

**Assurance Argument**  
**Saint Mary's College - IN**

10/8/2015

# 1 - Mission

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

## Argument

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### 1.A.1

The Mission of Saint Mary's College has been the heart of its educational ministry for over 170 years. The present [Mission Statement](#) was revised after a college-wide process inaugurated by then President Eldred in her [letter to the College community](#). Approved [in 2003 by the Board of Trustees](#), it continues to inspire and motivate new generations of students, faculty and staff, remaining faithful to the [Philosophy of Education of the Sisters of the Holy Cross](#), the College's founders and sponsors. Mission is a protected covenant in the [Bylaws](#), as is the position of Vice-President for Mission. The Mission Committee of the Board of Trustees ensures that Mission guides the College's operations. The Mission Statement is read to begin all meetings of the Board of Trustees ([see samples of minutes](#)) and a [Mission-based decision card](#) sits at each member's place. Similarly, the charge of the Curriculum Committee directs members [to be guided by Mission](#) as it fulfills its responsibilities. The Division for Mission regularly makes [presentations](#) to new Trustees and Staff during their [orientation](#). Potential faculty are given the Mission Statement to review prior to their on-campus interview, which [includes questions about their potential contribution to mission](#). Student Government Association (SGA) Officers are [given a copy](#) in their installation ceremony, and the Mission Commissioner of SGA works to ensure that Students are engaged with Mission.

### 1.A.2

"Saint Mary's College is a Catholic, residential women's college in the liberal arts tradition." The opening sentence of the College Mission Statement affirms the three essential facets of our identity: Catholic, women, liberal arts. Our Catholic identity is reflected in the very spaces where we work, learn, and live, and in our [celebration of the Eucharist throughout the year](#). A [Catholic Mass for the entire College community](#) marks the beginning of each academic year. Our identity as a women's college is visible in countless ways, from the undergraduate Student body to our Gender and Women's Studies Department and our Women's Health Center. Central to Saint Mary's Mission is its liberal arts tradition. The recent adoption and implementation of the [Sophia Program](#) and the [range of academic programs in it](#) clearly express the College's identity as a liberal arts institution. These three facets of

the College's identity are integrated within the Sophia Program. Requirements such as [Women's Voices](#) and [Global Learning](#) create a seamless connection between the College's academic programs and its Mission to inspire women to "develop their talents and prepare to make a difference in the world." The [Religious Traditions, Philosophical Worldviews](#), and [Social Responsibility](#) requirements embody the College's Catholic identity and Holy Cross heritage. Two endowed Chairs, one in Religious Studies and one in Philosophy, ensure that the work of St. Thomas Aquinas within the Catholic scholastic tradition is offered through coursework and annual lectures of notable scholars. (See also 3.B.1, 3.B.2, and 3.E.1-2) Finally, the [Mission Council](#), composed of Faculty, Staff and Student representatives, works to ensure that the Mission is understood and exemplified across the College.

Student support services express all aspects of the College's Mission, from aesthetic appreciation, intellectual vigor, women's leadership, and intercultural competence, to religious and social responsibility. Student support services particularly focused on Mission include Campus Ministry, Center for Spirituality, the Office of Civic and Social Engagement, Campus and Community Events, the Writing and Math Centers, and the Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership. (See also 3.D.1-2 and 3.E.1-2)

[Admission policies](#) emphasize key elements of Mission. The enrollment profile [reflects our Catholic identity](#), as well as a Mission-driven commitment to diversity. In accordance with the Mission Statement's call to respond to "the complex needs and challenges of the contemporary world," Saint Mary's seeks "students from diverse ethnic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds." The [increase in the diversity of our enrollment profile](#) over the past ten years reflects successful efforts "to bring together women of different nations, cultures, and races" ([Statement of Philosophy and Purpose](#)). Additionally, Saint Mary's remains a "residential women's college," with a large percentage of Seniors, exempt from the [residency requirement](#), electing to live on campus. The [high rate of Senior residents](#) corresponds to the [strong sense of community and satisfaction with student housing](#).

With the approval of the Higher Learning Commission in March 2014 and April 2015 to offer two master's and one doctoral degree, Saint Mary's has begun to admit male students, as required by federal law. In developing new graduate programs, Saint Mary's consulted with the Council of Graduate Studies (CGS) whose [consultants strongly supported the Graduate Programs as Mission-driven](#), as did the peer-consultants from the represented disciplines ([Speech Pathology](#), [Doctor of Nursing Practice](#), and [Data Science](#)). In approving the resolutions to inaugurate the Graduate Programs, the Board of Trustees have affirmed their consistency with Saint Mary's Mission (Minutes from [April 2013](#) and [April 2014](#)).

### 1.A.3

The College's Mission informs and shapes its Strategic Plan, which, in turn, serves as a backdrop for planning and budgeting priorities. A community-wide process (outlined in the prologues of [The Path to Leadership 2007-2012](#) and [Boldly Forward, 2012-2017](#)) ensured broad participation and results that reflect the Community's commitment to Mission (see 5.C.3). In fact, four of the five "fundamental principles" in the current Strategic Plan, *Boldly Forward*, are drawn directly from the College's Mission Statement; these include

- *Saint Mary's is committed to providing students with an excellent intellectual and academic experience.*
- *Saint Mary's is unwavering in its commitment to being a Catholic and Holy Cross college.*
- *Saint Mary's is committed to the education of undergraduate women.*
- *Saint Mary's is committed to being a residential college.*

The previous 2007-2012 Strategic Plan shaped [the priorities of the Capital Campaign](#), *Faith Always Action Now*, [approved by the Trustees on Oct. 31, 2008](#). Mission is also an essential component in the development of the College's annual budget. The Budget Committee, which consists of the members of the President's Cabinet, is reminded of this at the onset of the budget process in a [letter from the Vice-President for Finance and Administration](#). The College continually assesses the alignment of resource allocation with Mission, as evidenced by a recent [presentation](#) by the Vice-President for Finance and Administration to the Board of Trustees. (See also 5.C.1).

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## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

### Argument

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#### 1.B.1

The College's Mission Statement is articulated publicly on the [website](#) and appears in many documents, including the [College's Bulletins \(GradBulletin\)](#), the [Fact Book](#), [The Courier](#), and in materials sent to all accepted students. All [press releases](#) from the College include a statement emphasizing the tenets of Mission. The *Mission Statement* is frequently included in invitations to donor events. [Framed copies](#) of the *Mission Statement*, combined with the *Statement of Philosophy and Purpose*, are placed across campus. The College's present strategic plan, *Boldly Forward*, also clearly and publicly articulates our Mission, not only because it too [contains the text](#) of the *Mission Statement* and the *Statement of Philosophy and Purpose*, but because it expresses the College's Mission through a vision statement and a set of principles (pp. [5-11](#)) drawn from the Mission Statement.

#### 1.B.2

The College community regularly revisits Mission through the strategic planning process, assuring that the Mission of the College remains vital as we move forward. Various departments and programs across campus (for example, [Nursing](#), [Library](#), [Social Work](#)) have written their own mission statements in alignment with the College's Mission.

As stated previously, the College's [Statement of Philosophy and Purpose](#) underscores the importance of the three central aspects of the Saint Mary's identity and Mission. It affirms that as "a Catholic college, Saint Mary's cultivates a community of intellectual inquiry, liturgical prayer, and social action." Additionally, "the College insists on a liberal arts foundation for all its students" and forms a "community of students, faculty, and staff" that "responds to the needs of women." As mentioned in 1.A.3, the Strategic Plan draws upon and extends the tenets of our Mission into planning and action. The Mission is further emphasized by the promotion of four [Core Values](#): learning, justice, faith/spirituality, and community. These values flow from the College's Mission and closely mirror the values of the Sisters of the Holy Cross: prayer, community, faith, and compassion. Each year the Division of Mission chooses one Core Value to highlight. [Programming](#) for the year is often linked to the themes of this value. [Guides for Living the Core Values and Mission](#) provide all employees with concrete ways of demonstrating commitment to these values. As a visual reminder of this commitment, the Division for Mission arranges for a series of [banners](#) to be hung in the inner

courtyards of campus. (For the Sophia Program's commitment to the College's Mission Statement see 3.B.1.) The new Graduate Program website articulates the connection [between Graduate Programs and the Mission](#) of the College.

### 1.B.3

The [Mission Statement](#) clearly notes that Saint Mary's is an academic community for the education of women in the liberal arts tradition, including Students, Faculty, Staff, Alumnae and the Board of Trustees ([Bylaws: Mission Committee](#)). It is the responsibility of all members of the College to live the Mission, which includes "excellence in teaching" and a mutual engagement by Students and Faculty in "active scholarship." It speaks of bringing "together women of different nations, cultures and races" and responding to the "complex needs and challenges of the contemporary world" ([Statement of Philosophy and Purpose](#)). The Strategic Plan [Boldly Forward](#) reaffirms the nature, scope, and intended constituents of Saint Mary's programs and services, while [acknowledging](#) that the College will admit male students to its Graduate Programs.

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## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

### Argument

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#### 1.C.1

The [\*Statement of Philosophy and Purpose\*](#) boldly asserts the College's role in a multicultural society by specifically linking "the richest educational experience possible" with a community of women drawn from "different nations, cultures, and races." The [\*Mission Statement\*](#) reinforces this role by calling on "all members of the College" to "continually assess their response to the complex needs and challenges of the contemporary world." Today's world *is* multicultural, and thus, the Mission of the College insists upon engagement with human diversity. Within the tradition of the Sisters of the Holy Cross and Catholic social teaching, engagement with the world and human diversity cannot be separated from social responsibility. Multiple initiatives, programs, and practices echo the refrain sounded in the *Mission Statement* that defines Saint Mary's as a college that "promotes social responsibility" and prepares women "to make a difference in the world." How the College's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity in ways appropriate to its Mission is considered below through an examination of four areas: 1) College-wide initiatives, 2) Programming and Development for Students and Faculty, 3) Academic Programs, and 4) Alumnae and Community Outreach.

#### 1.C.2

##### College-wide initiatives - PCMA

President Mooney [formed The President's Council on Multicultural Affairs \(PCMA\) in response to recommendations](#) from the 2005 Diversity Task Force and the 2006 Chairs' Diversity Action Committee. With [broad membership](#), the PCMA is charged with "the ongoing education and development of the entire College community" "in the area of multicultural diversity" and assessment of these efforts, as well as proposing "initiatives to improve the campus climate and the racial and ethnic diversification of the College community." The President has acted on numerous recommendations from the PCMA, such as a [comprehensive climate study by the National Multicultural Institute \(NMCI\) in AY08-09](#) and [a climate survey administered by Educational Benchmarking Incorporated \(EBI\) in AY12-13](#). One result of the recommendations from NMCI was a College-wide Community Dialogue Day. This initiative (see [sample facilitators outline](#) and [session Power Point](#)) has been on-going (in various formats) since AY10-11. In AY12-13, Faculty and Staff initiatives were combined. Every Employee receives [an invitation from President Mooney](#) and attendance of full-time employees has been robust ([Fall 2013](#), [Spring 2014](#)). While the evaluations of the Community Dialogues have shown some variation, the results indicate that participants find value in the gathering ([Spring 2013](#), [Fall 2013](#), [Spring 2014](#), [Spring 2015](#)). The PCMA is responsible for developing a [comprehensive diversity plan](#) through a planning cycle beginning with a new climate study approximately every ten years; the PCMA's agenda for next year includes [discussion of a](#)

[climate audit in AY16-17.](#)

The PCMA reviewed College hiring practices in order to promote hiring from underrepresented populations; this review resulted in the adoption of a revised [Diversity Report Form](#) in AY12-13. The form, which evaluates the pool of applicants and finalists for inclusivity of underrepresented populations, must be completed and returned to the Office of Human Resources and approved by the divisional Vice-President before scheduling final interviews. The College has [significantly increased the diversity](#) of its Employees since 2007. A recent update from the Office of Institutional Research shows [notable growth in full-time employees from underrepresented populations in all three categories: faculty, staff, and administration.](#)

### **College-wide initiatives - Strategic Planning**

Believing that students must live, study and work in diverse settings in order to make a difference in the world, the Strategic Plan pays attention to internationalization and the diversity of our Student population. In keeping with that belief, Recommendation 10 of *Boldly Forward* [calls for 20%](#) of the Student body to come from historically-underrepresented groups by 2017. The College is optimistic about reaching this goal since it has already [doubled the percentage of students from these populations over the past ten years.](#) We must remain resolved, however, in order to move from 16.9% to 20% within the next two years.

Over the past decade, Saint Mary's has demonstrated a strong commitment to internationalizing the Campus, as first evidenced by [several pertinent goals](#) included in the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan. In 2008, the American Council on Education (ACE) completed an [internationalization study](#) for the College, which led to several new recommendations in the present Strategic Plan. In fact, *Boldly Forward* contains no less than four related recommendations:

[Recommendation 6:](#) *Build on Our Strength in Study Abroad and Global Studies*

[Recommendation 10:](#) *Target Recruitment and Retention of U.S. Minority Students and International Students*

[Recommendation 15:](#) *Continue Efforts to Diversify the Faculty*

[Recommendation 16:](#) *Promote a Culture that Values and Embodies International and Multicultural Diversity*

### **College-wide initiatives - Admissions and Financial Aid**

The Admissions Office attends to human diversity through Mission-appropriate [recruitment practices](#) and admission policies (see 1.A.2). Recent diversity-related actions include the addition of operating funds and [Admissions Counselor positions](#) focused on international recruitment and the coordination of recruitment from underrepresented populations ([Enrollment Management Strategic Plan](#)). Established in AY11-12, the English Language School brings culturally diverse students to campus for non-credit ESL courses with several having matriculated into our Undergraduate Program. The Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership (CWIL) also secured [an external grant for pre-approved study abroad grants](#) to admitted students of color, first generation, and Pell grant students; the grant funding ran from 2006 to 2013.

Providing access to an outstanding education is a pillar of our Mission and, as such, the College [invests a significant portion of its annual budget in financial aid](#) allowing students with limited

financial resources to afford a Saint Mary's education. (See also 5.C.1.) A snapshot of the changing landscape of financial need and how the College has responded to it through resource allocation can be found in the College's [Fact Book](#). The success of the College's effort to address economic diversity is evidenced by the results of *Faith Always, Action Now*, a capital campaign that secured [over \\$30 million for scholarships](#). The [New York Times has recognized](#) Saint Mary's as one of the ten most economically diverse top colleges in the nation. ([See also email from Media Relations.](#))

### **Programming and Development for Students and Faculty**

The College invites Students to engage with human diversity and gives attention to the diversity of its Student body in multiple ways. Every year the [Office of Multicultural Services](#) schedules lectures and cultural events that are focused on diversity. ([An endowment report](#) includes examples of a lecture by Erin Gruwel of the Freedom Writers Foundation and [programing during Black History month.](#)) The Office also sponsors a [multicultural graduation celebration](#), which offers an opportunity [to celebrate our Graduates of color](#). Other College programs include a [multicultural open house and retreat, a Justice Fridays series, and a Martin Luther King Peace dinner](#). Multicultural Services organizes [Belles Connect](#), an early-orientation program for women of color and first-generation Students. (See also 4.B, 4.C.3, and 5.D.2.) [The Office of Student Involvement](#) sponsors student organizations [focused on specific identities and cultures](#). Engagement with diversity is fostered through Student Government, particularly by the [Student Diversity Board](#) and its sponsorship of the annual Diverse Students Leadership Conference (see DSLC [press release for AY13-14](#) and [schedule of sessions for AY14-15](#)). Many offices and academic departments [offer extensive diversity-related programming](#) at Saint Mary's every year. (See also 3.E.1-2).

