.5%, and 2.0%, respectively. Clearly, Bennington academics are anchored in the renewable faculty; these are the faculty who most directly mentor students and provide a reliable liberal arts presence around which students build their individual Academic Plans.

Student Credits by Faculty Classification (2018-19)

- Regular (Full and Part-Time)
- Visitors
- Instrumentalists
- Technical Instructors
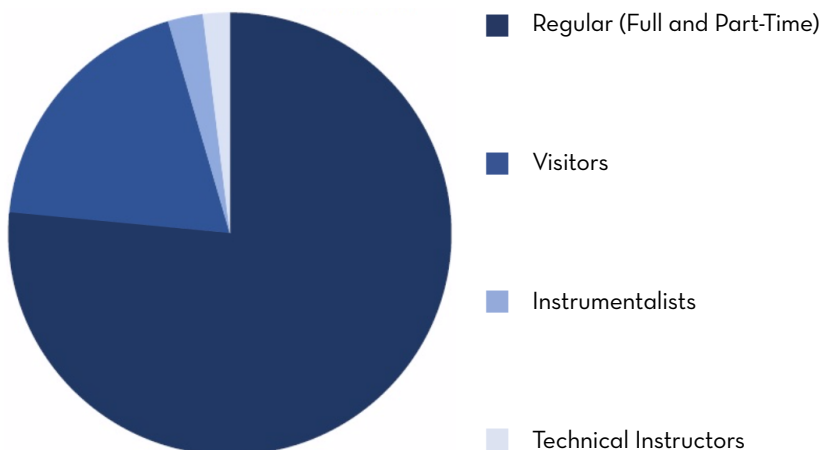
The academic work of the faculty is driven by their intellectual or artistic interests. However, this is not to say that it lacks institutional direction or organization. As described in Standard Four, Bennington does not have departments in the typical sense: faculty belong to Discipline Groups and work as a group to develop mutually supporting and complementary curricula and oversee student progress. The discipline groups also play a vital role in mentoring new faculty and coordinating the work of visitors, technicians and other support staff.

The backgrounds and training of faculty strongly depend on their areas of professional work. For example, nearly all in the natural and social sciences have doctoral degrees, as do those in languages; whereas faculty in literature and the performing and visual arts are hired on the basis of their professional work, regardless of whether or not they hold advanced degrees. Thus many literature faculty have robust publication histories and those in the arts developed strong professional resumes prior to coming to Bennington.

There are several other types of instructors employed by the College that do not fall into any of the classifications presented above. As part of our MFA programs in Dance and Public Action, we have graduate students take on teaching responsibilities, usually two or three in each area in a given term; they are responsible for one or two courses per term as part of the MFA program requirements. In addition, our low-residency MFA in Writing program also has faculty, a few of whom are faculty in the undergraduate program. The specific responsibilities and oversight of these faculty are specified in their individual contracts.

Beyond the faculty, Bennington has sixty staff members who support the academic work of the College, including librarians, program coordinators, and technicians, the latter of whom support the work of faculty in the visual arts, science, and the performing arts. Others, such as those in Academic Services, the Field Work Term and Career Development Office, and the Registrar's Office, interact directly with students. Staff in more administrative roles typically hold at least Bachelor's degrees, while technicians usually hold Bachelor's or MFA degrees, depending on the nature of their positions. More detailed information on the academic staff and their roles at the College are presented below.

The Dean of Studies oversees the academic services available to support students, faculty and faculty advisors in all areas of the student academic experience: academic accommodations and support, general academic advising, first-year experience, senior experience, transfer student advising, international student services, study abroad/away, grants and fellowship advising, and support to students on academic warning or probation.

In 2009 there were two staff in Academic Services; there are currently eight full-time, permanent staff in addition to the Dean of Studies, who oversees the work: three directors, three advisors, and two coordinators. Two of the advisor positions—the First-Year Advisor and the Academic Services and Accommodations advisor—were created in 2017 in response to growing shifts and needs among our student population, most notably the consistent growth among our international student population and the number of students requesting academic accommodations and support. In addition to the work noted below, the Dean and academic services staff provide advising and support to a caseload of students on academic warning or probation each term. In all of their work, they collaborate with faculty, faculty advisors, and many other offices on campus including Student Life, Health and Psychological Services, and the Registrar to provide integrated student support. These positions require bachelor's degrees, with advanced degrees preferred, as well as at least five years experience working in relevant settings.

The Director of First-Year Experience and International Student Services, along with two first-year and international student advisors, supports first-year and international students in their transition to Bennington. In the past two years, the Director has also worked closely with the Associate Dean for Advising in the planning and implementation of First-Year Forum (described in Standard Four). The Director of Grants and Fellowships/Associate Director and the Academic Services and Accommodations Advisor provide grants and fellowship advising; general academic advising to sophomores, juniors, and seniors; and assistance to students and faculty for academic accommodations. The Director of Learning Beyond Bennington/Associate Director for Academic Services oversees all aspects of study abroad and study away, including domestic and international exchanges. In addition, this position provides support to transfer students and students on academic warning or probation. The Director works closely with faculty and faculty advisors around questions of program fit and to ensure that students' work away integrates with the work of their Plans at Bennington. To further this collaboration and communication, the Global Programs Workgroup was developed early in 2019 to bring staff and faculty together to discuss study abroad opportunities and strategic initiatives to increase accessibility and promote campus internationalization.

Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation of Faculty and Academic Staff

Recommendations for new full- and part-time faculty positions come from the Academic Policies Committee (APC). Any faculty or groups of faculty can propose such positions for consideration and APC bases its decisions on criteria such as demonstrated curricular needs and the priorities it periodically establishes via needs assessment research (the 2017 Needs Assessment memo is available here), in which faculty, students and administrators have input into future directions for the College. The process followed for full- and part-time faculty searches is described in the *Faculty Handbook*. Faculty search committees consist of faculty in disciplines closely aligned with that of the new hire as well as at least one from an unrelated field. Searches are typically international in scope, with advertisements posted in national publications as well as with organizations that specialize in particular fields.

Even more important than the attention dedicated to faculty searches is that directed toward faculty retention. We have done considerable work to improve our mentoring practices, professional development opportunities, and faculty compensation. Specifically, we increased faculty salaries and benefits in recent years to be competitive with peer institutions (see the faculty salary survey report from March 2019). We offer a variety of benefits intended to foster professional development, including faculty grants of up to $1,250, available every term, to support conference attendance and other professional activities or supports. In addition, since our previous self-study, the College has accelerated its sabbatical eligibility cycle; faculty are now able to take one fully paid sabbatical leave term after every five years of teaching. Other avenues for professional development, such as non-teaching terms (added since our last accreditation review), in which faculty are relieved of teaching responsibilities for a term, and early sabbaticals, are awarded on a competitive basis. Finally, in 2017, we created two rotating Associate Dean positions—the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and the Associate Dean of Advising—to more deeply establish a system of shared governance for the College and, in so doing, provide faculty with opportunities to get administrative experience and to improve communication in a more general sense between faculty and administration. A third Associate Dean position was created in 2019, a two-year position to support faculty specifically in the areas of pedagogy and curriculum development; whether or not it continues beyond the two-year time frame will depend on how much continuing support the work that flows from this position demands. Finally, we recognize that the integration of new faculty into the Bennington community will not be consistent without thoughtful mentoring practices. Since our previous self-study, we have experimented with a number of models, including dedicated faculty mentoring roles (competitively awarded and compensated positions), and direct mentorship by the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. In the coming year we will be surveying recent hires to ascertain the effectiveness of these approaches and to refine our approach.

The policies governing and relevant criteria for the review of faculty performance are described in the *Faculty Handbook* and vary with the type of faculty position: full- and part-time faculty, as well as administrative/faculty, are reviewed by the Faculty Performance Review Committee (FPRC), while visitors and musical instrument instructors are reviewed by the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. The specific procedures followed by FPRC depend on the length of service for faculty under review; details of the process differ for faculty who, at the end of their current contract, will have completed six years or less, between seven and twelve years, and longer than twelve years of service, referred to as Tier 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Regardless of level, the review

criteria include quality of teaching and advising, and the quality and quantity of professional work and service. We have no quantitative requirement for professional work output (e.g., one published paper per year), but allow faculty significant latitude to define for themselves what meaningful professional work means in their fields. To help the committee determine the appropriateness of that work, faculty reviews usually involve external reviewers for the express purpose of providing feedback about the quality and quantity of the faculty member's professional work. In addition, faculty with contracts of greater than five years in length have mid-contract reviews with the Provost and Dean to go over progress in any issues raised in the prior review and to discuss other matters related to performance and support.

Academic staff are reviewed annually by the direct supervisors, such as the Dean of Studies or the Dean of the Library. The process typically involves a self-assessment with specific prompts for their accomplishments, areas they would like to develop, and a solicitation of feedback regarding recognition for their work. At a follow-up meeting, staff meet with their direct supervisor to go their overall performance using criteria such as familiarity with specific job-related knowledge and skills, communication, initiative, problem-solving, accountability, judgement and supervisory skills (for students or staff, if applicable). There are also professional development opportunities for academic staff in the form of training sessions during our monthly First Friday meetings that bring together all staff working under the umbrella of the Provost and Dean's Office; sessions on mediation, diversity and inclusion, and effective team building are recent examples.

Faculty and Academic Staff: Appraisal

As stated in Standard Four, in roughly a ten-year cycle each discipline group and program area(including the library) undergoes a self-study and external review using guidelines established and revised by the Provost and Dean's Office. One of the review criteria include the suitability of staffing and faculty to the mission of each group, so every group has a clear mechanism and opportunity to thoughtfully consider its ability to deliver an appropriate curriculum. The creation of a new mathematics faculty line arose, in part, from the arguments presented by the Science and Math discipline group and reinforced by the external reviewers for that study.

The faculty review process has not changed significantly since our previous self-study report. That said, we recognize that despite its centrality to our academic model, the quality of academic advising by faculty remains difficult to adequately assess. In each review we ask that faculty describe how they approach advising, providing feedback for improvement when appropriate, but we do not have information about advising to the same degree as the other performance criteria. In 2015 the Mellon Foundation awarded Bennington a three-year grant, called "Progressive Education for the 21st Century," to examine effective advising models among other issues. The faculty group involved in the work developed several new possible structures to improve advising, one of which—First-Year Forum—has already been implemented (see Standard Four for more information). The group also examined issues around workload generally, but especially with respect to advising. What became clear over the course of this work is that we need to more clearly articulate the institutional view that advising is a form of teaching, its importance is on par with "regular" teaching and, moreover, we need assessment techniques for this form of teaching as robust as for those we use for our courses. A number of

ideas aim to better prepare faculty to advise students well, including an adjusted course load for faculty with advising responsibilities that would explicitly recognize that quality advising demands time and energy from faculty, just as teaching their courses does. These discussions are ongoing and as of this writing, several approaches to improving advising are under consideration.

In recent years the College has made it a priority to diversify the faculty. As APC considers each new proposal for a faculty position, it explicitly addresses how any new position can serve this end. With the establishment of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in 2015, search committees have had more guidance and tools at their disposal to ensure diverse candidate pools from which to select final candidates. Moreover, our search procedures have incorporated steps to promote candidate diversity and we are attempting to more thoroughly document the results of these efforts to further improve the diversity of future searches. These efforts appear to be bearing fruit: of the ten starting renewable faculty in Fall 2018, eight were individuals of color and six were women. That said, retention of faculty of color remains a challenge, in part due to other institutions luring faculty away. In the recent past, three faculty of color have left Bennington for Harvard, Indiana University, and The University of Puget Sound. Although we recognize that the reasons for these departures are varied, some being personal, others professional, we currently actively working to balance the need to maintain relative pay equity across faculty while also retaining our recent hires.

Several additional issues exist surrounding faculty work remain areas for improvement. One involves faculty compensation. As stated above, Bennington has made significant strides through efforts spanning over a decade to improve faculty salaries. We have improved the salaries of new faculty hires, to the point where we are not only competitive with peer institutions, but are higher on average. The same cannot yet be said of longer-serving faculty. Our salary schedule is compressed, with longer-serving faculty not earning what their counterparts at peer institutions do. The College is committed to addressing this disparity. A second issue involves the College's grievance policies and procedures; the Faculty Grievance Committee is an underutilized governance structure, and other means available to faculty to pursue grievances are not perceived as adequately transparent or operate in a timely enough fashion. The *Faculty Handbook* has a variety of avenues by which faculty can address grievances with colleagues, but they are awkward in practice and need review. An ongoing project in the Provost and Dean's Office is a reconfiguration of our policies, including a redefined charge of the Faculty Grievance Committee to more adroitly manage faculty grievances.

Finally, in recent years it has become apparent that the inclusion of visiting faculty into the academic milieu of the College is not as robust as it should be; upon exiting, some have reported feeling isolated and unsupported. The Provost and Dean's Office has initiated a more thorough mentoring program for visiting faculty and aims to do more to integrate these important members of our community into the life of the College. We have also taken steps to improve the support visiting faculty get from colleagues in their respective Discipline Groups.

Faculty and Academic Staff: Projection
Bennington will continue to support the faculty as they develop innovative curricula and pedagogies, pursue their professional work, advise students, and remain active members of the College community. Specifically we aim to:

- Refine and strengthen our approaches to diversifying the faculty and staff; this includes an active role by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in modifying search strategies and candidate screening practices;

- Develop assessment tools to gauge the effectiveness of faculty advising and thereby improve student experience with the Plan Process and develop appropriate support structures for faculty who would benefit from modifying their approach to this critical function;

- Build on the outcomes from the 2016 Mellon Grant to address faculty workload issues;

- Refine, streamline, and normalize procedures to address faculty grievance issues;

- Address salary compression for more senior faculty as financial conditions allow;

- Continue to work toward integrated delivery of faculty and staff support of students;

- Enhance opportunities for professional development of academic staff.

Teaching and Learning: Description

Bennington is unique among liberal arts colleges in that a particular pedagogy was envisioned at its founding: *learning by doing*. A natural offshoot of the progressive education movement in the early 20th century, the College was intended to be a place for young women to actively engage with their educations and individually shape it according to the work they wanted to produce and, through the act of working and creating, internalize and deeply absorb the relevant principles and foundations for their future academic, creative, or entrepreneurial endeavors. Obviously many things have changed about the College since its founding—most visibly, the inclusion of men and the radically enhanced diversity of students by socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and race. But the underlying pedagogy remains, reflecting strong and enduring support among faculty and administrators alike.

In the Fall of 2018, faculty were asked to articulate, in specific terms, what constitutes the Bennington Pedagogy. In addition to the commonality of many of the comments, what was affirming was the energy and engagement faculty demonstrated in the exercise. It was obvious that faculty are keenly interested in what effective teaching practices entail and they are eager to learn from each other. Some clear threads emerged from the discussion: the importance of working collaboratively; the importance of "failing" (or more aptly, the importance of learning from mistakes to grow artistically and intellectually); the critical role of faculty in providing constructive criticism; and the importance of understanding material on its own terms and with enough sophistication and creativity to ask meaningful questions that show genuine engagement. These were values shared by faculty across disciplines and backgrounds, and that speak to an approach that strives for "deep learning" to use current parlance. It is also worth noting that the common attributes faculty ascribed to a Bennington pedagogy neatly align with the Capacities, presented in Standard Four. Thus, the previously mentioned reluctance of Bennington faculty to fully embrace incorporating the Capacities in their day-to-day work appears to have more of a semantic origin than a philosophical one, suggesting that an alternative approach in clarifying their purpose may be successful.

We are excited about the opportunities a more diverse faculty, student body, and curriculum all promise: richer experiences inside and outside of the classroom; a greater sense of belonging, especially for those in historically underrepresented groups; and deeper and more genuine engagement on the part of students as they see and sense greater chances for their own success. But, as has become well understood, diversity and inclusion are distinctly different concepts and instilling an inclusive environment has its share of difficulties, for all members of the community. To this end, we have offered workshops for faculty to equip them with tools so they can skillfully lead their classes through difficult and contentious conversations. We plan to continue doing so, refining them for the benefit of new and established faculty alike. Likewise, we are working with students to help them positively navigate differences in academic, social, and residential settings.

As discussed in Standard Seven, the physical centerpiece of our campus—Commons—is re-opening in Fall 2019 after being closed for several years for extensive renovations. The third floor (which has an amazing history in the life of the College in its own right but has not been used for about 30 years) will be a space called the Forum dedicated to SCoPE (Student Collaborative Peer Education) activities that we are very excited about. Much more than a tutoring center, this space will be available for collaborative student work of all types, and will also be used by student organizations. We want the space to reflect the founding ethos of the college—we are a community of learners and this will be a community space. The Forum will be home to peer tutors for writing, research, and quantitative reasoning; Student Career Assistants; and a student-staffed, student-facing IT Help Desk.

It is difficult to overstate centrality of the concept of "community" in our ethos. A significant share of our teaching tangibly revolves around it: The Center for the Advancement of Public Action (CAPA), established since the previous self-study in 2009, has grown to be a major hub of our students' academic work. Not a discipline group in its own right, its unifying pedagogical theme is, as the name implies, action; as such, it is an ideal vehicle for students to realize the promise of our underlying philosophy of teaching and learning. Its work currently falls into five loosely defined programs: Activating Democracy, Art and Public Action, Environment and Public Action, Human Rights and Peacebuilding and, fittingly, Progressive Education. Courses taught under the CAPA umbrella are taught by a cross-section regular faculty from across the college, visiting faculty, government officials, entrepreneurs, and local experts; a small sample of include "Understanding PFOA" (supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation), "GANAS," focused on outreach to migrant workers and their families in our region, and "Future Studio," which brings together concepts of art, entrepreneurship, and technology. Faculty and staff working in CAPA have been hugely successful in securing external funding for the work, including NSF grants to support computer science education as part of our Prison Education Initiative (briefly described in Standard Four) and the aforementioned PFOA work, as well as a $1 million grant from the Mellon Foundation this year to examine food insecurity, a portion of which will go toward the establishment of a food studies curriculum.

Further demonstrating our commitment to community, we also build into every course structures that manifest the concept of "learning communities." Beyond the observation of well-publicized office hours, faculty provide time for students to meet during class time—usually near the middle of the term—to discuss the organization, teaching effectiveness, quality of feedback offered, etc. for the course. Organized and implemented through the SEPC, this important aspect of our

course evaluation process and academic culture gives students a voice in how their courses are implemented in such a way that they can shape their personal in-class experience. Faculty and students alike find the opportunity to discuss the design of courses a rewarding experience that contributes to a positive learning environment and promotes communication more generally.

Teaching and Learning: Appraisal

The commonly held principles of Bennington pedagogy briefly described above are implemented by the faculty in the context of their particular discipline groups. As such, when each group undergoes a self-study and is reviewed externally, the faculty have an opportunity to cast a critical eye on how well the curricular aims are executed and the success of their pedagogical approaches. Without exception, external reviewers are impressed by the quality of instruction they observed firsthand, the substance of the coursework offered, and the engagement of students, not only in the specific courses that happen to be observed, but in the more general structure and goals of the Bennington Plans. Moreover, these studies give each group a means by which they can re-evaluate their methods and priorities, making sure they are optimally aligned to achieve their mission.This is where the insights from external reviewers are particularly helpful, as faculty from other institutions may (and have) provide(d) fresh ideas that may improve, if not the underlying pedagogical principles, the means by which they are put into practice.

As stated above, faculty are eager to further refine their teaching and learn from each other. To make possible the improvements in teaching that many of our faculty so obviously want, over the past few years we have held a number of events to provide a forum for those discussions. Some have been in the form of luncheons hosted by APC, others break-out sessions during regularly scheduled faculty meetings and facilitated by the Mellon Fellows. We have also been experimenting with a variety of mentoring models to enculturate new faculty into the Bennington academic community. We have found that these discussions, while sometimes difficult for faculty to make time for, have been very helpful and have a discernible impact on faculty teaching.

Another avenue for faculty to get feedback on their teaching is via the course evaluation forms that were designed by the Student Educational Policies Committee (SEPC) together with the Academic Policies Committee. Unlike the teaching assessments used by many institutions, these forms are not quantitative in nature, but completely narrative. Students provide feedback on the content, organization, and effectiveness of teaching, often providing insightful suggestions for improvement. During faculty reviews in FPRC, committee members read these responses in their entirety for each faculty member under review. These inform the questions centered on teaching that the committee raises during their meeting with the faculty member. In addition, FPRC arranges for two separate classroom visits and uses the resulting reports to further inform their evaluation of the faculty member's teaching.

Regardless of the innovative pedagogy of our faculty, there is room for improvement with respect to providing students with an understanding of our practices, ways by which we can provide students with more information and clarity without imposing on faculty autonomy. For example, although external reviews provide uniformly positive feedback of teaching quality, students lack the perspective that seasoned educators bring and, as a result, they may not understand or appreciate what is happening in the classroom. This can lead to anxiety or frustration at times.

Faculty can alleviate this with more clearly articulated learning objectives and syllabi that explain the logic and trajectory of their courses. We are making an effort to have faculty explain more directly their course structures to this end.

Similarly, while Bennington faculty have confidence that students will be able to design and carry through with a unique Plan, many students do not share that degree of optimism. They can get anxious, in large part because they perceive a system that includes "secret requirements." Specifically, students pursuing plans that align closely with some discipline groups need to demonstrate advanced work as defined by that area (see Standard Four), but the exact definition of that can be elusive, vague, or confusing. We encourage students to ask questions of their faculty and advisors, but despite many invitations, some students are reluctant to do so. One of the goals of First-Year Forum is to help students overcome that anxiety and become more assertive in pursuing their plans. Plan Committees also need to be more communicative with students, addressing questions that are not asked, to make sure that students have the requisite understanding of what they are being asked to do. Importantly, the MetaReview Task Force (described in Standard Four) recognized the problems of discipline group requirements and will be forwarding specific recommendations that eliminate (or at least scale back) the extent to which discipline groups can define what constitutes advanced work for studentsSuch oversight more appropriately belongs to Plan Committees.

Along with many other liberal arts colleges, we are still developing strategies to be more inclusive in our teaching. The workshops referred to previously are a first step in this direction and it is too early to gauge their success. In the past year or two, there have been an increasing number of complaints from students around the issue of inclusivity, in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, and teaching practice, which we need to analyze and discuss as we work with faculty to be more cognizant of how our teaching fosters (or impedes) overall student success. In the short-run, we will continue developing structures to support faculty in being more cognizant of how their teaching styles, materials, and assessment methods impact students, and impact them in different ways; we will use feedback from faculty and students alike to refine those approaches as we discern their relative strengths and deficiencies.

Finally, one aspect of teaching that has bedeviled Bennington faculty and administrators for years lies in formal assessment of student outcomes. As mentioned in Standard Four, we have given much more attention to, and make explicit references to, the Capacities of a Bennington Education. As an institution we are convinced of the appropriateness of the language of and principles behind these Capacities, but how do we demonstrate student improvement in these facets of their work as they progress through our system? The Mellon Fellows and APC have done considerable work toward this end, with some early attempts at documenting progress having been implemented or tested in recent years. For example, we recently performed an audit of narrative evaluations to see how frequently and how clearly the Capacities were addressed; only 19% of a random sampling of course evaluations were readily connected to the Capacities. In addition, faculty who had students enrolled in the pilot year of First-Year Forum were asked to provide initial assessments of their student proficiency in the Capacities; this was to have formed a sort of baseline set of data to track student progress. The data were highly equivocal, however, obviating their use as a baseline to track subsequent development. Clearly, much work needs to be done in this area.

Teaching and Learning: Projection

Bennington will continue to build on its tradition of active learning and innovative pedagogy. Specifically we will:

- Articulate a set of shared pedagogical principles and explicitly connect them to the Capacities;

- Use the Capacities help new faculty implement effective teaching strategies and refine the teaching practices of experienced faculty;

- Continue supporting CAPA as an important vehicle for students to connect their academic interests and focus of their Plans to the broader community;

- Develop and foster the growth and creative use of the Peer Learning Center in Commons;

- Develop assessment techniques to appropriately gauge student progress in the Capacities of a Bennington Education;

- Continue to develop workshops to promote inclusive pedagogy and student success;

- Continue to refine First-Year Forum and other advising structures to help students more effectively design and implement their individual education plans.

STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP (FACULTY BY CATEGORY AND RANK; ACADEMIC STAFF BY CATEGORY, FALL TERM)

	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year
	(FY 2015-16)	(FY 2016-17)	(FY 2017-18)	(FY 2018-19)

Number of Faculty by Category

Full-Time	55	60	60	63
Part-Time	12	14	10	12
Adjunct				
Clinical				
Research				
Visiting	22	28	31	23
Other; specify below:				
Instrumentalists	9	9	9	10
Masters in Writing Faculty	15	14	15	16
Total	113	125	125	124

Percentage of Courses Taught by Full-Time Faculty

56.90%	55.30%	57.10%	57.90%

Number of Faculty by Rank, if applicable

Professor				
Associate				
Assistant				
Instructor				
Other; specify below:				
Total	0	0	0	0

Number of Academic Staff by Category

Librarians	4	4	4	4
Advisors	10	12	12	12
Instructional Designers				
Other; specify below:				
Total	14	16	16	16

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Grouping MW genres together to determine the number of MW classes (for the percentage of courses taught)

STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP (HIGHEST DEGREES, FALL TERM)

		3 Years Prior (FY 2015-16)	2 Years Prior (FY 2016-17)	1 Year Prior (FY 2017-18)	Current Year (FY 2018-19)
Highest Degree Earned: Doctorate					
Faculty	Professor				
	Associate				
	Assistant				
	Instructor				
	No Rank	29	33	33	33
	Other	10	9	13	12
	Total	39	42	46	45
Academic Staff	Librarians				
	Advisors			1	1
	Inst. Designers				
Other, specify					
Highest Degree Earned: Master's					
Faculty	Professor				
	Associate				
	Assistant				
	Instructor				
	No Rank	28	31	29	32
	Other	26	31	29	24
	Total	54	62	58	56
Academic Staff	Librarians	3	3	3	3
	Advisors	6	8	9	9
	Inst. Designers				
Other, specify					
Highest Degree Earned: Bachelor's					
Faculty	Professor				
	Associate				
	Assistant				
	Instructor				
	No Rank	9	9	7	9
	Other	8	10	11	11
	Total	17	19	18	20
Academic Staff	Librarians	1	1	1	1
	Advisors	4	4	2	2
	Inst. Designers				
Other, specify					

STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP (HIGHEST DEGREES, FALL TERM) (cont.)

		3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year
		(FY 2015-16)	(FY 2016-17)	(FY 2017-18)	(FY 2018-19)

Highest Degree Earned: Professional License

Faculty	Professor				
	Associate				
	Assistant				
	Instructor				
	No Rank				
	Other				
	Total	0	0	0	0
Academic Staff	Librarians				
	Advisors				
	Inst. Designers				
Other, specify					

Highest Degree Earned: Unknown

	No Rank	1	1	1	1
	Other	2	1	2	2
	Total	3	2	3	3

STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP (APPOINTMENTS, TENURE, DEPARTURES, RETIREMENTS, TEACHING LOAD FULL ACADEMIC YEAR)

	3 Years Prior		2 Years Prior		1 Year Prior		Current Year	
	(FY 2015-16)		(FY 2016-17)		(FY 2017-18)		(FY 2018-19)	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
Number of Faculty Appointed								
Professor								
Associate								
Assistant								
Instructor								
No rank	1	0	5	1	3	1	7	1
Other		14		18		23		25
Total	1	14	5	19	3	24	7	26
Number of Faculty in Tenured Positions								
Professor								
Associate								
Assistant								
Instructor								
No rank								
Other								
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Faculty Departing								
Professor								
Associate								
Assistant								
Instructor								
No rank	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	2
Other		18		13		20		29
Total	2	18	0	13	2	20	1	31
Number of Faculty Retiring								
Professor								
Associate								
Assistant								
Instructor								
No rank	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Other								
Total	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0

STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP (APPOINTMENTS, TENURE, DEPARTURES, RETIREMENTS, TEACHING LOAD FULL ACADEMIC YEAR) (cont.)

| | | 3 Years Prior | | 2 Years Prior | | 1 Year Prior | | Current Year | |
| | | (FY 2015-16) | | (FY 2016-17) | | (FY 2017-18) | | (FY 2018-19) | |
		FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
Fall Teaching Load, in credit hours									
Professor	Maximum								
	Median								
Associate	Maximum								
	Median								
Assistant	Maximum								
	Median								
Instructor	Maximum								
	Median								
No rank	Maximum	20.00	12.00	16.00	12.00	16.00	12.00	16.00	16.00
	Median	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
Other	Maximum		16.00		16.00		16.00		16.00
	Median		8.00		8.00		6.00		8.00

Explanation of teaching load if not measured in credit hours

No rank = FPRC-reviewable; Other = Visiting, Instrumentalists, MW, PEI

STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP (NUMBER OF FACULTY BY DEPARTMENT OR COMPARABLE UNIT, FALL TERM)

	3 Years Prior		2 Years Prior		1 Year Prior		Current Year	
	(FY 2015-16)		(FY 2016-17)		(FY 2017-18)		(FY 2018-19)	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
Number of Faculty by Department (or comparable academic unit)								
CAPA (and PEI)	2	4	3	4	3	6	2	7
MW		15		14		15		16
Literature	6	5	7	7	4	10	8	4
SCT	9	6	12	3	11	3	13	3
IKCLC	7		7	1	7		7	
Science/Math/Computing	9	3	9	4	10	3	9	3
Visual Arts	10	8	11	12	12	9	12	11
Music	4	6	4	7	5	5	5	3
Music - Instrumentalists		9		9		9		10
Dance/Drama	8	2	7	4	8	5	7	4
Total	55	58	60	65	60	65	63	61

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

PT = PT reviewed by FPRC, Visitors, PEI, Instrumentalists, MW

STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP (FACULTY AND ACADEMIC STAFF DIVERSITY)

For each type of diversity important to your institution (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, other), provide information on faculty and academic staff below. Use current year data.

Faculty for 18-19	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total Headcount	Headcount Goal (2030)
Category of Faculty (e.g., male/female, ethnicity categories)				
Male	30	27	57	
Female	33	34	67	
Hispanic	2		2	
Non-Hispanic:				
American Indian/Alaska Native			0	
Asian	4	6	10	
Black or African American	3	2	5	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander			0	
White	48	50	98	
Two or more races	3	3	6	
Nonresident alien	3		3	

Academic Staff	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total Headcount	Headcount Goal (specify year)
Category of Academic Staff (e.g., male/female, ethnicity categories)				
Male	5		5	
Female	11		11	
Hispanic	1		1	
Non-Hispanic:				
American Indian/Alaska Native			0	
Asian			0	
Black or African American			0	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander			0	
White	14		14	
Two or more races	1		1	
Nonresident alien			0	

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

PT = PT reviewed by FPRC, Visitors, PEI, Instrumentalists, MW

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Strengthening institutional resources has been a College priority over the last 10 years. Since the last self-study, the College has greatly reduced deferred maintenance and brought new facilities online (e.g. the Center for the Advancement of Public Action, Paran Creek Apartments, Student Center addition), completed renovations on a key building (i.e. Commons), and renovated other important spaces (e.g. Dickinson, student houses, Student Health Center). The College's ability to attract and retain employees has been enhanced through a commitment to more robustly fund retirement contributions, although the College still lags behind the contribution level at some peer institutions. Key investments have been made to dramatically upgrade the College's technological infrastructure, including the integration of important software solutions, and to improve data security. With respect to finances, while further work is needed, fundraising capacity and results have been enhanced, debt has been refinanced at a lower rate with more advantageous terms, enrollment has increased, and a capital campaign—one of the central objectives to significantly increase the institution's endowment—launched.

Human Resources: Description

Bennington College staffing levels have remained generally stable over the last decade with with fluctuations primarily to planned initiatives such as the expansion of staff in Institutional Advancement to handle the capital campaign or the addition of personnel to meet specific needs such as the establishment of an office dedicated to diversity and inclusion. As of June 2019, the College employed 83 full-time equivalent (FTE, including five MFA) faculty members and 218 FTE administrative and support staff, which includes 50 unionized staff members (all of whom are employed in either Dining Services or Buildings and Grounds). A comprehensive package of employee benefits is provided to full-time employees.

The College is committed to maintaining a robust and positive employee experience. The Human Resources staff provides support for all core areas of the employee experience including recruitment, compensation, benefits, employee and labor relations and performance management. The Office of the Provost and Dean of the College manages all aspects of the faculty experience, with the exception of benefits. In recent years, the College has increased its efforts to diversify faculty and staff. In 2018, the College appointed a Vice President for Institutional Inclusion, Equity, and Leadership Development in part to support these efforts. The College's overall efforts to increase diversity are yielding results: In 2016, diverse employees constituted approximately 8% of staff and 18% of faculty; those measures are now 11% for staff and 23% for faculty.