Other College offices also attend to diversity. The [Disability Resource Office](#) assists Students with learning or physical disabilities. [The Office of Student Success](#) supports academic success by offering assistance with skill and strategy development. The [Career Crossings Office's](#) (CCO) [recruiting guidelines \(requiring adherence to Equal Opportunity laws and principles\)](#) and their [non-discrimination policy](#) reflect attention to diversity. The CCO also sponsors an [International Student Career Counselor Internship](#), offers [grants](#) to supplement unpaid or low-pay summer internships, and [sponsors diversity-related programming](#). Additionally, the Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership ([CWIL](#)) provides multiple [opportunities for Faculty development](#) around issues of diversity and invites Students to engage with diversity through [study-abroad programs](#), the [Intercultural Portfolio Program](#), the [Catalyst Trip](#) (taken with women from the local community), and, for the past three years, through involvement with the [Study of the United States Institute \(SUSI\)](#). CWIL also has a position dedicated to assisting our international Students in all aspects of their Saint Mary's experience. (See also 3.E.1-2 .)

### **Academic Programs - The Sophia Program in Liberal Learning and Specific Majors/Minors**

See 3.B.4 for an elaboration of the attention to human diversity found in the Sophia Program and in several academic programs from Global Studies to Intercultural Studies, among others. Study-abroad is discussed in section 3.E.1-2.

### **Alumnae and Community Outreach**

The Alumnae Association Board of Directors (AABOD) has arranged for CWIL to conduct diversity training for its members (see [sample facilitator's outline](#) and [session Power Point](#)). The [application for service to the AABOD](#) expresses its commitment to seek members "from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups, those who have had multicultural experience, and those who can demonstrate a commitment to diversity." The Office for Civic and Social Engagement

(OCSE) specifically focuses on outreach to the community in all of its diversity. Programs sponsored by the OCSE involve [many community partners](#) and a [wealth of initiatives](#) (see 3.E.1-2). The DSLC [invites local area high-school students to participate in the conference's high-school track](#), free-of-charge. Specific initiatives of community outreach sponsored by CWIL include the [English Language School](#), which extends our academic community to non-native speakers, and the Women's Entrepreneurial Initiative ([WEI](#)) and its [Spark](#) program for local business women. [WEI and Spark have had a significant impact on the local community](#). The College also offers summer camps and hosts large, public events; recent examples include lectures by prominent authors Nicholas Kristof and Michelle Alexander ([see Summary](#)). Examples of community outreach programs reflecting attention to human diversity sponsored by academic departments or student clubs include [Feminists United](#), [Business Administration and Economics](#), [CSD](#), [Education](#), [Mathematics](#), and [Social Work](#). (See also section 1.D.3).

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## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

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The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Argument

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#### 1.D.1

Since its founding in 1844, Saint Mary's has focused its Mission on making a positive difference in the world. Former president Sister M. Madeleva Wolff's, CSC promise of: ". . . discovery; discovery of yourself, discovery of the universe, and your place in it," still inspires the Faculty, Staff and Students, as the College provides opportunities for immersion in the world's reality, creating avenues to positively impact that world.

Concern for public good is integrated into our curriculum. (See multiple examples in 3.B.2 and 3.B.4.) The [Second Principle](#) of *Boldly Forward* notes that within its Catholic and Holy Cross identity, Saint Mary's educates students not only for their own benefit, "but also for the benefit of the broader society." Saint Mary's opens its campus to the wider community in many ways. The annual [Christian Culture lecture](#), the [Center for Spirituality's Annual Lecture Series](#), the [Madeleva Lecture](#), and many others, which draw internationally known speakers, are free and open to the public. The [The Office of Campus and Community Event webpage](#) advertises multiple arts events such as concerts, theatrical and dance productions, and art gallery openings that invite engagement with the community (see 1.C.2). The [Fifth Principle](#) of "Boldly Forward," consistent with Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*, calls for new efforts to promote sustainability, "not only preservation of natural resources, which is essential to the well being of the planet, but also preservation of social norms that value human dignity and the just distribution of goods." Additionally, President Mooney has signed the Declaration of Commitment to the encyclical sponsored by global leaders in Catholic higher education. Other examples of commitment include the establishment of the [Environmental Studies](#) minor and [other initiatives](#) described in 5.D.1. A major local contribution is Saint Mary's Women's Entrepreneurship Program ([WEI](#)) and [SPARK](#) which combine student involvement with that of local women in the creation of successful local businesses. [Over 100 local, predominantly low-income women graduated from this program](#) in the last six years. This same program sponsors a [Renaissance Woman's Forum](#), attracting some of the most successful local businesswomen. Finally, the College demonstrates its concern for public good by making its education accessible to students of limited means. In September 2014 the [New York Times](#) rated Saint Mary's in the top seven colleges nationwide in efforts on economic diversity (See also 1.C.2 and 5.C).

#### 1.D.2

Article II, Section 2.2 of the [Bylaws](#) of the Board of Trustees defines the Institution as a public benefit

Corporation. [Article V](#) helps assure that the College will continue to be identified as a Catholic, women's college in the liberal arts tradition, giving primacy to the educational mission. The College directs its expenses [primarily for educational purposes](#). In FY2013, instructional programs and academic support expenditures were \$28.3 million or 48.5% of operating expenditures. At Saint Mary's peer institutions, the average spent on these two categories in FY2013 was 47.5%. Furthermore, the College has conflict-of-interest policies for [Trustees](#), [Faculty](#), and [Administrators and Staff](#). Other policies exist within individual offices, for example that of [Financial Aid](#) (See also 2.A.). Finally, the College has an [endowment spending policy](#) regulating the floor and ceiling for annual payouts to assure a steady funding of essential programs of the College in service of the Mission. (See also 5.A.2.)

### 1.D.3

Throughout its 170+-year history, the College has developed relationships with external constituents that continue to grow, providing benefit to all parties. These relationships center in the regional civic community, but extend beyond state and country borders to include partnerships around the world. Experiential learning classes, workshops and volunteer-outreach opportunities provide examples: mathematics students host [Hypatia Day](#) to interest local girls in math and other STEM disciplines; students in Communication classes provide workshops on [communication and interviewing skills](#) for guests at the local homeless center; in conjunction with Indiana History Day [the History Department hosts a regional competition for students in grades 6-12](#); the Music Department holds an annual [High School Women's Choir Festival](#); and nursing students provide [respite care for parents](#) of chronically ill children. Academic Experiential Learning integrated into specific courses also allows Saint Mary's students to respond to the needs of communities of interest in keeping with the College's Mission (see [EDUC 230](#) and [PSYC 386](#)). Students in the Chemistry Department have pioneered research on a [Paper Analytic Device](#) that will aid the identification of counterfeit drugs, an important tool for clinics in developing countries. Other examples find residence halls paired with area agencies, where students come to know the stories of people who find themselves on the margins of society. Students in Le Mans Hall partner with [Hannah's House](#), a home for pregnant women, to provide friendship and care. The College's [Office for Civic and Social Engagement](#) (OCSE) promotes [partnerships](#) with social agencies in the civic community; every fall since 2009 the OCSE, Campus Ministry, and the Career Crossings Office co-sponsor a [Community Engagement Dinner](#), bringing together community partners, Faculty, Staff, and Students to consider how to strengthen our partnerships. The OCSE offers opportunities to engage with the local community through the [12 Days of Christmas](#) outreach to needy families in the area, Blood Drives, and participation in activities such as the [walk for St. Margaret's House](#), a women's day shelter in South Bend, and the Alzheimer's Walk. The [College Academy for Tutoring](#), provides student tutors and classroom assistants for Title I schools in the area. Annually students provide over [2418 hours](#) of service through this program. [Statistics](#) show that 87% of Saint Mary's Seniors have reported volunteering in community service, a higher percentage than seniors at other Catholic institutions. (See also 3.E.1-2.)

Saint Mary's College, in partnership with Sodexo Food Services, was the first institution of higher education in the country to sign the [Real Food Challenge](#), which pledges that 20% of the food served will be provided by local producers by 2017. [The College is already very close to that goal](#). The Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership provides assistance to women in the area who want to begin small businesses in its [Women's Entrepreneurial Initiative program](#) (see above). Reaching out to the broader interests of the state, students and faculty collaborated on writing the *Report on the [Status of Girls in Indiana](#)*, a report available to governmental agencies and other educational institutions to study social and economic factors which impact young girls in Indiana. The [Office of Alumnae Relations](#) forges relationships and partnerships with Alumnae that span a lifetime, building on programs including the Alumnae Association and Alumnae Clubs, [spiritual retreats](#), travel

groups, [reunions](#), and many others. Other external constituencies served by the College include local and state employers that benefited from the [Cross Currents program](#) (funded by a Lilly Endowment matching grant) designed to engage local employers to increase the number of graduates who stay in Indiana (see 5.C.3). The College has an ongoing relationship with employers engaged in [partnerships with Career Crossings Office](#). These are but a few examples demonstrating Saint Mary's commitment to public good and the College's efforts to respond to the needs of communities of interests. (See also 1.C.2, 5.C.3, and 3.E.1-2.)

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## **1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary**

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### **Summary**

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#### **Strengths**

- Saint Mary's Mission is deeply understood by the College community and drives operations.
- Saint Mary's places its educational responsibilities in a place of primacy.

#### **Future Considerations**

- Continue using the strategic planning process to allow for intentional and periodic revisiting of Mission documents.
- Continue progress in relation to diversity issues writ large.
- Increase and strengthen the recent initiatives that extend the College's outreach to communities of interest.

### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

#### Argument

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##### 2.A

The policies and processes described below assure that Saint Mary's operates with integrity in all of its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions. The President's Office maintains and regularly updates a [consumer information webpage](#) to comply with the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA).

##### Financial functions

The [Bylaws](#) require the College to operate with integrity in its financial functions. The [Audit Committee](#) of the Board of Trustees has [responsibility for standards of conduct](#), ensuring that the College meets its fiduciary, statutory, and compliance obligations. The Vice-President for Finance and Administration and the Business Office employ generally-accepted accounting principles. Saint Mary's consistently receives an unqualified audit opinion for the [A-133 audit](#) conducted annually, in compliance with the requirements of the Department of Education (see 5.A.5). All Trustees annually sign a conflict-of-interest form and follow the directives in [Article XIV Section 14.1 in the Bylaws](#). In fact, all Officers of the College, all Employees working in the Financial Aid and Business Offices, and those authorized to sign for expenditures [are required to complete a conflict-of-interest](#) form. Additionally, the Financial Aid Office has a published [code of conduct](#) and membership in professional groups that adhere to high standards of ethical behavior (NASFAA, ISFAA, and NASFAA). Finally, the Development Office follows ethical practices as outlined in its [Donor Bill of Rights](#).

##### Academic Functions

Either the [undergraduate](#) or [graduate Bulletin](#) serves as the College's contract with all matriculating students. Both include [policies on academic dishonesty](#). The Cushwa-Leighton Library promotes the ethical use of scholarly resources by Faculty, Staff, and Students. The College has a [copyright policy](#) published on the Library's website under the ["About the Library"](#) and ["For Faculty"](#) menus. The ["Get Help"](#) page has a guide about ways to avoid plagiarism. The Head Librarian explains [copyright issues](#) and best practice in workshops for Faculty [preparing online courses](#). The Registrar ensures compliance with the following regulations: FERPA, State Authorization, and Gainful Employment. All new Faculty receive [FERPA training](#) from the Registrar and the Office of Academic Affairs during [the orientation for new Faculty](#).

Student academic issues with ethical implications are handled by the Provost's Office and the Associate Dean for Advising through processes elaborated in the appropriate [Bulletin \(GradBulletin\)](#). The [Student Code of Conduct](#) describes policies relevant to all other aspects of student life at Saint Mary's. The Student Affairs Division relies on this code to ensure that all Students are treated fairly and ethically at all times.

### **Personnel Functions**

Saint Mary's is an [Equal Opportunity Employer](#) committed to the highest possible standards of ethical conduct. Our [integrity policy](#) outlines the ethical standards to be followed by Officers, Trustees, and Employees, including Student Employees. Employee matters relating to Faculty are integrated into the *Faculty Handbook*, much of which is contained in the *Governance Manual*. A [guide for Student Employees](#) is linked to the Residential Life and Financial Aid Opportunities webpages. The [Registrar](#) is responsible for [FERPA training](#) of all Employees; every Employee must read and sign a [records maintenance form](#) from the Information Technology Department before receiving their access to our student-information system, Banner. The Registrar is collaborating with Information Technology and the Director of Human Resources to [find ways to improve the training process](#).

The College has specific policies on [general](#) and [sexual](#) harassment for Employees and Students (see [discriminatory harassment](#) and [student sexual misconduct](#) policies). The College Counsel is [the Title IX coordinator](#). He ensures compliance by working closely with the [Vice-President for Student Affairs](#), who acts as the Appeals Officer for all student-conduct cases. The Critical Issues Board has received [special training](#) for sexual misconduct/Title IX cases. [Mandatory training](#) is offered for all Faculty, Staff, Administrators, and Students. [Materials are sent to those unable to attend](#). Saint Mary's makes its policies and relevant information [publicly available](#), as required by federal law.

The College has two official reporting systems: [Ethics Point](#) and [Maxient](#). Over the last 10 years, however, direct verbal or written reports to various supervisors have often been used instead of these systems. Incident reports are made through Maxient while Ethics Point is outward facing, intended for use by individuals outside the Saint Mary's community who wish to report an ethics violation, in particular, a conflict of interest. It can and is, however, sometimes used by staff. Human Resources has a "How to File a Report" link under the "Integrity Policy" section [of its homepage](#). All Ethics Point reports are forwarded to the Director of Human Resources while Maxient reports are forwarded to the appropriate College officer.

The fact that Saint Mary's has created offices (the Belles Against Violence Office ([BAVO](#)), for example), policies, and processes to ensure that the College conducts itself ethically and responsibly, enables it to respond with integrity to unforeseen developments affecting the Community. Such is the case with the College's response to the recent documentary examining sexual assault on college campuses, *The Hunting Ground*, which prominently features Saint Mary's College and the University of Notre Dame. The Administration [invited the College community](#) to discuss the documentary and its implications for Saint Mary's. In response to Students' expressed concerns, President Mooney [established a Task Force on Sexual Assault](#).

### **Auxiliary Functions**

Auxiliary functions at Saint Mary's include the residence halls, the dining and catering services offered through Sodexo, and the bookstore run by Follett's. Residence Life subscribes to the standards and ethical principles of the Association for College and University Housing Professionals ([ACUHO](#)) and also falls under those of the Association for Student Conduct Administration ([ASCA](#)). Both

[Follett's](#) and [Sodexo](#) have statements of ethical policy. Sodexo's Saint Mary's Dining Services [partner with many student organizations](#) at Saint Mary's to contribute to the Community and to practice sustainability.

### **Ethical Policies and Procedures**

The College has fair and ethical policies and processes for its Governing Board, Administration, Faculty, Staff, and Students. Documents or webpages containing these policies include:

Governance Manual ([Bylaws](#); [Dismissal of Faculty for Serious Cause](#); [Faculty Conflict of Interest](#); [Sexual Harrassment](#); [General Harrassment](#); [Academic Honesty](#); [Student Code of Conduct](#); [Conflict-of-Interest Policy for Trustees](#));

Faculty Handbook ([Dismissal of Faculty for Serious Cause](#), [Conflict-of-Interest](#); [Bylaws](#));

Employee Handbook ([Responsibilities](#); [Equal Opportunity Employer](#); [Sexual Harrassment](#); [General Harrassment](#); [Safety](#); [Drug-free Workplace](#); [Criminal-Background Check](#); [Awards, Gifts, and Prizes for College Employees](#); [Conflict-of-Interest Policy for Administrators and Staff](#); [Integrity](#));

[Policy on Political Activity](#);

[Policy on Student Complaints](#);

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## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

### Argument

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The Office of Institutional Research's [Fact Book](#), available on the College's website, serves as a reference guide containing clear and complete information for internal and external audiences on the College, admissions, undergraduate enrollment, academic matters, financial aid, surveys, information on Faculty and Staff, and financial and giving statistics

### Programs and Requirements

The College [Bulletins](#) ([GradBulletin](#)) serve as the official guide to academic programs and requirements. First-Year Students receive a printed copy of the *Bulletin*. Both Bulletins are also available online ([Registrar](#), [Office of First Year Studies](#), [Graduate Programs](#)). Enrolled and prospective Students also find pertinent information through the [Undergraduate Majors](#) link on the College's homepage. Graduate programs have a Program Overview webpage explaining requirements (see, for example [Speech Pathology](#)).

There has been concern that department webpages are often more accurate than the College's homepage links developed by the MarCom Office. The College's development and prospective launch of a new website will respond to this concern. Improvements to accessibility include making the website mobile-responsive and a future transition to a portal in October 2015.

### Faculty and Staff

Both *Bulletins* contains a roster of the [Officers of the College](#), [Administration](#), and [Faculty](#), with titles and degrees. All academic-department webpages contain rosters of their Faculty, often providing personal profiles in addition to degree qualifications (see for example, [Biology](#), [Global Studies](#), and [Theatre](#)). Office webpages provide information about their Staff (see for example, [CWIL](#)). Finally, the online directory includes contact information for all Faculty and Staff.

### Costs to Students

The *Bulletins* includes information on [tuition, fees](#), and [financial aid](#) ([GradBulletin](#)). The College website is another source of information on [costs](#). Students costs are covered extensively in print through the [Financial Aid Brochure](#), and within the [financial aid pages](#) and the [Consumer Information](#) page on the College website. The Office of Financial Aid publishes the net-price calculator and updates its [website](#) on a regular basis. Financial aid applicants receive a [financial award letter](#) that includes details of their financial aid package for the academic year. [Supplemental materials](#) included with the letter refer Students to PRISM to see their exact cost of attendance. Saint Mary's publicly reports average student indebtedness of the most recent graduating class (see [Fact Book](#) and [Common Data Set](#)). This figure is reported through many guidebooks for prospective students such as *US News and World Report*.

Admission-marketing materials mailed to prospective Students include information on both programs

and costs. College Relations coordinates the development of these materials, updating them annually. Samples of materials for recruitment in AY14-15 include the [Viewbook](#) and the Financial Aid Brochure mentioned above. [Costs for graduate students](#) are detailed on the Programs' websites.

## Control

Saint Mary's College is sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Cross and incorporated as a Roman Catholic Organization. These relationships are clearly presented in the College's [Bylaws](#), on the [Fast Facts](#) page of the College's website, and in the [Governance Manual](#) available on the [President's webpage](#).

## Accreditation Relationships

The Higher Learning Commission's Mark of Affiliation appears on the College's [website](#). The College's accreditation relationship with the HLC also appears on the College's [Who We Are](#) webpage. Finally, all of the College's accreditation relationships are listed in the pertinent College [Bulletin](#) ([GradBulletin](#)).

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## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

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#### 2.C.1 (see 5.B.1-3 *Board of Trustees*)

The authority and responsibilities given to the Trustees by virtue of the Bylaws ([Article VII](#)) ensure that the Board has the autonomy to make decisions that preserve and enhance the College. The Board consists of both lay and religious Trustees ([BYLAWS, Section 6.3](#). Class Voting Rights). This special separation of voting powers is intended to preserve the commitment to the Catholic tradition and special emphasis on the education of women. The Board keeps the Mission of the College in mind during all of its deliberations (see 1.A.1).

The Board meets four times annually, with extended meetings during the academic year and a two-day retreat in June. Materials for the meetings are posted to a confidential [Board of Trustees website](#) two weeks prior to a meeting. The summer retreat often [focuses on strategic planning](#). Key Performance Indicators are now used to [update progress towards goals](#). A [trained facilitator](#) often leads the retreat.

New Board members [are assigned to an experienced Trustee](#) who serves as their mentor. Before the first meeting in the fall, new Trustees arrive early for an [orientation](#) about the College and training in Trustee expectations.

#### 2.C.2 (see also 5.B.1-3 *Board of Trustees, Faculty, and Students*)

The Board regularly requests presentations by members of the Cabinet, Faculty, Administration, and Students, thus attending to the interests of these constituents during decision-making deliberations. When appropriate, they meet with the leadership team of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. The voting rights and privileges of the Trustees also reflect constituents' interests since a member of the Faculty, the president of the Alumnae Association, and a Student have full voting rights and privileges. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the Board membership must include members from Roman Catholic congregations, specifically requiring members from the sponsoring order, the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

The standing committees reflect the Board's attention to both internal and external constituencies. For each Board meeting, Committee Chairs set an agenda on specific areas of concern. Recent examples include:

- Enrollment and discounting tuition (Student Life Committee)
- Faculty load (Academic Affairs Committee)
- Staff compensation (Finance and Budget Committee)
- Graduate Programs (Academic Affairs Committee)
- Monitoring educational quality, including retention and assessment of student learning (Academic Affairs Committee)
- The Capital Campaign *Faith Always, Action Now* (College Relations Committee)
- Development of a master plan and recent building projects, such as the Science Hall or Angela Athletic Center (Facilities and Grounds Subcommittee of the Finance and Budget Committee)
- Desired skills and knowledge of our graduates in the marketplace (Academic Affairs)

At each Board meeting, the Chairs of standing committees report and, when appropriate, present resolutions for action.

### 2.C.3

The [Bylaws](#) and the [Governance Manual](#) include the conflict-of-interest policy for Board members. All Trustees must sign a conflict-of-interest form (see 2.A).

### 2.C.4 (see also 5.B.1-2 *Board of Trustees* and *President*)

The [Governance Manual](#) clearly states that the President is the College's Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Advisor to the Board. The President has the authority to execute all documents on behalf of the College and the Board, consistent with Board policies and the best interests of the College. [The Board](#) and [the Faculty](#) support the concept of shared governance. [Section III B](#) of the *Governance Manual* states the responsibilities of the Faculty for overseeing academic matters.

Recently, particular efforts have been made to focus the Board's work on strategic initiatives. In the Board's [2014 summer retreat](#), a facilitator from the Association of Governing Boards conducted workshops with this focus.

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## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

### Argument

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One of the tenets of a Catholic education is the understanding that faith and reason are not in conflict. We believe that the continued pursuit of understanding ultimately leads to wisdom. The College manifests this tenet in all fields - from philosophy and religious studies to the sciences and professional programs.

The College articulates its commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning in [Section III-I](#) of the *Governance Manual*. The policies outlined in the *Governance Manual* address academic freedom, freedom of teaching, and freedom of research.

Occasionally tensions arise around practices not consistent with Catholic doctrine. The College expects both external and internal constituencies to understand and respect the difference between education and advocacy. Hence, many issues are studied in the classroom and in co-curricular learning environments without advocating their adoption by the learner.

### Sources

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## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Argument

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#### 2.E.1

In compliance with federal guidelines (Title 45 CFR Part 46), Saint Mary's College maintains an [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) composed of at least five members with varying backgrounds of experience and expertise, qualifying the IRB to review research activities conducted at the College. The purpose of the IRB is to: 1) ensure the protection of human participants used in the projects; 2) provide guidance in the design of experiments ensuring that information will be obtained in an ethical manner; and 3) provide a process that assures society that the experimental protocols have been reviewed and approved ethically by knowledgeable individuals not directly involved in the research. The College adheres to standards of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for all research involving animals. IRB approval, when required, must be granted prior to commencing the research. The IRB is active at Saint Mary's, [reviewing more than 60 proposals](#) in 2014.

#### 2.E.2

Saint Mary's guides students on the ethical use of information through multiple avenues: [Critical Thinking Seminars](#), the Writing Center's [Resources](#) weblinks, and the [Library](#). The Department of Information Technology also shares College policies on [copyright and the responsible use of college computers](#) and the internet on its website. The policy describes the [responsibilities](#) of students who are accessing information resources. Students must take a [quiz](#) to assure their competency with network policies before gaining access to the College's IT network. The IRB also has [guidelines](#) available on its website for Students, Faculty and Staff on conducting ethical research. (See 2.A and 3.D.5.)

#### 2.E.3

Saint Mary's Academic Honesty Policy is well-disseminated. It appears in the College [Bulletins](#) ([GradBulletin](#)) and on the [Policies](#) webpage of the Office of Academic Affairs and First Year Studies. Faculty are required to include the College's policy and the instructor's penalty for violation in their course [syllabi](#). It is also included in the [Academic Guide for First Year Students](#). The policy clearly addresses issues of plagiarism and appeal procedures. A sub-committee of the [Academic Standards Committee](#) is responsible for adjudicating student appeals of alleged violations of the Academic Honesty Policy. Appeals based on new information go to the Academic Appellate Board, also a sub-committee of the Academic Standards Committee, with final appeals going to the President. The Office of Academic Affairs [documents](#) reported violations and appeals, and conducts appeal

hearings.

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## **2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary**

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### **Summary**

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#### **Strengths**

- Saint Mary's long history of fulfilling the Institution's fiduciary, statutory, and compliance obligations
- Well-established, publicly-available ethical policies and procedures

#### **Future Considerations**

- Continue efforts to improve FERPA training
- Increase knowledge of available online resources related to integrity

### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

## **3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

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The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

### **Argument**

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#### **3.A.1**

Saint Mary's assures the currency, quality, and appropriate rigor of its courses and programs in multiple ways, particularly through assessed learning outcomes. All academic programs have learning outcomes developed and assessed by the appropriate department (see 4.B). Instructors must include learning outcomes or goals in their syllabi (see [fall](#) and [spring](#) memos). The Sophia Program in Liberal Learning was adopted in AY06-07, having been created by the *Ad Hoc* Committee on General Education, a committee created by President Mooney for the purpose of revising the College's general education program. Additional evidence testifying to the currency and appropriate rigor of courses and programs include: 1) the Senior Comprehensive requirement; 2) pass rates on required national or state examinations where applicable; 3) Curriculum Committee review; and 4) policies governing the inclusion of courses in the bulletins.

The Senior Comprehensive requirement may be an exam, but is [more often a research project or portfolio review](#). The fact that all Students must complete the Comprehensive requirement provides internal assurance that courses and programs are appropriate to the degree a Student receives.

The [results of licensure exams](#) as well as [Graduate](#) and [Principal surveys](#) provide evidence that the Education Program prepares Students as teachers. The [CPA exam](#) has a wider range of results that nonetheless assure the quality of our Accounting Program. [The pass rate of Saint Mary's Students on the National Council Licensure Examination for Nursing](#) declined in 2013. In response, the Nursing Department proposed changes to increase the rigor of the program that were ultimately [approved by the Academic Affairs Council](#).

Since AY09-10, the Curriculum Committee has considered over 100 new course proposals and over twenty proposals for new or revised programs (see CC archives [AY11-12](#), [AY12-13](#), and [AY13-14](#)); specific examples include the [Global Studies Program](#), the Gender and Women's Studies [major](#) and [minor](#), a revision of the [major](#) and [minor](#) in Humanistic Studies, as well as course

proposals for [ART 142 - Introduction to Film History and Analysis](#), [ENLT 231 - Animals in Literature and Society](#), and [MUS 275 - Global Music](#).

Courses are kept current by [policies that govern the reinstatement of courses](#).

The fact that Saint Mary's degree programs are appropriate to higher education is further assured through 1) accreditation by outside agencies, 2) external and internal reviews of academic programs, and 3) the results of a gap-analysis comparison with the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualification Profile, or DQP.

A complete listing of programs that adhere to standards established by outside accrediting agencies appears in the undergraduate [Bulletin](#). All programs with specialized accreditation have been reaccredited since 2009 (see also 4.B).

External and Internal reviews ensure the currency of programs and courses. Over the past seven years, [many academic programs](#) have undergone [external review](#) (see section 4.A for examples of programs that made changes based on their review). The College implemented its [Internal Review process](#) during the AY12-13; [thirteen programs](#) have been reviewed to date. The initial internal reviews of all programs are [scheduled to be completed by AY17-18](#). The [qualitative section of the internal review](#) specifically requires academic departments to evaluate the quality and strength of their programs.

In AY12-13, four programs (Biology, Modern Languages, Psychology, and Nursing) were part of our Quality Initiative project, comparing the learning outcomes of these programs to those of the Lumina Foundation's DQP, an external, nationally-generated set of learning outcomes. These gap analyses [document a high percentage of correspondence with the DQP's Bachelor's-level learning outcomes](#). (A [summary chart of Appendix I](#) gives a succinct view of the results.) The gap analyses provide evidence that these four programs are "appropriate to the degree" awarded insofar as the DQP represents a national perspective on outcomes deemed essential for a Bachelor's degree.