The College has taken great strides to ensure that its compensation and benefit programs remain competitive and attractive to both prospective and current faculty and staff. Several years ago the College engaged a consultant to conduct a full compensation study in order to build a compensation structure that established a clear, credible framework for making salary decisions that are appropriate, fair and equitable for staff positions. The Provost and Dean's Office tracks yearly faculty salaries in relation to other institutions, and the institution has made significant progress in moving faculty salaries to a more comparable position over the last decade.

As part of the overall framework for the employee experience, the College conducts training programs to ensure that managers understand and remain compliant with relevant employment law. New hires are welcomed with a robust onboarding experience including a written offer of employment, an in-person new hire orientation session and access to the College's human resources information system which provides access to personal and employment data allowing for a clear understanding of the terms of employment. The human resources information system integrates payroll, human resources, and benefits administration for faculty and staff. Human Resources provides employees with a copy of the Administrative Staff Handbook (non-union staff) or the Collective Bargaining Agreement (union staff); union staff members also receive additional policy information—relevant policies not contained within the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The College requires employees to review and sign for employment-related policy information, thus indicating that they have read and understand all required policies. The College updates the Administrative Staff Handbook periodically in response to employee feedback, to reflect changing needs of the organization as well as changes in relevant state and federal laws. The terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement were negotiated for a four-year period; that Agreement expired on June 30, 2019. The College has successfully negotiated a contract with the union at each expiry. Policies and benefit programs and information are posted online and readily available to employees. Most recently, the College actively engaged with employees around policy changes related to pets on campus, community engagement, and holidays. Through a combination of established grievance policies and informal structures, the College offers employees an opportunity to share concerns with individual managers, Human Resources, and College administration. The College's policies provide for the fair redress of grievances.

While funding for external conferences has been limited in recent years, the College encourages employees to seek out cost-effective professional development opportunities through webinars, membership associations, and attendance at local/regional training workshops. Additional opportunities are available through educational benefits that are offered both on our own campus and at neighboring colleges. The College conducts on-site training workshops that cover a range of topics including, among others, supervisory training, team-building skills, communication skills, diversity/inclusion, performance management, social justice, FERPA, health/safety/wellness, stress management, computer/technical skills, sexual harassment/misconduct, and conflict/negotiation skills.

The College's performance management process was strengthened over the last several years and a new performance evaluation tool was introduced. As part of the initial implementation of the new performance management system, managers were required to attend a performance management training program to learn how to engage with employees around the performance process and how to conduct a meaningful performance evaluation. The College generally assesses employees' performance after an initial probation period and annually thereafter. The expectation is that the employee and the manager have an opportunity to reflect on the employee's work and to identify areas for growth/development. As needed, Human Resources staff coach managers on developing and executing performance improvement plans and identifying training or development opportunities.

Human Resources: Appraisal

The College has effectively evaluated compensation and benefit programs to be able to recruit and retain top talent. While the College has challenges relative to attracting experienced professionals to the rural Southern Vermont region, the College continues to yield a relatively strong applicant pool and is generally able to secure top applicants. To mitigate recruitment challenges, the College engages in partnerships with regional employers, including colleges/universities and other employers/organizations, to assist with developing a qualified pipeline of talent and to assist prospective candidates' spouses/partners with identifying employment opportunities, which are often limited. The College's success in recruitment is evidenced by strong faculty and staff retention.

Bennington strives to provide a competitive benefits package, although the rapidly rising cost of health insurance has been a particular challenge in recent years. From FY 2016 through FY 2020, the annual cost to the College of the employee medical insurance has risen $773,000 or 37.7%. As part of the ongoing review of medical plan benefits, the College works collaboratively with a benefits consultant to analyze its benefit offerings and trends to ensure that plans meet employee needs and remain competitively priced. The implementation of plan design changes have allowed the institution to continue to meet the various benefit needs of employees (relative to both plan type and overall premium cost) while mitigating the impact of cost increases to the institution.

The College also compares other benefit plans to peer institutions to understand where its plans are with respect to peer market alignment and competitiveness. In response to an analysis of peer market data made approximately eight years ago, the Board approved increasing the College's 403(b) retirement plan contribution for employees from 5% to 7.5% over a period of four years. Additionally, in support of ensuring that benefits remain competitive, the College has partnered with the Association of Vermont Independent Colleges (AVIC) to analyze the benefit of insurance aggregation of member schools.

Human Resources: Projection

- Human Resources will be studying different health care options to identify potential solutions that can better help the College contain health care cost increases while meeting the needs of the College's employees.

- The Human Resources department will be continuing benchmarking employee compensation and benefits to ensure that the College remains competitive.

- The College will continue its commitment and efforts to increase diversity among its faculty and staff.

Financial Resources: Description

The Business Office is central to the College's efforts to steward its resources, providing information to the Board and members of the College community to facilitate the effective management of the College's finances and other resources. Functions provided by this department include payroll, accounts payable, accounting, finance, treasury management, and compilation of financial results. The department is staffed by appropriately qualified personnel; notably, both the Vice President for Finance and Administration and the Controller are CPAs with experience in higher education prior to their employment at Bennington.

A new accounting software system, Intacct, was implemented in 2015, which enhanced financial reporting and the tracking of restricted funds and other dimensions that department heads wish to track. Budget reports can be pulled in real time directly by departments, enabling managers to better track and make financial decisions. In the last two years, the College moved its payroll processing to ADP, the leading provider of these services, and is implementing its human resources information system to enhance online services to employees.

Financial statements are prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Standards (GAAP) for higher education, and the College's financial statements and federal awards are audited annually by Crowe Horwath, a firm with a national footprint and a robust higher education practice. With the experience of the Vice President and Controller, the College's 990 is prepared internally and circulated to the entire board prior to filing. Financial reports, including comparisons to budget and the prior year, are provided to the Board at least quarterly. The Business Office also maintains detailed cash projections by week for up to a year, enabling the institution to closely monitor its cash position.

The institution maintains written financial policies and a robust system of internal controls. Financial policies are periodically reviewed and updated by the Business Office. Appropriate separation of duties is recognized in these policies and maintained. The adequacy of these controls is verified by the fact that Crowe Horwath has not noted or reported any internal controls deficiencies in its audit. Further, the Single Audit report for Federal Awards did not have any findings cited during recent years.

The Board and its committees are appropriately engaged in financial management, planning and governance for the College. The Board approves the annual operating and capital budgets at its meeting held in conjunction with graduation each year (end of May or early June). The annual increases in tuition and fees are approved by the full Board after review and recommendation by the Finance Committee.

In addition to standard reports on financial results, a variety of other information is used for financial planning. For example, at the December 2018 Board meeting the results of multi-year models, which projected net tuition income using different scenarios, were discussed. In adopting the College's Ten-Year Goals in 2015 (see Standard Two), the Board considered the impact of different levels of student enrollment and varying amounts of endowment on the need for current-use fundraising to support operations. The result was that a broad consensus was built that the College needed to both increase its enrollment as well as the amount in its endowment as part of its strategic plans. This conclusion was also reviewed at the December 2018 Board meeting and the updated information confirmed that these twin goals were still valid. At least annually the Board receives a detailed report from Admissions at which time the financial aid strategies, trends, and the makeup of the student body are discussed.

Financial matters are brought to the Budget and Finance Committee prior to consideration by the full board. This committee reviews more detailed information and provides recommendations to the Board regarding increases in tuition and fees, budgets, financing, long-term contracts, sale of assets and financial trends including cash projections. Multi-year projections are used to inform decisions and to better understand financial dynamics.

The Investment Committee actively monitors the investment performance of the College's endowment, which is managed by outside firms using an outsourced-CIO model. In 2015, the Investment Committee issued a request for proposal (RFP) for investment management services, which culminated with the selection of Glenmede, the investment advisor for the Pew Charitable Trusts and Pew family, as the new manager for the endowment. The Investment Policy Statement was reviewed and updated in 2016 with input from Glenmede. Investments are diversified with the portfolio including domestic and international equities, fixed income and marketable alternative investments. Investment performance is evaluated in comparison to benchmarks on an ongoing basis, and the Investment Committee meets regularly with Glenmede. In 2016, after the consideration of various forms of socially responsible investing (SRI), the Committee approved the incorporation of environmental, societal, and governance considerations (ESG) into the investment selection process for 20% of the portfolio. The performance of the ESG component of the portfolio has met or exceeded the performance of the non-ESG portfolio and, as a result, the Investment Committee approved an increase in the percent invested using ESG precepts to 25% in 2018.

The Audit and Risk Committee handles institutional compliance as well as evaluates risk and strategies to minimize risk. After the completion of an RFP process to consider firms to provide auditing services, Crowe Horwath was appointed as the external auditors effective with the June 30, 2016 fiscal year (FY). The Committee typically meets twice each year with the external auditors to discuss the audit plan and, later, to receive the Crowe Horwath's report and discuss any findings. This Committee has also delved into different areas of risk for the institution such as Title IX compliance and data security.

The College's Ten-Year Goals have shaped and informed fundraising priorities, including the need to increase the College's endowment and raise funds for campus renewal and operations. The College currently has a capital campaign underway, which was publicly launched in March 2019. To properly staff for the capital campaign, the College has increased staffing in Institutional Advancement in recent years to its current 20-member team. The records of Institutional Advancement and the Business Office are reconciled monthly to ensure reporting of gifts as well as appropriate tracking of restricted donations.

Financial Resources: Appraisal

Over the five years ending June 30, 2019, the College's financial situation has been stable. Net tuition revenue grew from a low of $21.3 million in FY 2015 to $25.5 million in FY 2019. In FY 2014, the College incurred a large operating loss as shown in the chart below due to several factors, the largest of which was the write-off of a $9.2 million balance on a $20 million major gift pledge that was originally recorded in FY 2008. While the College appropriately removed the pledge from its balance sheet, the donor intends to fulfill this remainder as a planned gift. Other factors contributing to the large loss in FY 2014 was a drop in enrollment and a decline in donations during the transition to a new president. After FY 2014, enrollment and fundraising rebounded and the institution reported operating surpluses in four of the next five years. The cumulative net surplus for the years from FY 2015 through FY 2019 was $14.6 million.

Core Operating Deficit (in millions)
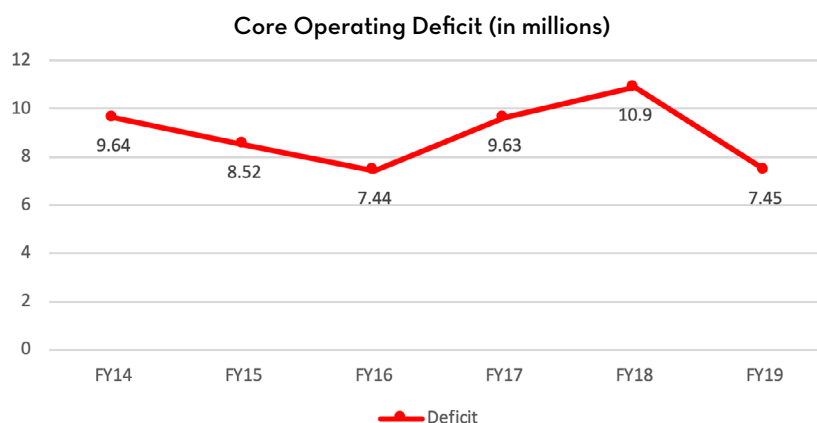
The College has been grappling with issues similar to those facing many other private liberal arts colleges over the last decade. Simply put, for many private institutions increases in net tuition income have not kept up with increases in operating costs. While this may seem a simple statement, the reasons underlying this condition, such as enrollment and demographic challenges and rising discount rates, are complicated. The net effect of these dynamics over time has been an increase in the operating deficit that must be covered yearly by current use fundraising. The core operating deficit (which excludes depreciation and the pledge write-off in FY 2014) has fluctuated over the six-year period as follows:

FY 2014	$9.64 million
FY 2015	$8.52 million
FY 2016	$7.44 million
FY 2017	$9.63 million
FY 2018	$10.90 million
FY 2019	$7.45 million

Enhancing the College's financial situation has been an important focus in recent years, and the actions taken and strategies adopted have positioned the College to better respond to these challenges.

When President Mariko Silver assumed leadership of the institution in 2013 the Board and College community took the opportunity to consider the future direction of the College. New long-term objectives were carefully considered and the College adopted the *Ten-Year Goals*, of which one of the three main pillars is "Ensuring Financial Sustainability." As part of the financial planning prior to the formal adoption of these goals, the Business Office created financial models that showed the projected operating deficit at different levels of enrollment combined with different levels of funding available from varying sizes of the endowment. A graphical representation of this information clearly showed that, not surprisingly, the institution needed to both increase the size of its undergraduate enrollment as well as increase its endowment in order to enhance the College's financial situation. While the finding was not revolutionary, the clarity that the financial models brought to the discussion enabled consensus to be built that both actions were important strategic objectives.

Planned growth in the student body also had profound implications for the College's physical plant. The existing campus was sized for a maximum student body of 600 to 650, with insufficient space for student housing, dining, and classroom space at higher levels of enrollment. The renovation of Commons, funded through the USDA financing, has solved the capacity constraints posed by limited classroom and dining space. The College believes that, with the renovated Commons, the current classroom and dining configuration can support an undergraduate student body of up to 1,000. A renovated and revitalized Commons should also increase the appeal of the campus to prospective students, as this facility is the one single building that every student uses every day.

Over the next several years, the College embarked on a number of important initiatives to further the twin goals of growing its enrollment and building a more significant endowment, all while recognizing that the College's financial situation continued to require substantial fundraising for current use donations to balance the budget. The College underwent a study of its branding as well as developed a new web site, which launched in the late spring of 2016, to improve its marketing to prospective students. New staff were hired in Admissions, and marketing strategies were revised. Visits to high schools increased dramatically.

As further detailed in the discussion of physical resources, the College also had to address a shortage of student housing to support its long-term goal of growing its enrollment. In this case, the College resolved this issue through the lease of apartment units, called Paran Creek Apartments, on the edge of campus. The addition of this different style of housing also enhanced the retention of students in College housing, bolstering housing revenues as well as providing appropriate housing for the post baccalaureate students, which the College could not house prior to the addition of Paran Creek. The Paran Creek Apartments lease contains a purchase option that the College may exercise if it decides that Paran Creek should be a permanent addition to the College's student housing options. The College has just completed the second year of a five-year lease commitment and will need to decide if it wants to discontinue the rental of this space, purchase the facility or negotiate an extension of the lease. With the addition of Paran Creek, the College projects that it can house an undergraduate enrollment of up to 751. Enrollment above this number will require other solutions, which could entail the conversion of faculty houses to student use, the building or leasing of more apartments for students, or allowing more students to live off-campus.

Enrollment Trends, Outlook, and Net Tuition Income

The bulk of the College's tuition and fees come from traditional undergraduate students. Matriculated undergraduate enrollment in recent years (excluding non-degree students, dual enrollment students, and students in our Prison Education Initiative) has been fluctuating from a low of 613 in Fall 2013 to a high of 717 in Fall 2017. Fall 2019 undergraduate enrollment is currently expected to be 683.

In addition to undergraduates, there are two programs that make smaller contributions to the College's net tuition income: a nationally-ranked, low residency Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Writing degree program and a post baccalaureate program to prepare students for medical school (see Standard Four). Both of these programs experienced some enrollment declines in recent years; however, under new leadership each program rebounded in enrollment in FY 2019.

The MFA program has increased its enrollment from a recent low of approximately 75 to almost 100. The numbers in the following chart include all degree programs in order to provide a comprehensive picture of net tuition income.

Net Tuition Income (with discount rate)
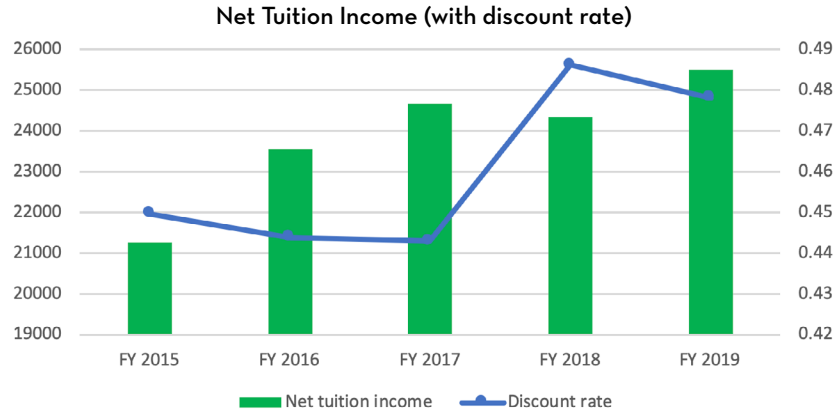
In FY 2010, net tuition income reached $21.9 million. After struggling for many years to increase, net tuition income did grow in recent years, peaking at $25.5 million in FY 2019. Unfortunately, the increases have not been regular or, on the whole, kept up with normal increases in operating costs.

Like most private institutions, Bennington College's discount rate (including fees from room and board) has increased significantly in recent years as shown on the above chart, rising from 45.1% in FY 2010 to 61.6% in FY 2018. In FY 2019, the College experienced an improvement in the discount rate, with the rate falling 1.1% from the prior year to 60.5%. Controlling the discount rate is expected to be an ongoing challenge. A significant part of Bennington's challenge in managing its discount rate is that the depth of the applicant pool does not allow the College to easily control the discount rate. The College needs more applications to be able to better control the rate.

The College is currently expecting an undergraduate student enrollment of 683 for Fall 2019, a decline from 696 in the previous fall. Additionally, securing the incoming student class required more aid than in prior years with the overall discount rate increasing to over 66%. Although the financial impact of the enrollment and discount rate changes in the undergraduate population has been partially offset by enrollment increases in the MFA in Writing and post baccalaureate programs, the net effect is still a decline of $2.3 million in net tuition revenue for this fiscal year. The full impact of this decline has been mitigated by increases in other revenues, most notably conference revenues from the Middlebury Language Schools (see below) and an increase in the spending policy amount due to past increases in the value of the endowment. Considering the other sources of income, total income is budgeted to decrease by approximately $700 thousand compared to FY 2019. As one would expect, this has put additional pressure on the need to raise unrestricted funds for operation. The Board understands this need and is committed to ensuring the College gets the funding it requires for its operations.

As also discussed in Standard Five, this past year has been one of transition in the Admissions Office, with a new vice president and a number of new staff members. While overall enrollment has been relatively stable, it has not been growing as imagined as part of the College's strategic plan. Furthermore, with increases in the discount rate, net tuition income has not kept up with increases in operating expenses, requiring the College to raise significant donations for current use to fund its operations.

Fundraising

Helping to offset the challenges to growing net tuition income, the College has increased donations from alumni and parents to support operations as well as made significant headway towards the goal of increasing its endowment. Further, Bennington is innovating in its approaches to fundraising, expanding beyond alumni and parent donors through its partnership agenda, creating a new senior VP level role to lead this essential work (see Standard Three). As previously mentioned, in keeping with its *Ten-Year Goals*, the College planned and implemented a capital campaign with the quiet phase of the campaign starting July 1, 2014. The public phase commenced in March 2019 and the campaign is expected to run another few years. To implement the campaign, a number of staff were added to the Advancement Office over the last few years to increase the number of gift officers and to add new skills, such as specialists in planned giving and annual fund giving. Consultants were engaged to help with campaign planning and to help determine the size of the campaign. The priorities for the capital campaign were driven by the strategic goals articulated in the College's *Ten-Year Goals*.

The College has been fortunate to have a number of committed major donors over the years who have generously supported the institution. A necessary goal of the campaign has been to broaden the support of the College to cultivate more donors at the $1 million-and-above level, and there has been notable progress in this regard. In the five years ending June 30, 2014, which precedes the launch of the campaign on July 1, 2014, the College had a total of six donations that represented a new commitment of $1 million or above. In the five years ending June 30, 2019, after the launch of the campaign, the number of donations at or above $1 million was 23.

The overall success of the College's fundraising efforts is apparent in the amount of contributions reported in its financial statements. In the five year period ending on June 30, 2014 (prior to the launch of the campaign), the average recorded contribution was $8.34 million per year. In the four year period ending on June 30, 2018, the average recorded contribution per year was $14.97 million. It should be noted that the financial statements do not reflect all of the progress made in fundraising in recent years. Currently, the College has received approximately $5.2 million in written pledges as part of the capital campaign that do not meet the standard for recording in financial statements.

A key goal of the campaign is to have at least $100 million total investments and pledges to the endowment by the end of the campaign. Including pledges and bequests in writing to date, the total of investments and commitments to the endowment exceeds $50 million as of the date of this report. Further progress is expected as the campaign engages more alumni and parents during its public phase.

Although increasing the endowment is an important priority, raising funds to support operations remains critical. The College's donors have historically strongly supported operations, knowing that the institution does not have a large endowment providing income to help cover the operating deficit. Below is a chart of the cash received that is available to fund operations (i.e. excluding gifts to the endowment). The amounts include unrestricted and temporarily restricted gifts, as the College does not solicit or accept restricted donations that do not align with institutional plans or priorities, as well as distributions from trusts that represent the culmination of planned giving efforts in the past.

FY 2013	$7.6 million
FY 2014	$9.1 million
FY 2015	$9.0 million
FY 2016	$18.8 million
FY 2017	$11.2 million
FY 2018	$11.1 million
FY 2019	$11.9 million

The outlook for fundraising in FY 2020 remains strong. Most notably, a $12.0 million pledge from a trustee was received and recorded in July 2019. Other multi-million dollar donations are expected to be received in the current fiscal year.

Changes in Financing and Debt Service Discussion

The refinancing of the College's debt in 2017 contributed to the College's financial stability in recent years. As detailed in prior reports filed with NECHE, starting with the 2014 fiscal year, the College was not meeting certain financial covenants in its debt agreements with TD Bank relating to bonds issued in 2008 and 2009. Although TD Bank provided waivers without charge, the situation increased institutional risk. As detailed in the annual report filed in 2017, the College refinanced its existing bond debt through interim financing through notes issued by the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) based on a financing commitment obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Community Facilities program, which provides financing at favorable rates to non-profit entities and agencies in rural areas. The USDA loan, which will close after the completion of renovations to Commons, will have favorable terms—a 35-year term at a 2.375% interest rate with no financial ratio covenants required. The only significant covenant is that the USDA has the right to approve additional indebtedness, a common requirement given the level of long-term funding that the USDA will be providing. Further, the College was able to include in the financing funds to renovate Commons, which remains central to the College's plans to grow its enrollment (and therefore revenue).

Through the USDA approval process, the USDA requested that some piece of the overall financing come from their guaranteed loan fund so, in addition to a $47.575 direct loan from the USDA, there is a $5.0 million loan from TD Bank, which has a 90% guarantee from the USDA. The loan from TD Bank has no financial ratio covenants. One major benefit of the refinancing is that the debt of the College is held by a friendly government agency with a mission, rather than a for-profit financial institution with shareholders.

As mentioned above, the USDA direct loan will close following the completion of the Commons renovation with the proceeds going to redeem the VEDA notes and is on track to close this fall. The principal of the VEDA notes does not amortize during the issuance period, and the interest due on the notes through their maturity date, which is July 1, 2020, was escrowed at closing in order to obtain an investment grade rating from Moody's. The monthly payments on the TD Bank loan due during the period that the VEDA notes are outstanding were also escrowed in order to position the College to get a favorable rating from Moody's. As a result, the College has not had to fund any debt service payments from its operating cash flow since September 2017.

After the redemption of the VEDA notes, the College will have to start making monthly debt service payments of $210,972, which includes the monthly payment on the direct loan, the monthly contribution to a USDA reserve fund, as well as the monthly payment on the TD Bank loan. The College's financial plan for FY 2020 contemplates that the debt service payments, which total $2.53 million, will commence.

Other Actions Taken to Enhance Financial Results

In recent years, the College has taken a variety of actions to bolster its financial condition and resources, in keeping with the third pillar of our *Ten-Year Goals*, "Ensuring Financial Sustainability." First, the College has been careful to control the increase in its operating costs. The following chart displays the core operating costs of the College—excluding expenditures funded by external grants and costs related to the Advancement office, which significantly increased in recent years due to the additional staffing needed to conduct the capital campaign. The success of fundraising efforts is discussed above; however, the increase in Advancement masks the results of the College's work to monitor and control increases in its core operations.

Operating Expenses Excluding Advancement

FY 2014	$35.117 million
FY 2015	$34.322 million
FY 2016	$35.234 million
FY 2017	$37.063 million
FY 2018	$37.966 million

The data show that the average increase for the core operating costs rose an average of just 2.0% per year. Furthermore, this result was obtained during a period of rapidly escalating medical insurance costs (which increased 37.7% over four years), as well as an increase of .5% in each of the first two years to bring the College's retirement plan contribution up to 7.5%. The results reflect the effort that the College has made to pare costs in many other areas to achieve this result. While the operating deficit has fluctuated in recent years, the focus on controlling expenses has aided the College in dealing with the challenges in growing its net tuition income.

Second, the College has undertaken a concerted partnership campaign—akin to and in conjunction with the comprehensive capital campaign—to expand Bennington's network, heighten the College's visibility and reputation, and bring new philanthropic resources / revenue to the College. These include long-term partnerships with operating foundations to develop and

operate programs jointly that benefit Bennington students (Lucille Lortel Foundation Fellowships in Theatre, Museum Fellows Term) and new initiatives like Art for Access which celebrates the College's visual arts legacy network, brings new art assets to the College, and creates a stream of support for scholarships by selling select works at regular intervals. The initiative was launched in Fall 2018 in partnership with Christie's with the sale of five works (given many years ago with the express intention to benefit the College financially) which yielded $3.1 million for scholarships. An Art for Access Committee was established under the direction of two trustees and, as hoped, the success of Art for Access has spurred many recent donations of art to the College, which can be sold at a later date.

Another partnership that is key to this effort and to enhancing revenue is our new relationship with Middlebury Language Schools. In February 2019, an agreement was executed with Middlebury College in which Bennington committed to host a number of Middlebury's well-known language schools for an eight-week period each summer. Starting in the summer of 2020, the presence of the Language Schools will dramatically increase the utilization of the College's campus during the summer. The financial improvement, after consideration of the projected costs, is approximately $700 thousand per year compared with the net result of the College's past conference activities. It is important to note that the renovation of Commons was critical to Bennington being able to host the language schools because, without the addition of the classrooms in Commons, the College did not have the number of modern classrooms that is needed by Middlebury.

The relationship with Middlebury has other provisions favorable to the Bennington community. Middlebury has committed to providing three Bennington students generous scholarships to attend any of their language schools. Also, Bennington faculty and students will be considered for short-term employment opportunities with the language schools on our campus or at Middlebury.

Financial Resources: Projection

Although in recent years the College has held enrollment relatively steady, resolved loan defaults through favorable financing through the USDA, and had notable success in its capital campaign, this progress has been largely offset by continued increases in the College's discount rate, causing the College to continue its heavy reliance on current use fundraising to balance its budget. The College clearly has more work to do to achieve its goal of long-term financial sustainability.

A projection of other important matters impacting financial resources includes:

- The Admissions team is refining its recruitment strategies to increase the number of applications and reduce the discount rate (also discussed in Standard Five). We will also continue to focus on retention initiatives to grow enrollment (as discussed in Standard Eight.)

- Advancement will be continuing progress on meeting the goals of the capital campaign, including securing more commitments to build the College's endowment and fund the operating deficit.

- In FY 2020, Middlebury College will hold its first language school sessions at the Bennington College campus, dramatically increasing the utilization of the campus during the summers and increasing conference revenues. In the next year, we will explore other opportunities to build additional revenue streams that continue to shift our dependence on revenue from tuition and fundraising.

- We will continue to pursue revenue from partnerships and foundations through programs that also enhance our education.

- The resumption of debt service payments will occur at some point in FY 2020 after the closing of the USDA direct loan as discussed above.

- In conjunction with the long-term planning of the physical plant, the College will have to determine if it wishes to exercise its purchase option for the Paran Creek Apartments.

- Given the changes in the environment of higher education since the adoption of the *Ten-Year Goals*, the Board will also be studying whether such goals should be modified in terms of the enrollment or endowment goals to put the College on a more sound financial footing.

Physical Resources: Description

The Bennington College campus, comprised of approximately 360 acres of rolling fields and forested land in southwestern Vermont, is renowned for the remarkable beauty of its landscape as well as its architecture. Of 63 campus buildings, 35 structures—dating from 1769 to 1945—are currently included as part of a state-designated Historic District by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. In addition to these early examples of vernacular and Colonial Revival architecture, Post 1950's development of the campus resulted in several exemplary works of mid-century International Style modernism, which are currently being considered for inclusion (along with the earlier buildings on the state register) in the National Register of Historic Places. Beyond the main campus, which straddles the boundary between the Village of North Bennington and the Town of Bennington, the College owns and maintains an additional 80 acres of land at the President's residence in neighboring Shaftsbury.

Growth in enrollment and the number of staff has occurred over the last decade, and the physical plant of the College has expanded in response. In 2011, the Elizabeth Coleman Center for the Advancement of Public Action ("CAPA") opened in support of a major curricular initiative. In 2016, the College purchased and renovated a 5-bedroom home on Prospect Street in North Bennington to fill a need for more shared faculty housing. In spring of 2017, the College leased office space in downtown Bennington to house its Institutional Advancement offices, which (in support of the current campaign) had expanded staffing beyond the limits of their on-campus offices. In the fall of the same year, the College also entered into an agreement to lease a newly developed residential building adjacent to the campus in North Bennington, providing capacity (85 beds in 24 individual apartments) to support the growth of student enrollment beyond current on-campus housing capacity. In order to integrate this new housing initiative—known as the Paran Creek Apartments—with the main campus, the College purchased three small parcels of land between the campus edge and the new building, and constructed a paved and lighted pedestrian/cycling path which opened simultaneous with the apartments. And in 2018, the College received the gift of the Robert Frost Stone House Museum, a historic 1790's farmstead on

seven acres in Shaftsbury, where Robert Frost lived during one of his most prolific periods. The College now operates the museum and is developing programs to connect curricular initiatives with the site and its rich history. Taken together, these projects have served to expand and deepen the connections between the College and the surrounding community, which has been a positive aspect of the institution's growth. Most recently, renovations have been completed on Commons, a central building on campus, which has dramatically increased classroom space as well as revitalized the primary dining facility on campus.

Physical Resources: Appraisal

Bennington College's campus encompasses over 500,000 occupiable square feet of space in 59 buildings (additional support and storage buildings are not included in this count). Of this total square footage, approximately 51% is dedicated to academic and administrative program uses, 30% to student residential space, 11% to social and dining space, with the remainder dedicated to faculty housing, guest housing and support buildings. Since 2009, the College has invested strategically and significantly in its physical resources in order to keep pace with changing institutional needs, as well as to maintain and enhance the buildings and landscape that comprise its extraordinary setting for living and learning. Over the last decade, the College has completed nearly $68 million dollars in major capital improvements across all areas of physical resources, including housing, academic and support buildings, infrastructure, and landscape. New projects completed over the last decade have dramatically expanded the capacity of the physical campus to support its mission, while preserving and enhancing the unique character of the place itself.

Academic facilities

Bennington's campus provides a rich array of resources supporting its educational mission, distributed among 16 buildings, providing approximately 360 square feet per student of academic space alone (256,000 for 720 students). This generosity of space allows students to pursue their interests outside of the classroom unrestrained by limits of space or resources, and the Bennington experience is characterized by the creative ways in which students utilize the campus for intellectual and artistic exploration. Classrooms at Bennington tend to be intimate and oriented around interaction and conversation; out of 57 classroom spaces on campus, only three are conventional tiered lecture-type spaces; the remainder are flexible, open floor plan spaces that can be adapted to support the range of teaching and work styles that characterize the faculty's diverse approach to classroom dynamics. The recently completed Commons renovation added 15 new, fully mediated classrooms across a range of sizes, expanding the College's classroom space to allow for the growth of the student body (up to 1000).

For an institution of its size, Bennington's spaces and resources for pursuing the visual and performing arts are unparalleled. The sprawling, 120,000 square foot Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) complex—completed in 1974 and constantly evolving to keep pace with the times—is the vibrant hub of arts activity on campus. In the Visual Arts wings of VAPA, studios for painting, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking and architecture exist alongside fully outfitted shops for working with wood, metal and other materials utilizing both manual and state-of-the-art digital techniques. Computer labs, darkrooms studios, and a small theatre for screenings, all support work in video, animation and photography. The College continues to invest in maintaining and improving this vital facility. Over the last decade, VAPA has received upgrades

to its ventilation systems, lighting and exterior envelope (roofing and exterior windows)—dramatically improving the building's energy footprint—in addition to several targeted interior renovations of discrete spaces. The ceramics kiln building, which supports a wide range of glazing and firing techniques, received significant upgrades to its working and storage spaces in 2018.