### 3.A.2

Beginning with fall semester 2015, Saint Mary's will offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees. At the present time the College has no post-baccalaureate, post-graduate or certificate programs. Students can earn a Bachelor's degree in Arts, Business Administration, Fine Arts, Music, and Science ([Bulletin](#)), and, beginning this fall, a Master of Science in [Speech Pathology](#) or [Data Science](#), as well as a [Doctorate in Nursing Practice](#). There are separate bulletins for [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) study. Furthermore, Students are directed to websites [specific to their level of study](#). The Sophia learning outcome requirements are specifically identified as part of the undergraduate general education curriculum and are articulated in multiple locations, including the undergraduate [Bulletin](#), the [Academic Guide for First Year Students](#), the *Sophia Program in Liberal Learning Curriculum Guide* (pp. 7-42), and in various other locations throughout the College's website. Major and minor programs' learning outcomes are articulated in the [Bulletin](#). Learning outcomes for graduate programs are included in the graduate [Bulletin](#).

### 3.A.3

The College ensures the quality of courses, programs, and achievement of learning outcomes through: 1) course evaluations; 2) internal and external reviews; and 3) the assessment of the Sophia Program and all major programs. (For courses taken abroad or transferred from other institutions see 4.A.2 and 4.A.3.) Beyond these practices, the College also requires that proposed courses (including those

of the Rome Program) be approved by the Curriculum Committee ([Governance Manual](#)) and that all certifications of courses for the Sophia Program be awarded by the Sophia Program Curriculum Committee, or SPCC ([GM](#)). Furthermore, as stated in 3.A.1, all syllabi taught must contain a set of required elements, including learning outcomes and a grading policy, among others. The Associate Dean of Faculty verifies their inclusion in syllabi submitted to the [Curriculum Committee](#) or the [SPCC](#). Finally, new Faculty-led off-campus study programs undergo a rigorous [approval process](#).

Since their inception, all online course offerings--summer and graduate courses--have been reviewed to ensure that their learning outcomes and quality are consistent with traditional-delivery courses.

Instructors wishing to offer an online course [must submit a request](#), [undergo training](#), and [receive approval](#) from the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable (TLTR). The TLTR's [review](#) establishes equivalency between online and face-to-face versions of a course in terms of quality, content, learning outcomes, and credit hours and requires [student-faculty and student-student interaction](#). All internships and independent studies require Faculty supervision and a [learning contract](#).

Saint Mary's has entered into articulation and co-exchange agreements with the University of Notre Dame. Our [Dual Degree Engineering Program](#) allows Saint Mary's Students to complete a Bachelor's degree (a B.A. or a B.S.) at Saint Mary's in four years and a B.S. in Engineering from the University of Notre Dame in a fifth year. [The Co-Exchange Program](#) allows Saint Mary's Students to take a limited number of courses at the University of Notre Dame and vice-versa. [Significant numbers of students](#) participate each semester in this program. Saint Mary's College and the University of Notre Dame have a deep historical connection born of their shared commitment to an education built upon the principles of the founder of the Congregations of the Holy Cross, Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau. These ties give Saint Mary's great confidence that the quality and learning goals of the courses taken at the University of Notre Dame are consistent with our own. We also rely on the fact that the University of Notre Dame is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

Saint Mary's College participates in [NICE](#) (all participating institutions are accredited by the HLC) and has articulation agreements with [Ancilla](#) and [Cottey](#) Colleges (see [pertinent data](#)). The articulation agreements specify course equivalencies and require review for consistency by the Office of Academic Affairs. The College will begin to work with Ancilla to update the articulation in light of our new general education curriculum. We have inquired whether Cottey College is interested in updating our articulation agreement since they now offer some Baccalaureate programs in addition to Associate Degrees. (See also 4.A.2.)

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## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

## Argument

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### 3.B.1

One of Saint Mary's boldest moves forward over the past decade is the sweeping revision of our general education program. The College went from a traditional distribution model substantively unchanged for several decades to a learning-outcomes-based curriculum known as the Sophia Program in Liberal Learning. The Sophia Program represents a multi-year effort on the part of many, including Students, Faculty, and Administrators. [Faculty have participated broadly](#), with nearly a third contributing to the design and with all academic departments contributing to its [steady course towards full implementation](#). Unlike its predecessor, the Sophia Program in Liberal Learning serves as the general education program for all Saint Mary's Students, regardless of their undergraduate degree. It is in every way a program intentional in its connection to Saint Mary's Mission, educational offerings, and degree levels.

### MISSION

The Sophia Program in Liberal Learning is not only appropriate to the College's Mission, its three foundational [learning outcomes are based](#) on the College's Mission Statement ([CG](#)), corresponding both in letter and spirit to the College's Mission. Learning outcomes and Mission Statement both refer to "intellectual vigor," the spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of a Saint Mary's education, women prepared for today's world, social responsibility, and the College's connection to the Sisters of the Holy Cross. The college-wide learning outcomes are "[a succinct statement of the most basic components of a Saint Mary's education within the context of our identity as a Catholic college for women sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Cross.](#)"

The Sophia Program captures Saint Mary's inheritance from the Sisters of the Holy Cross in multiple ways. At the foundational level, it follows the wisdom of Blessed Anthony Moreau's insistence that,

in a Holy Cross education, "the mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart." In his interpretation, [Brother John Paige, CSC, speaks of three key aspects of a Holy Cross pedagogy](#): information, formation, and transformation. The college-wide outcomes of the Sophia Program echo these three elements: LO1 (Knowledge Acquisition & Integration of Learning) corresponds to *information*; LO2 (Cognitive & Communicative Skills) corresponds to *formation*; and LO3 (Intercultural Competence & Social Responsibility) corresponds to *transformation*. The embodiment of the College's Mission Statement is both broad and deep, [reaching across every element of the Sophia Program's structure](#). The *Ad Hoc* Committee was intentional in its effort to design a general education deeply rooted in the College's Mission. (See excerpts from the *SPLL Curriculum Guide* related to [Knowledge Acquisition & Integration of Learning](#), [Women's Voices](#), [Intercultural Competence and Social Responsibility](#), and [Academic Experiential Learning](#).)

## EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

The Sophia Program offers the traditional breadth of a liberal arts education by encompassing all of Saint Mary's disciplinary programs ([see Figures 9 and 10](#)), which is appropriate to the College's "liberal arts tradition." The Sophia Program extends over a Student's four years at Saint Mary's, [intersecting with major and minor programs](#). This is particularly true for LO2 Cognitive and Communicative Skills since all academic departments have been instructed [to incorporate six Sophia skills into the assessment of their major programs](#): Synthesis, Critical Thinking, Writing Competence, Oral Competence, Problem Solving, and Information Literacy ([CG, pp. 23-30](#)). Additionally, the rules governing LO2 state that Students are expected to fulfill these skill-based Learning Outcomes [in conjunction with the major](#). The intersection with major programs, however, is not limited to LO2. By the conclusion of AY14-15, Sophia certifications had been granted to courses across all levels, with substantial percentages of Women's Voices and LO3 courses in the upper-division levels ([LO1](#), [LO2-WV](#) and [LO3](#)). The Sophia Program's permeation throughout the curriculum and its integration into major programs makes it integral, and thus appropriate, to Saint Mary's educational offerings.

## DEGREE LEVELS

During AY12-13, Saint Mary's participated in the HLC's evaluation of the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile. One element of this evaluation project was to conduct a gap analysis between the Sophia Program and all of the DQP's general education learning outcomes. (Specialized Knowledge learning outcomes were compared to the learning outcomes of four different major programs in a separate part of the project; see 3.A.1.) The DQP's Bachelor-level learning outcomes were compared to those of the Sophia Program. Only a moderate number of differences between the DQP learning outcomes and those of the Sophia Program were noted ([see Quality Initiative Report, pp. 4-5](#)). No gap was identified as a matter of degree level. In fact, the gap-analysis shows that a significant majority of the *DQP's* Bachelor-level learning outcomes find an equivalent in the Sophia Program (see [QI Report, Appendix A](#) and [summary chart for Appendix A](#)). Thus, the Sophia Program's learning outcomes have been thoroughly and thoughtfully evaluated by comparing them to the Lumina Foundation's DQP, a document produced within a national framework whose central purpose is to define the appropriateness of learning outcomes to various degree levels ([QI Report, p. 13](#)).

### 3.B.2

#### Purposes, Content, and Intended Learning Outcomes

Saint Mary's clearly articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate education requirements in multiple documents available to all stakeholders. The Sophia

Program's foundational learning outcomes and learning outcomes-based requirements are found in the following documents [Bulletin, pp. 75-93](#), [Academic Guide, pp. 6-14](#), and [Curriculum Guide, pp. 7-8, 12-25, 28-36, and 39-42](#). Additionally, the learning outcomes webpages ([LO1](#), [LO2](#), and [LO3](#)) display links to program requirements. (For additional areas of LO1, see [Arts for Living](#), [Cultures and Systems](#), [Science for the Citizen](#), and [Traditions and Worldview](#).) All of these are also found on [the Faculty Resource pages](#) of the College's website. (See also 3.A.2.)

### **Philosophy/Framework for Saint Mary's General Education Program**

The philosophy informing the vision of a Holy Cross education is foundational to the College's *Mission Statement*, *Statement of Philosophy and Purpose*, and, in turn, the Sophia Program (see 3.B.1), leaving no doubt that our general education program is "grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution." Learning outcomes provide the organizing framework. While the Sophia Program reflects many influences, both the philosophy and the framework that underpin it honor Holy Cross traditions. The Sophia Program is unique to Saint Mary's, having been [developed by the Saint Mary's community](#).

### **Broad Knowledge, Skills, Intellectual Concepts, and Attitudes**

That Saint Mary's believes the Sophia Program represents the broad knowledge, skills, and engagement that every college-educated person should possess is evidenced primarily by the College's decision to [require all Students to complete the program](#).

The LO1 learning outcome requirements that constitute the [arms of the Sophia cross](#) embody a cross-section of disciplines that represent the broad array of knowledge Saint Mary's Students will gain.

Through [Cognitive and Communicative Skills](#) and the [Critical Thinking Seminar](#), the Sophia Program develops intellectual skills, particularly [integration of learning](#) and [critical thinking](#). [Women's Voices](#) outcomes emphasize Students' cognitive skills (e.g. awareness, understanding) relative to women's contributions and achievements. They also cultivate critical analytical-thinking and problem-solving [applied to constructions of gender](#). Other skills such as quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and oral/written competence are [woven throughout the Sophia Program](#). The development of effective writing skills has a long and proud tradition at Saint Mary's. For over twenty-five years, our Students have been required to demonstrate writing proficiency by earning [Basic Writing Proficiency](#) (the "W") and [Advanced Writing Proficiency](#) (the Advanced "W") in their majors. The Basic W requirement has recently been [integrated into the Sophia Program](#).

Concepts such as [social responsibility](#), [intercultural competence](#), and [gender construction](#) are key features of the Sophia Program. The Women's Voices learning outcomes as well as those placed under the umbrella of LO3 call for engagement with the world, with women, with difference, and with humanity. Inherent to Sophia's engagement outcomes are attitudes of openness, curiosity, and compassion. The presence of LO3 boldly declares the attitudes (and behaviors that flow from them) that Saint Mary's values as our Students' proper inheritance from the pioneering Sisters of the Holy Cross who left for a distant frontier and founded Saint Mary's College, defying the narrow and gender-bound vision of women's lives held by the age they lived in. More than any other feature, these requirements make the Sophia Program distinctive to Saint Mary's College.

### **3.B.3**

The Sophia Program in Liberal Learning is based on three college-wide, four-year learning outcomes that are [not limited to general education courses](#). Thus, the Sophia Program promotes a more

permeable border between a Student's general education and her major (see 3.B.1-Educational Offerings). Consequently, the following argument includes an analysis of the Sophia Program as a means of providing assurance that every degree program of the College meets the student learning goals described in 3.B.3.

### **Collecting, Analyzing, and Communicating Information**

In AY10-11, the Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty instructed all Department Chairs to [include six specific Sophia skill-based learning outcomes in their major programs' assessment plans](#), thus effectively integrating these skills into all undergraduate degree programs. Two of these skill-based outcomes, [Critical Thinking](#) and [Information Literacy](#) require Students to collect and analyze information. In fact, information literacy within Sophia is specifically [defined as the ability to obtain \(collect\), evaluate \(analyze\), and use \(communicate\) information](#). [Writing Competency and Oral Competency](#) provide further assurance that Students engage in the analysis and communication of information.

All major programs include the Senior Comprehensive and the Advanced W requirements. These hallmarks of a Saint Mary's education also ensure that all Saint Mary's Students engage in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information. Despite variations in format, all Senior Comprehensives require research or creative work (see [chart of Senior Comprehensive requirements](#), [department example](#), and 3.B.5 below). The [Advanced W requirement](#) necessarily focuses on communicating information (see [department example](#)). The collection, analysis, and communication of information is not limited to the Senior Comprehensive and Advanced W requirements since many programs engage Students in research (see [examples of relevant major courses](#)), and several major programs require a research-methods course separate from the Senior Comprehensive requirement (see, for example, [Political Science](#)). *NSSSE* data show that Saint Mary's Seniors analyze or make use of data [more often than do Seniors in our comparison groups](#).

All three graduate degrees include [research courses](#) or [clinicals/practicums](#) that require collecting, analyzing, and communicating information. The Master of Science in Data Science, for example, integrates scholarly writing and effective presentation into its [research methods course](#).

### **Mastering modes of inquiry**

All academic departments [also include the learning outcome of Synthesis in their assessment plans](#). As one of the [Integration of Learning outcomes](#), this skill requires Saint Mary's students to synthesize "[examples, facts, issues, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective into a coherent whole](#)," something that cannot be done without a practiced understanding of the modes of inquiry that have produced the various pieces of information to be synthesized. The ability to synthesize information from different fields of study derives from the foundation laid through the knowledge-based Sophia requirements (LO1), which include a wide range of modes of inquiry, from the [Interpretation of Complex Texts](#) (literary, historical, theological, and philosophical modes of inquiry) to [Quantitative Reasoning](#) (modes of inquiry within mathematics and the natural and social sciences), and [Investigative Skills](#) (associated with numerous modes of inquiry and disciplines). The learning outcomes of a select number of majors in the [Bachelor-of-Arts](#) and [Bachelor-of-Fine-Arts](#) degree programs and [minors](#) specifically focus on mastering modes of creative work, while the [Creative and Performing Arts requirement](#) of the Sophia Program ensures that all Students engage in creative work, even if their degree programs do not require them to do so. The *College Senior Survey* shows that our Students' satisfaction over a broad range of courses from science and mathematics to arts, humanities, and social sciences is [on par with or higher than that of students in comparison groups](#). By the nature of their professional graduate degrees, our Graduate Students focus on developing a practiced

understanding of their fields' primary mode of inquiry.