The Dickinson Science Building—which includes classrooms, wet labs, computer labs and a variety of other facilities supporting the scientific disciplines—was the subject of a comprehensive, phased renovation from 2012-2016. The renovation included a complete overhaul of the building's mechanical systems (including the addition of air conditioning), renovations to all public spaces and circulation systems to enhance accessibility and aesthetics, new chemistry teaching labs, chemical storage and handling facilities, and two new state-of-the art environmental chambers for biology and ecology experiments.

New facilities and major renovations since 2009 have expanded the range and capacities of academic space on campus. In 2010, a comprehensive renovation of the former Early Childhood Center created a new venue for teaching and study, focused around two large tiered lecture-style classrooms. This change spurred the renovation of two adjacent buildings over the next several years, including the Word and Image Lab, a teaching space and letterpress printing studio completed in 2014, and the new Student Health Center, completed in 2017. In 2011, the donor-funded $20 million CAPA—a complex of three structures providing classroom, meeting, office and lodging space for innovative curricular and institutional initiatives—was completed, transforming a neglected portion of the campus. This facility has since become a vibrant hub for campus and community meetings, classes and symposia.

Most recently, the renovation of the Commons building—completed in summer 2019 after two years of construction—created a new hub for academic programming on campus through its comprehensive reimagining of this historic 1931 structure which served as the central and founding building of the campus. The holistic renovation provides nearly 45,000 square feet of revitalized social, dining and academic space serving the entire campus community, including the conversion of 13,000 square feet of previously underutilized 3rd floor space into state-of-the-art, multi-functional classrooms and academic space. Central to the third floor is a space dedicated to student peer learning—an open, flexible environment defined by furniture and technology that invites students to collaborate and learn together. As a whole, this project, which is critical to increasing the campus' capacity to support a growing student body and expanding curriculum, adds 15 new classrooms along with a completely redesigned dining hall, new café and bakery, campus bookstore, and a range of social, study and meeting spaces. The redesigned Commons embodies Bennington's vision of a holistic live/learn environment, integrating spaces for academic and social pursuits directly alongside fundamental activities of daily life within a single, dynamic whole.

A recent fire at one of the College's primary academic and administrative buildings—the historic Barn building—is providing an opportunity to re-imagine and rebuild this central facility. On April 30th, 2019, during repair and repainting of the building's exterior, a siding nail inadvertently nicked an electrical wire within the wall, initiating a fire that damaged over 8000 square feet of space in this two-story wood frame building, including spaces housing the President's Office, Communications Office, campus bookstore, classrooms and conference

rooms, as well as 13 faculty offices. The College has been able to re-house these programs temporarily, and is currently planning the reconstruction of this wing of the Barn, envisioning the project as the initial phase of a holistic renovation of the building. The project, expected to be funded by a combination of insurance money and private donations, will dramatically enhance the building's capacity to host a variety of central campus functions, including improved accessibility, infrastructure, and technology. We are currently in the design phase, with construction tentatively scheduled to being in 2020.

In concert with investments in technology, equipment and other resources, the renovation and expansion of the College's academic spaces over the last decade have allowed the College to support a growing student body alongside new curricular initiatives. Through targeted improvements to its core facilities and intelligent space planning and utilization, the institution is in a position to continue this trajectory without the need for additional academic space.

Residential Facilities

Bennington's student housing model is unique and fundamental to the culture of the institution, consisting of 21 small residential buildings which each house fewer than 40 students. These buildings, arranged in clusters by typology, are occupied by a mix of students from all class years. While each house varies in configuration, all include a mix of double and single rooms, shared bathrooms, common rooms, kitchen and laundry facilities. In 2017, in response to the need to accommodate a growing student body, the College introduced a new housing venue—the Paran Creek Apartments— which offers a new housing model based on three-to-five person apartments, each with its own full kitchen, bathrooms and living rooms. This residential building is leased by the College on a site adjacent to the campus and connected by a purpose-built pedestrian and cycling path. The five-year term of the lease includes an option to buy, allowing the College to test this alternative student living arrangement while it evaluates enrollment trends and financial considerations for a period of time and while deciding how best to accommodate student housing needs in the long term. With the addition of this 85-bed facility, the College currently has the capacity to house between 760-790 students based on current occupancy models. As the enrollment trajectory over the next several years develops, the College may choose to pursue the addition of new on-campus housing to augment its current capacity if needed.

While the College has not constructed new residential facilities on campus in nearly 20 years (the last housing built on campus were the three houses designed by Kyu Sung Woo, completed in 2000), it has made significant investments in maintaining and improving existing housing stock. Exterior and interior upgrades to the existing houses—including ADA-compliant renovations of bathrooms and kitchens in most houses, as well as comprehensive exterior renovations of the original "Colonial" houses and the 1968 "Barnes" houses—have allowed the College to maintain a high quality student living experience. As evidence, Bennington is consistently ranked by the Princeton Review in the Top 10 for Best College Dorms (#8 in 2018).

Commons Related Renovations

The renovation of the Commons building, and the need to host its critical program functions elsewhere during the 2-year project, catalyzed several other major projects on campus, which will have a long-term benefit to the institution. The first of these was the complete redesign and renovation of a circa-1900 agricultural building (most recently used as faculty apartments) into the new Student Health Center. This brand-new facility provides expanded capacity

for Bennington's Health Services and Psychological Services programs, as well as office and program space for Student Life's Director of Health Promotion—all in a beautifully designed and environmentally efficient structure in a central campus location. Separately, the need to provide a temporary venue for the College's dining services spurred a renovation and 4000 square-foot addition to the Student Center building (originally built in 2006), which filled an immediate need for the duration of the renovation, but also laid the groundwork for an imaginative reworking of that facility, developed in concert with current students through a Fall 2018 course. This renovation, currently underway, creates a vibrant new multi-purpose space for student-centered programming on campus.

Safety, Accessibility, and Sustainability

The many capital projects over the last decade have enabled the College to make great strides in improving the accessibility and safety of its facilities. The Commons renovation alone has added 15 new accessible classrooms and significantly improved the accessibility of the primary dining facility on campus. The new Student Health Center (completed in 2017) created an accessible home for student health and psychological services. On an ongoing basis, the College assesses the accessibility of its facilities and identifies potential improvements that can be implemented outside of major projects.his is a collaborative effort involving Buildings and Grounds, Student Life, and the Dean's and Provost's Office. Through this process, upgrades to historic buildings throughout campus continue to enhance and extend access to buildings across campus.

Other projects on campus have focused on enhancing safety, including ventilation projects in the chemistry labs and storage areas, as well as areas in ceramics and printmaking. Between 2012 and 2019, the College has initiated multiple projects to enhance and redesign the ventilation systems in VAPA and the Dickinson building (sciences) to meet or exceed current standards for general and task ventilation. The College appointed a Chemical Hygiene Officer in 2016, and has developed a comprehensive Chemical Hygiene Plan which provides the basis for managing chemicals throughout campus, including cataloguing, storage, use and disposal. A Campus Safety Coordinator position was created in 2018, allowing for coordination of training and practices across multiple departments and disciplines within the College. A Safety Committee, comprised of representatives from Buildings and Grounds, Human Resources, Campus Safety and the Dean's Office, meets quarterly to discuss policies, current safety concerns as well as the status of ongoing projects. Workplace safety training programs are mandated for all applicable staff, with on-campus training sessions provided twice a year, in addition to access to comprehensive online training resources.

Sustainability has been an important consideration in capital projects as well as campus operations over the last decade. CAPA was built using a geothermal heating and cooling system. The Commons renovation will reduce energy consumption in CAPA due to enhanced insulation and state-of-the-art mechanical systems and lighting. Several other smaller buildings have been retrofitted to dramatically improve energy efficiency. Through a close working relationship with the utility-funded non-profit Efficiency Vermont, the College has implemented (with the help of significant incentives) dozens of efficiency-focused projects over the last decade, resulting in a net reduction of $328,000 in annual direct energy costs. In 2018, the College signed power purchasing agreements (PPAs) that source 75% of the electrical usage on campus to solar arrays in Vermont. The PPAs have the added benefit of securing fixed increases in the electric rates to a level far below that of what Green Mountain Power's have been and are expected to be going forward.

Physical Resources: Projection

- The recently completed Commons renovation will re-shape how the campus is utilized— particularly with regard to academic functions-—including teaching and peer-to-peer learning. New social spaces and expanded dining facilities will enhance the student experience, provide new spaces for lectures and special programs, and add capacity for growth.

- The renovation of the Student Center building, planned for 2019-2020, will create a dynamic student-centered space designed to host a wide range of social, recreational and co-curricular programs. The design, based on a student-generated concept developed collaboratively during a Fall 2018 course (taught jointly by architecture faculty and the VP for Facilities Management and Planning), is a showcase for Bennington's focus on student engagement, directly linking pedagogy with real-world implementation.

- The reconstruction of the fire-damaged southeast wing of the Barn will expand capacity to support administrative and academic function in this central campus facility. The project will enhance accessibility and infrastructure for the building as a whole, while presenting a model for a phased future renovation of the remaining portions. The design will create new spaces that foster interaction and collaboration between students, administration, and faculty, while preserving the historic character and iconic image of this beloved campus landmark.

- The College will undertake a review and revision of its Master Plan, focused on adapting the future vision for the physical campus to current institutional ambitions and trajectory and considering the long-term student housing needs.

Library, Information, and Technology Resources: Description

The Library

The foundation of Crossett Library's services is to provide highly personalized service focused on the individual needs of the faculty and students. The library offers a variety of information resources and services that respond to the curriculum and support the individual inquiries of our community.

Crossett Library is staffed with four FTE professional and three FTE support positions. Additionally, the Undergraduate Writing Initiatives, housed with the library, is staffed with one full-time faculty/staff position and one hourly tutor position. A small music collection is housed in Jennings and staffed by one FTE support position. An average 25 student employees work 3,000 hours annually providing essential services and assistance.

The library's collection of information resources is not viewed as a static body but rather as an organic and vital extension of the educational experience. The collection is carefully curated in collaboration with the community to maximize relevance and use. Between 1,500 and 1800 acquisition requests are received from faculty members and students annually, accounting for 45%-55% of all items added to the collection in a given year. Funding is adequate to support the library's collection of print and online resources.

A variety of instructional services are available at the library including individual consultations with librarians, library instruction sessions for a class, librarians working in classes for the entire term, library workshops, research guides and more. The College's new First-Year Forum allows the librarians to give entering students a rich and nuanced introduction to the library. Crossett Library offers workshops for the First-Year Forum groups focused on the resources and services of the library for example, how to search the databases effectively, evaluate information, use interlibrary loan or access the digital archive.

One of the library's fundamental roles is to provide access to resources. There is no reference collection of books; almost all of the library 94,000 books circulate, as do our 300 print journals and newspapers. Extended loan periods are easily arranged with the library staff, and borrowing over Field Work Term and summer is encouraged. In FY 2018 the library circulated 31,134 items. Crossett Library provides access to approximately 50 databases in a range of subjects covering all the disciplines taught at Bennington College. Off-campus access to the vast majority of our databases is available.

In addition to providing the Bennington College community with access to resources, the library also shares the College's history and scholarship with the world. Although the College lacks an archivist and adequate storage facilities for the archives, enormous progress is being made toward sharing the archives digitally. There are over 12,000 digitized items in the College Archive. In 2016 the faculty resolved to share their scholarship widely by having work available in the College's institutional repository and now there are over 90 scholarly works by faculty members in the Digital Repository.

The library is committed to engaging technology to enhance services and collections, approaching technology as a tool rather than a solution. An open attitude to emerging digital opportunities, in combination with a responsive College community willing to use new features, allows the library to adopt the best solutions. Computers and circulating laptops are available in the library. Recent technology implementations include a discovery search service allowing for seamlessly searching the catalog and databases together, migrating to a cloud-based interlibrary loan platform, and in collaboration with Information Technology installing 3-D modeling workspace for photogrammetry in the library.

The library is leading a new initiative centered on peer learning. The individual agency of students and peer learning are essential features of a Bennington education. The newly renovated Commons building will include a peer learning space designed to support students' development of the Bennington Capacities (see the description of SCoPE). Peer learning will expand beyond the existing peer writing tutors to including peer educators in new areas such as technology and research. The space is being designed for collaborative work in small groups and will feature flexible furniture with easily accessible integrated technology and multiple writing and display surfaces.

Information Technology
The Bennington Information Technology (IT) team has full-time staff lines aligned with critical IT business functions, including data integration, software development, IT security, AV support, classroom design and instructional technology, help desk, web design and support,

cloud and local systems design and management, networking and business intelligence. The team employs multiple paid student interns and more than a dozen student workers who all contribute to the workforce and support infrastructure. The campus has redundant network gateways, state-of-the art firewalls and network traffic monitoring capabilities. The campus has fiber-optic cabling running to over 95% of the buildings. Building-level networks are maintained through professionally designed and managed network switches and the campus is in the second year of a comprehensive five-year wireless upgrade process. The College has a robust support infrastructure in place and has developed quality control metrics and dashboards over the past year to monitor and ensure effective, high-quality IT service delivery. The College is in the final stages of a comprehensive migration of all legacy servers, systems and data into a cloud-based and, when possible, SaaS model, redounding to improved service, greater redundancy and enhanced data security. The IT team has begun developing and deploying data warehouse and business intelligence services.

Library, Information, and Technology Resources: Appraisal

The College is in the third year of a comprehensive IT Security Plan based on the CIS Top 20 Critical Controls framework, and has made a series of important updates, including improving network infrastructure, network traffic monitoring and rapid response to compromises, developing and implementing a disaster recovery plan, patch management for college-owned personal devices (such as laptops assigned to faculty and staff), invigilation and due diligence of data stored in the cloud and in SaaS systems, centralization and standardization of penetration testing (including PCI-compliance), retiring antiquated/out-of-support hardware and software, and the nascent elements of a campus-wide IT Security education plan. These efforts are helping to secure the IT infrastructure: there has been a reduction of more than 700% in critical vulnerabilities and more than 500% in medium vulnerabilities over this time period. The College has well-developed compromise protection and data recovery protocols, which include early detection, quarantine, eradication, data backup and return to full business function protocols.

The College has invested heavily in upgrading the campus-wide network infrastructure. Beginning in summer of 2018, all classroom and administrative buildings were upgraded with new network switches and wireless access points. Student housing network remains to be upgraded, which is planned for the FY 2020-2021 year.

The College has a robust academic technology infrastructure, with more than 50 technology-enhanced classrooms, more than 400 pieces of audio-visual equipment (digital cameras, microphones, audio recorders, video cameras, etc.) for checkout by students, seven discipline-specific computer labs (photo, video, animation, computer science, etc.) with more than 80 computers with specialized hardware and software, and four discipline-specific science laboratories (chemistry, geology, astronomy), and an astronomy observatory. Faculty collaborate with instructional designers in Bennington's IT department regularly to discuss effective practice in using technology in the classroom.

The College has developed a series of policies, all available to the public, regarding the privacy of individual data.

The College supported the audio-visual needs of 158 individual events at the College in assessment year (AY) 2018-2019. Both the campus auditorium, Tishman Hall, and the premiere presentation/meeting space, the CAPA Symposium, were completely rebuilt with state-of-the-art AV systems in FY 2019. The IT team has been investigating and piloting options for wireless projection in all classrooms, as well as IP-based AV support systems that will reduce time to resolution for more than 80% of classroom Help Desk calls, increasing meaningful classroom time. The College has adopted and is leveraging a cloud-based media management system (Elevator) and are working toward an all-digital ecosystem for instructional media support.

The Bennington IT Help Desk continues to assess its performance and align with best practices (ITIL). In fall 2019, the Help Desk resolved 1364 tickets, and the average time to resolution for Help Desk tickets has fallen to approximately 3 business days in AY 2019.

Projection

- The College is working toward more full integration of a data warehouse/data mart/ business intelligence flow where data are available to and being used by business units to drive data based decision-making.

- The IT team plans to have developed an AV plan for classrooms by the end of summer 2019, and will begin piloting/rollout of an all-digital, IP-support infrastructure in fall of 2019.

- The College's first five-year IT Security plan will be completed by spring 2020 (two years ahead of schedule); the new plan will be developed AY 2020.

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (HEADCOUNT OF EMPLOYEES BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY)

For each of the occupational categories below, enter the data reported on the IPEDS Human Resources Survey (Parts B and D1) for each of the years listed.

	3 Years Prior (FY 2016)			2 Years Prior (FY 2017)			1 Year Prior (FY 2018)			Current Year (FY 2109)		
	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
Instructional Staff	55	58	113	60	65	125	60	65	125	63	61	124
Research Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Service Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Librarians	4	0	4	4	0	4	4	0	4	4	0	4
Library Technicians	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	3
Archivists, Curators, Museum staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student and Academic Affairs	19	2	21	16	5	21	15	4	19	17	3	20
Management Occupations	29	4	33	39	6	45	41	5	46	47	3	50
Business and Financial Operations	9	1	10	11	0	11	12	0	12	12	0	12
Computer, Engineering and Science	7	1	8	5	1	6	6	1	7	6	2	8
Community, Social Service, Legal, Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	21	6	27	23	3	26	22	3	25	27	1	28
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	2	2
Service Occupations	49	13	62	47	10	57	45	4	49	49	4	53
Sales and Related Occupations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Office and Administrative Support	43	3	46	43	4	47	41	2	43	41	3	44
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance	14	1	15	14	1	15	13	1	14	14	0	14
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	0	4	4	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	4	4
Total	253	93	346	265	101	366	262	92	354	283	83	366

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION/STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS)

Fiscal Year ends - month & day: (6/30)	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Most Recent Year	Percent Change	
	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	2 yrs - 1 yr prior	1 yr - most recent
ASSETS (in 000s)					
Cash and Short Term Investments	$8,920	$2,676	$2,726	−70.0%	1.9%
Cash held by State Treasurer				−	−
Restricted Deposits	$0	$0	$656		
Deposits held by State Treasurer				−	−
Accounts Receivable, Net	$690	$1,101	$798	59.6%	−27.5%
Contributions Receivable, Net	$14,480	$16,801	$15,662	$16.0%	−6.8%
Inventory and Prepaid Expenses				−	−
Long-Term Investments	$18,105	$21,448	$21,877	18.5%	2.0%
Loans to Students				−	−
Funds held under bond agreement	$130	$131	$11,920	0.8%	8999.2%
Property, plants, and equipment, net	$59,008	$61,842	$73,254	4.8%	18.5%
Beneficial interest in split-interest agreements	$1,944	$2,091	$2,139		
Other Assets	$1,031	$1,282	$1,891	24.3%	47.5%
Total Assets	**$104,308**	**$107,372**	**$130,923**	2.9%	21.9%
LIABILITIES (in 000s)					
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$4,505	$5,444	$4,922	20.8%	−8.3%
Deferred revenue & refundable advances	$2,098	$2,003	$1,751	−4.5%	−12.6%
Due to state				−	−
Due to affiliates				−	−
Annuity and life income obligations				−	−
Amounts held on behalf of others				−	−
Long-term investments	$25,773	$24,978	$51,298	−3.1%	105.4%
Refundable government advances				−	−
Interest rate swaps at fair value	$3,088	$1,550	$0	−49.8%	−100.0%
Advance payments	$2,722	$2,333	$2,476	−14.3%	6.1%
Other long-term liabilities				−	−
Total Liabilities	**$38,186**	**$36,308**	**$60,517**	−4.9%	66.7%

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION/STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS) (cont.)

Fiscal Year ends - month & day: (6/30)	2 Years Prior (FY 2016)	1 Year Prior (FY 2017)	Most Recent Year (FY 2018)	Percent Change	
				2 yrs - 1 yr prior	1 yr - most recent
NET ASSETS (in 000s)					
Unrestricted net assets					
Institutional	$27,281	$25,621	$22,070	−6.1%	−13.9%
Foundation				−	−
Total	**$27,281**	**$25,621**	**$22,070**	**−6.1%**	**−13.9%**
Temporarily restricted net assets					
Institutional	$13,847	$13,725	$16,128	−0.9%	17.5%
Foundation					
Total	**$13,847**	**$13,725**	**$16,128**	**−0.9%**	**17.5%**
Permanently restricted net assets					
Institutional	$24,996	$31,717	$32,208	26.9%	1.5%
Foundation				−	−
Total	**$24,996**	**$31,717**	**$32,208**	**26.9%**	**1.5%**
Total Net Assets	**$66,124**	**$71,063**	**$70,406**	**7.5%**	**−0.9%**
TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS	**$104,310**	**$107,371**	**$130,923**	**2.9%**	**21.9%**

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES)

Fiscal Year ends - month & day: (6/30)	3 Years Prior	2 Year Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward
	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)

OPERATING REVENUES (in 000s)

Tuition and fees	$33,487	$35,019	$37,407	$38,611	$39,240
Room and board	$8,860	$9,244	$9,996	$10,263	$9,919
Less: Financial aid	−$18,789	−$19,611	−$23,046	−$23,360	−$25,962
Net student fees	$23,558	$24,652	$24,357	$25,514	$23,197
Government grants and contracts	$579	$93	$519	$438	$603
Private gifts, grants and contracts	$17,569	$15,073	$13,548	$15,200	$20,100
Proceeds from sale of assets				$3,138	$350
Other auxiliary enterprises	$818	$769	$709	$596	$1,085
Endowment income used in operations	$848	$604	$697	$794	$829
Other revenue (specify): Health services and misc. revenue	$975	$1,155	$1,226	$1,122	$1,026
Other revenue (specify): Investment income	$182	$82	$162	$202	$19
Net assets released from restrictions					
Total Operating Revenues	**$44,529**	**$42,428**	**$41,218**	**$47,004**	**$47,209**

OPERATING EXPENSES (in 000s)

Instruction	$15,810	$16,407	$17,117	$17,371	$19,199
Research					
Public Service					
Academic Support	$3,190	$3,196	$3,249	$3,117	$3,533
Student Services	$5,414	$6,149	$6,221	$6,144	$6,772
Institutional Support	$8,164	$8,757	$8,921	$9,424	$10,828
Fundraising and alumni relations	$2,172	$2,664	$3,112	$3,017	$2,861
Operation, maintenance of plant (if not allocated)					
Scholarships and fellowships (cash refunded by public institution)					
Auxiliary enterprises	$329	$356	$360	$480	$3,767
Depreciation (if not allocated)					
Other expenses (specify): Food service	$2,512	$2,720	$2,961	$3,046	$185
Other expenses (specify):					
Total Operating Expenditures	**$37,591**	**$40,249**	**$41,941**	**$42,599**	**$47,145**
Change in net assets from operations	**$6,938**	**$2,179**	**−$723**	**$4,405**	**$64**

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES) (cont.)

Fiscal Year ends - month & day: (6/30)	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward
	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)
NON OPERATING REVENUES (in 000s)					
State appropriations (net)					
Investment return	−$1,249	$1,077	$502	−$496	Not Projected
Interest expense (public institutions)					
Gifts, bequests and contributions not used in operations					
Other (specify): Change in value of interest rate swaps	−$1,549	$1,537	−$483	$0	$0
Other (specify): Change in value of split-interest agreements	−$463	$147	$48	$23	Not Projected
Other (specify):					
Net non-operating revenues	**−$3,261**	**$2,761**	**$67**	**−$473**	**$0**
Income before other revenues, expenses, gains, or losses	**$3,677**	**$4,940**	**−$656**	**$3,932**	**$64**
Capital appropriations (public institutions)					
Other (specify):					
TOTAL INCREASE/DECREASE IN NET ASSETS	**$3,677**	**$4,940**	**−$656**	**$3,932**	**$64**

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (STATEMENT OF DEBT)

Fiscal Year ends - month & day: (6/30)	3 Years Prior	2 Year Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward
	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)
Long-term Debt					
Beginning balance	$26,757	$25,773	$24,978	$52,522	$52,447
Additions			$52,575		
Reductions	($984)	($795)	($25,031)	($75)	($728)
Ending balance	$25,773	$24,978	$52,522	$52,447	$51,709
Interest paid during fiscal year	$1,034	$999	$774	$1,204	$1,329
Current Portion	$818	$851	$215	$75	$738
Bond Rating	NOT RATED	NOT RATED	NOT RATED	NOT RATED	NOT RATED
Debt Service Coverage Operating Income / (Annual Interest + Current Portion of Debt)	3.75	1.17	–0.73	3.10	
Debt to Net Assets Ratio Long-term Debt / Total Net Assets	0.39	0.35	0.75	0.71	
Debt to Assets Ratio Long-term Debt / Total Assets	0.25	0.23	0.40	0.39	

Debt Covenants: (1) Describe interest rate, schedule, and structure of payments; and (2) indicate whether the debt covenants are being met. If not being met, describe the specific covenant violation (i.e., requirement of the lender vs. actual achieved by the instituiton). Also, indicate whether a waiver has been secured from the lender and/or if covenants were modified.

The College was approved for financing through the U.S.D.A. Rural Development program in 2016. The financing approved includes a direct loan from the U.S.D.A. in the amount of $47,575,000 and a U.S.D.A. guaranteed loan through TD Bank in the amount of $5,000,000. The proceeds from the U.S.D.A. direct loan will be received once the renovation of the Commons building has been completed. To fund the renovation of Commons and to refinance the College's existing long term debt, the College obtained interim financing in the form of three-year tax exempt notes issued through the Vermont Economic Development Agency (VEDA) with a par amount of $47,575,000 and an interest rate of 2.0%. The TD Bank loan, which closed at the same time as the VEDA notes in September 2017, is a 30-year $5,000,000 loan with a fixed interest rate of 5.07%. There are no financial covenant ratios required on either the outstanding bonds or TD Bank loan; however, the USDA does have the right to approve additional indebtedness.

Line(s) of Credit: List the institutions line(s) of credit and their uses.

None at this time.

Future borrowing plans (please describe).

As stated above, the College obtained interim financing in the amount of $47,575,000 in the form of tax exempt notes issued by VEDA. Once the Commons renovation is complete, the College will receive the proceeds from the U.S.D.A. direct loan to pay off the VEDA notes. The $47,575,000 direct loan will have a 35 year amortization and a 2.375% interest rate.

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (SUPPLEMENTAL DATA)

Fiscal Year ends - month & day: (6/30)	3 Years Prior	2 Year Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward
	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)

NET ASSETS

Net assets beginning of year	$62,449	$66,124	$71,062	$70,406	$70,450
Total increase/decrease in net assets	$3,675	$4,939	($656)	$44	$356
Net assets end of year	$66,124	$71,063	$70,406	$70,450	$70,806

FINANCIAL AID

Source of funds					
Unrestricted institutional	$17,691	$18,973	$21,870	$22,160	$24,662
Federal, state and private grants	$1,528	$1,832	$2,523	$3,079	$2,771
Restricted funds	$1,098	$638	$1,176	$1,200	$1,300
Total	$20,317	$21,443	$25,569	$26,439	$28,733

% Discount of tuition and fees	44.40%	44.3%	48.6%	47.8%	52.8%
% Unrestricted discount	41.8%	42.9%	46.1%	45.3%	50.2%
Net Tuition Revenue per FTE	$30,048	$31,363	$29,815	$32,296	$28,533

FEDERAL FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COMPOSITE SCORE	2.7	1.5	2.2	2.5	

Please indicate your institution's endowment spending policy:

The spending policy is 5% of the average market value for the 12 quarters ending March 31 of the year immediately preceeding the fiscal year in which the payout is going to be made.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below.

As all full-time students are required to live on-campus, the discount rates show are calculated on the total charges for tuition and fees, room and board. The institutional aid numbers include aid to both undergraduate and graduate students.

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (LIQUIDITY)

Fiscal Year ends - month & day: (6/30)	3 Years Prior	2 Year Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward
	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)

CASH FLOW

Cash and Cash Equivalents beginning of year	$2,020,115	$2,589,062	$1,553,624	$2,762,839	
Cash Flow from Operating Activities	$7,086,095	($2,895,362)	$303,766	$1,808,993	
Cash Flow from Investing Activities	($8,629,845)	($1,937,341)	($13,877, 884)	($12,000,000)	
Cash Flow from Financing Activities	$2,112,697	$3,797,265	$14,747,333	$11,426,168	
Cash and Cash Equivalents end of year	**$2,589,062**	**$1,553,624**	**$2,726,839**	**$3,962,000**	

LIQUIDITY RATIOS

Current Assets	$16,317,458	$9,473,421	$10,916,057	$12,547,915	
Current Liabilities	$5,751,922	$6,522,339	$5,258,538	$4,773,157	
Current Ratio	2.84	1.45	2.08	2.63	
Days Cash on Hand [Cash and Cash Equivalents / (Operating Expenses + Depreciation and other noncash expenses)]/ 365	44.01	36.63	53.12	71.65	

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below that may impact the institution's cash flow.

> During FY 2020, the College will commence making payments on its USDA loan. During FY2018 and FY2019, the College's interim financing through VEDA only required interest payments and the interest due through the maturity of the notes was escrowed at the closing of the VEDA financing.

Has the institution needed to access its restricted net assets or liquidate other financial assets to fund operations?   If so, please describe and indicate when approvals (if required) were obtained from the state's authority.

> The institution has not had to access restricted investments to fund operations in recent years.   There remains a balance on a loan from the permanently restricted funds dating back to the late 1990s, against which the College is paying interest and making an annual reduction in the principal balance.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below.

> For purposes of the Days Cash on Hand, the unrestricted portion of the investments held in the endowment account have been included. Anticipated cash needs are only invested in high quality fixed income instruments in the endowment account.

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (INFORMATION RESOURCES)

	3 Years Prior	2 Year Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)
Total Expenditures					
Materials	$137	$146	$138	$132	$130
Salaries & wages (permanent staff)	$378	$389	$474	$477	$519
Salaries & wages (student employees)	$32	$44	$62	$46	$67
Other operating expenses	$237	$244	$230	$249	$296
Expenditures/FTE Student					
Materials	$196	$207	$186	$184	$182
Salaries & wages (permanent staff)	$540	$553	$639	$669	$726
Salaries & wages (student employees)	$46	$62	$84	$64	$93
Other operating expenses	$339	$347	$311	$348	$414
Collections					
Percent available physically	24%	23%	35%	35%	35%
Percent available electronically	76%	77%	65%	65%	65%
Number of digital repositories	1	1	1	1	1
Personnel (FTE)					
Librarians - main campus	3	3	3	3	3
Librarians - branch /other locations	0	0	0	0	0
Other library personnel - main campus	4	4	4	4	4
Other library personnel - branch/other locations	1	1	1	1	1
Availability/attendance					
Hours of operation/week main campus	109	109	109	109	109
Hours of operation/week branch/other locations	52	46	46	46	46

Consortia/Partnerships

Vermont Consortium of Academic Libraries - VCAL (purchasing, training, and organizational)
Westchester Academic Library Directors Organization - WALDO (purchasing)
Williams College (borrowing and lending agreement for students and faculty)

URL of most recent library annual report: https://library.bennington.edu/screens/about-overview.html

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below.

Under "Collections," the percentage change in FY18 is because we changed ebook vendors which decreased the total number of ebooks in our collection but increased the relevancy/quality of the titles.
Amounts for total expenditures are rounded to the thousand while expenditures/FTE are shown in whole dollar amounts.

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES)

	3 Years Prior	2 Year Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(FY 2015-16)	(FY 2016-17)	(FY 2017-18)	(FY 2018-19)	(FY 2019-20)
Course management system	Moodle. Populi.				
Number of classes using the system	**Moodle** Spring 2016: 27 course shells Fall 2015: 29 course shells **Populi** Fall 2015: 319 course shells Spring 2016: 334 course shells	**Moodle** Spring 2017: 28 course shells Fall 2016: 29 course shells **Populi** Fall 2016: 314 course shells Spring 2017: 321 course shells	**Moodle** Spring 2018: 19 course shells Fall 2017: 27 course shells **Populi** Fall 2017: 338 course shells Spring 2018: 370 course shells	**Moodle** Spring 2019: 22 Fall 2018: 46 **Populi** Fall 2018: 355 Spring 2019: 396	**Moodle** Spring 2020: 25 Fall 2019: 45 **Populi** Fall 2019: 100% Spring 2020: 100%
Bandwidth					
On-campus network	2gbps	20gbps	20gbps	20gbps	20gbps
Off-campus access					
Commodity internet (Mbps)	1gbps	1.8gbps	1.8gbps	2gbps	2gbps
High-performance networks (Mbps)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wireless protocol(s)	802.11 a/b/g/n/ac				
Typical classroom technology					
Main campus	Most classrooms have basic projection capabilities, most often with a projector, screen and VGA/HDMI hookup. Some classrooms also have DVD players in the classrooms, and a few have residential computers (Mac Minis, most often). We are beginning to outfit our rooms with wireless projection and portable DVD players rather than residential equipment.				
Branch/other locations	NA				
Software systems and versions					
Students	Slate (prospective students), Populi (SIS), PowerFAIDS (Financial Aid), Google Suite (communications and productivity)				
Finances	Intacct (accounting), PowerFAIDS (financial aid), ADP (payroll)				
Human Resources	ADP				
Advancement	Raiser's Edge				
Library	Sierra				
Website Management	Acquia hosting service/Drupal, Reclaim Hosting (WordPress)				
Portfolio Management					
Interactive Video Conferencing	Google Hangouts				
Digital Object Management	Elevator, Sierra, Google Drive, AWS				

Website locations of technology policies/plans

Integrity and security of data	http://bit.ly/benningtonprivacypolicy
Privacy of individuals	http://bit.ly/benningtonprivacypolicy
Appropriate use	http://bit.ly/benningtonprivacypolicy
Disaster and recovery plan	http://bit.ly/benningtonprivacypolicy
Technology replacement	http://bit.ly/benningtonprivacypolicy

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below.

STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (PHYSICAL RESOURCES)

Campus location	Serviceable Buildings	Assignable Square Feet (000)
Main campus	68	505
Other U.S. locations		
International locations		

	3 Years Prior	2 Year Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)

Revenue ($000) - Funding Sources for the Expenditures

	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)
Capital appropriations (public institutions)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Operating budget	$3,331	$946	$1,600	$329	$650
Gifts and grants	$894	$4,463	$1,420	$3	$1,308
Debt	$0	$0	$12,392	$9,711	$995
Total	$4,225	$5,409	$15,412	$10,043	$2,953

Expenditures ($000)

	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)
New Construction	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Renovations, maintenance and equipment	$4,090	$5,035	$15,235	$9,890	$2,793
Technology	$135	$374	$177	$153	$160
Total	$4,225	$5,409	$15,412	$10,043	$2,953

Assignable Square Feet (000)	Main campus	Off-campus	Total
Classroom	157		157
Laboratory	38		38
Office	32		32
Study	17		17
Special	11		11
General	54		54
Support	16		16
Residential	143	2	145
Other	32		32

NOTE: Does not include approximately 30,000 SF of rented student residential space in the Paran Creek Apartments off-campus.

Major new buildings, past 10 years

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable SF (000)	Cost (000)	Year
CAPA	Academic, Guest Residential	15.00	$21,800	2011
Student Health Center	Health and Psych Services	4.00	$2,000	2017
Student Center Addition	General	4.00	$1,000	2017

New buildings, planned for next 5 years

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable SF (000)	Cost (000)	Year

Major Renovations, past 10 years

The list below includes renovations costing	$2,000,000	or more

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable SF (000)	Cost (000)	Year
Commons	Academic, Support, General	36.00	$24,000	2020
Dickinson Science Building	Academic	38.00	$3,630	2014
VAPA Visual Arts Ventilation	Academic	60.00	$2,820	2011

Renovations planned for next 5 years

The list below includes renovations costing	$500,000	or more

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable SF (000)	Cost (000)	Year
Student Center	General, Support	12.00	$1,000	2020
Barn, SE Wing	Academic, Support	9.00	$2,500	2020

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below.

Assignable Square feet categorization represents Gross Square Feet of building space, generalized on the basis of primary building uses. The College uses a different categorization of spaces for its campus buildings as follows: Academic/Administrative, Social/Student Life, Student Residential, Faculty Residential, Guest Residential, Facilities/Support, and Storage/Plant. For the purposes of this report, existing building space was allocated to the NECHE categories based on the best approximation of primary building program. Residential square footage listed above represents only Student Residential. Faculty Residential and Guest Residential are categorized in the "Other" category.

STANDARD EIGHT: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Bennington has, since its founding, regarded assessment as critical to its institutional mission. We were founded as a "thoroughgoing experiment in higher education along modern lines" (Leigh, *The Educational Plan for Bennington College*), and our founders saw early on the need for a robust system for data collection, analysis, and feedback. Even in our earliest years, and long before the accountability movement in higher education, our faculty and staff carefully tracked student success metrics, measured learning throughout the institution, and assessed alumni outcomes. Though this work was primarily for the benefit of students—both present and future— so too was it crucial for Bennington to "[remain] adaptable to changing needs and sensitive to the light of new truths" (*Bennington College: A Prospectus*, 1928). Our capacity for adaptability and self-renewal depended—as it does now—on our ability to measure what we're doing and use that information to do it better. At a time when analytics and "big data" are revolutionizing quality assurance efforts in many industries (not least education), and when prospective students and parents are asking ever-more pointed questions about return on their substantial investment, Bennington continues to leverage a long legacy of assessment to both demonstrate value and ensure educational effectiveness.

Here we define and consider educational effectiveness from several interdependent perspectives, each contributing to and building on the others. Several key questions guide our work overall. For the students who come to Bennington: Do they persist and graduate? What do they learn while they're here? And what happens when they graduate? To address these questions—and to use assessment results to improve learning and other outcomes for all of our students—we have built in the past several years a robust, distributed, and interconnected institutional research and assessment infrastructure for monitoring educational effectiveness (see also the narrative for Standard Two). This work is largely coordinated out of the Provost and Dean's Office, which ensures that this work is focused on the student experience and that it leverages and connects the wealth of quantitative and qualitative data generated in and around our academic program, including enrollment information, grades, and narrative course evaluations, Plan process assessments, comments and feedback from faculty advisors, Field Work Term employer evaluations, survey data, and other information. Specifically, the Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment—who reports to the Provost and Dean of the College, and who is a member of Senior Staff—tracks and analyzes key performance metrics, conducts routine and ad hoc surveys, co-leads various data governance initiatives, and contributes routinely and within the appropriate faculty committee structures to conversations about student learning. Though this work has existed in various forms throughout the years—indeed, since our founding—assessment and analytics are today a cornerstone of our *Ten-Year Goals* strategic plan framework, fully supported by our academic and institutional leadership.

In the sections below, we contemplate in turn the measurement of student learning, matters of retention and completion, and research directed at understanding the success of recent graduates. We also discuss educational effectiveness in our post baccalaureate, graduate, and prisoner education programs.

Measurement of Student Learning: Description

In an educational environment designed to be maximally flexible, and which allows students themselves to guide their own education, the measurement of student learning is at once more complicated and also more crucial to ensuring student success. Fortunately, many of Bennington's educational structures—especially the Plan process—provide a scaffold to measure and monitor learning and put assessment data in the hands of students, faculty, and staff at key moments. Ideally, these structures allow us both to use assessment data to improve learning for individual students and to see more macro-level trends across the student body. Though our assessment practices are still developing, we have made progress in recent years to outline and clarify what students learn as a result of their education, as described later in this narrative.

At the core of our learning assessment efforts are the newly-developed Capacities, which are a set of five skills we expect every student to develop, and which provide a framework for teaching and learning at Bennington (see also the narrative for Standard Four). These Capacities both constitute our set of institutional learning goals and form a central spine of educational effectiveness through which all other assessment mechanisms connect. We have done substantial work in the past two years—some of which is outlined below—to incorporate the language of the Capacities into the educational fabric of the institution: conducting self-assessments as part of our first-year seminar, adding Capacities language to Plan essay prompts, and assessing progress in Capacity development in certain critical moments in the student life cycle, to name but a few. Though we have much work to do, the importance of the Capacities in providing a shared language and understanding for the education we provide cannot be overstated.

As at many institutions, Bennington tracks student learning at the course, discipline, and institutional level. The foundation for learning assessment happens at the course level: Each faculty sets learning goals for their courses, describes these goals in course descriptions and syllabi, and then tracks progress toward these goals throughout the semester through the use of papers, problem sets, exams, critiques, studio projects, performances, and in-class discussions. At the end of the term, faculty compose a narrative evaluation for each student in each of their classes. This narrative evaluation is approximately 100 words, and is meant to capture each student's attendance, engagement, progress, and overall performance. The evaluation is coupled with either a pass, marginal pass, or failing mark; or a traditional letter grade if the student requests one. These grades and evaluations are available in our student information system, as well as our homegrown Advising Hub, and are reviewed together by the student with their faculty advisor to understand where the student is progressing and where they might need to improve. Grade distributions are tracked in aggregate (by class, subject, discipline group, etc) to reveal any patterns or trends and to identify groups of students who may be struggling. In recent terms, for example, we've noticed several spikes in the total number of failing grades our students receive, and we are working to understand whether these are connected to particular courses or disciplines, to certain groups of students, or to emerging challenges on the retention front.

At the discipline level, we rely on individual discipline groups—bolstered by periodic reviews, as described in the narrative for Standard Four—to set learning goals for individual subject areas, and to define the process and outcomes for advanced work. In certain disciplines, advanced work may take place as part of a senior seminar with a substantial paper or thesis evaluated by one or more faculty; in others, it might be advanced workshops or individual tutorials leading to a presentation, performance, or exhibition. A strength of the Bennington model is flexibility

through the Plan; as such, individual students—together with their advisor—can in principle define approaches to advanced interdisciplinary work that don't necessarily fit neatly within our disciplinary structures. Still, Bennington has throughout its history struggled with the role of departments or discipline groups (variously named) within an educational model that is meant to be flexible and student-centered. Even today, discipline groups may put forth requirements or guidelines that feel very much like a major, and we are at times equivocal about how strict we should be with discipline-based advanced work requirements. There are conversations currently underway in the Academic Policies Committee (APC) and elsewhere about developing broader, institution-wide descriptions of advanced work that would allow for greater flexibility, and with more of a focus on institution-level learning goals (as below). Meanwhile, the Provost and Dean of the College, the Dean of Studies, and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs work closely with individual students, faculty, and discipline groups as needed to ensure students are permitted maximum flexibility while ensuring academic programs and Plans that are rigorous and grounded in the disciplines in which a student's work is focused. We also continue to work with individual discipline groups—primarily in the context of the review process—to develop advanced work requirements that are focused on learning outcomes instead of checklists of required courses or activities.

Finally, at the institutional level, the Plan process is the primary vehicle through which we ensure students are meeting the expectations of a Bennington education, and that they're developing in the Capacities that we have set out as central to these expectations. Through a series of essays and in meetings with faculty, students craft a plan of study, set goals (learning and otherwise), and reflect on what they've accomplished in their time at Bennington. This work is supported primarily by the student's faculty advisor along with a committee of at least two other faculty, all of whom give input into the student's Plan and ensure the student is setting and meeting appropriate goals. After each Plan meeting, the faculty advisor completes a form that describes the student's course of study, planned coursework and Field Work Term experiences, and progress made towards desired outcomes. In recognition of the centrality of the Plan process to student learning, and to underscore the importance of these forms in the ongoing assessment of that learning, we have recently renamed these "Plan Assessment Forms." We have also reworked a number of the questions on these forms to reflect institution-level learning goals, so that faculty are providing regular feedback to students connected to the Capacities. Though we still have significant norming to do, we are excited to be implementing a shared language for student success at Bennington.

We also leverage our Field Work Term program to assess student learning and progress. Our Capacities framework aligns closely with nationally recognized work-readiness competencies, and serves as a foundation for assessing students' work in the world. Assessment is conducted by the Field Work Term and Career Development Office and is based on: meeting application due dates, completing learning objectives, compliance with the Field Work Term student-employer agreement, working the required number of hours, completing quality reflective assignments, and receiving satisfactory supervisory evaluations. These supervisory evaluations, especially, provide key quantitative and qualitative assessment data connected to work-readiness and the Capacities, including: critical thinking and problem-solving, oral and written communication, teamwork/collaboration, digital technology, leadership, professionalism/work ethic, global and intercultural fluency, and ethical decision-making. Work-competency scoring is also aggregated to show campus-wide strengths and gaps in learning, and segmented for analysis

by subpopulation. For example, the student body as a whole scores very high on leadership, but lower on sub-areas of professionalism. There is also variability on written communication competencies across sub-populations; for example, students in some discipline clusters and new international students from some regional areas score lower.

In addition to these relatively direct measures of learning, we have also been employing other indirect, self-report measures of learning. For example, every first-year student who entered Bennington in the past two years completed a Capacities self-assessment (this was done as part of orientation in fall 2017, and within First-Year Forum in fall 2018). This served both to educate students about these learning objectives, and to provide the basis for conversations between students and advisors about developing these skills in their coursework and elsewhere. At the same time, we have for several years surveyed graduating seniors—and, also, alumni—about the skills they developed in their time at Bennington. Though the language of this question does not (as yet) precisely mirror the Capacites, they have been instructive in showing us where Bennington excels and where we have room to improve (see Table 8.1). For example, many of our students report learning how to create and revise work (67%), connect work to broader context (60%), and formulate an inquiry (56%), all of which reflect the language of the Capacities. Meanwhile, fewer students say they learned how to conduct research (36%), suggesting that we have work to do in this space.

Table 8.1. Senior survey self-reported learning outcomes

	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
Formulating an inquiry	56%	40%	2%	2%
Identifying, analyzing, and using resources	51%	49%	0%	0%
Creating and revising work	67%	31%	2%	0%
Presenting and explaining work	44%	40%	11%	4%
Connecting work to broader contexts	60%	33%	4%	2%
Critical thinking and analytic reasoning	53%	38%	9%	0%
Quantitative reasoning	16%	49%	29%	7%
Conducting research	36%	42%	20%	2%
Complex problem solving	38%	47%	9%	7%
Written communication	43%	50%	7%	0%
Taking risks and handling new and unfamiliar situations	56%	38%	4%	2%
Grit, resilience, perseverance	67%	27%	4%	2%
Working as part of a team	40%	40%	16%	4%
Quickly learning new technical skills	47%	42%	4%	7%
Ethical judgment and integrity	40%	40%	13%	7%
Engaging with the world around you	27%	51%	13%	9%

Measurement of Student Learning: Appraisal

As we move forward, we are thinking with a new intentionality about the opportunities afforded by a clearly-defined set of institution-level learning goals. In collaboration with the Academic Policies Committee, the Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment recently completed an assessment audit to understand what outcomes (learning and otherwise) are being assessed, and where. This revealed a wide range of assessment approaches and metrics (both in and outside of the Plan) in various offices, and across modalities of student learning. It also revealed that some important student artifacts are not assessed at all. The faculty on the Committee agreed that these many assessment streams should be harmonized and streamlined where possible. There was also a sense that certain new assessments could be layered in, as appropriate. We are especially keen to deploy the Capacities more rigorously and intentionally within extra- and co-curricular domains, more consistently across the discipline groups, and perhaps even as embedded and assessed within the advisor-advisee relationship. These additional assessments would provide a crucial data stream connected to learning, and would improve our overall understanding of student progress and success at Bennington. Importantly, this work would also serve to concretely connect learning in and out of the classroom, which is something we hold as central to Bennington's progressive educational philosophy.

Though there is clarity in this vision of an integrated education that is connected through a hub of Capacities, this work has been challenging to undertake and has progressed more slowly than we had anticipated. There are at least two related reasons for this. First, Bennington by its nature resists anything resembling standards or expectations that apply to every student. That we would develop a set of skills that all students are meant to develop has sometimes seemed anathema to the underlying spirit of the institution. Second—and as is surely true elsewhere—it has been challenging to engage faculty productively in conversations about Capacities and, especially, assessment. Though the Capacities themselves emerged from a process to which most faculty contributed, there are some who feel the Capacities are too diffuse to be assessed, or too narrow to be applied in every discipline for every student. Then, of course, there is the time needed to develop assessments and then norm faculty—and staff—to good assessment practice. This is the work in front of us, and we are developing new structures and engagement points to carry this forward. This past spring, we convened an ad hoc assessment committee that brought faculty from our Academic Policies and Curriculum Planning Committees together with staff from several offices to begin identifying new places were Capacities can be assessed. This committee refined some Field Work Term assessments so that they pointed more concretely to the Capacities; and we'll continue this work next term to contemplate changes to other assessments, including, for instance, narrative evaluations. This work is slow and can be painstaking, but we are committed to the process of implementing the Capacities in a fulsome and comprehensive way.

Measurement of Student Learning: Projection

- We will continue to develop and refine assessment tools for use at the course, discipline, and institutional levels to better understand what (and where) students learn at Bennington. We will connect these assessments, where possible, to provide a comprehensive view of educational effectiveness.

- To improve our assessment of student learning, and particularly of institution-level learning goals, Bennington will continue to leverage and deploy the Capacities—embedding the language of the Capacities within various assessment streams, making assessment data more widely (and readily) available, and continuing to norm faculty and staff in the assessment of Capacities. We are especially eager to deploy the capacities within the co-curricular space so that we might connect learning in and out of the classroom.

- We will begin to consider and evaluate overall student progress in terms of capacity development as a cornerstone of our educational effectiveness efforts. In this way, student success will not just be about passing classes and completing the degree; instead, we will come to view students' success as their ongoing improvement across the Capacities, as assessed in and out of the classroom, and across educational contexts.

Retention and Completion: Description

As a small, progressive educational institution, Bennington has long had a complex enrollment picture, particularly when it comes to retention and completion. Founded as a women's college in the 1930s, surely some of our earliest students left Bennington to get married or to join the war effort in the 1940s. Graduation rates ranging from 50% to 60% have been commonplace throughout our history, and narratives circulate on campus even today about how it is normal—desirable!—for students to consider some time away from Bennington. Many students adopt this philosophy to good effect: some may choose to remain employed or start their own company after a successful Field Work Term experience; or others might propose a Plan as a sophomore, only to realize that it is best accomplished elsewhere. Still, as central as this narrative is to the process of reflection and self-discovery that we want for our students, so too can it get in the way of their success. Many more students than we want leave Bennington before graduating, and it is our collective impression that we have work to do on this front.

Since its last comprehensive review, and especially since the adoption of the *Ten-Year Goals* in 2015, Bennington has embarked on an ambitious plan to increase the percent of entering students who go on to earn a degree at Bennington. This is important for reasons of enrollment management, financial stability, and longer-term planning, but it is also the cornerstone of our approach to educational effectiveness. Students need to earn a degree at Bennington if indeed they are to benefit from the education we provide. Graduating with a Bennington diploma is crucial to fulfilling the promise we make to the students we admit. Similarly, in today's data-rich and consumer-oriented educational marketplace, prospective students and parents (and regulators) are also keenly aware of retention and graduation rates, and ask questions about student support, success, and overall satisfaction. Our retention and graduation rates have long trailed many of our peers and admissions-overlap schools (see Table 8.2 below), and surely we lose students in the admissions process because of uncertainty about whether they will complete their degree at Bennington.

Table 8.2 Retention and six-year graduation rates of Bennington and peer institutions
(*National Center for Education Statistics*.)

Institution	Retention rate (2017 cohort)	Six-year graduation rate (2011 cohort)
Bennington College	78%	67%
Beloit College	85%	86%
Cornell College	81%	68%
Juniata College	81%	84%
Knox College	87%	76%
Presbyterian College	82%	68%
Ripon College	71%	68%
Saint Michael's College	83%	78%
Westminster College	78%	70%
Westmont College	83%	70%
Wofford College	89%	81%
Bard College	83%	74%
Emerson College	88%	81%
Hampshire College	76%	62%
Mount Holyoke College	91%	86%
Oberlin College	91%	86%
Reed College	88%	80%
Sarah Lawrence College	82%	79%
Skidmore College	93%	87%
Smith College	93%	88%

At the time of our comprehensive self-study in 2009, we were making significant investments in retention and student support. We had developed a staff advising model, clarified certain aspects of the Plan process and advanced work, and reconfigured an Institutional Research Committee to improve data collection and analysis efforts related to retention. In the following years, Bennington made great strides in first-year retention rates, which increased from 76% for the Fall 2006 cohort, to 85% for the Fall 2010 cohort (see Table 8.3). Nonetheless, graduation rates remained in the mid-sixty percent range, as we continued to lose another 20% or so of students in or after the sophomore year—a time when students engage deeply in the Plan process, strengthen their connection to an advisor and one or more discipline groups, and begin to develop ideas for their advanced work. Knowing that some students were clearly struggling in one or more of these areas, we developed and launched an innovative, data-driven initiative called the Retention Lab, in Spring 2014. This collaboration between faculty and key staff—and spearheaded by the Provost and Dean of the College—followed the cohort that entered in Fall 2013 in an effort to

understand together the factors that influence student success at Bennington. We discussed the student experience at faculty meetings, held break-out discussions about advising, conducted faculty and student surveys, and collected and shared data related to retention. Along the way, and with faculty leading many of these conversations, we strengthened and normed aspects of our advising model, improved coordination between faculty and staff on matters of student support, modified course registration practices, and clarified aspects of the Plan process to better facilitate success. At the conclusion of the retention lab, we achieved stabilized enrollments among upperclass students (particularly rising juniors, where we saw a decrease in the average number of students we were losing by five percentage points); an increased rate of reentry among students who took a leave of absence; and—most critically—a marked increase in our graduation rates. Our six-year rate eclipsed 70% for the first time ever in 2016, and now stands at 76% for 2019. For graduation rates that had been so stubborn for so long, an increase of nine percentage points in five years is no small accomplishment.

Table 8.3 Retention and graduation rates, by entering cohort

Cohort year	Retention rate	Six-year graduation rate
2005	74%	67%
2006	76%	64%
2007	80%	67%
2008	84%	67%
2009	81%	68%
2010	85%	70%
2011	83%	67%
2012	83%	74%
2013	84%	76%
2014	82%	—
2015	80%	—
2016	78%	—
2017	73%	—

Even as our graduation rate increased, however, our first-year retention rate has slipped back— to 73% for the cohort that entered in fall of 2017. This striking contrast between increasing graduation rates and declining retention rates highlights an important enrollment dynamic playing out at Bennington, and likely elsewhere in higher education: even as we deploy more resources and work with faculty and staff to improve overall student support and success, the factors that influence the success of entering students demand constant attention, especially with swiftly-changing student demographics, emerging generational differences between college-going students, and a hyper-competitive educational marketplace.

In Fall 2016, even before the more recent declines in retention, we recognized the importance of having a group that met routinely to discuss enrollment challenges and opportunities, particularly

among first-year students. At the outset of that semester, we convened the First-Year Retention Task Force, comprised of representatives from the Provost and Dean's Office, Student Life, Admissions, and Financial Aid. This group sees the whole of the first-year experience—from recruitment and application, to financial aid packaging, to arrival and orientation, to the student experience in the first year. The Task Force meets regularly throughout the year to debrief on the students who have taken a leave of absence or withdrawn, and attempts to see broader patterns of student success through the collection and analysis of student and other data. Crucially, this setting allows for routine feedback between the offices that are recruiting students and the offices that are supporting those students once they arrive, and allows us to coordinate—in a bidirectional, ongoing way—recruitment and student support efforts.

Our work in the FIrst-Year Retention Task Force is grounded in the collection and analysis of data, which have allowed us to evaluate two fundamental questions: Who's leaving and why? To answer the first question, we looked at four years of entering student data—the first-time, full-time cohorts that entered between Fall 2014 and Fall 2017—and evaluated the first-year retention rates of various key demographic groups. These data are below in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 First-year retention rates of various demographic and other key groups for cohorts that entered between Fall 2014 and Fall 2017

Group	Retention Rate
Overall	78%
Domestic students of color	77%
International students	88%
Pell students	75%
First-generation students	77%
Male/Female[1]	81% / 77%

Though there are one or two outliers (for example, international students retaining significantly better than domestic students), many groups retain more or less equally. This suggests we are not losing certain at-risk groups at rates that are significantly higher than others. On the one hand, this is a good thing, since it means we're supporting Pell-eligible students, minority students, and students that are the first in their family to go to college, all groups that might otherwise struggle in a small liberal arts setting. On the other hand, it means that we have yet to identify student characteristics—demographic or otherwise—that we might use to allocate or deploy resources based on risk. The next phase of this work will be to see if retention varies based on experiences students have as first-years—for example, orientation events they attend, classes they take, or student groups they join. We hope this may provide another axis of data to evaluate in terms of retention, risk-assessment, and student support.

To address the question of *why* students leave, we developed and implemented a classification scheme to describe the reasons students leave. The classification is based on exit surveys and

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[1]   We do not as yet distinguish between cis-/transgender or non-binary students, so this data represents what was reported to us on their application to Bennington. We are working to find ways to track the retention—and overall success—of students whose gender may not necessarily be accurately reflected.

interviews, conversations with students and faculty, and input from the advising staff who work with students as they apply to take a leave of absence or withdraw. For the cohorts that entered between Fall 2014 and Fall 2017, the primary reasons students left in the first year were for reasons of physical or (especially) mental health. Nearly a third of the first-year leaves or withdrawals were for medical reasons, and when we disaggregated these data by year, we saw that this number has increased nearly three-fold since 2014; fully 10% of the cohort that entered in fall of 2017 left for medical reasons, up from 3% in 2014. This has led to substantial and ongoing conversations around mental health and well-being programming on campus, as outlined in the narrative for Standard Five. At the same time, we are evaluating our efforts in relation to the other categories of student exits. For example, we've talked extensively with faculty about matters of "academic fit" and the students who leave because they feel like they can't study what they want at Bennington. Though there are situations where this is plainly true—the student who wants to enroll in a nursing training program, for example—our sense is that our educational model is flexible enough to accommodate most areas of interest, and in any case, that we should focus on the virtues and value of Bennington's overall approach to education: self-directed education through the Plan, learning by doing, development of certain key core Capacities, and preparation for work in the world through Field Work Term (see also the narrative for Standard Four).

Retention and Completion: Appraisal

Though it has been disappointing to experience the decline in retention these past two years—even as we continue to meet and devote significant time and resources to student support—our work has illuminated several key truths: that ongoing coordination and calibration between the Admissions staff who read applications and the staff who support students once they arrive is crucial if we are to improve our enrollment picture; that many of our incoming students—as elsewhere—are struggling with significant mental health issues, particularly in the transition to college; and that we need input and engagement throughout the institution as we work to enhance retention and overall student success. As we've outlined in several of the previous narratives, we are using these lessons to good effect in various offices and across several new initiatives, particularly in Admissions, the Provost and Dean's Office, and in Student Life; within our new First-Year Forum program; and as we think about the structures that support institutional research and assessment efforts across the College.

Going forward, our Task Force will continue to be an important clearinghouse for conversations and new initiatives connected to enrollment, retention, and overall student success. This work is bolstered by a new Associate Director of Enrollment Research and Analytics, a position that is shared between the Research, Planning, and Assessment Office and the Admissions Office; and that is a key connector in our analytics work related to enrollment. Data collection and analysis will continue to be a cornerstone of our work on retention, though we know also that any sort of "predictive analytic" approach—that is, the use of data to identify and mitigate risk—is only part of any retention strategy. Indeed, we feel strongly that we must also focus on new initiatives, programming, or other support structures that will enable the success of all first-year students, regardless of any risk factors that we might identify—a "lift all boats" strategy. This intentional shift towards student success as a broader conceptualization of educational effectiveness is an important piece of our strategy around retention, and is connected to the other sections outlined below.

Also as part of this strategy, we will seek to expand and fine-tune our engagement with faculty on matters of retention and student success. Since the time of our Retention Lab, we have routinely shared enrollment data with faculty, and have had a number of productive discussions around trends (and challenges) connected to retention. Often these conversations gravitate towards the nature and quality of advising, and the ways faculty can and do support students who are struggling. Indeed these conversations were critical to advancing several key advising initiatives—First-Year Forum, for instance, or our newly-developed Advising Hub, a central clearinghouse of student data and other resources that helps advisors track and support the experience of their advisees. While this focus on advising is surely appropriate given the importance of advising at Bennington, we have heard from faculty that they feel singularly responsible for improving our enrollment outlook—or, as some have said, that they feel their job is to "keep every student." We try to emphasize in these moments that there are some students who surely benefit from time away from Bennington, but at the same time, it is our job—collectively—to ensure that those who can succeed at Bennington do so. As we broaden our conversations on retention to encapsulate other factors that support student success, we will seek other and more meaningful engagement points with faculty connected to pedagogy and curriculum, progress through the Plan, as well as mental health and well-being. We will incorporate the outcomes of this work into the existing student support platforms, and especially the Advising Hub—which we will continue to refine as a key tool and resource for information sharing, coordination of support, and data collection.

Retention and Completion: Projection

- Bennington will continue to focus on improving its retention and overall enrollment picture through the ongoing work of the First-Year Retention Task Force, bidirectional calibration of admissions criteria and student support efforts, faculty engagement, and building an institutional culture of student success.

- A focus of our work will be around student health and well-being, and on understanding the support needs of today's students; this work will necessarily engage everyone at the institution, from front line staff who meet with students, to faculty whose advising relationships routinely engage matters of personal and interpersonal well-being among our students. Our ongoing work on the Advising Hub will support the key role of faculty in promoting student success.

- We will also be working to find ways to clarify educational pathways so that every student can "see" themselves—academically—at Bennington. We need to reveal to students how they learn and progress through the Plan; and then clarify for them what success looks like. Part of that work involves new methods for student learning assessment, as outlined below.

The Success of Recent Graduates: Description

Bennington, we often say, punches "above its weight" in terms of the outsized impact its graduates in the world. Indeed, for the size of our alumni body (in the vicinity of 13,000) we are lucky to count among our alumni a number of Pulitzer Prize recipients, MacArthur "Genius" Award winners, Academy Award winners, and recipients of other prestigious awards. Our alumni are change makers, groundbreakers, and culture shapers. Nonetheless, the national narrative that surrounds higher education these days around return on investment demands a new focus

and clarity around what our graduates gain as a result of their education. While the temptation everywhere—and no less true here at Bennington—is to focus on easy-to-measure outcomes like employment, salary, and continuing education, we have endeavored to understand our education not only as a private good that benefits our students' employment prospects, but as a public one that contributes meaningfully to society through our students' membership in the communities they join; the sense of creativity, wonder, and self-fulfillment they carry with them after graduation; and their ability to make the world as they want it to be. We bring this philosophy to the data we collect, analyze, and share—both internally and with the world beyond Bennington via the Outcomes and Fast Facts pages on our website.

Our primary vehicle for understanding the success of our recent graduates is a custom[2] survey (see sample here) sent each year to a stratified sample of alumni one, five, ten, and fifteen years out from graduation; for certain outcomes, we supplement with data from LinkedIn, the College Scorecard, the National Student Clearinghouse, and other public and private sources. We use these analyses for planning and evaluation (see also the narrative for Standard Two), marketing via the website and other communication channels, and assessment of educational effectiveness—from the very general (but important) outcomes related to employment, salary, and additional education, to more mission-specific outcomes like volunteerism, engagement in the arts, and entrepreneurism. At one year after graduation, 88% of our alums are employed, with approximately half of earners earning less than $25,000 per year.[3] Employment rates further out are even better—94% collapsed across the out-years—and salaries are higher, with about a third earning $85,000 or more a year. Our alums also are very engaged in their jobs, at a time when workplace engagement is the exception, not the norm. Seventy-nine percent of our employed alums (across all years) report having work they find engaging, compared to 39% in certain national surveys of workplace engagement. ("Great Jobs, Great Lives: The 2014 Gallup Purdue Index Report," Gallup/Purdue University.). We consider this metric (and result) crucial to our mission and purpose of educating students who are attuned to "self-fulfillment" and "constructive membership in modern society" ("Bennington College Commencement Statement").

We have also been closely watching the College Scorecard effort that the Obama administration launched in 2015. This innovative public transparency effort makes visible a number of key indicators and metrics, including—most notably—alumni earnings. While we applaud the government's efforts in promoting informed decision-making among prospective students and parents, we feel as though the substantial focus on financial indicators is overly-narrow, and misses other harder-to-measure, but-no-less-important outcomes, like overall well-being or workplace engagement (as above). Still, to the extent that prospective students and parents are evaluating colleges and universities according to data they see in the Scorecard, we need to be responsive to what's there and particularly to our median alumni salary data—reported to be less than $30,000 at 10 years after starting college (U.S. Department of Education,

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2   As with other institutions, we struggle to balance the need for national norming and peer comparison with the important flexibility afforded by locally-designed surveys. In general, we remain committed to conducting surveys developed in-house so that we can ask questions specific to our mission, but we have recently contemplated migrating over to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) first-destination employment standards so that we can compare ourselves to peers on this specific outcome for our most recent graduates.

3   Data in this section is from the 2018 administration of our alumni survey.

College Scorecard, accessed July, 2019). This data is both troubling on its face, and also hard to square with our own internal surveys, which show twice as many alumni earning more (vs less) than $30,000 at five to fifteen years after graduating. Nonetheless, this data has prompted many important conversations about the role of Bennington in general—and Field Work Term in particular—in preparing our students for the world of work. Among many other initiatives connect to work-integrated learning, in Spring 2019, we piloted a two-credit seminar for seniors devoted to framing their Bennington experience in relation to life after college. This course was taught by our Associate Director of Field Work Term and Career Development, and included topics like social and professional networking, career mapping, and balancing tensions between interests and personal responsibility. Though we are still assessing the efficacy of this pilot, we are optimistic that this structure will better prepare students for seeking and securing their first full-time job after college, and improving longer term employment rates and salaries. Much like First-Year Forum for first-year students, we also see a significant role for the faculty in preparing students for success after Bennington, and imagine perhaps a split advising model where faculty and staff work together to mentor individual seniors about the world of work.

In addition to the employment and salary metrics outlined above, we also track carefully rates of graduate school enrollment, both through a question on our alumni survey, and through periodic use of the StudentTracker service at the National Student Clearinghouse. Though the self-reported rates of graduate or professional school enrollment among recent graduates is low (20% at one year), when we use the Clearinghouse to analyze a sample of graduates ten to fifteen years out from graduation, more than 50% have gone on for some form of further study; and nearly 70% of these have earned an additional degree or credential. Aside from Bennington (where many of our graduates have pursued an MFA, or an MAT as part of a now-suspended dual-degree program), the top schools attended are NYU, Columbia, CUNY (various), Simmons, and Boston University; the top degrees attained are by far at the master's level—mostly MFA, with some MA/MS, MAT, and MArch. (See report here.)

Lastly—and perhaps most critically—we use our alumni survey to assess a number of mission-centric process measures and outcomes connected to educational effectiveness. Here we find that more than four in five alumni are engaged in the arts, with more than a third (overall) creating or performing in the arts as a professional; nearly a quarter volunteer; and, underscoring the entrepreneurial spirit of Bennington, a third have started or owned their own business. Many alumni stay in touch and carry with them the sense of community nurtured here on campus: approximately a quarter say they are working or otherwise collaborating with one or more alumni.

The Success of Recent Graduates: Appraisal
Bennington has made significant strides in recent years to develop and implement a thoughtful framework for evaluating the success of recent graduates. Our alumni surveys, complemented by the use of National Student Clearinghouse and College Scorecard data, give us insight into the lives of our former students. We feel confident and comfortable with the metrics we assess, particularly as connected to engagement at work, participation in the arts, and entrepreneurial activities (among others). Our salary data—particularly what is made available in the College Scorecard—has given us pause, and deserves our attention. Though we are wary of focusing too exclusively on financial outcomes for our students, we know also that better salaries are

a principal reason that some of our students attend college, and we need to be attentive to Bennington's capacity to transform the financial futures of our students.

In all of this work, we are mindful of the significant opportunities afforded by good data collection, management, and governance practices; and are working to merge longitudinal, student-level outcomes data with our other assessment streams (outlined above) so that we can answer fundamental questions about the nature and quality of a Bennington education. We are especially interested, for example, in asking questions about the particular combination of demographic, academic, and experiential factors that give rise to the best outcomes for our alumni. This will answer important questions about the value of Bennington's educational philosophy, and will also provide data we can use to improve the academic experience for all students—particularly those that might be underperforming given certain barriers to success that are now not otherwise visible. At a time when many are questioning the value of higher education—and even those who ascribe value do so in ways that are unsatisfactorily narrow—we believe we can provide an answer through use of analytics that model the relationships among the attributes of an entering first-year student, her attainment of key learning outcomes while at Bennington, and the nature and quality of her life after graduation.

The Success of Recent Graduates: Projection

- We are committed to describing the value of a Bennington education in ways that are timely, relevant, effective, and appropriate to Bennington's mission. We will continue to track and publish employment, graduate school enrollment, engagement in the arts, and rates of volunteerism, among other outcomes.

- While our employment data is strong, alumni salaries—at least as tracked via the College Scorecard—are very low. This has prompted important conversations about the value of a Bennington education, both in a general way and in terms of Bennington's ability to transform the financial futures of our students. We will address this both from a marketing and communications perspective (e.g., highlighting the many positive benefits of a Bennington education), and from an internal programming perspective, through the expansion of programming connected to Field Work Term and career development.

- As we gather more data on alumni outcomes, and refine our student success and learning assessment efforts, we will perform data analyses to understand possible relationships between outcomes and the experiences—educational and otherwise—our students have on campus, thus providing a crucial quality assurance / quality improvement feedback cycle.

Programs Beyond the Traditional Undergraduate Experience: Description
We apply the same framework for educational effectiveness to all programs at Bennington, and closely track student learning, retention and completion, and alumni outcomes for our post baccalaureate pre-medical, prison education, and graduate programs. This work is distributed among individual faculty, program directors, and the central institutional research and assessment office, as appropriate. Our various programs establish and track learning goals for our students, within and across coursework and through capstone or other advanced work;

these goals (and associated metrics) are refined over time through a self-study process that mirrors the discipline group reviews at the undergraduate level.

As with our traditional undergraduates, assessment of student learning happens at multiple levels—within individual coursework primarily (often through the use of narrative evaluations) and at the program level (in consultation with faculty and advisors). The master of fine arts programs in writing, dance, and public action deepen students' knowledge and skills in their respective areas, with ample opportunities through performances and other presentations to demonstrate that learning to both peers and faculty. The post baccalaureate program—meant for recent graduates from other institutions who want to pursue a career in medicine, but who might not have taken the necessary coursework—has very focused learning goals: to give students the knowledge necessary to apply to and succeed in medical school. And the Prison Education Initiative (PEI), designed for inmates in a maximum security prison in upstate New York, has some of the same learning goals as our primary undergraduate program (Capacities are the central frame for the education, as they are for our regular undergraduates), but layers in additional objectives; in particular, the education allows inmate students to make meaning of their worlds, cope with their sentences, and engage with others.

Rates of retention and completion for our various programs are tracked in the Provost and Dean's Office, and are used both to evaluate the success of our students and to calibrate our admissions processes. Our graduate programs have very strong retention and completion rates, ranging from 80% to 90%. Completion rates for our post baccalaureate pre-medical program—a one-year program that often has between 10-15 students—have ranged from 100% to as low as 40% in recent years. Our PEI program does evaluate ongoing enrollment and retention, though in a maximum security setting where inmates often transfer or are otherwise unavailable to continue in their coursework, retention rates are a less meaningful metric.[4]

Success of the alumni from our various programs is defined based on both the goals of the programs themselves and—where appropriate—the individual goals of the students we enroll. A principal goal of our MFA in writing program is to produce writers who will publish quality works of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry, and we track carefully any books or other publications that come out of the program. Success of the graduates of our other MFA programs (dance and public action) is defined in terms of academic appointments, professional engagements, and the quality and prominence of the work(s) in which they subsequently engage; these data are tracked largely through individual conversations with alumni, given the small number of s tudents that pass through these programs. The pre-medical program is designed to prepare students for medical school and a career in medicine, and so we are routinely in touch with alumni to document their professional trajectory, and track this both individually and in aggregate. We know, for example, from a recent analysis compiled on data from nine years of classes, that 73% of our alumni successfully entered medical school. PEI defines success in diverse ways, and we are working—in the context of this new program—to develop metrics appropriate to the setting. For inmates who may be released, further education and employment are outcomes we will begin to track; for inmates who are not slated to be released, PEI seeks to support a meaningful philosophy of life in an incarcerated setting.

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4   Though PEI students are technically degree-seeking for federal financial aid purposes, they do not acquire the credits necessary to obtain a bachelor's degree. Bennington has recently submitted a substantive change proposal to NECHE to award PEI students an associate's degree; this proposal will be in review as of Fall, 2019.

Programs Beyond the Traditional Undergraduate Experience: Appraisal

As with our traditional undergraduate program, we ensure that Bennington delivers on the promise of a quality, progressive education for all of our students, regardless of setting and circumstance. We are continuing to develop, refine, and assess learning goals appropriate to the degree level and the students we serve. Clarity around these outcomes serves both to orient the specific educational structures we employ and to demonstrate value to students. Our retention and completion rates are strong at the graduate degree level, which shows we are both identifying, recruiting, and supporting the students who are capable of success. The same is true generally for our pre-medical program, though we have seen some dips in completion rates, to which we must be attentive. The pre-medical program has recently been through a comprehensive self-study process which will help guide ongoing student support and success efforts.

In addition to our retention and completion rates, we show the value of a Bennington education through the evidence we collect about the alumni from our programs, both individually and in the aggregate. It is here, however, that we might be more systematic in the evidence we collect. Currently, most of our data is collected through individual updates, conversations, or other idiosyncratic means, and not through the systematic collection of data from—for instance— regular, comprehensive surveys or alumni databases. And though we have ample evidence to suggest that our students are achieving desired outcomes—both educationally and in the lives they live after Bennington—we have not yet generated program-level statistics to show what proportion of students achieve particular program goals.

Programs Beyond the Traditional Undergraduate Experience: Projection

- For our programs beyond the traditional undergraduate experience, and just as we do for discipline groups, we will continue to refine our learning goals and assessment practices through regular program evaluation and self-study. Where possible, we will connect our emerging assessment practices to leverage ongoing work described elsewhere in this standard.

- We will be more systematic about the data we collect about the alumni from our programs. In particular, the Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment (who also manages alumni outcomes research for our undergraduates) will ensure robust data collection practices among our various programs.

STANDARD EIGHT: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (UNDERGRADUATE RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES)

Student Success Measures/ Prior Performance and Goals	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(Fall 2015)	(Fall 2016)	(Fall 2017)	(Fall 2018)	(Fall 2019)
IPEDS <u>Retention</u> Data					
Associate degree students	—	—	—	—	—
Bachelors degree students	82%	80%	78%	73%	78%
IPEDS <u>Graduation</u> Data (150% of time)					
Associate degree students	—	—	—	—	—
Bachelors degree students	70%	67%	74%	76%	72%
IPEDS <u>Outcomes Measures</u> Data					
First-time, Full-Time Students					
Awarded a degree within six years	67%	67%	68%	70%	68%
Awarded a degree within eight years	68%	68%	68%	70%	70%
Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
First-Time, Part-Time Students					
Awarded a degree within six years	—	—	—	—	—
Awarded a degree within eight years	—	—	—	—	—
Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	—	—	—	—	—
Non-First-Time, Full-Time Students					
Awarded a degree within six years	75%	90%	90%	70%	90%
Awarded a degree within eight years	75%	90%	90%	70%	90%
Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Non-First-Time, Part-Time Students					
Awarded a degree within six years	—	—	—	—	—
Awarded a degree within eight years	—	—	—	—	—
Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	—	—	—	—	—
Other Undergraduate Retention/Persistence Rates (Add definitions/methodology in #1 below)					
Other Undergraduate Graduation Rates (Add definitions/methodology in # 2 below)					
Post-baccalaureate pre-medical program completion rates	86%	77%	67%	40%	75%
Definition and Methodology Explanations					
1					
2					

Note: complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (See Standard 8.1)

STANDARD EIGHT: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (STUDENT SUCCESS AND PROGRESS RATES AND OTHER MEASURES OF STUDENT SUCCESS)

Category of Student/Outcome Measure	Bachelor Cohort Entering		Associate Cohort Entering	
	6 years ago	4 years ago	6 years ago	4 years ago
First-time, Full-Time Students				
Degree from original institution	76%	59%	—	—
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution	0%	9%	—	—
Degree from a different institution	8%	2%	—	—
Transferred to a different institution	11%	16%	—	—
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled	3%	13%	—	—
First-Time, Part-Time Students				
Degree from original institution	—	—	—	—
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution	—	—	—	—
Degree from a different institution	—	—	—	—
Transferred to a different institution	—	—	—	—
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled	—	—	—	—
Non-First-Time, Full-Time Students				
Degree from original institution	82%	71%	—	—
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution	0%	14%	—	—
Degree from a different institution	6%	0%	—	—
Transferred to a different institution	6%	0%	—	—
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled	6%	14%	—	—
Non-First-Time, Part-Time Students				
Degree from original institution	—	—	—	—
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution	—	—	—	—
Degree from a different institution	—	—	—	—
Transferred to a different institution	—	—	—	—
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled	—	—	—	—

Measures of Student Achievement and Success / Institutional Performance and Goals	3 Years Prior (FY 2015)	2 Years Prior (FY2016)	1 Year Prior (FY 2017)	Current Year (FY 2018)	Next Year Forward (goal) (FY 2019)
Success of students pursuing higher degrees (add definitions/methodology in #1 below)					
1 One year out	14%	19%	6%	20%	20%
2 5/10/15 years out (aggregate)	52%	See note #3	61%	68%	65%
3					
4					

Other measures of student success and achievement, including success of graduates in pursuing mission-related paths (e.g., Peace Corps, public service, global citizenship, leadership, spiritual formation) and success of graduates in fields for which they were not explicitly prepared (add definitions/methodology in #2 below)

1 Employment at one year					
2 Creating/peforming art as professional at one year					
3 Started or owned a business at 5/10/15 years out (aggregate)					
4					

Definition and Methodology Explanations

1	Self-reported rates of continuing education at one, five, ten, and fifteen years out from graduation.
2	Self-reported alumni survey data.
3	Our analyses for this year do not presently allow us tease apart the data for these questions.

STANDARD EIGHT: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (LICENSURE PASSAGE AND JOB PLACEMENT RATES AND COMPLETION AND PLACEMENT RATES FOR SHORT-TERM VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS)

	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Most Recent Year
	(FY 2)	(FY 2)	(FY 2)	(FY 2)

State Licensure Examination Passage Rates

Name of exam	# who took	# who passed	# who took	# who passed	# who took	# who passed	# who took	# who passed
1								

National Licensure Passage Rates

Name of exam	# who took	# who passed	# who took	# who passed	# who took	# who passed	# who took	# who passed
1								

Job Placement Rates

Major/time period	*	# of grads	# with jobs	# of grads	# with jobs	# of grads	# with jobs	# of grads	# with jobs
1									

* Check this box if the program reported is subject to "gainful employment" requirements.

Web location of gainful employment report (if applicable)	

Completion and Placement Rates for Short-Term Vocational Training Programs for which students are eligible for Federal Financial Aid					
	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(FY 2)	(FY 2)	(FY 2)	(FY 2)	(FY 2)

Completion Rates

1					

Placement Rates

1					

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Bennington College does not have any programs applicable to this form.

STANDARD EIGHT: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (GRADUATE PROGRAMS, DISTANCE EDUCATION, OFF-CAMPUS LOCATIONS)

Student Success Measures/ Prior Performance and Goals	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(AY 15-16)	(AY 16-17)	(AY 17-18)	(AY 18-19)	(AY 19-20)
Master's Programs (Add definitions/methodology in #1 below)					
Retention rates first-to-second year	89%	86%	82%	91%	90%
Graduation rates @ 150% time	86%	85%	89%	89%	90%
Average time to degree	2	2	2	2	2
Other measures, specify:					
Doctoral Programs (Add definitions/methodology in #2 below)					
Retention rates first-to-second year					
Graduation rates @ 150% time					
Average time to degree					
Other measures, specify:					
First Professional Programs (Add definitions/methodology in #3 below)					
Retention rates first-to-second year					
Graduation rates @ 150% time					
Average time to degree					
Other measures, specify:					
Distance Education (Add definitions/methodology in #4 below)					
Course completion rates					
Retention rates					
Graduation rates					
Other measures, specify:					
Branch Campus and Instructional Locations (Add definitions/methodology in #5 below)					
Course completion rates					
Retention rates					
Graduation rates					
Other measures, specify:					

Definition and Methodology Explanations

1	Data are calculated using full-year cohorts, according to the reporting years listed above (eg, Current Year = June '15/Jan '16 for MFAw; Fall '15/Spring '16 for MFA)
2	
3	
4	
5	

STANDARD NINE: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Bennington continues to abide by "the fundamental connection between ethics and the educational process" (to cite the 2009 *Self-Study*) as it is described in the opening lines of the College's traditional commencement statement:

> Bennington regards education as a sensual and ethical, no less than an intellectual process. It seeks to liberate and nurture the individuality, the creative intelligence, and the ethical and aesthetic sensibility of its students, to the end that their richly varied natural endowments will be directed toward self-fulfillment and toward constructive social purposes.

As we wrote in Standard One, educating toward "self-fulfillment" and "constructive social purposes" is central to Bennington College's mission. Bennington is naturally committed not only to realizing that goal for its students, but also to fostering the values implicit to the goal within its campus community—among faculty and staff—as well as in the local, regional, and wider communities with which we interact. Of course, that goal is not achievable without what is commonly understood as integrity, a value that has perhaps been too often assumed a given at educational institutions, which have historically been perceived as elevated from the fray of commerce and exempt from the sometimes compromising practices of running a business.

It is only in the last decade that this public perception of higher education, particularly in the private sphere, has begun to shift, driven in part by the increased scrutiny that follows from a close examination of the return on investment provided by an expensive college education, from the point of view of what is increasingly referred to as the "consumer" of that education. We are now regularly and painfully reminded that private higher education in the United States is a business venture, subject to the same vicissitudes as other business ventures, even when not pursued for profit. At Bennington, integrity in this sense is not assumed; from the beginning, Bennington has consciously striven—through practices of reflection, examination, revision, and adaptation—to maintain and develop that integrity, as we hope is evident to readers of this report. After all, the College was founded as an experiment meant to provide a better and more meaningful education for young women (see Leigh's *The Educational Plan for Bennington College*), and that intent continues to drive what we provide—to all students.

But the meaning of integrity as used in this Standard is necessarily different. This Standard asks not whether we are righteous, but whether the College does what it says it does (demonstrating integrity) and whether the College describes openly (with transparency) and widely (by disclosing to the public) the ways in which it does what it does. The College's integrity can only be shown in the sense of the word as used above: Does our representation of the education we provide match with the experience of that education? Evidence for the doing has been given in the narratives preceding this Standard; what now remains to be addressed is how thoroughly, accurately, and broadly Bennington communicates about the education it provides.

The data forms that accompany this Standard contain a comprehensive inventory of documents demonstrating Bennington's compliance with the basic requirements of transparency and public

disclosure. There are handbooks for students, faculty, and staff with enough policies to satisfy even the most zealous administrator, pertaining, for example, to conduct, grievance, academic honesty, and academic freedom. We publish policies and procedures for judicial processes and for Title IX, Clery reports, water quality reports, and more, and we produce a directory of "consumer information." All of these are updated regularly. We have always done what is legally necessary for compliance.

Of course we seek to do more than just what is necessary, and we seek to do more than just provide information about what to do when something goes wrong. We want the information we present to either embody our educational values, or, if that isn't feasible, to exist within a rich context that embodies our educational values. As we wrote in the *Fifth-Year Interim Report*: "In a place as small and self-reflective as Bennington, the ethical principles expressed above must not only be communicated clearly and effectively to students, they must...be reflected in the administration of the whole College as well." What follows is a description of an extended attempt to do so focused on Bennington's current website, which houses the vast majority of the documents listed in the data forms and which therefore serves as both the College's most robust enactment of integrity, transparency, and public disclosure and as an emblem of the significant difficulties in doing so.

Description
In 2015, the College commissioned a marketing study by the Fearless group, which— in addition to performing the usual research—interviewed over 100 students, faculty, staff, alumni, counselors, parents, and other friends of the College in order to recommend a positioning strategy. How was Bennington perceived in the world? What was Bennington's reputation? What does the College need to do to be recognized as the "most forward thinking of the elite liberal arts colleges"? Such a study—just like the usage of the words "marketing" and "brand"—was something novel and somewhat anathema to some at the College. The ethos of Bennington had long been characterized in part by an unwillingness to sell ourselves, which seemed suspect and might, it was thought, quickly lead to unkept promises. Moreover, the people and the work that they do should make the value of the College self-evident to any who care to look.

This kind of inward exceptionalism (which we wrote about in the *Fifth-Year Interim Report*) kept Bennington small and, to some extent, closed to the world – a secret, magical, slightly fevered place in southwestern Vermont available only to those in the know. (Critically, this kind of self-perception has consequences not just for enrollment, but for access, diversity, and inclusion as well.) Already susceptible to self-reflection, Bennington took the Fearless work—which, despite skepticism, managed to capture the spirit of the College—as an opportunity to explore more fully what it would mean to open outward, both entering into and welcoming in the world as it was. A new website would be one of the primary vehicles for doing so.

Echoing the promise of the internet from its heady early days, we wrote in the *Fifth-Year Interim Report* (2014) that we were "looking to build a site that embraces the multiple voices that make up the College's digital ecosystem, integrates them into the Bennington website in ways that are useful to site visitors, and provides a platform for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents to contribute to an authentic and intentional online community." The College's general website would follow in the footsteps and in the spirit of its curriculum site, launched in 2103 on the WordPress platform, which allowed unparalleled access and increased visibility, and which

facilitated real-time changes and additions (e.g. pop-up courses)—all of which better supports the student Plan process. (The curriculum site, radical in its time, is now very long in the tooth; developmentally, internet years pass more quickly than even dog years.)

Many hopes were pinned on the new website. It would become *the* vehicle for transparency, open to the world, which would demonstrate our integrity for all to see. The website was perceived as a critical part of the ongoing work of converting Bennington from a community that relied almost exclusively on the oral transmission of cultural and information—which, with all its warmth and relational charm, sometimes took the form of a campus-wide game of telephone—to one that was comfortable with information, stories, and data that had publicly accessible, verifiable sources. No longer would a student holding a weathered, two-page printout sketching the general contours of the Plan process need to wander the campus in search of faculty and peers willing to describe that process in detail (and often in conflicting detail). Even the relatively simple struggle to keep information up-to-date would be aided by the new website, which, like the curriculum, might even allow for real-time news and information—about conferences, talks, shows, and other events, for example. Openness and accessibility would help to create community. We would be able to see and hear each other more fully, which is a challenge even at a small college.

The Communications Office, together with representatives from the company that designed the website, met with all constituencies to learn about their hopes and dreams and to figure out once and for all how to represent the Bennington ethos—including the ambiguous-seeming, choose-your-own-adventure style Plan process—to the world, dynamically. Although everyone acknowledged that the education and the place were best experienced in person (of course), a website with a fully-deployed suite of media and extensive storytelling might just be a close second. Internal and external audiences would see exactly the same things. Prospective students would see there represented as close to what they would experience on arrival as possible, including fulsome descriptions of the programs and areas that comprise a Bennington education and video tours of all the student houses. Faculty, staff, and students would see their work there represented, fully and accurately, in relation to each other and be able to access all the resources they need to undertake their work. This new website would be supplemented by a strong set of social media, newsletters, campus-wide messages, and leadership communications disseminating and amplifying Bennington's many stories. Lastly, there were hopes that the website would serve as the public complement to an internal "data hive" accessible to students, faculty, and staff, which we described in the 2014 *Fifth-Year Interim Report* as "a centralized data warehouse that tracks key student learning outcomes over time and links these performance indicators to retention, completion, and other student and alumni data" (74). In other words, the education we described publicly (on the website) would also be measured and tested internally (through the data hive).

Bennington's new website was launched in the late spring of 2016.

Appraisal

The 2016 website, and its evolution since, has been successful on several fronts, unsuccessful on several others, and revealing in at least two ways. Rather than create a catalogue of all here, we will highlight as is relevant to this Standard.

Perhaps most importantly, many aspects of a Bennington education are now described in writing (and represented through photos, videos, and stories) and in a widely accessible way *for the very first time*. This includes many discipline and program overviews. More, a number of programs and offices—such as the Field Work Term, Admissions, and Financial Aid offices—took the opportunity to revise, update, and expand existing content in order to better inform both current and prospective students. Cost, financing, enrollment, and demographics (showing that the College is increasingly accessible and diverse on nearly every metric) are detailed. Each office now has either a mission statement or other appropriate text explaining its role at Bennington.

For the first time, every faculty member is now presented with a photo and a proper biography. All staff have photos, also for the first time. We believed this would help us recognize each other and so support the creation of community. All of this, we imagined, went a long way to making Bennington and its people both more visible and more accessible. No longer are we talking mostly to ourselves; we're here for all the world to see. We even advertise on social media, enticing the curious to visit our website (and inquire, apply, and enroll). Not insignificantly for a college with a strong reputation in the arts, the site has often been described as beautiful—dynamic and engaging, at times even representing the intensity and excitement of the education itself.

The many exciting events at the College have finally been integrated into the community calendar, which, together with weekly and monthly newsletters to various audiences, make a much broader audience aware of life at (and through) the College, allowing all to participate directly or indirectly. We are finally able to publicly present the kind of work done at Bennington: those same newsletters contain links to the many student, faculty, alumni, and institutional stories regularly featured on the website, creating a sense of community as well as of "brand," something recognizably *Bennington*. One no longer needs to be an insider to get a good sense of the Bennington spirit.

One measure of success is the eagerness with which some inform the Communications Office of their most recent accomplishments—so they can be shared in posts, stories, or newsletters. There is a belief that the audience for this sort of news is significant, appreciative, and engaged. Clear processes for gathering and receiving news of this sort—from students, faculty, staff, and alumni—have been established. Equally telling is the alacrity with which others inform Communications of mistakes and errors; people are paying attention.

It is true that sometimes the attempt to represent a Bennington education went a little bit awry. The so-called "exploratory navigation," meant to show how the Bennington Plan process actually unfolds through the examples of several students, whose various educational experiences were shown in web-like interrelations, was implemented in such a way that even frequent visitors to any page of the site could accidentally drift into the fractal-like space—and find themselves conventionally lost. (The exploratory navigation was silently removed over a year ago; not a single complaint has been heard.)

But one indication that something had gone more generally sideways with the new website was the discovery, not long after launch, of a rogue website called "bennington.works" (a play on our admitted students' day, BenningtonWorks). A list of simple hyperlinks divided into

three categories (each featuring the word "useful"), all designed to be immediately helpful to a Bennington faculty member. At the top of the home page it is noted that the provided links "pass the XKCD test."

What happened here? Although the website brought significant improvements to its internal audiences (as described above), this was a telling example of how the College's official website was oriented toward external audiences, and particularly prospective students; it was designed primarily to market the College, and not so much to be as useful to those who attend or work at the College. Moreover, the improvements made are not easily accessible, especially when the site-search function has been weak (the savvy use Google search to find specific pages on the Bennington College website), the directory unreliable, and certain central pages (like the home page) slow to load. In the attempt to open outward to external audiences, we have not served our internal communities as well as we can.

Among the many paradoxes of Bennington is that although we are a small community of less than a thousand people, misinformation (and/or lack of information) abounds—about things large and small, and no matter how or how many times a piece of information has been disseminated. This is habitually referred to as a "communications problem," as if it were something requiring a tactical or technological fix. But it has been shockingly recalcitrant at Bennington, far beyond simply being the symptom of not reading an email or newsletter, or of guesswork or gossip filling a perceived void. We thought this problem could be solved if everyone could see the same thing at the same time, via the website and the vehicles that were directly connected to the website.

There are at least two lessons to be learned here:

1. *One website cannot serve several constituencies equally well.*
   It turns out, of course, that one website—no matter how robust—cannot satisfy all audiences. The idea that prospective students, current students, faculty, staff, and alumni could all look at the same content, see a reflection of themselves, and receive exactly what they need is a lovely and romantic and unrealistic one. In fact, each audience has distinct needs, even if those needs are sometimes overlapping.

2. *Websites cannot fix problems that exist within a community.*
   It is a rare website that can actually create community, especially where a community already exists. A website cannot correct for the problems or shortcomings within a community. A website can support these endeavors, and often quite well, but we have to do the real relational work in analog form.

The typical lifespan of a website is three years; sometimes it can be stretched to five. We are now approaching the end-of-life stage for Bennington's website. It took more than a year's worth of work to create something that might grant five years of benefit. And, as with campus structures, there is a kind of "deferred maintenance" cost to the website. It is a structure that needs constant care; if it is not constantly maintained, it breaks or dies, sometimes with dire consequences to data accessible through the site.

- Designate a working group to consider whether an intranet site designed to serve internal audiences only (faculty, students, and staff) is a worthwhile pursuit.

- If so, streamline current bennington.edu site to more effectively market to prospective students and their parents, counselors, and peers.

- Continue collecting website usage data and begin consulting constituencies to imagine the next iteration of the College website.

STANDARD NINE: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE (INTEGRITY)

Policies	Last Updated	Website location where policy is posted	Responsible Office or Committee
Academic honesty	June 2018	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/academics/academic-and-artistic-ethics-policy	Student Life
Intellectual property rights	June 2018	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/policies-and-procedures/information-technology-policy	Information Technology
Conflict of interest - staff/faculty	August 2019	Conflict of interest form - updated anually	President's Office
Conflict of interest - board	August 2019	Conflict of interest form - updated anually	President's Office
Privacy rights	June 2018	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/policies-and-procedures/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act	Provost and Dean's Office
Fairness for students	June 2018	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/community-standards/student-conduct-procedures https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/community-standards/student-conduct-standards	Student Life
Fairness for faculty	December 2018	https://www.bennington.edu/faculty/faculty-handbook/organization-of-college/faculty-elected-committees	Provost and Dean's Office
Fairness for staff	October 2018	https://www.bennington.edu/staff/committees	Human Resources
Academic freedom	November 2018	https://www.bennington.edu/faculty/faculty-handbook/educational-principles/academic-freedom	Student Life
Research	November 2018	https://www.bennington.edu/faculty/committee-research-human-participants	Provost and Dean's Office
Title IX	June 2018	https://www.bennington.edu/sexual-harassment-and-misconduct	Provost and Dean's Office
Other; specify			

STANDARD NINE: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC
DISCLOSURE (INTEGRITY) (cont.)

Non-discrimination policies

Recruitment and admissions	2017	https://www.bennington.edu/admissions-aid/apply/non-discrimination-statement-admissions	Admissions
Employment	2018	https://www.bennington.edu/human-resources/employment-bennington/nondiscrimination-statement	Human Resources
Evaluation	2018	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/policies-and-procedures/nondiscrimination-policy	Provost and Dean's Office
Disciplinary action		https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/policies-and-procedures/nondiscrimination-policy	Provost and Dean's Office
Advancement		https://www.bennington.edu/human-resources/employment-bennington/nondiscrimination-statement	Human Resources
Other; specify			
Faculty	2018	https://www.bennington.edu/faculty/faculty-handbook/faculty-handbook-general-college-policies/nondiscrimination-statement	Provost and Dean's Office

Resolution of grievances

Students	2017	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/community-standards/student-conduct-procedures	Dean's Office
Faculty	2018	https://www.bennington.edu/faculty/faculty-handbook/organization-of-college/faculty-elected-committees	Comittee on the Resolution of Greivances
Staff		(print publication only)	Administrative Staff Greivance Comittee
Other; specify			

Other	Last Updated	Website location where policy is posted	Responsible Office or Committee

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

STANDARD NINE: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE (TRANSPARENCY)

Information	Website location and/or Relevant Publication(s)
How can inquiries be made about the institution? Where can questions be addressed?	https://www.bennington.edu/request-information http://benningtonstudents.tumblr.com/ https://webinfo.bennington.edu/CampusDirectory/CampusDirectory.cfm
Notice of availability of publications and of audited financial statement or fair summary	http://www.govwiki.info/pdfs/Non-Profit/VT%20Bennington%20College%202017.pdf
Processes for admissions	https://www.bennington.edu/admissions/apply
Processes for employment	https://www.bennington.edu/employment-opportunities
Processes for grading	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/academics/evaluation-of-academic-work
Processes for assessment	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/academics/evaluation-of-academic-work
Processes for student discipline	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/community-standards/student-conduct-procedures https://www.bennington.edu/provost-and-deans-office/judicial-restorative-justice
Processes for consideration of complaints and appeals	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/community-standards/student-conduct-procedures

List below the statements or promises made regarding program excellence, learning outcomes, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty and indicate where valid documentation can be found.