### **Developing Skills Adaptable to Changing Environments**

The Sophia Program prepares our undergraduate Students to move forward into a future defined by change through the skill of [Problem Solving](#) and the six LO3 requirements. Requiring Students to "[design, implement, and evaluate a strategy to reach a goal or solve an unscripted problem](#)," fosters their ability to adapt. [LO 3 requirements](#) also foster Students' ability to adapt to changing environments by calling on them to engage with the world, with society, and with difference (see [Global Learning, Social Responsibility, and Intercultural Competence](#)). Additionally, the Academic Experiential Learning ([AEL](#)) requirement offers practical experience with adapting to environments outside Saint Mary's. [AEL](#) and [LO3 courses include upper-division courses](#), which, in turn, fulfill requirements in various major programs (see, for example, [GWS 207](#), and [PSYC 386](#)). Finally, *NSSE* data suggest that Saint Mary's courses give attention to developing skills adaptable to changing situations; when asked how much coursework emphasized "applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations," [81%](#) of Saint Mary's students have responded with "very much" or "quite a bit," a rate on par with or higher than comparison groups.

Each graduate degree represents Saint Mary's response to changing environments and its desire to prepare its Students for them. Examples include adapting tele-practice to meet the unmet demand for speech, sound, and language therapy, and training Students at a deep level in data analysis focused on the creation of algorithms with enduring utility, and in preparing the non-traditional adult to understand and adapt to the rapidly-changing delivery of health-care services.

#### **3.B.4**

The commitment to an education that recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which Students live and work is expressed in the College's *Mission Statement*, a statement that calls upon every member of the College community to "[continually assess their response to the complex needs and challenges of the contemporary world](#)." Thus, at the most fundamental level, there is an understanding that Saint Mary's is the locus of our Students' education, but does not circumscribe their education. Saint Mary's is a home base from which Students can begin to understand and interact with the larger world in all of its variety and complexity. The Graduate Program's [external-consultants' reviews](#) note each Program's recognition of the human and cultural diversity of the world.

The [LO3](#) and, [AEL](#) Sophia requirements (see 3.B.3) develop knowledge and skills that will transfer from an educational context to the wider world. Implementation challenges for the Program remain, including the [need for additional AEL courses](#). On the other hand, [many courses have received AEL certification](#), before the requirement's implementation with the start of AY15-16. These are high-impact courses that engage Students with human and cultural diversity (see, for example, the [course description](#), [final assignment](#), and [sample Student papers](#) from RLST 236, and a [syllabus](#), [sample Student reflections](#), and supervisor reports ([AY12-13](#) and [AY14-15](#)) for Students in AEL-certified Psychology courses). In fact, a Saint Mary's professor was [recently recognized by the Indiana Campus Compact for Service-Engagement Teaching](#) for the diversity-related experiential learning woven into her AEL-certified course. Several academic departments have learning outcomes that thread human and cultural diversity throughout the curriculum (see, for example, [Modern Languages](#), [Social Science I](#), and [Women's Voices](#)). The Sophia Program not only recognizes human and cultural diversity, it does so broadly and frequently, often within the context of social justice, an historical anchor for the College's identity.

Several major and minor programs also focus on human and cultural diversity. Obvious connections

exist with Anthropology, Gender and Women's Studies, History, and Modern Languages, but there are many other academic programs less traditionally centered on diversity that nonetheless give it particular attention. [English Literature](#), [Social Work](#), and [Sociology](#) have a specific diversity requirement, while other programs, such as [Education](#) or [Political Science](#) include one or more diversity-focused foundational courses. There are many other academic departments that offer courses with a diversity focus, such as [Business Administration](#), [Communication Studies](#), [Music](#), [Philosophy](#), [Psychology](#), and [Social Work](#). The College also has two interdisciplinary minors fully centered on human and cultural diversity: [Intercultural Studies](#) and [Justice Education](#). Finally, diversity is at the core of one of Saint Mary's newest academic departments, [Global Studies](#). The Global Studies Program increases the impact of diversity-focused courses scattered across the curriculum by organizing them into concentrations within a major. Assessment demonstrates that our [Students gain greater understanding of other cultures](#) through study abroad. (See 3.E.1-2 and 4.B for study abroad.)

The Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology offers course work and clinical experiences that [sensitize Students to the unique needs of diverse populations](#) and students in the Doctorate in Nursing Practice [learn about and support social entrepreneurship](#). These are both examples of programs attending to human and cultural diversity.

### 3.B.5

Saint Mary's Faculty contribute to the College's intellectual vigor through [research, scholarship](#), and creative work (see *Published and Presented*: [Fall 13-14](#), [Spring 13-14](#), [Fall 14-15](#), [Spring 14-15](#)).

Saint Mary's Seniors participate in professors' research projects at levels [similar to those of seniors nationally](#). The same is true for [opportunities to publish](#). Reports of research conducted with faculty are on par with other Women's Colleges and our Carnegie cohort, and significantly above other [NSSE](#) responders. Results from the AY13-14 *HERI Faculty Survey* show that [38%](#) of our full-time Faculty report that they have engaged undergraduates in Faculty research projects within the last two years, while [60%](#) report working with undergraduates on a research project during the same time period.

Student-Faculty partnerships in scholarship and creative work are a well-established tradition at Saint Mary's. A very successful example is the Paper Analytical Devices, or [PAD Project](#). This research has given Saint Mary's two patents pending. [Many other academic departments](#) also engage in Faculty-Student scholarship and research (see [compilation](#)). Student-Faculty scholarship is also supported through the [Neuhoff Summer Science Research Communities](#) and [SISTAR \(Student Independent Study and Research\) grants](#). The latter are awarded annually by the [Center for Academic Innovation \(CAI\)](#) and include [grants](#) supporting creative work as well as scholarship. SISTAR experiences contribute positively to Students' education [at Saint Mary's](#) and [beyond](#). Some grants have had lasting effects, such as the [SISTAR](#) that led to the [Real Life](#) project.

Saint Mary's Students also engage in independent research and scholarship. Although the format of the Senior Comprehensive requirement (3.B.3) varies considerably, all Students contribute to scholarship through this requirement, with approximately [60% \(15-out-of-25\)](#) conducting research towards the discovery of knowledge (see [summary description and spreadsheet](#)). Some departments have [established colloquia](#) that offer their Students an opportunity to present their scholarship. The College supports Student research and scholarship in a variety of ways, including three donor-funded and endowed travel grants for Students ([Neuhoff grant](#), [Draths grant](#) and [Woolsey and Motl grant](#)). Additionally, the Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership (CWIL) offers grants for [travel to conferences with a Faculty leader](#) and for [independent-research projects](#) conducted during

travel or study abroad. It also provides Students opportunities to participate in larger research projects, such as the *Report on the Status of Girls in Indiana* (see 1.D.3, 3.C.4, and 3.E.1-2). (The College plans for the *Status of Girls to be* [an on-going project](#).) As a result of the encouragement and resources that Saint Mary's provides, some Students [publish prior to graduation](#), and occasionally [win awards](#) for their publications.

Multiple opportunities exist for both Students and Faculty to engage in creative work. This is particularly true within the [Art](#) and [Music](#) Departments, as well as the [Dance](#) and [Theatre](#) Programs. Every semester, studio art Majors develop a [creative portfolio](#) displayed in the Moreau Art Galleries. In addition, senior studio art Majors [present a comprehensive body of their work in the school galleries during their final semester](#), and all art majors have the opportunity to exhibit their work in an [annual-juried student summer exhibition](#). The [Art Faculty are engaged professionals](#) whose work is highlighted in the Moreau Art Galleries once every three-to-four years.

In Music, Students have a wide variety of opportunities for [ensemble and solo performance](#) and study, both vocal and instrumental. Our nationally-recognized Women's Choir [tours](#) every other year and [records](#) on the ProOrgano label. The [Opera Workshop](#) provides an unusual opportunity for undergraduate Students to perform opera roles in full production. Student recitals and chamber music performances further expand the Department's offerings. At the end of each semester the Music Students give juried performances. [The Music Faculty are engaged, active professionals](#).

"DanceArts" is the [annual concert](#) presented by the Program in Dance and [performed by the Dance Ensemble Workshop](#). The Dance Faculty create original works in their various genres for and with Students. Additionally, under Faculty guidance, the [Student Choreographer's Showcase](#) is an opportunity for [student creative work](#) in all aspects of production. Dance Faculty contribute choreographically to the [Annual Madrigal Dinners](#) and [liturgical celebrations and prayer services](#) featuring Student performers. [The Dance Faculty are engaged, active professionals](#).

Theatre majors must direct, design and produce a one-hour play that is open to a public audience. This [requirement](#), covers all aspects of producing a play, from auditions to scenery, lighting, and costume design. All Students have opportunities to engage in creative work through the Theatre Program's [two annual mainstage productions](#). The [2014-2015 season](#) featured a contemporary re-figuring of Moliere's [The Misanthrope](#) and Lois Lowry's [Gossamer](#). Every four years, the Theatre Program collaborates with the Music and Dance Programs on [a musical theatre production](#). Auditions are open to the entire campus community. [The Theatre Faculty are engaged, active professionals](#).

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## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

### Argument

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#### 3.C.1 (See also 5.A.1.)

The number of full-time Faculty members, Instructional Staff, Library Staff, technical and paraprofessional Staff, and support-service Staff employed by the College can be found in [data on full-time employees from the Fact Book](#). The largest increase in the number of Faculty occurred in AY06. The average [length of employment](#) for full-time Faculty speaks to the stability of the College's instructional staff. A recent [voluntary retirement incentive](#) program has resulted in long-time faculty leaving, being replaced largely by tenure-track Assistant Professors. There is no system of teaching assistants; Faculty teach all courses. Students enjoy close working relationships with professors, with a campus-wide [student/faculty ratio of 10:1](#).

[2013 NSSE](#) data indicate strong student satisfaction with faculty. On the engagement indicator of “Student-Faculty Interaction,” Senior responses place Saint Mary’s in the top 10% of all institutions participating in NSSE. On “effective teaching practices,” First-Year and Senior responses rank Saint Mary’s in the top 10% of all institutions nationally. These results document the high level of student satisfaction and engagement with faculty, demonstrating that Saint Mary’s has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs.

Service required of Faculty includes the expectation that [faculty participate in committees](#) determining academic policy, curriculum, reviews of departments, assessment of programs, and assessment of the Sophia Program. There are currently [thirty-seven committees](#) on campus; recently the Nominating Committee, itself an elected body of Faculty, has found it difficult to fill the slate for the annual Faculty Assembly election. More involvement is anticipated in light of the recent [teaching-load reduction](#). Key committees such as the [Academic Affairs Council](#), the [Program Review Committee](#), the [IRB](#), and the [Curriculum Committee](#) (which approves courses and curricular changes) are composed largely of faculty members. Faculty are present in every decision-

making structure (including the Board of Trustees) that determines expectations for student achievement and oversight of the curriculum. (See 4.A.4.)

The *Governance Manual* defines academic credentials for Instructional Staff; these are verified by the Dean of Faculty at hiring. All [new instructional hires](#) are required to submit transcripts, a curriculum vitae, and two letters of recommendation. Departments review qualifications and suggest candidates, but hiring cannot be completed until all required materials are received in the Dean of Faculty's Office, where they are kept on file.

The Faculty at Saint Mary's assumes a fundamental role in course and program assessment. Faculty are elected to the [Assessment Committee](#), and also to the [Sophia Oversight Committee](#), designed to oversee and assess the new general education program.

### 3.C.2 (See also 5.A.1 and 5.A.4.)

Full time Faculty are hired on the basis of Qualifications for Appointment as stated in the [Governance Manual](#). Criteria and procedures for appointment and promotion are clearly stated, ensuring that all instructors are appropriately credentialed, possessing the requisite level of scholarly achievement and teaching excellence. Full-time tenure-track Faculty members must have terminal degrees in their primary teaching areas (see [faculty roster](#)). A [random analysis](#) of thirty full-time faculty in fall 2015 finds all holding a doctorate or terminal master's degree. In order to teach outside their primary area, Faculty undergo a [process to determine disciplinary standing](#). (See 4.A.4 for discussion of the College's exercise of authority over Faculty qualifications.)

Adjunct Faculty [are required to hold the Master's degree](#) in a related discipline and if not, have [demonstrated professional experience](#). Individuals with bachelor's degrees may serve as laboratory or clinical instructors for courses in which a full time faculty member is the Faculty of Record. Adjunct Faculty are identified by the department Chair and hired on approval of the Dean of Faculty.

Whenever Saint Mary's students receive credit from courses taught in other institutions the appropriate credentialing of instructors is assumed based on the institution's regional accreditation and the policies and procedures at the host institution. Saint Mary's instructors do not participate in any dual-credit programs.

### 3.C.3

Saint Mary's systematic approach to faculty evaluation includes annual faculty reports, annual review by the department Chair with the Dean of Faculty, and the course evaluation process.

All full-time faculty submit an [annual report](#) with sections on teaching, scholarly activity, and service. This report is the basis for [a yearly evaluation by the department Chair](#). In 2008, the Vice-President and Dean of Faculty changed the process from the Chair's reporting to the Rank and Tenure Committee annually to the Chair's discussing results with the Dean of Faculty. Reviews of pre-tenure faculty members are shared with all tenured faculty in the department, who [must sign](#) the Chair's recommendation for a reappointment letter to be issued. This report is read by the Dean, the Provost, and the President. The President makes the final decision on reappointment.

The Chair's [annual review of the department](#) at the end of each academic year includes a short report on each faculty member.

Each semester, course [evaluations](#) are distributed in all classes taught by non-tenured faculty; tenured

faculty are evaluated every third semester. A three-year process has resulted in a piloted [instrument](#) intended to improve formative feedback for faculty members, while preserving summative information needed by Administration and the Rank and Tenure Committee to support their recommendations to the President.

The [Governance Manual](#) clearly states the College's criteria and procedures for promotion and tenure. Previously, faculty midpoint reviews were conducted by the Rank and Tenure Committee in the faculty member's fourth year; these are now reviewed in the [third year](#). Faculty come up for tenure and promotion in their sixth year, with all promotion decisions made by the President on the recommendation of the Rank and Tenure Committee.

### 3.C.4

The College has been forward-looking in regard to support of faculty development. Multiple opportunities make conference attendance and independent research possible. The most outstanding example of institutional support is the Center For Academic Innovation, founded in 1993. The Center (CFAI) supports academic excellence through a variety of programs and grants awards that include the [SISTAR grant](#) for collaborative research projects in the summer between faculty and student, the [COSTAR](#) program which supports scholarly, creative and pedagogical partnerships for teams of two Saint Mary's faculty, [Faculty Development Research Grants](#), and [Faculty Development Teaching Grants](#). A significant portion of CFAI grants are reserved for the Humanities. The [Farrell Mentor Program](#), administered through the Dean of Faculty, mentors pretenure faculty from their appointment through the tenure process. New faculty also receive a [course reduction](#) in their first year of teaching.

The College budgets \$80,000 annually to support [travel to conferences](#). International travel is supported by the [Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership](#) as is faculty involvement in large research initiatives, such as *the* [Report on the Status of Girls in Indiana](#).

The [sabbatical leave](#) is a central element of the faculty development at Saint Mary's, supporting faculty members in their growth as teachers, scholars, and professionals. [Sabbatical support](#) is not competitive; if a faculty member's proposal is not approved, s/he has the opportunity to resubmit it. The College covers any expenses not covered by a special fund established through an NEH endowment, which generates an annual \$71,000 budget.