Information	Website location and/or Relevant Publication(s)
Bennington students graduate with a capacity to get it done, to put themselves out there, to find a novel solution.	https://www.bennington.edu/about/outcomes https://www.bennington.edu/academics/plan/bennington-education-capacities

Date of last review of:	
Print publications	Ongoing.
Digital publications	Ongoing.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

STANDARD NINE: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE (PUBLIC DISCLOSURE)

Information	Website location
Institutional catalog	http://curriculum.bennington.edu/spring2019/ https://www.bennington.edu/academics/areas-of-study
Obligations and responsibilities of students and the institution	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/academics/guidelines-and-academic-expectations-of-college https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook
Information on admission and attendance	https://www.bennington.edu/about/outcomes/fast-facts https://www.bennington.edu/admissions-and-financial-aid
Institutional mission and objectives	https://www.bennington.edu/about/vision-and-history https://www.bennington.edu/academics/plan/bennington-education-capacities
Expected educational outcomes	https://www.bennington.edu/academics/plan/bennington-education-capacities https://www.bennington.edu/academics/plan https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/academics/guidelines-and-academic-expectations-of-college
Status as public or independent institution; status as not-for-profit or for-profit; religious affiliation	https://www.bennington.edu/about
Requirements, procedures and policies re: admissions	https://www.bennington.edu/admissions/apply https://www.bennington.edu/admissions-aid/apply/common-application
Requirements, procedures and policies re: transfer credit	https://www.bennington.edu/admissions/apply/transfer-students/undergraduate-credit-transfer-policy https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/academics/transfer-credit https://www.bennington.edu/academic-services/study-abroad-and-study-away
Student fees, charges and refund policies	https://www.bennington.edu/admissions/apply/financing-your-education/tuition-and-fees https://www.bennington.edu/business-office/withdrawal-and-refund-policy https://www.bennington.edu/business-office/student-billing
Rules and regulations for student conduct	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/community-standards/student-conduct-standards
Procedures for student appeals and complaints	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/community-standards/student-conduct-procedures
Other information re: attending or withdrawing from the institution	https://www.bennington.edu/business-office/withdrawal-and-refund-policy https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook
Academic programs	https://www.bennington.edu/academics/areas-of-study https://www.bennington.edu/graduate-postbac-programs

Information	Website location
Courses currently offered	http://curriculum.bennington.edu/spring2019/
Other available educational opportunities	https://www.bennington.edu/academics/field-work-term https://www.bennington.edu/robert-frost-stone-house-museum https://www.bennington.edu/academics/areas-of-study-curriculum/visual-arts/museum-fellows-term https://www.bennington.edu/field-work-term-and-career-development/field-work-term/field-work-term-options/lucille-lortel https://www.bennington.edu/center-advancement-of-public-action/human-rights-and-peacebuilding/incarceration-america/prison
Other academic policies and procedures	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/student-handbook-policies-and-procedures
Requirements for degrees and other forms of academic recognition	https://www.bennington.edu/academics/plan/requirements-graduation https://www.bennington.edu/academics/advising/grades-and-evaluation https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/academics/evaluation-of-academic-work
List of continuing faculty, indicating department or program affiliation, degrees held, and institutions granting them	https://www.bennington.edu/academics/faculty https://www.bennington.edu/academics/faculty/aos?aos=96
Names and positions of administrative officers	https://www.bennington.edu/about/college-leadership
Names, principal affiliations of governing board members	https://www.bennington.edu/about/college-leadership
Locations and programs available at branch campuses, other instructional locations, and overseas operations at which students can enroll for a degree, along with a description of programs and services available at each location	https://www.bennington.edu/academic-services/study-abroad-and-study-away
Programs, courses, services, and personnel not available in any given academic year.	NA (faculty and course listings reflect current offerings)
Size and characteristics of the student body	https://www.bennington.edu/about/outcomes/fast-facts
Description of the campus setting	https://www.bennington.edu/about/visit/where-eat-sleep-explore
Availability of academic and other support services	https://www.bennington.edu/academics/advising/academic-advising-and-support https://www.bennington.edu/academic-services/accommodations-and-support
(see section on Student Life Services)	https://www.bennington.edu/office-of-student-life

Information	Website location
Range of co-curricular and non-academic opportunities available to students	https://www.bennington.edu/life-bennington/clubs-organizations/complete-list-of-clubs-organizations https://www.bennington.edu/life-bennington
Institutional learning and physical resources from which a student can reasonably be expected to benefit	https://www.bennington.edu/directory-of-offices
Institutional goals for students' education	https://www.bennington.edu/academics/plan/bennington-education-capacities https://www.bennington.edu/academics/plan
Success of students in achieving institutional goals including rates of retention and graduation and other measure of student success appropriate to institutional mission. Passage rates for licensure exams, as appropriate	https://www.bennington.edu/about/outcomes/fast-facts
Total cost of education and net price, including availability of financial aid and typical length of study	https://www.bennington.edu/admissions/apply/financing-your-education/tuition-and-fees https://www.bennington.edu/admissions/apply/financing-your-education/tuition-and-fees/net-price-calculator https://www.bennington.edu/admissions/apply/financing-your-education/financial-aid-undergraduates
Availability of financial aid	https://www.bennington.edu/admissions/apply/financing-your-education/financial-aid-undergraduates
Expected amount of student debt upon graduation and loan payment rates	https://www.bennington.edu/about/outcomes/fast-facts
Statement about accreditation	https://www.bennington.edu/about

AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS RELATING TO TITLE IV

Periodically, member institutions are asked to affirm their compliance with federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

1. **Credit Hour:** Federal regulation defines a credit hour as an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutional established equivalence that reasonably approximates not less than: (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. (NECHE Policy 111. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.34.)

URL	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/academics/guidelines-and-academic-expectations-of-college
Print Publications	NA
Self-study/Fifth-year report Page Reference	49-51

2. **Credit Transfer Policies**. The institution's policy on transfer of credit is publicly disclosed through its website and other relevant publications. The institution includes a statement of its criteria for transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education along with a list of institutions with which it has articulation agreements. (NECHE Policy 95. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.38, 4.39 and 9.19.)

URL	https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/academics-and-field-work-term/transfer-credit
Print Publications	NA
Self-study/Fifth-year Report Page Reference	49

3. **Student Complaints.** "Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and fairly and consistently administered." (*Standards for Accreditation* 5.18, 9.8, and 9.19.)

URL	Policy on student rights and responsibilities: https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/community-standards/student-conduct-standards Grievance procedures: https://www.bennington.edu/current-students/student-handbook/community-standards/student-conduct-procedures
Print Publications	
Self-study/Fifth-year Report Page Reference	68

4. **Distance and Correspondence Education: Verification of Student Identity:** If the institution offers distance education or correspondence education, it has processes in place to establish that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit....... The institution protects student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity. (NECHE Policy 95. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.48.)

Method(s) used for verification	NA
Self-study/Fifth-year Report Page Reference	

5. **FOR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS ONLY: Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Opportunity for Public Comment:** The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public of an upcoming comprehensive evaluation and to solicit comments. (NECHE Policy 77.)

URL	https://www.bennington.edu/invitation-public-comments,
	https://www.benningtonbanner.com/stories/accreditation-team-seeks-comments-on-bennington-college,581474
Print Publications	Bennington Bulletin (on-campus e-newsletter), Bennington Banner

Self-study Page Reference - NA

The undersigned affirms that <u>Bennington College</u> (institution name) meets the above federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including those enumerated above.

Chief Executive Officer: _____   Date: _____

	1. What are the claims for student achievement or student success?	2. Where are the claims published?	3. Other than course completion and grades, what outcomes evidence is used to support the claims?	4. Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. by the curriculum committee)	5. What changes have been made in the program, the claims or the evidence?
At the institutional level	Students take responsibility for planning their education, and connect their work in and outside of the classroom.	Website, Student Handbook, FWT Handbook, Plan materials	Plan essays, Plan minutes, transcript evaluation, FWT essays and evaluations, narrative evaluations of courses.	Faculty Plan committees, individual faculty members, Provost and Dean's Office staff, occasional external reviewers.	We are working across our various assessment streams to harmonize, connect, and streamline where possible.
For general education if an undergraduate institution	Courses of study reflect breadth and depth. Students develop a set of five Capacities which serve as essential skills during their time at Bennington and beyond	Website, Student Handbook, Capacities document, Plan materials	Transcript analysis, Plan minutes and letters, Plan essays.	Faculty, faculty Plan committees, Provost and Dean's Office.	We have recently developed and implemented the Capacities as an essential framework for teaching and learning at Bennington.
Undergraduate Discipline Programs:					
1. Dance	Students create new artistic work through studying composition and improvisation, supported by an individual movement practice, collaboration with music, design and technology, an understanding of anatomy, and exposure to dance history	Website	Periodic program review, narrative evaluations, course evaluations Plan essays, Plan minutes, performances, collaborative projects with other colleges, FWT evaluations.	Faculty, Provost and Dean's Office, occasional external reviewers or visitors.	None.
2. Drama	Students explore human nature in action, integrating the study of dramatic literature, theory, performance, design, and creative collaboration.	Website	Periodic program review, narrative evaluations, course evaluations Plan essays, Plan minutes, performances, collaborative projects with other colleges, FWT evaluations.	Faculty, Provost and Dean's Office, occasional external visitors	None.
3. Languages	Students learn about cultural ideas as they learn a language.	Website	Advanced projects in the target language(s) which must include an analytical component. Periodic program review, narrative evaluations, course evaluations, Plan essays, Plan minutes, FWT evaluations.	Faculty in the discipline supervise and evaluate the work; sometimes an outside reader is involved.	None.
4. Literature	Through exploration of great literature, students are expected to read, think, and express in writing complicated ideas that have influenced minds greater than their own.	Website	Periodic Program review, narrative evaluations, course evaluations Plan essays, Plan minutes, student readings, student on-line journal, FWT evaluations.	Faculty, Provost and Dean's Office	None.

5. Music	Students integrate the study of theory, history, composition, improvisation, performance and digital technology through hands-on music making.	Website	Periodic program review, narrative evaluations, course evaluations, Plan essays, Plan minutes, FWT evaluations, performances.	Faculty, Provost and Dean's Office, occasional external visitors	None.
6. Sciences and Mathematics	Students learn the basic concepts and applications in the sciences and math through discussion, problem solving, and projects where they develop research questions, conduct and present research.	Website	Periodic program review, narrative evaluations, course evaluations, Plan essays, Plan minutes, FWT evaluations, presentations to the community.	Faculty, Provost and Dean's Office, occasional external reviewers or visitors.	None.
7. Society, Culture, and Thought	Students explore the human experience from multiple perspectives, developing research skills and analytical expertise.	Website	Periodic Program review, narrative evaluations, course evaluations, Plan essays, Plan minutes, FWT evaluations, presentations to the community.	Faculty, Provost and Dean's Office, occasional external reviewers or visitors	None.
8. Visual Arts	Students learn to articulate their ideas through a coherent body of work across a range of media, and within historical and contemporary contexts.	Website	Periodic program review, narrative evaluations, course evaluations, Plan essays, Plan minutes, junior and senior review, FWT evaluations.	Faculty, Provost and Dean's Office, occasional external reviewers or visitors.	None.
Graduate Programs:					
9. MFA in Dance	Students deepen their artistic passions and hone their technique through studio work, regular performance, and work outside their disciplines.	Website, Information document on the program	Informal showings of works-in-progress at dance workshops, formal performances, critiques	Faculty in the disciplines with occasional external visitors, Provost and Dean's Office.	None.
10. MFA in Public Action	Designed to give accomplished artists working as agents of social change the time, space, and focus to conduct research and develop new work.	Website, Information document on the program	Peer & professional engagement.	Faculty in the disciplines with occasional external visitors, Provost and Dean's Office.	New program; assessment framework in progress.
11. MFA in Writing	Students read widely and deeply to further develop their literary critical-thinking skills; students also deliver a critical literary lecture and a reading of their creative work, and complete a creative thesis in their chosen genre.	Website, Program Guidelines, Promotional print materials, Supplemental planning materials	Narrative evaluations by faculty of students, students of faculty, and student evaluations of residences each term; faculty thesis review panel; student publications of books, and anthologies.	Director and Assistant Director and faculty of program, with oversight by the Provost and Dean and occasional outside reviewers.	None.

BENNINGTON COLLEGE AND SUBSIDIARY

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
June 30, 2018 and 2017

BENNINGTON COLLEGE AND SUBSIDIARY
Bennington, VT

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
June 30, 2018 and 2017

CONTENTS

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Trustees
Bennington College and Subsidiary
Bennington, VT

Report on the Consolidated Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying consolidated financial statements of Bennington College and Subsidiary, which comprise the consolidated statements of financial position as of June 30, 2018 and 2017, and the related consolidated statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the consolidated financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Consolidated Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of consolidated financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

(Continued)

1.

Opinion

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Bennington College and subsidiary as of June 30, 2018 and 2017, and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matter

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements as a whole. The Consolidating Schedule of Statement of Activities and the Consolidated Schedule of Financial Position are presented for purposes of additional analysis rather than to present the financial position, results of operations, and cash flows of the individual entities and are not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. Such information are the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the consolidated financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the consolidated financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the consolidated financial statements or to the consolidated financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the consolidated financial statements as a whole.

Crowe LLP

Crowe LLP

New York, New York
October 26, 2018

2.

BENNINGTON COLLEGE AND SUBSIDIARY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
June 30, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
ASSETS:		
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 2,726,839	$ 1,553,624
Deposits with trustees	11,920,046	130,596
Restricted deposits	655,861	-
Accounts and grants receivable, net of allowances of $715,131 and $750,409, respectively	797,765	1,100,824
Pledges receivable, net (note 3)	15,662,261	16,800,677
Beneficial interest in split-interest agreements (notes 4 and 5)	2,139,235	2,091,031
Other assets	1,891,246	1,281,650
Investments (note 5)	21,876,735	22,570,740
Plant assets, net (note 7)	73,253,380	61,841,610
Total assets	$ 130,923,368	$ 107,370,752
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:		
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses (notes 7 and 12)	$ 4,991,651	$ 5,444,475
Deferred income	1,750,779	2,002,546
Advance payments (note 13)	2,476,321	2,333,333
Interest rate swaps, at fair value (notes 5 and 8)	-	1,550,489
Notes payable (note 8)	51,298,309	24,977,553
Total liabilities	60,517,060	36,308,396
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	22,070,370	25,620,764
Temporarily restricted (note 9)	16,127,566	13,724,985
Permanently restricted (note 10)	32,208,372	31,716,607
Total net assets	70,406,308	71,062,356
Total liabilities and net assets	$ 130,923,368	$ 107,370,752

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

3.

BENNINGTON COLLEGE AND SUBSIDIARY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended June 30, 2018 (with comparative totals for 2017)

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total	2017 Total
Operating:					
Revenues, gains, and other support					
Tuition and other fees	$ 37,407,396	$ -	$ -	$ 37,407,396	$ 35,018,523
Residence and dining	9,995,786	-	-	9,995,786	9,243,683
Less financial aid	(23,046,248)	-	-	(23,046,248)	(19,610,952)
Net tuition and other fees	24,356,934	-	-	24,356,934	24,651,254
Federal grants	519,408	-	-	519,408	93,091
Private gifts and grants	6,418,462	6,799,139	330,225	13,547,826	15,072,848
Investment and other financial income (note 5)	98,041	696,945	64,281	859,267	685,742
Auxiliary enterprises	708,788	-	-	708,788	768,693
Other income	1,202,143	-	24,055	1,226,198	1,155,056
Net assets released from restrictions used in operations (note 11)	5,544,295	(5,569,295)	25,000	-	-
Total operating revenues, gains, and other support	38,848,071	1,926,789	443,561	41,218,421	42,426,684
Expenses					
Instruction	17,117,330	-	-	17,117,330	16,406,988
Academic Support	3,248,661	-	-	3,248,661	3,196,493
Student services	6,221,013	-	-	6,221,013	6,148,567
Institutional support	12,033,846	-	-	12,033,846	11,421,332
Food service and other auxiliary enterprise expense	3,320,968	-	-	3,320,968	3,075,385
Total operating expenses	41,941,818	-	-	41,941,818	40,248,765
Change in net assets from operations	(3,093,747)	1,926,789	443,561	(723,397)	2,177,919
Nonoperating activities:					
Change in fair value of Investment return on long-term investments (note 5)	26,564	475,792	-	502,356	1,076,505
Interest rate swap agreements (note 8)	(483,211)	-	-	(483,211)	1,537,115
Split interest agreements (note 4)	-	-	48,204	48,204	147,203
Total nonoperating activities	(456,647)	475,792	48,204	67,349	2,760,823
Change in net assets	(3,550,394)	2,402,581	491,765	(656,048)	4,938,742
Net assets at beginning of year	25,620,764	13,724,985	31,716,607	71,062,356	66,123,614
Net assets at end of year	$ 22,070,370	$ 16,127,566	$ 32,208,372	$ 70,406,308	$ 71,062,356

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

4.

BENNINGTON COLLEGE AND SUBSIDIARY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended June 30, 2017

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Operating:				
Revenues, gains, and other support				
Tuition and other fees	$ 35,018,523	$ -	$ -	$ 35,018,523
Residence and dining	9,243,683	-	-	9,243,683
Less financial aid	(19,610,952)	-	-	(19,610,952)
Net tuition and other fees	24,651,254	-	-	24,651,254
Federal grants	93,091	-	-	93,091
Private gifts and grants	2,539,072	6,093,923	6,439,853	15,072,848
Investment and other financial income (note 5)	89,940	604,134	(8,332)	685,742
Auxiliary enterprises	768,693	-	-	768,693
Other income	1,155,056	-	-	1,155,056
Net assets released from restrictions used in operations (note 11)	7,689,110	(7,830,949)	141,839	-
Total operating revenues, gains, and other support	36,986,216	(1,132,892)	6,573,360	42,426,684
Expenses				
Instruction	16,406,988	-	-	16,406,988
Academic Support	3,196,493	-	-	3,196,493
Student services	6,148,567	-	-	6,148,567
Institutional support	11,421,332	-	-	11,421,332
Food service	3,075,385	-	-	3,075,385
Total operating expenses	40,248,765	-	-	40,248,765
Change in net assets from operations	(3,262,549)	(1,132,892)	6,573,360	2,177,919
Nonoperating activities:				
Change in fair value of				
Investment return on long-term investments (note 5)	65,576	1,010,929	-	1,076,505
Interest rate swap agreements (note 8)	1,537,115	-	-	1,537,115
Split interest agreements (note 4)	-	-	147,203	147,203
Total nonoperating activities	1,602,691	1,010,929	147,203	2,760,823
Change in net assets	(1,659,858)	(121,963)	6,720,563	4,938,742
Net assets at beginning of year	27,280,622	13,846,948	24,996,044	66,123,614
Net assets at end of year	$ 25,620,764	$ 13,724,985	$ 31,716,607	$ 71,062,356

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

5.

BENNINGTON COLLEGE AND SUBSIDIARY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
Years ended June 30, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Change in net assets	$ (656,048)	$ 4,938,742
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	3,557,724	3,259,041
Accretion	49,582	33,138
Contributions restricted for long-term investment	(3,138,734)	(4,648,096)
Change in fair value of interest rate swap agreements	483,211	(1,537,115)
Change in value of beneficial interest in split-interest agreements	(48,204)	(147,203)
Net realized and unrealized gains on investment	(839,762)	(1,605,992)
Changes in assets and liabilities		
Accounts and grants receivable	303,059	(410,734)
Pledges receivable	1,138,416	(2,320,813)
Other assets	(609,596)	(250,390)
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	172,897	278,274
Deferred income	(251,767)	(95,325)
Advance payments	142,988	(388,889)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	303,766	(2,895,362)
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchase of plant assets	(15,411,651)	(5,409,002)
Purchase of investments	(24,142,758)	(36,552,008)
Proceeds from sales of investments	25,676,525	40,023,669
Net cash used in investing activities	(13,877,884)	(1,937,341)
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Payments on long-term debt	(215,175)	(850,664)
Debt proceeds received from trustees and restricted deposits	11,823,774	(167)
Contributions restricted for long-term investment	3,138,734	4,648,096
Net cash provided by financing activities	14,747,333	3,797,265
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	1,173,215	(1,035,438)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	1,553,624	2,589,062
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	$ 2,726,839	$ 1,553,624
Supplemental cash flow information:		
Cash paid for interest	$ 774,199	$ 998,875
Amounts accrued for the purchase of plant and equipment	45,430	720,733
Noncash financing activities:		
Issuance of new long-term debt	52,575,000	-
Repayment of long-term debt as part of new long-term debt issuance	(24,959,682)	-
Settlement of interest rate swap agreement	(2,033,700)	-
Funding of deposits to trustees as part of new long-term debt issuance	(21,882,132)	-
Pre-payment for interest as part of new long-term debt issuance	(2,625,772)	-
Payment for debt issuance costs as part of new long-term debt issuance	(1,073,714)	-

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

6.

NOTE 1 – THE ORGANIZATION

Bennington College (the College) is a liberal arts educational institution located in Bennington, Vermont. B.C. Campus Holdings, LLC, a special purpose Limited Liability Company of which Benning College is the sole member, was created to facilitate the financing obtained through the Unites States Department of Agriculture Community Facilities loan program. This wholly owned subsidiary is consolidated in the financial statements of the College and consolidating schedules are presented in the supplemental information section.

NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The significant accounting policies followed by the College are described below to enhance the usefulness of the financial statements to the reader.

Basis of Presentation: The accompanying financial statements, which are presented on the accrual basis of accounting, have been prepared to focus on the College as a whole in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States of America (GAAP) for not-for-profit institutions. Net assets and revenues, gains, and losses are classified based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Accordingly, net assets and changes therein are classified as follows:

Permanently Restricted Net Assets: Represents net assets subject to donor-imposed stipulations that they be maintained permanently by the College. Generally, the donors of these assets permit the College to use all or part of the investment return, if any, on related investments for general or specific purposes.

Temporarily Restricted Net Assets: Represents net assets subject to donor-imposed stipulations that may or will be met by actions of the College and or the passage of time. Also includes accumulated unspent gains on donor-restricted endowment funds.

Unrestricted Net Assets: Represents net assets not subject to donor-imposed stipulations.

Revenues are reported as increases in unrestricted net assets unless use of the related assets is limited by donor-imposed restrictions. Expenses are reported as decreases in unrestricted net assets. Gains and losses on investments and other assets or liabilities are reported as increases or decreases in unrestricted net assets unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulations or law. Expirations of temporary restrictions on net assets, that is, the donor-imposed stipulated purpose has been accomplished and or the stipulated time period has elapsed, are reported as reclassifications between the applicable classes of net assets.

Principles of Consolidation: The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of the College and Subsidiary. All material intercompany accounts and transactions are eliminated in consolidation.

Operations: The statements of activities report the changes in net assets from operating and nonoperating activities. Nonoperating activity reflects the appreciation (depreciation) on long-term investments, net of investment management fees, in excess of the amount appropriated under the Board of Trustees' approved spending formula. In addition, nonoperating activities include changes in the present value of split-interest agreements, and changes in the fair value of interest rate swap agreements and certain other activities. All other activity is classified as operating activity.

Accounting for Contributions: Contributions, including unconditional promises to give, are recognized as revenues in the period received. Contributions subject to donor-imposed stipulations that are met in the same reporting period are reported as temporarily restricted support initially, then are included as net assets released from restrictions.

(Continued)

7.

NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Unconditional promises to give that are scheduled to be received after the balance sheet date are shown as increases in temporarily restricted net assets and are reclassified to the unrestricted net assets when the purpose or time restrictions are met. Unconditional promises to give subject to donor imposed stipulations that the corpus be maintained permanently are recognized as increases in permanently restricted net assets.

Contributions to be received after one year are discounted at the appropriate rate commensurate with the risks involved. Amortization of the discount is recorded as additional contribution revenue in accordance with the donor-imposed restrictions, if any, on the contributions. An allowance for uncollectible contributions is provided for based on historical collection experience.

The College reports contributions of land, buildings, or equipment as unrestricted support unless the donor places restrictions on their use. Contributions of cash or other assets that must be used to acquire long term assets are reported as temporarily restricted support until the assets are acquired and placed in service.

Contributions of investments in securities and plant, properties, and equipment are recorded at fair value at date of gift.

Cash and Cash Equivalents: For purposes of the statements of cash flows, the College considers investments purchased with a maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents. The College's cash and cash equivalents at times may exceed federally insured limits.

Deposits with Trustees: In accordance with the terms of the United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA") Rural Development financing agreement discussed in Note 8, the proceeds from the bond anticipation notes issued by the Vermont Economic Development Authority are held in a trust and are disbursed for the renovation of the Commons building upon approval by the College and the USDA.

Restricted Deposits: In accordance with the terms of the TD Bank loan, restricted deposits are held at the bank to be used for future interest payments on the loan.

Accounting for Investments: Investments are reported at fair value. If an investment is held directly by the College and an active market where quoted prices exist, the College reports the fair value as the market price of an identical security. Shares in mutual funds are based on share values reported by the funds as of the last business day of the fiscal year. The College also holds shares or units in alternative investment funds involving hedge, private equity and real estate strategies. Alternative investment funds may hold securities or other financial instruments for which a ready market exists and are priced accordingly. In addition, such funds may hold assets which require the estimation of fair values in the absence of readily determinable market values. Such valuations are determined by fund managers and generally consider variables such as operating results, comparable earnings multiples, projected cash flows, recent sales prices, and other pertinent information, and may reflect discounts for the illiquid nature of certain investments held.

The College utilizes the net asset value (NAV) reported by each of the alternative funds as a practical expedient for determining the fair value of the investment. These investments are redeemable at NAV under the original terms of the subscription agreements and operations of the underlying funds. However, it is possible that these redemption rights may be restricted or eliminated by the funds in the future in accordance with the underlying fund agreements. Due to the nature of the investments held by these funds, changes in market conditions and the economic environment may significantly impact the NAV of the funds and, consequently, the fair value of the College's interests in the funds. Furthermore, changes to the liquidity provisions of the funds may significantly impact the fair value of the College's interest in the funds.

(Continued)

8.

NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Although such investments may be sold in a secondary market transaction, subject to meeting certain requirements of the governing documents of the funds, the secondary market is not active and individual transactions are not necessarily observable. It is therefore reasonably possible that if the College were to sell a fund in the secondary market, the sale could occur at an amount different than the reported value, and the difference could be material.

Plant Assets: Plant assets are stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation. Buildings and equipment are depreciated over their estimated useful lives using the straight-line method.

The College recognizes the fair value of a liability for legal obligations associated with asset retirements in the period in which the obligation is incurred. When the liability is initially recorded, the College capitalizes the cost of the asset retirement obligation by increasing the carrying amount of the related long lived asset. The liability is accreted to its present value each period, and the capitalized cost associated with the retirement obligation is depreciated over the useful life of the related asset. Upon settlement of the obligation, any difference between the cost to settle the asset retirement obligation and the liability recorded is recognized as a gain or loss in the statements of operations.

Deferred Income: Student advance payments for tuition, room, and board related to future terms have been deferred and will be reported as unrestricted revenue in the year in which the term is completed.

Advance Payments: Amounts received from vendors that are refundable prior to the expiration date of the contract are recorded as a liability. Over the life of the contract, the liability is amortized to offset the related expenses.

Income Taxes: The College generally does not provide for income taxes since it is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ASC 740, Income Taxes, permits an entity to recognize the benefit and requires accrual of an uncertain tax position only when the position is "more likely than not" to be sustained in the event of examination by tax authorities. In evaluating whether a tax position has met the recognition threshold, the College must presume that the position will be examined by the appropriate taxing authority that has full knowledge of all relevant information. ASC 740 also provides guidance on the recognition, measurement, and classification of income tax uncertainties, along with any related interest or penalties. Tax positions deemed to meet the "more-likely than-not" threshold are recorded as a tax expense in the current year.

The College has analyzed all open tax years, as defined by the statutes of limitations, for all major jurisdictions. Open tax years are generally open for exam by taxing authorities three years after filling which for the College are 2015, 2016, and 2017. Major taxing authorities for the College include the Federal government and the state of Vermont. The College has no examinations in progress. The College believes it has no significant uncertain tax positions.

Fair Value Measurements: Fair value is defined as the exchange price that would be received for an asset or paid to transfer a liability (an exit price) in the principal or most advantageous market for the asset or liability in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date. The carrying amounts for cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable, prepaid expenses, accounts payable and accrued liabilities approximate their fair values because of their short-term maturities.

The College's recurring fair value measurements are performed on its investments. Fair value represents the price that would be received upon the sale of an asset or paid upon the transfer of a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants as of the measurement date. The fair value hierarchy prioritizes observable and unobservable inputs used to measure fair value. It is categorized into three levels:

(Continued)

9.

NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

- *Level 1 – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets that are accessible at the measurement date for assets or liabilities;*
- *Level 2 –* observable prices that are based on inputs not quoted in active markets, but corroborated by market data, and also those investments reported at net asset value that are redeemable at or near the balance sheet date; and
- *Level 3 –* unobservable inputs are used when little or no market data is available.

The fair value hierarchy gives the highest priority to Level 1 inputs and the lowest priority to Level 3 inputs. In determining fair value, the College utilizes valuation techniques that maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs to the extent possible, as well as consider counterparty credit risk in the College's assessment of fair value.

The College utilized the NAV reported by the alternative investments fund managers as a practical expedient for measuring and reporting their fair values in the accompanying financial statements. Because the College owns interest in each alternative investment fund rather than in the securities underlying each fund, it is generally required to consider such investments as Level 2 or 3, even though the underlying securities may not be difficult to value or may be readily marketable. Classification in Level 2 or 3 is based on the College's ability to redeem its interest at or near the date of the statement of financial position, and if the interest can be redeemed in the near term, the investment is classified in Level 2.

Use of Estimates in Financial Statement Preparation: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates. The significant estimates included in these financial statements include the valuation of accounts and pledges receivable, the valuation of investments and split interest agreements, and the valuation of interest rate swaps.

Fundraising Expenses: During the years ended June 30, 2018 and 2017, the College incurred fundraising expenses of $3,273,001 and $2,789,801, respectively.

Bond Issuance Costs: Bond issuance costs are capitalized and amortized over the life of the bond using the straight line method which approximates the effective interest method, and are included as a contra liability to the related notes payable on the statements of financial position.

Recent Accounting Guidance: In August 2016, the FASB issued ASU 2016-14 Non-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation of Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Entities. The guidance in this ASU substantially changes the financial statement presentation and disclosure requirements of not-for-profit entities to provide more relevant information about their financial resources, liquidity and changes to those financial resources. These changes include qualitative and quantitative requirements in the presentation and disclosure of net asset classes, investment return, expenses, liquidity and availability of resources, and operating cash flows. The ASU will be effective for the College's fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. The College is currently assessing the impact of ASU 2016-14 on its financial statements.

(Continued)

10.

NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

<u>Subsequent Events</u>: The College considers events or transactions that occur after the balance sheet date, but before the consolidated financial statements were issued to provide additional evidence relative to certain estimates or to identify matters that require additional disclosure. These consolidated financial statements were issued on October 26, 2018, and subsequent events have been evaluated through that date.

NOTE 3 – PLEDGES RECEIVABLE

Pledges receivable consist of the following at June 30:

	2018	2017
Unconditional promises expected to be collected in:		
Less than one year	$ 2,477,486	$ 2,235,908
One year to five years	4,313,191	5,050,398
Thereafter	22,150,000	22,612,500
Subtotal	28,940,677	29,898,806
Less allowance for doubtful pledges	(10,590,969)	(10,668,719)
Discounts for present value	(2,687,447)	(2,429,410)
	$ 15,662,261	$ 16,800,677

Amounts to be received in future years have been discounted using rates ranging from 1% to 5%. During fiscal year ended June 30, 2014 the College became aware that a foundation donor that had a large pledge outstanding would not be able to fulfill the pledge within the original timeline. Although the donor is still committed to fulfilling the pledge, a timetable for the collection of the remaining amounts due could not be established. At June 30, 2018 and 2017, an allowance of $10,000,000 exists related to the entire remaining pledge balance from this donor.

NOTE 4 – BENEFICIAL INTEREST IN SPLIT-INTEREST AGREEMENTS

The College's split-interest agreements with donors consists of perpetual trusts with a value at June 30, 2018 and 2017 of $2,139,235 and $2,091,031 respectively. The funds held in trust consist of resources neither in the possession nor under the control of the College and administered by outside trustees, with the College deriving income from the assets of such funds. The asset value recorded represents the College's portion of the market value of the underlying investments.

(Continued)

11.

NOTE 5 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE

The following presents the College's assets and liabilities by fair value hierarchy and type at June 30, 2018:

					Fair Value			
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3	Total	Redemption or liquidation	Day's Notice
Investments:								
Cash	$	82,168	$	-	$ -	$ 82,168	Daily	1
Preferred equity		-		-	48,235	48,235	Illiquid	N/A
U.S. government agency backed Securities		-		-	-	-	Daily	1
U.S. municipal bonds		-		-	-	-	Daily	1
Domestic corporate bonds		-		292,106	-	292,106	Daily	1
Foreign corporate bonds		-		10,245	-	10,245	Daily	1
Mutual funds:								
Money market funds		2,728,465		-	-	2,728,465	Daily	1
Fixed income		6,514,271		-	-	6,514,271	Daily	1
U.S. large cap equity funds		6,097,603		-	-	6,097,603	Daily	1
U.S. small cap equity funds		862,596		-	-	862,596	Daily	1
Foreign equity funds		2,773,562		-	-	2,773,562	Daily	1
Commodity mutual funds		350,576		-	-	350,576	Daily	1
Real estate securities		728,795		-	-	728,795	Daily	1
Total	$	20,138,036	$	302,351	$ 48,235	20,488,622		
Investments reported at net asset value:								
Absolute return hedge fund						1,388,113	Quarterly	60
Total						$ 21,876,735	Quarterly	60
Other assets:								
Split interest agreements	$	-	$	-	$ 2,139,235	$ 2,139,235	N/A	N/A

(Continued)

12.

NOTE 5 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE (Continued)

The following presents the College's assets by fair value hierarchy and type at June 30, 2017:

					Fair Value		Redemption or liquidation	Day's Notice
		Level 1		Level 2	Level 3	Total		
Investments:								
Cash	$	5,810	$	-	$ -	$ 5,810	Daily	1
Preferred equity		-		-	48,235	48,235	Illiquid	N/A
U.S. government agency backed Securities		313,155		168,948	-	482,103	Daily	1
U.S. municipal bonds		-		49,424	-	49,424	Daily	1
Domestic corporate bonds		-		494,843	-	494,843	Daily	1
Foreign corporate bonds		-		90,598	-	90,598	Daily	1
Mutual funds:								
Money market funds		669,904		-	-	669,904	Daily	1
Fixed income		6,186,495		-	-	6,186,495	Daily	1
U.S. large cap equity funds		7,111,945		-	-	7,111,945	Daily	1
U.S. small cap equity funds		971,458		-	-	971,458	Daily	1
Foreign equity funds		3,464,439		-	-	3,464,439	Daily	1
Commodity mutual funds		436,631		-	-	436,631	Daily	1
Real estate securities		1,065,895		-	-	1,065,895	Daily	1
Total	$	20,225,732	$	803,813	$ 48,235	21,077,780		
Investments reported at net asset value:								
Absolute return hedge fund						1,492,960	Quarterly	60
Total						$ 22,570,740	Quarterly	60
Other assets:								
Split interest agreements	$	-	$	-	$ 2,091,031	$ 2,091,031	N/A	N/A
Liabilities:								
Interest rate sw ap liability	$	-	$	1,550,489	$ -	$ 1,550,489	N/A	N/A

The College had no activity for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2018 and 2017 for investments measured at fair value on a recurring basis using significant unobservable inputs (Level 3) and as such, the fair value of these investments totaling $48,235 remained unchanged as of June 30, 2018 and 2017.

The change in the value of the beneficial interest in split interest agreements is from the following activity for the years ended June 30, 2018 to 2017.

	2018	2017
Beginning balance	$ 2,042,796	$ 1,895,593
Cash reciepts from charitable remainder trusts	-	-
Net unrealized gain (loss)	48,204	147,203
Ending balance	$ 2,091,000	$ 2,042,796

(Continued)

13.

NOTE 5 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE (Continued)

Investment income for the year ended June 30 consists of the following components:

	2018	2017
Dividends and interest	$ 637,470	$ 464,924
Realized gains	984,725	587,342
Unrealized (losses) gains	(144,963)	866,649
Other financial income	(15,982)	(68,597)
Investment fees	(99,627)	(88,071)
Total investment return	1,361,623	1,762,247
Less amounts used in operations:		
Investment return on short term investments	(162,322)	(81,608)
Spending policy allowance from endowment	(696,945)	(604,134)
Nonoperating investment return	$ 502,356	$ 1,076,505

NOTE 6 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS

The College's endowment consists of approximately 85 individual donor restricted funds established for a variety of purposes.

The College uses the total return concept, and its spending policy is designated to stabilize annual spending levels and to preserve the purchasing power of the endowment assets.

The Board of Trustees of the College has interpreted the Vermont enacted version of Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) as allowing the College to appropriate for expenditure or accumulate so much of an endowment fund as the College determines is prudent for the uses, benefits, purposes and duration for which the endowment fund is established, subject to the intent of the donor as expressed in the gift instrument. Unless stated otherwise in the gift instrument, the assets in an endowment fund shall be donor-restricted assets until appropriated for expenditure by the Board of Trustees. As a result of this interpretation, the College has not changed the way permanently restricted net assets are classified. The remaining portion of the donor-restricted endowment fund that is not classified in permanently restricted net assets is classified as temporarily restricted net assets until those amounts are appropriated for expenditure in a manner consistent with the standard of prudence prescribed by UPMIFA. In accordance with UPMIFA, the Board of Trustees considers the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate endowment funds:

    i.   the duration and preservation of the fund;

    ii.   the purposes of the College and the endowment fund;

    iii.   general economic conditions;

    iv.   the possible effect of inflation and deflation;

    v.   the expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments;

    vi.   other resources of the College; and

    vii.   the investment policies of the College.

(Continued)

14.

NOTE 6 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)

While split interest agreements such as beneficial interests in perpetual trusts are not legally subject to UPMIFA, the College has included them below as they consider them to be part of the College's endowment. Endowment net assets, including split interest agreements, consisted of the following at June 30, 2018 and 2017:

| | | 2018 | | |
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Donor restricted	$ -	$ 2,746,912	$ 32,208,372	$ 34,955,284
Total	$ -	$ 2,746,912	$ 32,208,372	$ 34,955,284

| | | 2017 | | |
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Donor restricted	$ -	$ 2,082,234	$ 31,716,607	$ 33,798,841
Total	$ -	$ 2,082,234	$ 31,716,607	$ 33,798,841

From time to time, the fair value of assets associated with individual donor restricted endowment funds may fall below the level that the donor requires the College to retain as a fund of perpetual duration. These deficiencies resulted from unfavorable market fluctuations related to the investments but are expected to be recovered by long term appreciation of investments compared to the spending policy of 5% each year established by the Board of Trustees.

Changes in endowment net assets for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2018 and 2017 is as follows:

| | | 2018 | | |
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Beginning balance	$ -	$ 2,082,234	$ 31,716,607	$ 33,798,841
Change in fair value of perpetual trusts	-	-	48,204	48,204
Contributions received	-	-	1,991,570	1,991,570
Pledges receivable	-	-	(1,548,009)	(1,548,009)
Investment return	-	1,361,623	-	1,361,623
Spending policy distribution	-	(696,945)	-	(696,945)
	$ -	$ 2,746,912	$ 32,208,372	$ 34,955,284

(Continued)

15.

NOTE 6 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)

| | 2017 | | | |
| | | Temporarily | Permanently | |
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Restricted	Total
Beginning balance	$ (49,923)	$ 974,044	$ 24,996,044	$ 25,920,165
Change in fair value of perpetual trusts	-	-	147,203	147,203
Contributions received	-	-	1,358,273	1,358,273
Pledges receivable	-	-	5,215,087	5,215,087
Investment return	49,923	1,712,324	-	1,762,247
Spending policy distribution	-	(604,134)	-	(604,134)
	$ -	$ 2,082,234	$ 31,716,607	$ 33,798,841

NOTE 7 – PLANT ASSETS

Plant assets consist of the following at June 30:

	Estimated Useful Life	2018	2017
Land	-	$ 1,824,024	$ 1,730,472
Buildings	15 - 50 years	91,480,039	87,018,925
Improvements other than building	25 years	558,115	166,080
Equipment	3 - 7 years	5,346,208	5,079,625
Computer/Software	5 - 15 years	2,977,545	2,800,384
Construction in progress	-	13,934,072	4,690,795
		116,120,003	101,486,281
Less accumulated depreciation		(42,866,623)	(39,644,671)
		$ 73,253,380	$ 61,841,610

Depreciation expense was $3,324,056 and $3,203,777 for the years ended June 30, 2018 and 2017, respectively. Depreciation expense has been allocated to the various functional expense categories based upon the use of the related assets.

(Continued)

16.

NOTE 7 – PLANT ASSETS (Continued)

The College has conditional asset retirement obligations arising from regulatory requirements to perform certain asset retirement activities at the time that certain renovations are completed relating to underground oil tanks and asbestos in buildings. The liability was initially measured at fair value and subsequently is adjusted for accretion expense and changes in the amount or timing of the estimated cash flows. The corresponding asset retirement costs are capitalized as part of the carrying amount of the related long term asset and depreciated over the asset's remaining useful life.

Construction in progress of $13,934,072 at June 30, 2018 includes costs primarily related to the renovation of the Commons building, for which the College obtained financing which closed in September 2017 as described in footnote 8. Additional unspent commitments to complete the project total approximately $9,000,000 at June 30, 2018.

The following table presents the activity for the conditional asset retirement obligations for the years ended June 30, 2018 and 2017, which is included within accounts payable and accrued expenses in the financial statements:

	2018	2017
Balance at beginning of year	$ 2,091,399	$ 2,082,349
Obligations settled in current period	(345,547)	(24,088)
Accretion expense	49,583	33,138
Balance at end of year	$ 1,795,435	$ 2,091,399

(Continued)

17.

NOTE 8 – BONDS PAYABLE AND OTHER DEBT

Outstanding debt consists of the following at June 30, 2018 and 2017:

	2018	2017
Series A Bonds, face amount $3,000,000 issued 2006, interest is fixed at 3.9603%, maturities to 2021; a general obligation bond insured by VEHBFA (Vermont Educational & Health Buildings Financing Agency)	$ -	$ 1,091,383
Series A Bonds, face amount of $10,000,000 issued 2008, interest is variable based on 69% of one-month LIBOR plus 1.5525%, maturities in 2028; a general obligation bond insured by VEDA (Vermont Economic Development Authority)	-	8,240,438
Series B Bonds, face amount of $10,000,000 issued 2008, interest is variable based on 69% of one-month LIBOR plus 1.5525%, maturities in 2028; a general obligation bond insured by VEDA (Vermont Economic Development Authority)	-	8,595,530
Series A Bonds, face amount of $8,150,000 issued 2009, interest is variable based on 69% of one-month LIBOR plus 1.5525%, maturities in 2028; a general obligation bond insured by VEDA (Vermont Economic Development Authority)	-	7,160,730
Revenue Anticipation Notes, face amount $47,575,000 issued 2017, interest only notes fixed at 2.0%, matures in 2020; a revenue bond insured by VEDA (Vermont Economic Development Authority)	47,575,000	-
TD Bank loan, face amount of $5,000,000 issued 2017, interest is fixed at 5.07%, matures in 2047; 90% guaranteed by USDA Rural Development	4,946,837	-
Less debt issuance costs, net of amortization	(1,223,528)	(110,528)
	$ 51,298,309	$ 24,977,553

The College entered into interest rate swap agreements, through January 1, 2029, for the 2008(a), 2008(b), and 2009(a) issues, converting the floating loan rate to a fixed rate.

(Continued)

18.

NOTE 8 – BONDS PAYABLE AND OTHER DEBT (Continued)

The interest rate swaps were paid off during the year ended June 30, 2018. As of June 30, 2017 the following interest-rate swap agreements were outstanding:

Counterparty	Issue date	2017 Expiration Date	Remaining notional amount	Swap fixed rate	Fair value at June 30, 2017 asset (liability) 2016/7
T.D. Bank N.A.	12/16/2008	1/1/2029	$ 8,240,438	3.67%	$ (410,274)
T.D. Bank N.A.	12/16/2008	1/1/2029	8,595,530	3.67%	(433,678)
T.D. Bank N.A.	5/6/2009	1/1/2029	7,160,730	4.26%	(706,537)
			$ 23,996,698		$ (1,550,489)

The variable rate-side of the swaps is based on 69% of one-month LIBOR plus 1.5525%.

The scheduled principal payments on the College's debt as of June 30, 2018 for the succeeding five years and thereafter are as follows:

	TD loan	Revenue Anticipation Notes to be replaced in 2020 by USDA loan	Total
Year ending June 30:			
2019	$ 74,695	$ -	$ 74,695
2020	78,628	47,575,000 **1**	47,653,628
2021	82,770	-	82,770
2022	87,130	-	87,130
2023	91,719	-	91,719
Thereafter	4,531,895	-	4,531,895
	$ 4,946,837	$ 47,575,000	$ 52,521,837

1 - As disclosed the USDA has committed to issuing a direct loan in 2020 that will pay off all the revenue anticipation notes and the College will be obligated to pay the direct loan with payments from 2019 to 2023 totaling $3,579,560 and $43,995,440 thereafter.

(Continued)

19.

NOTE 8 – BONDS PAYABLE AND OTHER DEBT (Continued)

The United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development financing consists of a $5.0 million USDA guaranteed loan, obtained through TD Bank, and a $47.575 million direct loan which will be disbursed upon completion of the Commons building renovation. The College obtained interim financing in the amount of $47.575 million through 36 month bond anticipation notes ("BAN's") issued by the Vermont Economic Development Authority. Once disbursed, the proceeds from the USDA direct loan will be used to pay off the bond anticipation notes.

On September 12, 2017, the College closed on the TD Bank loan and the interim financing using part of the proceeds to defease all outstanding bonds. The three interest rate swaps, which were associated with the series 2008(a), 2008(b), and 2009(a) bonds were also terminated and the termination payments were included in the amount refinanced.

The College has determined that the estimated fair value of its total indebtedness was equivalent to its net carrying value as of June 30, 2018 and 2017. The College further determined that the differences between the carrying value and estimated fair values of its other financial assets and liabilities at June 30, 2018 were not significant.

The College capitalized $379,859 and $0 of interest costs associated with the construction of buildings for the years ended June 30, 2018 and 2017, respectively.

NOTE 9 – TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Temporarily restricted net assets consists of:

	2018	2017
Contributions received for capital projects	$ 4,263,191	$ 5,667,914
Contributions received for operations	4,736,976	2,930,848
Appreciation on donor restricted funds	3,297,871	2,082,234
Pledges for future periods, net of allowance	3,829,528	3,043,989
	$ 16,127,566	$ 13,724,985

(Continued)

20.

NOTE 10 – PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Permanently restricted net assets are restricted to investment in perpetuity, the income from which is expendable to support the following:

	2018	2017
Instruction	$ 7,149,211	$ 6,344,152
Academic support	224,924	224,424
Scholarships and fellowships	6,050,469	5,544,458
Maintenance of plant	1,560,500	1,400,500
Any activity of the College	5,014,589	4,446,385
Pledges for future periods (20% Scholarship and 80% Any activities	12,208,679	13,756,688
	$ 32,208,372	$ 31,716,607

Permanently restricted net assets consists of the following:

	2018	2017
Endowment investments	$ 15,710,458	$ 13,668,888
Endowment loan to College	2,150,000	2,200,000
Perpetual trusts	2,139,235	2,091,031
Pledges for future periods	12,208,679	13,756,688
	$ 32,208,372	$ 31,716,607

The College has net internal borrowings of $2.15 million and $2.20 million at June 30, 2018 and 2017, respectively, of permanently restricted net assets to fund unrestricted activities. No restricted assets were used for such purposes subsequent to fiscal year 1997. The College intends to continue repaying the borrowed amounts in future periods.

Due to spending on construction in progress discussed in Note 7 and internal borrowing, the College does not have appropriate composition of assets in amounts needed to comply with all donor restrictions. At June 30, 2018, the College has $48,335,938 of temporarily and permanently restricted net assets while assets to comply with donor restrictions total $42,450,263 including the $2,150,000 of net borrowings discussed above.

(Continued)

21.

NOTE 11 – NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS

Net assets were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors, and through the expiration of time restrictions.

	2018	2017
Purpose restrictions accomplished		
Instruction	$ 1,686,871	$ 5,631,025
Academic support	2,676,214	1,576,851
Student services	43,810	39,389
Institutional support	210,376	61,113
Scholarships and fellowships	927,024	522,571
Total purpose restrictions released	5,544,295	7,830,949
Expiration of time restrictions	-	-
Total net assets release from restrictions	$ 5,544,295	$ 7,830,949

NOTE 12 – PENSION PLANS

Faculty and administrative staff of the College are participants in the defined contribution retirement annuity plan sponsored by the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association. The amount contributed to the plan by the College is based upon a percentage of salary as defined in the plan. Pension cost for this plan amounted to $1,260,095 in fiscal year 2018 and $1,162,971 in fiscal year 2017.

The unionized staff of the College are participants in a defined benefit plan. The College's funding policy is to contribute annually an amount equal to or greater than the amount necessary to satisfy the minimum funding standards under ERISA, using a different actuarial cost method and different assumptions from those used for financial reporting. Plan benefits are calculated based on a fixed amount multiplied by years of credited service. The College has a Deposit Administration Contract with Prudential Financial (formerly CIGNA Retirement & Investment Services) which establishes a guaranteed annuity contract for each union employee at the time of retirement. Once a contract is estimated, Prudential guarantees the future payment of the retiree's pension benefit, and the College has no ongoing liability for any postretirement payments.

The most recent actuarial valuation with participant information as of July 1, 2017 was used to determine the appropriate contribution for the plan year ended June 30, 2018. The plan has been frozen to new participants and the accrual of additional benefits due to continuing service for existing participants.

(Continued)

22.

NOTE 12 – PENSION PLANS (Continued)

Information with respect to the plan is as follows:

	2018	2017
Change in benefit obligations		
Benefit obligation at beginning of year	$ 1,206,510	$ 1,355,269
Service cost	-	-
Interest cost	36,780	37,199
Actuarial gain (loss)	(29,758)	(27,306)
Settlement/Curtailment	(75,400)	(158,652)
Benefits paid	-	-
Benefit obligation at end of year	1,138,132	1,206,510
Change in plan assets		
Fair value of plan assets at beginning of year	670,417	793,263
Actual return on plan assets	1,810	1,963
employer contribution	88,013	33,843
Settlement/Curtailment	(75,400)	(158,652)
Benefits paid	-	-
	684,840	670,417
Funded status and accrued postretirement benefit obligation	$ (453,292)	$ (536,093)

The liability related to the funded status and accrued postretirement benefit obligation is included in accounts payable and accrued expenses in the statements of financial position.

Net periodic postretirement benefit cost reported as expense in the statement of activities includes the following components:

	2018	2017
Interest cost	$ 36,780	$ 37,199
Expected return on plan assets	(25,425)	(28,004)
Recognized net loss	36,607	44,250
Settlement/Curtailment	26,323	61,351
Net periodic postretriement benefit cost	$ 74,285	$ 114,796

The weighted average assumptions used in the accounting included a discount rate of 3.75% and 3.25% as of June 30, 2018 and 2017, respectively, and the expected rate of return on plan assets of 4.0% and 4.0% as of June 30, 2018 and 2017, respectively. The overall long-term rate of return on assets assumption was based on an analysis of the historical rate of return for a portfolio with similar asset allocation. The plan's assets are comprised of Level 2 fixed income securities. The College expects to contribute $59,444 in fiscal year 2019. The following benefit payments are expected to be paid: $296,252 in FY2019, $15,481 in FY2020, $37,237 in FY2021, $51,906 in FY 2022, $73,818 in FY2023, and $487,270 thereafter through FY2028.

(Continued)

23.

NOTE 13 – CONTRACT FOR DINING SERVICES

On March 13, 2013, the College entered into a ten year contract with Aramark Educational Services, LLC (Aramark) to have Aramark provide all dining services for the College, effective July 1, 2013. Under the terms of the contract, the College provides all dining facilities and is responsible for all maintenance and repairs of the facility. Dining services personnel remain employees of the College except for management employees, who are employees of Aramark. As part of the contract, Aramark agreed to make a payment of $200,000 to the College in July 2013 for facility enhancements to the dining facilities. Aramark also made a $3.5 million payment to the College in July 2014, with the funds to be utilized by the College for dining services improvements. This amount has been recorded as an advanced payment on the Statement of Financial Position and is being amortized over the life of the contract.

In May 2018, the College and Aramark extended their contract for an additional five years. Under the agreement, Aramark made an additional $1.5 million commitment to the College with a $500,000 payment in June, 2018 and the remaining $1 million payment to be made in fiscal year 2019. This new commitment, along with the unamortized amount from the July 2013 payment, will be amortized over the new extended life of the contract. The amount amortized in fiscal year 2018 is $357,013, leaving a remaining balance to be amortized of $2,476,321.

24.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

BENNINGTON COLLEGE AND SUBSIDIARY
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
Year ended June 30, 2018

Assets	Bennington College	B.C. Campus Holdings, LLC.	Elimination Entries	Consolidated
Assets:				
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 2,725,894	$ 945	$ -	$ 2,726,839
Deposits with bond trustees	-	11,920,046	-	11,920,046
Restricted deposits	-	655,861	-	655,861
Accounts and grants receivable	797,765	-	-	797,765
Pledges receivable, net	15,662,261	-	-	15,662,261
Beneficial interest in split-interest agreements	2,139,235	-	-	2,139,235
Other assets	2,546,028	26,338,600	(26,993,382)	1,891,246
Investments	21,876,735	-	-	21,876,735
Plant assets, net	59,354,639	13,898,741	-	73,253,380
Due to/from Bennington College	-	288,534	(288,534)	-
Due to/from B.C. Campus Holdings, LLC.	(288,534)	-	288,534	-
Total assets	$104,814,023	$ 53,102,727	$ (26,993,382)	$130,923,368

Liabilities and Net assets

Liabilities:				
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	$ 3,520,141	$ 1,471,510	$ -	4,991,651
Deferred income	28,744,160	-	(26,993,382)	1,750,778
Advance payments	2,476,321	-	-	2,476,321
Interest rate swaps, at fair value	-	-	-	-
Bonds payable	-	51,298,309	-	51,298,309
Total liabilities	34,740,622	52,769,819	(26,993,382)	60,517,059
Net assets:				
Unrestricted	48,730,843	332,909	(26,993,382)	22,070,370
Temporarily restricted	16,127,566	-	-	16,127,566
Permanently restricted	32,208,372	-	-	32,208,372
Total net assets	97,066,781	332,909	(26,993,382)	70,406,308
Total liabilities and net assets	$131,807,403	$ 53,102,728	$ (53,986,764)	$130,923,367

See independent auditor's report

24.

BENNINGTON COLLEGE AND SUBSIDIARY
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
June 30, 2018

	Bennington College	B.C. Campus Holdings, LLC	Elimination Entries	Consolidated
Operating:				
Revenues, gains, and other support				
Tuition and other fees	$ 37,407,396	$ -	$ -	$ 37,407,396
Residence and dining	9,995,786	-	-	9,995,786
Less financial aid	(23,046,248)	-	-	(23,046,248)
Net tuition and other fees	24,356,934	-	-	24,356,934
Federal grants	519,408	-	-	519,408
Private gifts and grants	13,547,826	-	-	13,547,826
Investment and other financial income	771,374	87,893	-	859,267
Auxiliary enterprises	708,788	-	-	708,788
Other income	1,226,198	245,543	(245,543)	1,226,198
Net assets released from restrictions used in operations	-	-	-	-
Total operating revenues, gains, and other support	41,130,528	333,436	(245,543)	41,218,421
Expenses				
Instruction	17,117,330	-	-	17,117,330
Academic Support	3,248,661	-	-	3,248,661
Student services	6,221,013	-	-	6,221,013
Institutional support	12,278,862	527	(245,543)	12,033,846
Food service and other auxiliary enterprise expense	3,320,968	-	-	3,320,968
Total operating expenses	42,186,834	527	(245,543)	41,941,818
Change in net assets from operations	(1,056,306)	332,909	-	(723,397)
Nonoperating activities:				
Change in fair value of Investment return on long-term investments	502,356	-	-	502,356
Interest rate swap agreements	(483,211)	-	-	(483,211)
Split interest agreements	48,204	-	-	48,204
Total nonoperating activities	67,349	-	-	67,349
Change in net assets	(988,957)	332,909	-	(656,048)
Net assets at beginning of year	71,062,356	-	-	71,062,356
Net assets at end of year	$ 70,073,399	$ 332,909	$ -	$ 70,406,308

See independent auditor's report

25.

Bennington College

Audit Committee Meeting

December 4, 2018

Agenda

- Scope of Services / Deliverables

- Audit Overview

- Financial Statement Review

- Department of Education – Financial Responsibility Ratios

- SAS 114 Communications

- Management Letter Review

- Industry outlook

- New Accounting and Auditing Pronouncements

2

Scope of Services / Deliverables

- Audit Report on College's Consolidated Financial Statements

- Single Audit Report / Data Collection Form

- Audit Committee Communication (SAS 114)

3

Audit Overview

- Audit Planning and Timeline

- Assessment of Internal Control Environment

- Audit Risk/Focus Areas, Year-end Fieldwork

- Completion Procedures

- Exit or Other Meetings

- Draft Reports

4

Significant Audit Areas

- Student Financial Aid Compliance

- USDA Loan Guarantee Compliance

- Revenue recognition and related deferrals

- Receivables existence and related valuation allowances

- Expenditures

- Debt and related capital activities

- Net asset classifications

- Valuation of investments

- Evaluation of Information Technology Controls

5

Financial Statement Review

- Auditor's Opinion

- Financial Statements
  - Increase in total assets of approximately $23.6 million - purchases of property and equipment and increases from cash received from new financing classified as deposits with trustees

  - Increase in total liabilities of approximately $24.2 million – increase in notes payable from new financing discussed in Note 8

  - Net tuition revenue decreased approximately $294,000 - increases in gross student tuition and fees from higher enrollment offset by increase in scholarships and discounting of gross tuition

  - Total revenue decreased approximately $1.2 million - decrease in private gifts and grants from $15.1 million to $13.5 million

  - Total expenses increased approximately $1.7 million - increases across each category of program services

  - Change in unrestricted net assets from operations was negative $3.1 million, compared to negative $3.2 million in prior year. Total current year change in net assets is approximately negative $656,000

  - Statement of cash flows - total operating cash flows of positive $303,000 for the year, with $14.7 million contributed from financing activities, $15.4 million invested in property and equipment, and $1.5 million net proceeds from sales of investments

6

Financial Statement Review

- Footnotes to financial statements – highlights of items that have changed from prior year
  - Note 2 – Disclosure of ASU 2016-14 (Not-for-Profit Entities) - effective for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019.   Requires substantial changes to the financial statement presentation and disclosure requirements of not-for-profit entities:
    - Financial resources – availability and liquidity
    - Expanded disclosure requirements in the presentation and disclosure of net asset classes – with/without donor restrictions
    - Expenses
    - Investment return

  - Note 7 – Disclosure of commitments to complete construction in progress of approximately $9 million.

  - Note 8 – Disclosure of $47,575,000 Vermont Economic Development Authority Revenue Anticipation Notes - interest only notes fixed at 2.0%, mature in 2020 and will be paid off by the USDA direct loan and the $5,000,000 TD Bank. 90% of the TD Bank loan is guaranteed by USDA Rural Development.

  - SEFA – Disclosure of USDA guarantee that is a new major program that required auditing.

7

Department of Education - Financial Responsibility Ratios

- Primary Reserve Ratio
  - Comparison of Expendable Net Assets to Total Expenses
  - Expendable Net Assets = Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Net Assets Plus Long-Term Debt Less Net Fixed Assets
  - Benchmark: .3 to achieve max strength factor in composite score

- Equity Ratio
  - Comparison of Modified Net Assets to Modified Assets
  - Benchmark: .5 to achieve max strength factor in composite score

- Net Income Ratio
  - Comparison of Change in Unrestricted Net Assets to Total Unrestricted Revenue
  - Benchmark: .04 to achieve max strength factor in composite score

8

DOE Composite Score – Bennington Calculation

Composite Score Calculation	Original Ratio	Strength Factor*	Weight Factor	Weighted Ratio
Primary Reserve Ratio	3.98	3.00	40%	1.20
Equity Ratio	3.23	3.00	40%	1.20
Net Income Ratio	-1.29	-1.00	20%	-0.20
Composite Score				

* Limited to a value of 3

2.2

9

Interpretation of Composite Scores

Composite Score Interpretation

-1.0	Liabilities exceed resources
0.0	No demonstrable net resources
1.0	Minimal resources, but not enough for clear financial health
1.5	Minimal resources to indicate financial strength
3.0	Clearly financially healthy

2.2	**In between the minimal resources to indicate financial strength and the clearly financial healthy**

10

SAS 114 Communications

The Auditor's Communication With Those Charged With Governance

- Auditor's Responsibility Under Auditing Standards Generally Accepted In The United States Of America

- Auditor's Responsibility Under Government Auditing Standards

- Significant Accounting Policies And Management Judgments and Accounting Estimates

  - Significant Accounting Policies

  - Management's Judgments And Accounting Estimates
    - Allowance for uncollectible receivables
    - Expense allocations
    - Useful lives of capital assets
    - Accrued postretirement benefit liability
    - Present value of future cash flows

- Auditor's Judgments About Qualitative Aspects of Significant Accounting Practices

11

SAS 114 Communications

The Auditor's Communication With Those Charged With Governance

- Corrected And Uncorrected Misstatements

    - None

- Other Communications

    - Other Information in Documents Containing Audited Financial Statements

    - Significant Difficulties Encountered During The Audit

    - Disagreements With Management

    - Consultations With Other Accountants

    - Representations The Auditor Is Requesting From Management

    - Significant Issues Discussed, Or Subject To Correspondence, With Management

    - Other Finding or Issues We Find Relevant or Significant

        - New major program tested for USDA Loan guarantee

12

Management Letter Review

- <u>Material Weakness</u> – A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented or detected and corrected on a timely basis.

- <u>Significant Deficiency</u> – A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

- <u>Deficiency</u> – A control deficiency exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis.

- <u>Best Practice</u> – A matter which you may find of interest.

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Management Letter Review

- No significant deficiencies

- No material weaknesses

- Student Financial Aid compliance deficiencies
  - Related to FISAP reporting using estimate balances and immaterial discrepancies in the student federal aid population, disbursement population and verification population.

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Higher Education Outlook

- Moody's Higher Education Outlook for 2018*
  - Negative outlook related to expectations for the fundamental credit conditions driving the US higher education sector over the next 12-18 months
  - Tuition revenue growth will remain subdued, as will research funding and state appropriations
  - The annual change in aggregate operating revenue for four-year colleges and universities will soften to about 3.5% and will not keep pace with expense growth, which we expect to be almost 4.0%
  - Potentially rising labor costs and the need to sustain competitive investments in programs, facilities and technology will keep expense growth above general inflationary levels
  - Strong fiscal 2017 investment returns, generally above 10%, will drive up cash and investment levels and buffer potential volatility in the later part of outlook period and weaker returns in prior years
  - Total undergraduate enrollment growth is predicted to be averaging 1.5 percent for the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years
  - Graduate enrollment growth projections are initially more favorable but moderate toward the end of the outlook period, declining to under 2% by 2019 from over 3% in 2017. Decreasing international enrollment, which is typically higher for advanced degree programs, and improved employment rates may be contributing to this decline.
  - The higher education sector is highly exposed to changes in federal policy or funding. Changes to financial aid programs and tax reform could negatively affect enrollment and tuition revenue growth, philanthropic support and the cost of borrowing.

* Moody's Investors Service – Higher education - US

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Higher Education Outlook (Continued)

➢ Cybersecurity is the *most important emerging technology risk* for most entities (businesses, governments and individuals.)

➢ Recent breaches have had *major economic and reputational* consequences for the target(s).

➢ Stakeholders and regulatory bodies are *demanding increased visibility and assurance* regarding organizations' cyber risk management programs.

➢ New regulations and examiner guidance have *vastly increased expectations* regarding a client's Cybersecurity Risk Management and Controls.

➢ McKinsey Global Survey indicated that over half of executives interviewed believe that *cybersecurity is a strategic risk* for their companies. Yet only 5% of companies report "mature" or "robust" cybersecurity risk management maturity capabilities.*

- ➔ *Executive Management and governance bodies (e.g., Boards of Directors, Audit Committees) are expected to demonstrate increased responsibility and oversight of their organizations' Cybersecurity Risk Management Program and controls.*

- * McKinsey and Company, "*Risk and Responsibility in Hyperconnected World",* 2015 (Presented to the World Economic Forum)

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Accounting Developments

- ASU 2016-14, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958):* Presentation of Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Entities.

  - Issued August 2016 (effective for the College fiscal year ending **June 30, 2019**)
    - The amendments in this Update affect not-for-profit entities (NFPs) and the users of their general purpose financial statements. The amendments in this Update make certain improvements to the current net asset classification requirements and the information presented in financial statements and notes about a NFP's liquidity, financial performance, and cash flows. This ASU requires changes in presentation and disclosures to help NFPs provide more relevant information about their resources to donors, grantors, creditors and other stakeholdrers. Early application of the amendments in this Update is permitted. The College has not yet implemented this ASU and is in the process of assessing the effect on the College's financial statements.

  - **Impact:**
    Will result in major changes to the financial statement presentation of the College starting in fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. We will be working with management in advance of the 2019 audit regarding this standard. Key areas of impact in the financial statements include:
    - Net asset presentation
    - Expense presentation
    - Liquidity of financial assets

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Accounting Developments Continued

- ASU 2014-09, *Revenue from Contracts with Customers (Topic 606)*.