Faculty Chair Endowed funds provide annual discretionary funding for professional development. Support for faculty seeking external funding (for projects that align with the Institution's priorities) is provided by the [Office of Corporate, Foundation, and Government Relations](#). (See also 3.B.5.).

Over the past decade, a philosophy of encouragement has developed at the College. The endowed Slavin Fund, originally intended to support a CSC sister's tuition costs, was repurposed by the Board of Trustees to support faculty development. It currently supports training for [teaching online](#), [assessment grants](#), and development of [Critical Thinking Seminar](#), [Women's Voices](#), or AEL courses ([the latter also supported by an outside grant](#)).

Faculty development resources have greatly increased over the past decade. The current implementation of the President's mandate to move to a 3/3 teaching load in [Boldly Forward](#) speaks clearly to an ever-strengthening support of faculty scholarship and development, furthering a priority the College has demonstrated for many years.

### 3.C.5

All faculty members are expected to schedule [five office hours](#) per week to assure student access to professors. Beyond this basic requirement, faculty often serve as mentors to senior comprehensive projects, engage in SSTAR summer research projects with students, and work with students on independent study projects. Faculty members advise students in their departments; this involves assistance with registration and providing other academic advice as needed. As cited above, Senior responses for the engagement indicator of “Student-Faculty Interaction” in the [NSSE survey](#) indicate that Saint Mary’s ranks in the top 10% of all participating institutions.

### 3.C.6 (see also 5.A.1 and 5.A.4)

All Staff providing student support services are appropriately qualified and trained, as evidenced by [job descriptions](#) which cite necessary qualifications for employment. IT provides training and technological support for student service staff and departments. The following examples illustrate the College’s commitment to support the professional development of Staff:

Staff members of the Academic Advising Office are members of NACADA (National Academic Advising Association).

CWIL Staff attend annual conferences such as NAFSA: The Association of International Educators and the Forum on Education plus other external development opportunities, rotated among the staff for Leadership, etc.

Financial Aid Staff participate in [on-going training](#) as required by federal regulation, provided by sources such as the federal Department of Education and professional associations, throughout the year.

The College’s now-full-time Disabilities Specialist is supported by on-line courses and webinars.

Staff members of the Career Crossings Office are members of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), Midwest National Association of Colleges and Employers (MWACE) and other professional associations through which the staff participates in conferences, workshops, and webinars.

Funding to support Staff professional development has been a challenge in the economic climate of the past decade. Spending was curtailed in FY2010, but has increased every year since, although it is still [not at the level of spending in FY2009](#).

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## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

### Argument

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#### 3.D.1

The College provides services appropriate to all [undergraduate](#) and [graduate students](#), as noted on the College's webpage.

The core responsibility of the [Office for Student Success](#) is to support select students who most benefit from intensive focus on academic skills; [regular academic support programs](#) offered through the semester are open to all students. Graduate students are invited to contact this office for appropriate assistance.

Our [Disabilities Resource Office](#), staffed by a full-time specialist, provides a variety of services for all students with documented disabilities. Incoming students learn about this office during orientation and in the [Academic Guide for First Year Students](#). Services are also offered to our on-campus and online graduate students (visual-impairment, extended test-taking time, etc.).

The [Career Crossings Office](#) (CCO), provides a wide range of services, including information on internships, selecting majors, and connecting with Alumnae. Resume preparation, personality-testing, and employee information are offered to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Recognizing a need for [services for international students](#), the College offers additional support through CWIL. The position of [Assistant Director for International Student/Scholar Services](#) has been our Designated School Official and Responsible Officer for the College. In this capacity the Assistant Director has maintained student SEVIS records according to USCIS regulations and works with students to make sure they are maintaining their status according to regulations. Our DSO has recently changed to our Assistant Director of CWIL, Dr. Alice Siqin Yang.

#### 3.D.2-3

[The following provide services](#) that address the academic needs of all undergraduate students: [Academic Affairs and First Year Studies](#), the Division of [Student Affairs](#), [Cushwa-Leighton Library](#),

[Disabilities Resource Office](#), [Math Center](#), [Office for Student Success](#), [Pre-Health Professions Advising](#), [Pre-Law Professions Advising](#), and the [Writing Center](#). A subset of these services is provided to our [graduate students](#) on-campus and online. This includes the [Graduate Program Staff](#), Housing, Cushwa-Leighton Library, Disabilities Office, Math Center, Office of Student Success, Writing Center and the SMART Center.

CWIL operates an intensive [English Language School](#) for non-native speakers, providing preparatory instruction from beginner-to-advanced levels; this support is available year-round for students who matriculate. CWIL also works closely with Academic Affairs to help international students maintain their legal student immigration status in regard to academics.

Saint Mary's robust [First Year Advising Program](#) begins the summer before the student matriculates and continues throughout the student's first academic year. Faculty members serve as advisors, for which they are granted either a course release or a stipend. All advisors attend a [series of training sessions](#) to prepare for summer, fall, and spring [registration](#) advising. Before summer advising begins the Office of First Year Studies sends the [Academic Guide for First Year Students](#) to each matriculating undergraduate. The *Guide* explains [College academic policies, services](#), and [study abroad](#) options available, and introduces students to the [Sophia Program](#) and major prerequisites, assisting them with class selection and registration for the fall semester. During the initial summer advising session, first-year faculty advisors discuss the fall course schedule with new students and provide instructions regarding online registration and placement exams in language and math. In their first semester students attend a one-credit course (SPLL 101) taught by their advisors, assisted by student Peer Mentors. This newly developed program uses a [master syllabus](#) which incorporates common experiences to create a sense of community; all sections share a text and some common content.

Once a student decides her major, she is assigned a faculty advisor from her home department. Each department has its own structure for determining assignments, but because no student can register on PRISM without an alternate PIN provided by her advisor, we are confident that all students receive adequate and regular advising. Faculty advisors monitor a student's progress throughout her studies. The Office of Academic Affairs provides advising for students who have particular needs, for example, students changing majors. Study abroad advising is also provided by this Office, by the student's major advisor, and by the Faculty Coordinator of Study Abroad Programs.

Students may monitor their progress in completing degree requirements through our PRISM system. The College is moving to a new program, Degree Works, to further enable students and advisors to track academic progress. [Degree audits](#) performed during the summer prior to the start of the student's Senior year ensure graduation at the appropriate time by alerting students to any unmet degree requirements. Should a degree audit indicate that any student is not on track to graduate by the end of her Senior year, the Office of Academic Affairs works with the student and academic departments to find solutions that will allow the student to graduate in the timeliest manner possible.

A similar process is established for graduate students, including [orientation sessions](#) and advisement of students on a semester-to-semester basis. Graduate students also have access to PRISM/Degree Works, and collaborate with their advisors to track their academic progress.

Beyond facilitating the official academic advising that occurs before registration each semester, faculty members are required to keep [five office hours per week](#) to assure student access to professors. The College's [NSSE statistics](#) regarding Student/Faculty interaction consistently rate above the national average for time spent with students on academic advising outside of class and in discussion of career goals.

**3.D.4.** (see also 5.A.1)

**Technological Infrastructure**

*Boldly Forward* includes this recommendation: Improve the Campus Information Technology Services and Infrastructure. Accordingly, the technological infrastructure at Saint Mary's has expanded exponentially in the last decade on the basis of a thorough on-going [assessment](#). A high-speed data- and cable-television network reaches to all parts of the campus. The [campus network](#) connects faculty computers, classrooms, administrative offices, and residence halls, with one network connection per room. Wireless network access is available across campus as well as a [mobile application](#) launched last winter. The Huisking Family [Instructional Technology Resource Center](#) Staff provides support for students, faculty, and our learning management system, Blackboard. A new [Director of Graduate Instructional and Support Technology](#) supports the Graduate Programs.

Technological systems provide the most current in web-based electronic mail, enterprise calendaring, learning management, and administrative software including Banner and Degree Works. The College's server systems are Enterprise Red Hat Linux and Microsoft Windows Server systems, providing the campus with the most reliable service available today. The [IT web page](#) documents the areas of responsibility overseen by the IT Department.

**Scientific Laboratories**

The linked [description of laboratories](#) includes facilities used by the Departments of Chemistry and Physics, Biology, Nursing, Social Work, Music, Education, Communicative Sciences and Disorders, and Psychology.

**Library**

Saint Mary's College is proud of the [Cushwa-Leighton Library](#) and its Staff, which provide its users with balanced and diverse sources, services, instruction, and student-centered spaces. A summary of collections, including over 229,000 volumes in the General Collection, is found on the [Library website](#), as is an A-to-Z list of an impressive number of [databases](#) to which the Library subscribes, making online research accessible. Through individual subscriptions and databases with full text the Library provides access to articles in over 60,000 journals. Though the collection [does not provide](#) the standard number of volumes prescribed for the size of our student population, the collaborative arrangements and [services](#) provided by [MALC](#) (Michiana Academic Library Consortium) allow easy access to local resources. Library Staff are responsible as specialists in assigned subjects, making departmental/discipline-specific interaction accessible and efficient. Library [services and facilities](#) are readily available. [Collections](#) in the areas of Nursing, Data Science and Speech Pathology have all increased in preparation for the Graduate Programs beginning in fall, 2015.

**Performance Spaces**

Moreau Center for the Arts is a large fine-arts complex housing the Departments of Art, Music, and Communication Studies, Theatre and Dance. There are two performance spaces and 28 rooms distributed on the three floors of the building. Music Department concerts are also given in the Church of Loretto and Stapleton Lounge in Le Mans Hall. The [Office of Campus and Community Events](#) and the Office of the Registrar administer access to all spaces on campus. The large performing space, O'Laughlin Auditorium, is a 1300-seat auditorium with a large stage area. Little Theatre is a smaller 275-seat auditorium. This hall is centrally located in the Moreau Center for the Arts and is an important performance space for Music, Dance, and Theatre. A permanent recording

system installed in the Center permits digital recording to multiple formats; both halls have mounted projectors and screen, fully integrated with sound and lighting control. Productions are supported by scene and costume shops, with dressing rooms located on the basement level. The 2015 Master Plan shows an expansion of space in Moreau Hall to address continuing classroom and performance needs.

### **The Moreau Art Galleries**

Each academic year a series of exhibitions by professional, contemporary artists rotate in the three different exhibition spaces of the Moreau Art Galleries: The Sister Rosaire Extension Gallery, The Little Theatre Gallery, and Hammes Gallery. The galleries are also used for departmental student exhibitions. Recently new energy-efficient LED lighting has been installed in the galleries.

### **Clinical Practice Sites**

Undergraduate Nursing Science at Saint Mary's has access to multiple [clinical-learning sites](#). The DNP program works with the graduate student to establish any clinical-learning sites necessary in the area in which the online learner lives.

Field education is a key component of the Saint Mary's Social Work Program. Regional field placements are made over the course of two semesters in the Senior year for 240 hours per semester. In these [placements for Social Work](#) practicum, students work with agencies two days per week. National field placements occur in the spring semester. Through courses in the Gerontology curriculum, the Department of Social Work and Gerontology also requires visits to sites providing services for older adults, including Real Service, Inc., Southfield Village, Milton Adult Day Services, Healthwinn, and Beacon Health's Memorial Fitness Center.

The Department of Communicative Sciences and Disorders requires fieldwork of its majors in virtually every course in the Program. Majors complete 25 hours of observation before participating in a clinical practicum their Senior year. The Speech Language Pathology Graduate Program clinical needs are provided by approximately 50 off campus sites and the new Judd Leighton Speech and Language Clinic.

The [Learning Tree](#) at Saint Mary's College serves as a teaching resource center for Students, Staff, and Faculty in the Saint Mary's community, as well as teachers and parents in the surrounding area. This resource is used for Education courses and by students in [student teaching or field placements](#).

### **3.D.5 (see also 2.E)**

The Library staff continually partner with faculty to provide information-literacy instruction to students; this instruction is specifically tailored to the assignments of a particular course. In addition, research guides are available online on the Cushwa-Leighton Library website, which includes a page devoted to the [definition of plagiarism](#). The library has instituted librarian liaisons for each academic department or program on campus. Part of their work has been to develop web-based Research Guides for each program, as well as [course-specific guides](#) for many individual courses. Librarians assist students with [citation styles and appropriate referencing](#). In relevant cases, [guidance is also provided by the IRB](#).

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## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

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The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

## Argument

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### 3.E.1-2

The College has created new co-curricular and study-abroad opportunities rooted in Mission that enrich Students' education. The following argument presents these opportunities according to their contribution to specific aspects of Saint Mary's Mission: 1) aesthetic appreciation; 2) intellectual vigor; 3) religious sensibility; 4) social responsibility; and 5) preparing women to make a difference in the world.

### Aesthetic Appreciation

The promotion of aesthetic appreciation is one of the most visible ways that Saint Mary's co-curricular programming is linked to Mission. Every year, [the Moreau Center for the Arts](#) offers [a rich selection of performances](#), along with [exhibitions](#) held in the College's galleries. The Department of Art also [hosts one visiting artist who interacts with Art Students and gives a public lecture](#) each year. The Center also serves as a [venue for lectures, films, and performances](#). [Art](#), [Music](#), [Dance](#), and [Theatre](#) Programs offer annual [choral](#), [dance](#), and [theatrical](#) productions. All of these Programs also offer workshops and [masterclasses](#) (see 3.B.5). [The Margaret Hill Endowed Visiting Artist](#) series allows the Theatre Program to [host a prominent figure](#) from theatre or film who gives [a public lecture or performance](#) and [a master class](#) for Theatre majors. Student authors have outlets through [writing contests](#), and student publications such as [Chimes or The Avenue](#), and the [The Observer](#). Several student organizations foster [aesthetic appreciation](#), but [NSSE data](#) suggest that the College should strive to improve attendance.

### Intellectual Vigor

At the heart of a Saint Mary's education, intellectual vigor is developed primarily through the curriculum (see 3.B), but co-curricular programs also contribute, in part through the [31 student organizations affiliated with an academic department or honor society](#). Students have many opportunities to engage in independent and Student-Faculty research or creative projects (see 3.B.5). [Recommendation #3](#) of the Strategic Plan demonstrates the College's commitment to supporting independent student research. [Progress toward this recommendation](#) was made during the recent Capital Campaign. Intellectual vigor is supported through [multiple lectures](#) and [opportunities to participate in Faculty-Student discussions](#) outside of the classroom and through [grant-funded research at the graduate-level](#). [NSSE data](#) show that Saint Mary's Students interact more frequently with Faculty members outside of coursework than do students from similar institutions or nationally.

## Religious Sensibility

Campus Ministry and the Center for Spirituality are the offices most visibly connected to programming that foster religious sensibility. [Campus Ministry](#) offers "many outreach programs and events," including Faith Formation and Liturgical Ministry, among [many others](#). It also gathers the College community at various times to pray in remembrance of significant social and civic moments and sponsors [three annual events](#) and the [Theology on Fire lecture series](#). A significant percentage of Students (43.5%) attend Campus Ministry activities or programs ([Spirituality Survey, Chart 25](#)).

The [Center for Spirituality's mission](#) is firmly connected to the spiritual and intellectual identity of the College. A rich selection of sponsored programming includes three annual lectures (the [fall](#), [spring](#) and [Madeleva](#) lecture series) and [several discussion forums](#). The Center organized the [Voices of Young Catholic Women](#) initiative that culminated in the [delivery of letters and works of art from students across the country to Pope Francis](#) in Fall 2014, as well as the [Quest Project \(2007-2009\)](#), dedicated to providing forums for women to explore the science/religion interface. The College offers two annual symposia on the relevance of St. Thomas Aquinas ([the Joyce McMahan Hank Aquinas Chair in Catholic Theology](#), [the Edna and George McMahan Aquinas Chair in Philosophy](#)) and the [Christian Culture Lecture](#).

Developing religious sensibility or the "mature religious life" (*Statement of Philosophy and Purpose*), however, requires more than pertinent programming. Although the majority of Saint Mary's Students self-identify as Catholic, upon both arrival and departure ([CSS 2014](#)), College surveys ([Charts 5 and 6](#)) suggest that our Students' common religious affiliation co-exists with a range of religious and spiritual views. The picture is complicated, but at least partially discernible through some measures. The [CSS](#) indicates that Seniors see themselves as more highly spiritual than they did as first-year Students and Saint Mary's Students discuss religion more frequently than students at other Catholic Colleges (see [CIRP to CSS Presentation](#)). The 2011 Spirituality Survey also shows that some experiences at Saint Mary's deepen Students' faith and religious thinking ([see Chart 11](#)).

## **Social Responsibility**

Within the tradition of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, religious sensibility is not separated from social responsibility. Students benefit from that proud tradition, and our co-curricular programs reflect their inheritance. The many programs already mentioned and others help Students acquire what our *Statement of Philosophy and Purpose* identifies as one of the "hallmarks of a liberally educated woman," namely "the ability to make socially responsible choices about the future."

The *Statement* continues: "Through a host of co-curricular programs on campus and in the local community, Saint Mary's initiates Students in the habits of civic responsibility." [Service-oriented clubs](#) conduct numerous service events every semester. The annual Dance Marathon has been particularly successful, meriting [a letter of acknowledgment from Riley Hospital for Children](#). The [Office for Civic and Social Engagement](#) (OCSE) helps Students connect with [community partners](#), but it also transforms service opportunities into reflective community-based experiential learning. The OCSE also includes the [College Academy of Tutoring \(CAT\)](#). (See [OCSE report to the Board of Trustees](#).) Evidence of the effectiveness of the OCSE includes evaluations completed at annual [Community Engagement Summits](#) as well as *NSSE* and *CIRP* data presented below.

Another bold move forward for the College was the establishment of BAVO (Belles Against Violence Office) in 2009, established through a grant from the U.S. Justice Department. [BAVO's mission](#) is linked to the faith and social teachings of the Catholic Church and, thus, to Saint Mary's Mission. It

sponsors events such as bystander intervention ([Green Dot model](#)), [self-defense training](#), and interactive workshops, while participating in [national initiatives](#), and [hosting nationally-recognized speakers](#). [BAVO also provides training sessions for faculty and staff](#).

[Every athletic team conducts two service projects each year](#), with Student athletes and Staff [hosting larger events for communities beyond the College](#). Residence Life also promotes social responsibility since [every residence hall is partnered with a community organization](#). Other programs include the [Free Store](#), managed by a Ministry Assistant, and the [Blue to New donation program](#), which benefits community organizations. All of these initiatives make social responsibility understood as concrete action that must move beyond the theoretical foundations developed in our classrooms.

The most recent CSS on the *CIRP* theme of Civic Engagement shows that our Students' responses are higher than those of student at other Catholic Colleges to a whole host of question/indicators related to social responsibility, from understanding problems facing communities to performance of community or volunteer service, and interest in becoming a community leader ([pp. 2-6](#)). Saint Mary's Seniors also report higher levels of openness to having their views challenged and a greater ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues ([pp. 3-4](#)). There is, however, room for improvement since [NSSE responses](#) also show that Saint Mary's Students are somewhat behind or equal to students at other Catholic Colleges and our Carnegie cohort in attendance of events addressing important social, economic, or political issues (although they attend at higher rates than the composite of all *NSSE* respondents). College surveys also show that the [Civic Awareness](#) and [Civic Engagement](#) profile of Saint Mary's Seniors is impressive compared to students nationally. In fact, in 2010, Saint Mary's was [classified as a Community Engagement Institution by the Carnegie Foundation](#) for the Advancement of Teaching.

### **Preparing Women to Make a Difference in the World**

Saint Mary's women have multiple leadership opportunities that prepare them to make a difference in the world. *NSSE* indicates that over [60% of first-year Students and 82% of Seniors](#) believe they have many opportunities to practice leadership roles, while [66% of Students have held a formal leadership role](#). Comparing favorably to those of other students nationally, these figures embody the Office of Student Involvement's mission to develop Students as leaders. Participation in College governance (see 5.B), [Student Government](#) (which now includes a [Graduate Student Senator](#)) and the [large number of student organizations](#) sponsored by the Offices of [Student Involvement](#), [Multicultural Services](#), [Athletics](#), and [Residence Life](#) offer Students numerous leadership opportunities. In fact, Saint Mary's [average participation](#) in co-curricular activities for first-year Students and Seniors compares favorably to those of students at similar institutions. Most impressively, the *College Senior Survey* indicates that [93% of Students participated in student organizations](#).

Saint Mary's athletes [fill leadership positions](#) on the College's Student Athlete Advisory Committee ([SAAC](#)) and have [held high office for SAAC at the conference level](#) over the past three years. Athletics at Saint Mary's, from varsity competitions to personal fitness, complement the College's Mission ([Athletics Mission Statement](#)). In fact, over the past eleven years, there have been [three valedictorians, two Lumen Christi recipients, and one Outstanding Senior](#) among our student-athletes, and their retention and graduation rates [exceed the College average](#). Within [Residence Life](#), Students can choose to be a [Resident Assistant \(RA\)](#) or join the [student-run Residence Hall Association](#). More recent leadership opportunities include [Ministry Assistant \(MA\)](#) positions. Many other leadership opportunities exist, including [Tutors in the Writing Center](#) and [first-year Peer Mentors](#) who are paired with a cohort of first-year Students.

Other offices across Campus help Saint Mary's live out its Mission to prepare Students "for roles of

leadership and action" in various ways, including [Campus Ministry](#), [Career Crossings](#), the [OCSE](#), and [BAVO](#). The Office of Campus Ministry works closely with Student Affairs to ensure that the College's Mission, core values, and philosophy of a Holy Cross education [inform the goals and responsibilities of student-leadership positions on Campus](#).

With many programs paying "particular attention to the rights and responsibilities of women in the worlds of work, church, community, and family," a significant percentage of Students attend presentations on issues related to women (81% of first-year Students/84% of Seniors, according to [NSSE](#)). Women's leadership is central to the Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership (CWIL). Opportunities provided by CWIL include the [Intercultural Leadership Program](#), participation in [SUSI](#), a State Department-funded *Study of the United States Institute* on women and leadership for undergraduate women leaders from the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries, and [interning within the Women's Entrepreneurship Initiative](#) (WEI). The Mathematics Department sponsors [Hypatia Day](#), an event designed to encourage middle-school girls' interest in math and science (see also 1.D.3 and 3.B.4-5). Every year there are unique opportunities such as the *Forum on the Economic Status of Women in Indiana* held in April 2008 ([Lily report, p. 9](#)), or events that allow Students to hear and interact with [internationally-celebrated women leaders](#).

Women's leadership at Saint Mary's intersects with the development of intercultural competence. As our *Statement of Philosophy and Purpose* declares, "The College strives to bring together women of different nations, cultures, and races." We do so, however, for a purpose greater than mere contact; we do so "[in order to offer the richest educational experience possible](#)." The College has moved boldly forward in its [efforts to build a diverse community](#) and enrich our Students education through intercultural contact.

The College has realized a remarkable expansion in its study-abroad programs from [7](#) to [25](#) international programs since the establishment of CWIL. Student participation rates have also [increased significantly, outpacing national benchmarks](#), and receiving [national recognition from US News and World Report](#). The expansion of destinations includes [communities abroad where the Sisters of the Holy Cross serve](#). Saint Mary's understands study abroad to encompass the development of intercultural competence, as is evidenced by the Letter from the President in the [Global Education Programs Brochure](#). The College dedicates significant resources to study abroad and the *Faith Always, Action Now* campaign has increased endowment for study-abroad scholarships adding [five new scholarships](#), including one for underrepresented Students. These joined five existing scholarships. Saint Mary's Students who study abroad [gain increased understanding of different cultures and new insight into American culture](#). This growth is also demonstrated by the [results](#) of the [Global Perspectives Inventory](#), a pre- and post-survey taken by all Students studying abroad. CWIL also offers [intercultural-education experiences](#) within the United States, including the [Catalyst Trip](#), which has [evaluations](#) demonstrating a [significant impact](#).

Saint Mary's forward steps in intercultural education include opportunities beyond study abroad. Over the past eight years, many Students have created an [Intercultural Leadership Portfolio](#), benefiting from this high-impact program that [students themselves say](#) has enriched their education. The Office of Multicultural Services offers students a rich selection of [resources](#), sponsors diversity-related programming, as do many other offices and departments (see 1.C.2). Multicultural Services works closely with student-run organizations, especially those that [focus on diversity and inclusivity](#), such as the [Student Diversity Board](#). The *Diverse Student Leadership Conference* ([DSLCLC](#)) is a student-run conference offering opportunities to develop leadership skills and intercultural competence. *DSLCLC* celebrated its [tenth year in the spring of 2015](#).

Nonetheless, *NSSE* data reveal that Saint Mary's needs to find ways to improve results since our

Students do not compare favorably with other groups for interactions with people: 1) [from a different race or ethnicity](#); 2) [from different economic backgrounds](#); or 3) with [different religious beliefs](#). The *Senior Survey* identifies areas for improvement as well as areas of strength: the College aspires to have more than just half of our Students [socialize often or very often with someone from a different racial/ethnic group](#) or rate their knowledge of people from different races/cultures to be a [moderate or major strength](#). We should strive to have more than [33.3% of our Students](#) engage often or very often in meaningful and honest discussions about race/ethnic relations outside of class, but we can be heartened by the fact that [87.1% of our Students](#) rate their ability to work cooperatively with diverse people as above average.

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## 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### Summary

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#### Strengths

- Publicly-articulated learning outcomes for all academic programs
- *The Sophia Program in Liberal Learning*, a vibrant and Mission-driven general education program
- A new and evolving First-Year Advising Program that promotes advising as teaching
- Student-Faculty collaboration in research, scholarship, and creative work
- The Writing Proficiency Program
- Student services with intentional focus on underrepresented and international Students
- Highly-qualified Instructional and Student-support Staff who are available to Students
- Growth in the number and diversity of study-abroad programs
- Mission-driven co-curricular programs

#### Future considerations

- Improve the support for the professional development of Staff
- Continue evaluating the effectiveness of current course evaluations
- Continue integrating the Sophia Program into Saint Mary's academic culture
- Continue to expand undergraduate co-curricular Mission-based opportunities to Graduate Students and develop new opportunities specifically for them

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### Argument

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#### 4.A.1

The College maintains a practice of regular program review. It has implemented a 10-year schedule for external reviews (beginning in 2008), as mandated by the previous [Strategic Plan](#). This [review](#) by an outside peer-review team and one internal reviewer focuses on department and interdisciplinary programs of study and their support. An internal review [policy/process](#) has been created by Faculty with the Provost over a two-year period in response to an external review ([Pappas](#)) of financial challenges facing the College. Until AY15-16, this type of review focused on cost effectiveness and program quality (the latter defined by the [internal review policy](#)). It has been implemented over the last three years, and reviews occur on a [rotating schedule](#). Neither the external or internal review evaluates Faculty performance. [Attached is a summary](#) of results from the external reviews to date.

The following programs have undergone external reviews (see [External Review Protocol](#)):

<b>Program</b>	<b>External Review Report</b>	<b>Response</b>
Anthropology (AY08-09)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Dean</a>
Communication Studies (AY08-09)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Dean Department</a>
Political Science (AY08-09)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Dean Department</a>
Biology (AY09-10)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">MOU</a>
Chemistry (AY09-10)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Dean</a>
Italian (AY09-10)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Dean</a>
Music (AY09-10)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">MOU</a>
Mathematics (AY10-11)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">MOU</a>
Nursing (AY10-11)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Dean Department</a>
Philosophy (AY10-11)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Dean</a>
Modern Languages (French and Spanish) (AY12-13)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Dean</a>
Business Administration and Economics (AY13-14)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Delayed</a>
Gender and Women's Studies (AY13-14)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">MOU</a>
Library (AY13-14)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">MOU</a>
English Writing and English Literature (AY14-15)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">MOU</a>

The following programs have undergone an internal review (see the evolving [Internal Program Review Policy/Procedure](#)) See also a [summary of actions](#) to date.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Program Report</b>	<b>PRC Recommendation</b>	<b>Final Decision</b>
Nursing (AY12-13)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
Religious Studies (AY12-13)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
Gender & Women's Studies (AY12-13)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
Biology (AY13-14)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
Chemistry (AY13-14)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
Math (AY13-14)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
Intercultural Studies (AY13-14)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
French (AY14-15)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
Italian (AY14-15)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
Theatre (AY14-15)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>

Dance (AY14-15)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	<a href="#">Decision</a>
Humanistic Studies (AY14-15)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	Pending
Economics (AY14-15)	<a href="#">Report</a>	<a href="#">Recommendation</a>	Pending

The Graduate Program Committee will propose a schedule of similar reviews for the College's new graduate programs.

The internal review process addresses two Institutional needs: evaluation of program sustainability as the Institution addresses the need to wisely steward financial resources and program quality assurance. Departments respond to [quantitative information](#) from the Office of Institutional Research related to the cost effectiveness and sustainability of their programs and also evaluate the quality of their programs. (Reports do not evaluate the performance of individual Faculty). The reports are reviewed by the [Program Review Committee](#), chaired by the Dean of Faculty and with diverse Faculty representation. A Faculty member on the Committee serves as a representative on the Academic Affairs Council (AAC), a committee of the President. The AAC minutes communicate its deliberations and recommendations to the Faculty. The President's decision regarding each internal review is sent to the Chair/Coodinator (e.g. [Biology report](#), [AAC minutes](#) and the [President's final letter](#)). (See 5B for discussion of challenges that emerged in AY14-15).