  - Issued May 2014 (effective for the College for the fiscal year ending **June 30, 2020**)
    - The amendments in ASU 2014-09 and subsequent ASU amendments affects any entity that either enters into contracts with customers to transfer goods or services or enters into contracts for the transfer of nonfinancial assets unless those contracts are within the scope of other standards (e.g., insurance contracts or lease contracts). This ASU will supersede the revenue recognition requirements in Topic 605, Revenue Recognition, and most industry-specific guidance, and creates a Topic 606 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. The core principle of the guidance is that an entity should recognize revenue to depict the transfer of promised goods or services to customers in an amount that reflects the consideration to which the entity expects to be entitled in exchange for those goods or services. To achieve that core principle, an entity should apply the following steps:
      - Step 1: Identify the contract(s) with a customer.
      - Step 2: Identify the performance obligations in the contract.
      - Step 3: Determine the transaction price.
      - Step 4: Allocate the transaction price to the performance obligations in the contract.
      - Step 5: Recognize revenue when (or as) the entity satisfies a performance obligation.

  - <u>Impact:</u>
    Not expected to impact recognition of tuition revenue but could impact timing of revenue recognition for certain grant agreements. We will recommend and work with the College to document the conclusions on each material revenue source under the five step process as required by the new standard.

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Accounting Developments Continued

- ASU 2016-02, Leases (Topic 842).

  - Issued February 2016 (effective for the College fiscal year ending **June 30, 2021**)
    - The significant change under the new standard is that those operating leases will be recorded on the balance sheet. All leases, whether finance or operating, will be recorded on the balance sheet unless they are subject to the short-term (12 months or less) lease accounting policy election. An assets will be recorded to represent the right to use the leased assets, and a liability will be recorded to represent the lease obligation.

    - **Impact:**
    Will result in increased assets and liabilities for leases greater than one year as the College records the right to use asset and related lease obligation liability. Need to be considering how this changes the statement of financial position in any new debt agreements or covenants as it will result in larger liabilities. Crowe will work with the College before the standard is in effect to help provide guidance and review the calculations of the assets and liabilities.

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Crowe Horwath.

For more information, contact:

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LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE IN THE ELECTRONIC WORKROOM

Academic Program Reviews:

- Crossett Library
  - Library Review
- Dance
  - Dance Review- Coleman
  - Dance Review- Rogers
  - Dance Review- Samuelson
  - Dance Review
- Drama
  - Bennington College Drama Review Statements
  - Drama Review Statement
- Languages
  - Language Review External Reviewers Report 2018
  - Self-Study Report for the Language Discipline Group
- Literature
  - Literature Self-Study Report
  - Literature-External Reviewer Report
- MFA Writing
  - MFAWriting- External Review Report- Culver and Eprile
- Music
  - Music Review- Bahn
  - Music Review- Chase
  - Music Review- Tower
  - Music Review Statement
- Post-Bac Review
  - Postbac Self Study
- Science & Math
  - External Review- Edwards
  - Externa Review- Knapp
  - External Review- Pengelley
  - External Science and Math_ self-study final
- Society, Culture & Thought
  - Social Science Self-Study Report

Founding Documents:

- Bennington "Aims" (1931)
- Bennington College: A Prospectus
- Commencement Statement (Incorrect)

- Commencement Statement (long version)
- Commencement Statement Timeline
- The Educational Plan for Bennington College

Institutional Documents:
- Bennington College Charter
  - Amendment and Restatement of Charter 6:14:1985
  - Amendment to Charter 4:23:1949
  - Amendment to Charter 6:14:1941
  - Charter 4:15:1925
  - Restated Articles of Incorporation 4:22:2005
- Administrative Organization- July 2019
- Administrative Staff Book_December 2018
- Bennington College Peer Lists
- Board Committee Charters
- BOT Bios with photos- 2019-2020
- By-laws
- Ten-Year Goals (2016)
- Ten-Year Goal PPT Screenshot
- Ten-Year Goals Fall 2018 Faculty Meeting

NECHE Reports 2009-2019:
- 2009 Self-Study
  - Letter from NEASC 4.14.10
  - NEASC Self-Study 2009
  - NEASC Visiting Team Report 2009
- 2011 Report
  - Letter from NEASC 10.26.11
  - Report to NEASC 8.15.11
- 2013 Report
  - NEASC progress report response 3.25.13
  - NEASC Report 1.15.13
- 2014 Fifth-Year Interim Report
  - 2014 Bennington College Fifth-Year Interim Report
  - NEASC Interim Report Response 12.2.14
- 2016 Report
  - NEASC Progress Report 8.15.16
  - NEASC reply to Progress Report 10.28.16
- 2017 Report (ARFE)
  - NEASC ARFE Report December 2017
  - NEASC ARFE Response 3.19.18

Sample Newsletters:

- Bennington Alumni News | A Newsletter for Alumni and Friends
- Bennington Bulletin (weekly)
- Bennington College Public Event Listing (monthly)
- Bennington Connection | A Newsletter for Families
- Robert Frost Stone House Museum Newsletter
- Suzanne Lemberg Usdan Gallery Newsletter

Sample Syllabi:

- Syllabi
  - Sylliabi F18
    - Syllabi F18- CAPA
      - APA 2147- Oral History, Restorative Justice and Youth Impacted by the Criminal Justice System
      - APA 2148- Water- First Home of Life
      - APA 2151- American Food
      - APA 2153- Activating Democracy
      - APA 2154- Public Policy Forum
      - APA 2162- Ethical Community Collaboration
      - APA 2164- Plastic Pollution- What Can We Do About It
      - APA 2214- The Study Center for Group Work- Threeing
      - APA 2216- Art Intervention Projects Class- Mapping Projects on Climate Change
      - APA 2220- Water Dialogues-Conflicts Over Our most Valuable Resource
      - APA 2300- Upside,Down- Business in the 21st Century
      - APA 4154- Ganas
      - APA 5101- Graduate Assistantship in Public Action
    - Syllabi F18- Dance
      - DAN 2107- First Year Dance Intensive
      - DAN 2119- Movement Practice- Beginner Intermediate Dance Technique
      - DAN 2121- Movement Practice- Beginning Dance Technique
      - DAN 2131- Makers and Making- Performance in the 21st Century
      - DAN 2149- Experiential Anatomy-Somatic Practices
      - DAN 2153- Movement Practice- Dance Improvisation
      - DAN 2256- making from Scratch- Sourcing the Body
      - DAN 4129- Makers and Making- Performance in the 21st Century
      - DAN 4148- Movement Practice- Intermediate- Advanced Dance Techniques
      - DAN 4319- Finding Form
      - DAN 4344- Movement Practice- Advanced Dance Technique
      - DAN 4366- Artist's Portfolio
      - DAN 4679- Performance Project- Adaptable Score
      - DAN 4794- Projects- Dance
      - DAN 5305- Graduate Research in Dance

- Syllabi F18- Drama
  - DRA 2116- The Magical Object- Visual Metaphor
  - DRA 2134- Creating with Javascript
  - DRA 2148- The Concept Musical
  - DRA 2149- Kurdish Cinema- Images From a Longtime Stateless Nation
  - DRA 2151- American Theatre now
  - DRA 2156- History of Theatre
  - DRA 2159- The Art of the Staged Reading
  - DRA 2170- Actor's Instrument
  - DRA 2170- The Actor's Instrument
  - DRA 2241- Stage Management
  - DRA 2267- The Line of Clothing- Rendering for Costume Design
  - DRA 2277- Choice and Consequence- Alternative History
  - DRA 4114- Critical Voice and Style
  - DRA 4115- Topping It Off
  - DRA 4127- An Actor's Technique- Nuts and Bolts
  - DRA 4143- Faculty Performance Production- The Christians
  - DRA 4210- Projects in Costume Design
  - DRA 4268-Meisner Technique
  - DRA 4376- Directing II
- Syllabi F18- FYF
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Warnock
  - FYF 2105- First Year Forum- Sherman
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Alfano
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Banerjee
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Bernstein
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Cencini
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Gover
  - FYF 2150- First year Forum- Guthrie
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Harris
  - FYF 2150- First year Forum- MaClellan
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Montovan
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Scully
  - FYF 2150- First Year Forum- Wimberly
- Syllabi F18- Language
  - CHI 2117- Dining Culture in China
  - CHI 4323- Chinese Zen
  - CHI 4511- Post-Mao Chinese Rock and Roll
  - FLE 2107- Teaching Languages K-6
  - FRE 2103- Insider Perspective on the Francophone World I
  - FRE 4493- Chocolat
  - FRE 4602- Conversation
  - FRE 4805- Queer French

- FV 2109- The French New Wave
- ITA 2106- Food in Italy
- ITA 4606- INT-High and Advanced Italian- Special Projects
- ITA4108- Italians About Their World(s)
- JPN 2112- 100 Places Where You Must Visit Japan
- JPN 4301- Samurai and Art
- JPN 4509- Prominent Works of Japanese Authors
- JPN 4709- What is Truth- WWII from the Japanese Perspective
- SPA 2111- Latin America Art Since Independence
- SPA 4304- Life and Death of Lorca
- SPA 4503- La Generacion
- SPA 4706- How the Boom Went Bust
- Syllabi F18- Literature
  - LIT 2024- American Twentieth-Century Literature
  - LIT 2101- Language as System and Social Behavior
  - LIT 2214- Shakespeare- The History of Plays
  - LIT 2236- Reading Wilderness
  - LIT 2325- Zeitgeist and the Political Poem
  - LIT 2326- Screenwriting- Scene & Structure
  - LIT 2327- Black Queer Writiing and Theoretical Approaches
  - LIT 2353- Robert Frost and the Rural Authentic
  - LIT 2373- Contemporary Asian American Literature
  - LIT 2374- Written California, 1850s to the Present
  - LIT 2378- Adler, Didion, and Sontag--Personal Politics
  - LIT 2401- The Whiteness of the Whale-Moby Dick and Melville's America
  - LIT 4101- Language, Power and Belonging in the Middle East and North Africa
  - LIT 4124- The Ecstasy of Influence--Style in Fiction
  - LIT 4125- Latinx Avant-Garde
  - LIT 4159- Honors Seminar- Korean American Feminist Poetry
  - LIT 4253- Reading and Writing the City
  - LIT 4255- Reading & Writing Short Stories-Technology of Heartbreak
  - LIT 4276- Reading and Writing Poetry- Word Choice and Line Break
  - LIT 4795- Senior Projects
- Syllabi F18- Music
  - History of Jazz on Drumset
  - MCO 4116- Group Composition Intensive
  - MCO 4120- Beginning Composition
  - MCO 4130- Composing for the Choir
  - MCO 4802- Music Composition Project
  - MFN 2110- Groundwork- What you need to Know to Make Music
  - MFN 2117- Rhythmic Fundamentals
  - MHI 2135- Traditional Music of NA

- MHI 2215- Banjo
- MHI 2227- Fiddle
- MHI 2229- Mandolin
- MHI 4103- Studies in American Music History
- MHI 4221- Traditional Music Ensemble
- MIN 2232- Piano Lab- Forsyth
- MIN 2232- Piano Lab I- Chinworth
- MIN 2241- Beg Violin-Viola
- MIN 2247- Beginning Guitar- Cox
- MIN 2354- Beginning Cello
- MIN 4026- Bass Intensive
- MIN 4224- Modern Guitar- Loubet
- MIN 4224- Modern Guitar- Cox
- MIN 4232- INT Violin- Viola
- MIN 4236- Piano- Forsyth
- MIN 4236- Piano Lab II- Chinworth
- MIN 4240- Jazz Piano
- MIN 4333- Piano- Lewis
- MIN 4333- Piano- Sato
- MIN 4345- Violin-Viola
- MIN 4355- Cello
- MIN 4417- Bass with Bisio
- MIN 4695- Viola
- MPF 2146- Space is the Place- Sun Ra
- MPF 2164- Benn County Choral Society- Bach and Haydn
- MPF 4106- Mallet Percussion Ensemble
- MPF 4229- Audiovisual Performance
- MPF 4230- ADV Chamber Music
- MPF 4250- Jazz Ensemble
- MPF 4357- ADV Improvisation Ensemble of Dancers and Musicians
- MSR 2123- Experimental Sound Practices
- MSR 4053- Studio Practices- Mixing Decades
- MTH 2274- Music Theory I
- MTH 4117- Advanced Musicianship
- MTH 4129- Bernstein Seminar
- MVO 4301- INT Voice- Ryer-Parke
- MVO 4301- Intermediate Voice- Bogdan
- MOV 4401- Advanced Voice- Bogdan
- Syllabi F18- Science & Math
  - BIO 2102- How Do Animals Work
  - BIO 2109- Forest-An Into To Ecology and Evolution
  - BIO 4114- Intro to Cell Biology
  - BIO 4311- Advanced Topics in Cell Biology- The Life & Death of Proteins

- BIO 4317- Biogeography, Paleobiology and Human Origins
- CHE 4212- Chemistry 1- Chemical Principles
- CHE 4213- Chemistry 3- Organic Reactions and Mechanisms
- CS 2124- Intro to Computer Science
- ENV 4232- Studying Place By Metes and Bounds
- ES 2102- Environmental Geology
- ES 2110- Into to Maps and Geographic Information Systems
- ES ENV 4102- Earth Materials
- MAT 2117- Polynomials and Geometry
- MAT 2246 Presentation of Statistics
- MAT 2410- Logic, Proofs, Algebra, and Set Theory
- MAT 4127- Number Theory & Cryptology
- MAT 4132- Multivariable Calculus and Electromagnetism
- MAT 4133- Calculus
- MAT 4137- Number Theory and Cryptology
- PHY 2235- Physics I- Force and Motion
- PHY 2106- Stars & Galaxies

- Syllabi F18- SCT
  - ANT 2110- Renaissance and Reformation
  - ANT 4107- Globalization
  - ANT 4124- War in the 21st Century
  - ANT 4750- Senior Seminar in SCT
  - HIS 2110- Renaissance and Reformation
  - HIS 2142- Lost and Found in the 19th Century
  - HIS 4104- Witchcraft and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe
  - HIS 4204- America in the World- Past, Present, Future
  - MS 2104- Digital Life
  - MS 2105- Hip Hop Archaeology
  - PEC 2107- Economic Analysis of Natural Disasters-Droughts and Floods
  - PEC 4124- Economic Inequality
  - PHI 2109- Philosophical Reasoning
  - PHI 2110- Global Ethics- Global Justice
  - PHI 2112- Rhetoric- The Art and Craft of Persuasion
  - PHI 2124- Ancient Greek Philosophy
  - PHI 2134- The Meaning of Life
  - PHI 4366- Kant Seminar- The Three Critiques
  - POL 2109- American Environmental Politics
  - POL 2111- Human Rights in Global Politics
  - POL 4104- International Relations Theories
  - POL 4237- Politics and Governance in Africa
  - PSY 2237- Meet Your Enemy- The Psychology of Generational Cohorts
  - PSY 4105- The Psychology of Feelings and The Social Construct of Emotions

- PSY 4108- Theories of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change
- SCT 2136- What is Economics
- SCT 2137- Geographies of US Empire- Immigration, Race and Citizenship
- SCT 2138- Transnational Feminist Geography
- SCT 2139- Research Methods in the Social Sciences
- SCT 4102- Race- Class- Environment
- SCT 4750- Senior Seminar in SCT
- SCT 4750- Senior Seminar in Society, Culture and Thought I- Section 2
- SOC 2204- Sociological Imagination
  - Syllabi F18- Visual Arts
    - AH 2109- Toward a Rigorous Art History
    - AH 2123 Art of the Islamic World
    - AH 2127- Global History of Architecture
    - AH 4118- Advanced Art History Practicum
    - AH 4218- Visual Art Lecture Series
    - ARC 2112- Nature and Artifice
    - ACR 4116- (Re)Center- Reimagining a New Student Center- Schedule Overview
    - CER 2144- Slip Casting Ceramics for Functional Wares
    - CER 2221- The Hollow Form
    - CER 4214- Experimental Making in Ceramics
    - CER 4223- Collage From 2D to 3D
    - DA 2135- Data & Social Justice
    - DA 4103- Social Practices in Art
    - DRW 2118- Life Drawing
    - DRW 2149- Mark Making and Presentation
    - DRW 4246- The Language of Form- Investigating Abstraction
    - DRW 4260- Drawing Excess- The Low Pleasures of Decoration
    - DRW 4267- Small Books and Zines
    - FV 2303- Intro to Video
    - FV 4109- Intermediate Video- Contrapuntal & Contested Narratives
    - FV 4116- Adobe After Effects and CC for the Moving Image Artist
    - FV 4217- Film-Video History- Insiders vs Outsiders- The Position of the Filmmaker in Postcolonial and Ethnographic Film & Video
    - FV 4219- Special Topics in Video Production- Indirect Memory
    - FV 4224- Pre-Production for Advanced Projects in Film, Video and animation
    - MA 2109- Intro to Animation
    - MA 4104- Philosophies and Formal Elements
    - PAI 2107- Forms and Process- Investigations in Painting
    - PAI 2107- Forms and Process- Investigations in Painting
    - PAI 4214- Painting Practice
    - PAI 4216- Advanced Workshop for Painting and Drawing- The Contemporary Idiom

- PHO 2110- Another Roadside Attraction- Travel and Photography
- PHO 2151- Films by Photographers
- PHO 2153- Foundations of Photography- Digital Practice
- PHO 2302- Photography Foundations- 2nd Half
- PHO 4127- Photography Projects- Vision and Version
- PHO 4253- Light & Lighting
- PRI 2118- Low Tech Relief Printmaking
- PRI 4207- Image Weaving- Unorthodox Practices in Contemporary Printmaking
- PRI 4208- Letterpress- Technique, Materials and Equip
- SCU 2101- Intro to Sculpture
- SCU 2107- Metal Shop- 2nd 7 Weeks
- SCU 2107- Metal Shop- 1st 7 Weeks
- SCU 4797- ADV Sculpture- Making it Personal
- VA 2117- Point Curve Surface Solid- 3D Modeling and Fabrication
- VA 2118- Art of Resistance- The Bennington College Poster Project
- VA 2226- Ten Decades, Ten Exhibitions- Popular Art Narratives of the 20th Century
- VA 2999- Visual Arts Lecture Series
- VA 4121- The Real Betty Parson
- VA 4127- Spatial Interventions
- VA 4211- Thing Library Project
- Syllabi F18- Writing
  - WRI 2152- The Scriptorium- Borders and Boundaries
- Syllabi S19
  - Syllabi S19- CAPA
    - APA 2221- International Human Rights Law
    - APA 2108- Incarceration in America
    - APA 2155- Middle Eastern Diasporic Experience
    - APA 2159- Reinventing Radio
    - APA 2160- Improvisation- Methods and Practice
    - APA 2164- Plastic Pollution
    - APA 2166- Performing Walks
    - APA 2167- Creative Economics
    - APA 2168- Tuesday Soup-Er Club- Cooking is Power
    - APA 2169- The Personal Learning Plan and After-School Workshop Vermont Act 77 Educational Reform
    - APA 2170- Lexicon of Forced Migration
    - APA 2212- Peacebuilding Seminar
    - APA 2213- Women and Human Mobility
    - APA 2250- Sababa Project
    - APA 4109- CAPA Advanced Workshop
    - APA 4122- Social Change Agents Advanced Peacebuilding
    - APA 4132- Student to Student- A College Access Mentorship Program at Mauhs

- APA 4139- Addressing a Growing Environmental Problem, Plastic Pollution
- APA 4149- Edible Matters- Cartography and the Cultural Biography of Food
- POP 2258- Extinction and the Endangered Species Act
- Syllabi S19- Dance
  - APA 2157- Dance Now- Africa
  - DAN 2121- Movement Practice- Beginner Dance Technique
  - DAN 2124- Contemporary African Dance I
  - DAN 2127- Butoh I- body Weather Laboratory
  - DAN 2128- The Politics of Bodies in Motion
  - DAN 2134- Dancing and Drumming
  - DAN 2135- Tribes, Traditions & Modern Practices of African Dance
  - DAN 2144- You Do You- Feldenkrais & Dancing- Scores for Improv
  - DAN 2149- Experiential Anatomy- Somatic Practices
  - DAN 2154- Performance Attention Sensation Perception
  - DAN 2155- Composition Program Position Process
  - DAN 2277- Dance on Film
  - DAN 4131- Butoh II- Body Weather Laboratory
  - DAN 4134- Making Work
  - DAN 4136- Dance Performance Project- A New Collective Work
  - DAN 4148- Movement Practice- INT Advance Dance Technique
  - DAN 4225- Performance Project- Natura State of Error
  - DAN 4236- Movement Practice
  - DAN 4344- Movement Practice- Advanced Dance Technique
  - DAN 4675- Contemporary African II
  - DAN 4794- Projects- Dance
- Syllabi S19- Drama
  - DRA 2124- Viewpoints Groundwork
  - DRA 2130- Sewing Fundamentals
  - DRA 2165- Metamorphoses- Borders and Beyond- Devising Multicultural Theatre
  - DRA 2166- Child and Youth Migration
  - DRA 2170- Actor's Instrument
  - DRA 2176- Historical Dress- The Great Couturiers
  - DRA 2234- Working with Light
  - DRA 2249- Adaptation
  - DRA 2250- The Art of Stage Design
  - DRA 4149- Transformation- An Approach to Character
  - DRA 4159- Windfall
  - DRA 4160- The Place we Built- Faculty Performance
  - DRA 4170- Five Approaches to Acting
  - DRA 4213- New Play Development
  - DRA 4263- Double Exposure
  - DRA 4322- Solo Performance- Telling My Story
  - DRA 4332- Directing I- The Director's Vision

- Syllabi S19- FYF
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Alfano
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Banerjee
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Bernstein
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Cencini
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Gover
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Guthrie
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Harris
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- McClellan
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Montovan
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Scully
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Sherman
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Warnock
  - FYF 4150- First Year Forum- Wimberly
- Syllabi S19- Language
  - CHI 4216- Contemporary Chinese Poetry
  - CHI 4402- Confucianism vs Daoism
  - CHI 4603- Propaganda in Modern Chinese Culture
  - FRE 4117- Paris on Screen- Tradition and Modernity
  - FRE 4224- Insider Perspectives on the Francophone World II
  - FRE 4605- Travel and Discovery
  - FRE 4806- Race and Gender in Franco-Maghrebi Literature and Film
  - ITA 2117- Mother Figure and Motherly Figures
  - ITA 4214- Unlocking Italian Culture II- Reporting Italy
  - ITA 4401- Traveling in Italian Film
  - JPN 4224- Social Expectations for Japanese Children
  - JPN 4401- Life and Death- Buddhism in Modern Japanese Films
  - JPN 4601- Social Issues in Japan Through Online News
  - JPN 4801- Special Projects in Advanced Japanese
  - SPA 4207- Inner Travel
  - SPA 4223- Language Through Film
  - SPA 4495- Latin America A Paratext
  - SPA 4806- Literature of Barcelona and Madrid
- Syllabi S19- Literature
  - LIT 2287- Shakespeare- The Comedies
  - LIT 2329- Chicanz Literature
  - LIT 2329- Poetry and the Art of Revision
  - LIT 2330- Animal Tales- Fundamentals of Creative Writing
  - LIT 2331- Wharton and James- Gender and Power
  - LIT 2332- Dostoevsky's Major Novel
  - LIT 2346- The Literature of Matriarchy
  - LIT 2357- reading Poetry- A Basic Course
  - LIT 2383- Contemporary African Writing

- LIT 4138- Reading and Writing the Missing Person
- LIT 4166- The Lyric Essay
- LIT 4167- Yeats and Vision of the Apocalypse
- LIT 4221- American Lit- Experimental Fiction American Others
- LIT 4259- Niedecker, Graham, Ford
- Syllabi S19- Music
  - MCO 4119- Advanced Electronic Music Composition and Performance
  - MCO 4121- Bodies of Sound
  - MCO 4376- Senior Projects in Music
  - MCO 4501- Music Composition Project- Acoustic- Electric
  - MCO 4501- Music Composition Project- Acoustic- Electronic
  - MFN 2117- Rhythmic Fundamentals
  - MHI 2110- Women Composers
  - MHI 2238- Black Music Division
  - MIN 2120- Drumming- An Extension of Language
  - MIN 2232- Piano Lab 1- Chinworth
  - MIN 2232- Piano Lab 1- Forsyth
  - MIN 2241- Beginning Violin
  - MIN 2247- Beginning Guitar (1)
  - MIN 2353- Percussion- M Gold
  - MIN 4025- Intermediate Guitar- Cox
  - MIN 4026- Bass Intensive
  - MIN 4224- Modern Guitar
  - MIN 4232- Intermediate Violin- Viola
  - MIN 4236- Piano Lab 2- Forsyth
  - MIN 4236- Piano Lab II- Chinworth
  - MIN 4237- Saxophone
  - MIN 4240- Jazz Piano
  - MIN 4333- Piano- Forsyth
  - MIN 4333- Piano- Sato
  - MIN 4333- Piano
  - MIN 4335- Jazz Piano
  - MIN 4345- Violin- Viola
  - MIN 4354- Cello
  - MIN 4357- Flute
  - MIN 4417- Bass with Bisio
  - MPF 2164- Benn County Choral Society
  - MPF 2201- Javanese Gamelan
  - MPF 2252- Drums Gongs and Bamboo Percussion Ensemble
  - MPF 4100- Sage City Symphony
  - MPF 4225- Intermedia Performance
  - MPF 4230- Advanced Chamber Music
  - MPF 4243- Budapest Band

- MSR 2141- Intro to Studio Recording
- MSR 4110- Mixing Techniques
- MTH 2272- Intro to Jazz Theory & Improvisation
- MTH 2277- Intermediate Musicianship
- MTH 4106- Beethoven Seminar
- MTH 4130- Harmonic Spheres
- MTH 4249- ADV Counterpoint- Fugue
- MTH 4292- Basso Continuo & You
- MUS 2229- Instrument Building
- MUS 4131- Conducting
- MVO 4301- Intermediate Voice- Bogdan
- MOV 4301- Intermediate Voice- Ryerparke
- MOV 4401- Advanced Voice- Bogdan
- Syllabi S19- Science & Math
  - BIO 2203- Women & Men- The Biology of the Sexes
  - BIO 2210- Mutant- Genetic Variation and Human Development
  - BIO 2240- Plant Diversity and Ecology
  - BIO 4104- Evolution
  - BIO 4201- Comparative Animals Physiology
  - BIO 4207- Genetics- Principles and Practice
  - CHE 2116- Sustainable Chemistry in the Modern World
  - CHE 4212- Chemistry 2- Organic Structure
  - CHE 4257- Chemistry Independent Research Projects
  - CHE 4335- Biochemistry- The Molecular Basis of Life
  - CS 2118- Scripting for Computer Graphics
  - CS 4119- Programming & Data Structure
  - CS 4121- The Theory & Practice of Hardware Hacking
  - CS 4122- Computational Linguistics
  - ENV 2173- Understanding PFOA- Science and Policy
  - MAT 2100- Entry to Mathematics
  - MAT 22440 Intro to Quantitative Reasoning and Modeling
  - MAT 2247- Statistics for Data Analysis
  - MAT 4134- Partial Differential Equations and Fourier Series
  - MAT 4218- Calculus
  - PHY 4210- Special Relativity
  - PHY 4211- Quantum Mechanics
  - PHY 4325- Physics II- Electricity and Magnetism
- Syllabi S19- SCT
  - ANT 2117- Culture, Environment & Sustainable Living
  - ANT 2204- What Comes After State
  - APA 4131 Land Mines
  - HIS 2208- The Journey- The World Between the Great Wars
  - HIS 2312- The History of Medicine- from Hippocrates to Harvey

- HIS 4115- US-Russian Relations
- HIS 4116- Medieval Travelers on the Silk Road
- LIN 2102- Language Evolution, Extinction and Survival
- LIN 4102- Language and Society in Vermont and Its Neighbors
- PEC 2218- Price Theory
- PEC 4245- Poverty Analysis
- PHI 2143- Happiness
- PHI 2253- Philosophy of Art- Aesthetics
- PHI 4108- Truth- Beauty and Goodness- The Philosophy of Iris Murdoch
- POL 2102- Comparative Democratization
- POL 4239- Local Government in Comparative Perspective
- POL 4248- Civil Society in Conflict Resolution
- PSY 2103- Intro to Forensic Psychology
- PSY 2289- Cross-Cultural Psychology
- PSY 4106- Feminist and Queer Thought- An Introduction
- PSY 4134- Narrative Trauma and Bearing Witness
- SCT 2133- Feminist Geographies of Dis-Ability, Care & Emdodiment
- SCT 2134- Social Dynamics of Inclusion
- SCT 4105- Statistics for the Social Sciences
- SCT 4107- Space, Place & Power
- SCT 4750- Senior Seminar in Society, Culture and Thought
- SOC 2203- The Working Class
- Syllabi S19- Visual Arts
  - AH 2121- Islamic Art and Modernity
  - AH 2126- Religious and Modernity
  - AH 4219- Visual Arts Lecture Series Seminar
  - ARC 2101 Architecture 1- Elements
  - ARC 2104- Architectural Graphics
  - ARC 4401- Architectural Analysis
  - CER 2105-Foundations in Ceramics- The Hand as a Tool
  - CER 2107- Beginning Potters Wheel
  - CER 4105- Glaze- Redesigning the Ceramic Studio Glazes
  - CER 4106- Material Science
  - CER 4214- Experimental Making in Ceramics
  - CER 4381- Advanced Projects in Ceramics
  - DA 2102- Adobe Creative Suite for Artist
  - DA 2136- Isadora- Real Time Media Manipulation for Performance
  - DRW 2118 - Life Drawing
  - DRW 2149- Mark Making
  - FV 2106- Women-Moving Image Arts
  - FV 2303- Intro to Video
  - FV 4114- Special Topics in Video Production- Misogyny in the Media
  - FV 4117- Intern Video Contemporary Approaches

- FV 4305 Advanced Projects in Video
- HA 4115- Westworld
- HA 4119- Visual Cultures of the Americas
- MA 2216- Animated Collage
- MA 2216- Projection- Mapping Class
- MA 4107- Technical Topics- Virtual Reality
- MA 4202- Animation Projects
- MA 4204- Advanced Digital Animation
- MS 2106- Immortal Media
- MS 4101- Digital Materiality
- PAI 2107- Form and Process- Investigations in Painting
- PAI 4301- intern Painting- Scale, Process & Presence
- PAI 4302- Advanced Workshop for Painting and Drawing
- PHO 2109- War- Catastrophe- The Ethics of the Photographer
- PHO 2136- Photography Foundations
- PHO 4128- Photographic Narratives
- PHO 4129- Color Photography- History & Practice
- PHO 4255- Digital Negatives and Alternative Processes
- PRI 2111- Intro to Intaglio- The Alchemists Print
- PRI 2121- Century Plate Lithography
- PRI 4272- Unique Prints- Experimental Printmaking- 3D Prints, Modular Prints & Books
- SCU 2117- Camera Mounts
- SCU 2123- Intro to Sculpture II- From the Body
- SCU 4117- Camera Mounts 2
- VA 2114- No Narratives No Rehearsals- Performance Art Workshop
- VA 2119- Art of Resistance
- VA 2204 Waterways Exploring the Landscape and Watershed with Artist Marie Lonrenz
- VA 2224- Dollhouse Diorama
- VA 2225- 3D Modeling for Painting, Drawing and Printmaking
- VA 2999- Visual Arts Lecture Series (1)
- VA 2999- Visual Arts Lecture Series
- VA 4112- Form to Function Part Two
- VA 4114- Conceptual Art and The Photograph
- VA 4138- Art Exhibitions as Site for Contemplation and Research
- VA 4152- Expanding Fields- History and New Practices of Curating the Rural
- VA 4207- Future Studio
- VA 4216- The Archive in Art
- VA 4305- Research Colloquium
- VA 4310- Fieldwork Professional Practicum
- VA 4312- Historical Perspectives
- VA 4405- Contemporary Art Contexts
- VAR 2207- Manga Into Art- After Super Flat

- Syllabi S19- Writing
  - WRI 2152- The Scriptorium- Borders and Boundaries
  - WRI 2153- The Scriptorium- The Body and Society

Supporting Documents:

- APC Position Recommendations F17v2
- Associate Dean Position Announcement
- Community Standards 2016-2017 Faculty Meeting Presentation
- Exploratory Navigation
- Narrative Evaluation Guidelines
- SCoPE: Student Collaborative Peer Education
- Work Integrated Learning (FWT) Evaluation

Surveys and Reports:

- AlumniSurveyOneYear
- AlumniSurveyOutYears
- Assessment Audit
- Faculty Salary Reports-S19
- Fearless- Bennington Positioning (compiled)
- Mellon Prog Ed grant final report 2019
- NCHA Survey
- Non-Applicant Survey 2019
- Symposium Report (1994)