Both external and internal review policies have evolved. Regarding the internal review, the PRC assesses its own processes. A recent [revision of the policy](#) allows for the Committee to provide more detailed responses to the departmental internal review reports; the PRC's response aims to affirm or identify concerns about the program, while also shaping the review process by identifying strengths and areas for improvement in the report. At the end of AY14-15, the PRC also recommended eliminating program-cost calculations that have proved to be more confusing and less helpful than a [history of enrollments](#). These changes have been approved by the AAC and included in a [revised policy](#). (See 5.B. for an example of how Faculty, through shared governance, shaped the internal review process in its early stages).

One major change in the external review process has been to institute the creation of a Memo of Understanding (MOU) so that Faculty and Administration are clear on which recommendations should be pursued. Within 90 days of a review's completion, a MOU based on the reviewers' recommendations is signed by the Chair and the Dean of Faculty. Since MOUs were not originally part of the external review process, there has been some backlog completing them. Academic departments have seen [tangible results](#) from participation in external reviews. For example, the Mathematics Department has been able to focus its curriculum-planning to define a restructured Faculty position, thereby getting approval for a tenure-track replacement that they might otherwise have lost. (See [Math External Review Report](#), and [MOU](#)). The [Biology Department's MOU](#) documents the diverse initiatives that can result from an external review, including curricular changes.

#### 4.A.2. and 4.A.3

Saint Mary's has processes to evaluate all credit it transcripts. Curriculum committees approve all new courses (see [Curriculum Committee](#) and [Sophia Program Curriculum Committee](#) and 3.A.3). The College follows [commonly-accepted practices](#) of assigning credit hours in line with the federal definition of the credit hour; this policy ensures that online courses cover the same course content as on-campus classroom-based courses. All transcribed experiential learning fulfilling general education requirements is awarded on the basis of a credit-bearing course certified for [Academic Experiential Learning \(AEL\)](#) by the Sophia Program Curriculum Committee; experiential learning through an internship requires a Faculty supervisor and a [learning contract](#) detailing assignments and assessment

of learning. Saint Mary's does not award credit for prior learning unless it is associated with an academic transcript from an accredited institution.

Saint Mary's also transcripts:

- Courses taken at the University of Notre Dame under the "[Co-Exchange Program.](#)"
- Courses taken through the [Northern Indiana Consortium for Education \(N.I.C.E.\)](#).
- [Transfer of courses](#) from other institutions. Graduate courses in transfer are limited to 6 [credit hours](#) and are reviewed by the Graduate Program Directors.
- [Credits by examination](#). [Strict guidelines](#) apply to credits for AP, IB, CLEP, and SAT(II) examinations.

Quality assurance for the above is based on the policies and procedures in place at the host institutions, the institutions' regional accreditation, and by review of Saint Mary's Office of Academic Affairs and/or academic departments.

The policies under which transfer courses are approved for incoming undergraduate Students are defined in the undergraduate [Bulletin](#), [Academic Guide for First-Year Students](#), and the [graduate Bulletin](#). They also articulate grade and accreditation requirements for transfer courses. Policies under which currently-enrolled Students may transfer credit earned in the summer are described in the undergraduate [Bulletin](#) and in detailed [instructions](#) from the Office of Academic Affairs.

#### 4.A.4

### **Prerequisites, Rigor, and Expectations for Student Learning**

The College's curriculum committees, whose [memberships](#) include Administrators and Faculty, maintain and exercise authority over course prerequisites, rigor, and expectations for student learning. All new or substantively-changed courses must go through appropriate review: undergraduate courses go to the Curriculum Committee; courses intended to meet Sophia requirements are reviewed by the [SPCC](#) (once approved by the Curriculum Committee), while the [Graduate Program Committee](#) reviews and approves all new or substantively-changed graduate courses. A proposal for any of these three Committees originates within an individual academic department or program and must receive approval from the Department Chair or Program Director prior to submission. Prerequisites must be specified on the submission forms (see [CC](#) and [SPCC forms](#) and [Graduate-Course policy](#)), and are reviewed by the appropriate committee as part of the approval process. Changes to undergraduate course prerequisites, titles, and descriptions [can be approved by the Associate Dean of Faculty](#) if s/he determines that they are not substantive. Prerequisites must be included in course descriptions in each [Bulletin](#), and in the [Course Schedule](#).

The approval process of these Committees assures rigor and appropriate expectations for Student learning by requiring proposals to include a syllabus with learning outcomes, descriptions of assignments, a schedule of classes, and a grading policy (see [CC](#) and [SPCC form](#)). An approved course that will be delivered online undergoes additional review by the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable (TLTR) (see 3.A.3). The semester credit hour is [defined in the undergraduate Bulletin](#) and [graduate Bulletin](#) and is based on either Carnegie-hour definitions or the TLTR review, which ensures coverage of course content. Upon approval by the appropriate committee, the Registrar adds the course description, prerequisites, and all relevant information to College electronic records and each [Bulletin](#). (see also 3.A.1, 3.B.1, and 4.B.)

### **Access to Learning Resources**

The College offers a rich array of student learning resources (described in section 3.D.4) over which it maintains and exercises authority. These [student resources](#) are managed by College Employees within the Academic Affairs Division. Budgets managed by the Academic Affairs Division are in place for each. Online-courses must provide [contact information](#) for Saint Mary's technology support resources.

### **Exercise of Authority over Faculty Qualifications (see 3.C)**

Hiring of new or replacement full-time tenure-track Faculty members begins with a [Position Request](#) documenting the need for the position and areas of specialization/competence. Upon final approval by the President (after approval of the Dean of Faculty and the Provost), the department Chair follows procedures outlined in [Guidelines for Hiring](#); these include providing copy for the job posting, recommending appropriate listings, and attending to Saint Mary's policies and commitment to diversity. The [interview process includes review by the departmental Faculty, the Dean of Faculty, the Provost/Senior VPAA, and the President](#). Part-time Faculty appointments are made by the department Chairs; [appointments to the full-time Faculty are made by the President](#), upon recommendation of the Chair, Dean of Faculty, and Provost.

Dual-credit courses or similar programs for high school students are not offered.

#### **4.A.5.**

The College maintains [specialized accreditation or approval](#) by the following organizations:

[American Chemical Society \[ACS letter\]](#)

[Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#)

[Council on Social Work Education](#)

[Indiana State Board of Nursing](#)

[National Association of Schools of Art and Design](#)

[National Association of Schools of Music](#)

[National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education](#)

Office of Educator Licensing and Development (State of Indiana)

#### **4.A.6.**

Saint Mary's regularly gathers evidence to evaluate the success of its Graduates. Just prior to graduation each year, the College surveys its graduating Students to ascertain their post-graduate plans, including how many have already obtained employment or been accepted to graduate school. [This report](#) is shared with the Director of Career Crossings, who follows up with Students who indicate a desire for additional support.

Each undergraduate class is also surveyed both one year and five years after graduation using locally-developed instruments administered and compiled by the Office for Institutional Research. The [One-Year and Five-Years-Out Survey Report](#) is prepared and distributed annually. One year after graduation, [95% of the May 2014 Graduates](#) responding to the survey were either employed or enrolled in graduate or professional school and another 2% were engaged in other activities such as

volunteer service. [99% of the May 2010 graduate](#) respondents were similarly categorized. The [top fields of employment](#) for both groups were education, health/medical services, and business/industry, accounting for more than 60% of the Graduates from each year. Five years after graduation, [more than half](#) of the May 2010 respondents had either completed or were currently enrolled in a graduate or professional program; 89% at the Masters level and 9% at the Doctoral level. A similar tracking process is planned for graduate students.

These survey tools also measure Graduates' perceptions of how Saint Mary's prepared them for their careers and lives. More than 75% of Graduates from 2010 and 2014 indicate that Saint Mary's [prepared them well](#) for their current job and/or graduate/professional school. More than [75% of the Graduates one-year-out](#) indicated other Mission-related positive outcomes. More than [two-thirds of the Graduates five-years-out](#) shared these perceptions. The [executive summary](#) of this report is shared publicly on the College's consumer information and Institutional Research websites. This post-graduate information is also integrated into the President's [planning dashboard](#) as a measure of student success, demonstrating its consideration at the highest administrative levels. Beginning in AY15-16, the Office of Institutional Research will make available multi-year customized reports for individual departments, allowing them to measure the success of their Graduates based on results from these surveys.

The College also annually tracks the success of its Graduates by utilizing the services of the National Student Clearinghouse Tracker to [determine in which institutions](#) Students enroll following graduation from Saint Mary's. The College also closely monitors the levels of debt its Graduates assume, integrating this information into the [President's annual dashboard](#).

Individual academic departments that prepare Students for professional-licensing examinations regularly monitor and review the pass rates of their Graduates where appropriate. For example, when the Department of Nursing's review of recent Graduates' [pass rates on NCLEX](#) showed a decline, the Department [responded](#) to investigate potential remedies.

Finally, an internal [analysis of data from the Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) reveals that Saint Mary's Graduates are successful in their pursuit of research doctorates. In fact, Saint Mary's ranks in the top 25% of baccalaureate institutions in the number of research doctorates earned per Graduate since 1966 and in the top 35% nationally among more recent Graduates. From 2002 to 2011, 91 Saint Mary's Graduates have earned doctoral degrees. Our Graduates' most common broad doctoral degree disciplines include Education, Life Sciences, Psychology and Humanities.

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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

### Argument

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Saint Mary's continues to develop its assessment processes across the Sophia (General Education) Program, academic majors and minors, study abroad, graduate programs, and relevant co-curricular programs. During the last comprehensive visit by the HLC in 2006 it was noted "The team's expectation is that Saint Mary's College will ... be able to implement a systematic process for assessing student learning – both in the major and in general education – in ways that link: 1) learning outcomes, 2) reliable measures, and 3) program improvements..." The College has responded to this area for improvement by participating in the [HLC's Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning](#) and implementing Campus-wide efforts designed to enhance assessment of student learning. The College is pleased to report significant progress.

#### Sophia Program in Liberal Learning

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment addressing deficits noted by the HLC in 2006 was the establishment of a new learning-outcomes-based general education program known as the [Sophia Program in Liberal Learning](#). This dynamic [curriculum](#) was developed through a multi-year process, guided by the *Ad hoc* Committee on General Education involving [extensive faculty input](#). The Program was officially approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2010. A phased replacement of the previous distribution model of general education began in Fall 2012. As of Fall 2015, the Program will be [near full implementation](#).

The Sophia Program learning outcomes are [grounded in the College's Mission Statement](#) and emphasize the unique elements of a Saint Mary's education associated with our identity as a Catholic college for women in the Holy Cross tradition. The College-wide learning outcomes are: [Knowledge Acquisition and Integration of learning outcomes \(LO1\)](#), implemented in Fall 2012, [Cognitive and Communicative Skills \(LO2\)](#) and [Intercultural Competence and Social Responsibility \(LO3\)](#) outcomes, seamlessly layered over the LO1 outcomes, have been phased in over successive years. The curriculum requires learning outcomes for [integration of learning](#), [critical thinking](#), [women's voices](#), [intercultural competence](#), [social responsibility](#), and [global learning](#), and includes courses in major and minor programs of study. The Sophia learning outcomes are articulated in the [Academic Guide](#), and [undergraduate Bulletin](#) and are [included or referenced in Instructors' syllabi](#). (See also 3.B.1 and 3.B.2.) Over the course of AY10-11 and AY11-12 the Sophia Program Curriculum Committee (SPCC) conducted a [comprehensive review of the syllabi](#) of all courses that requested certification for the Sophia Program; this review included all courses that comprised the previous general education

curriculum as well as new course proposals. In this way, the SPCC has verified the alignment between Sophia learning outcomes and the actual work required by Students as detailed in the syllabi. This engagement of a broad cross-section of Faculty in a consideration of the presence of Sophia Program learning outcomes in their courses has helped to advance the culture of assessment at Saint Mary's.

Assessment of the Sophia Program is supervised by the [Sophia Oversight Committee](#). A group of Faculty from this Committee attended the AAC&U 2012 Institute on General Education and Assessment ([see proposal](#)), and there developed a [five-step Sophia Assessment Plan](#) that reflects [best practices supported by AAC&U](#), i.e. moving backwards from results to outputs to activities to inputs. The first three steps have been or are being implemented.

**Step 1:** The Office of Institutional Research has [mapped](#) question items and results from national surveys (*NSSE*, *CIRP*, *CSS*) to the Sophia Program learning outcomes. The College administers the surveys on a staggered time frame that allows for tracking of student growth over four-years in *NSSE* and *CIRP/CSS*. Results related to [Creative and Performing Arts](#) and [Critical Thinking](#) illustrate the process. Since the Seniors surveyed to this point graduated before the Sophia Program had been fully implemented, their results should give us a reasonable benchmark going forward. Results for Seniors who will have graduated under Sophia at the end of AY15-16 will be compared to the established benchmarks. Survey results are updated regularly and [shared with Faculty](#) via the Assessment Committee and [internal website](#) according to a [process](#) developed in AY13-14.

**Step 2:** The Sophia Oversight Committee has initiated an [online survey](#) for Students in courses with LO1-knowledge outcomes. Each semester the College administers this survey to Students in courses associated with learning outcomes from a different "[arm of the cross](#)"; thus, addressing each arm over a two-year cycle. The survey was piloted during AY13-14 for [Arts for Living \(fall\)](#) and [Cultures and Systems \(spring\)](#). The Sophia Oversight Committee [reviewed](#) these results and considered issues around implementation. Procedural changes [increased the response rate](#) in the spring. [Initial findings](#) suggest that Students are familiar with the outcomes, and, perhaps more importantly, understand what they mean. These [initial results](#) provide benchmarks for future comparison. The Oversight Committee has [agreed](#) that department-specific results should be distributed to departments beginning in AY15-16.

**Step 3:** The Sophia Oversight Committee has approved the launch of an [integration of learning assessment plan](#) that uses an ePortfolio to collect artifacts over a student's academic career as part of longitudinal direct assessment. In the initial year of implementation all first-year Students placed two artifacts ([see requirements in SPLL 101 master syllabus](#)) in their ePortfolios. The first direct assessment of ePortfolios will take place at the end of AY17-18.

**Step 4:** The plan calls for additional direct methods of assessment through Faculty-designed projects centered on a question of interest identified by Faculty. This step has not yet been implemented but [Sophia Oversight](#) has recognized the need to begin, and [plans](#) are underway to focus on this and other direct measures in AY15-16.

**Step 5:** Departments are expected to include assessment of relevant Sophia outcomes as part of their programmatic assessment. Although the College has not yet systematically implemented this element, some departments conduct assessment of Sophia outcomes as part of their programmatic assessment. An example is the analysis of how well Students explained historical and cultural contexts in Religious Studies (see Religious Studies AY12-13 [Assessment Report](#)).

Additional assessments of Sophia regularly occur, including the [assessment](#) of the first-year common-experience course beginning in AY13-14. Results influenced [changes](#) to the course for AY14-15.

This instrument also indirectly assesses [outcomes](#) claimed for the course. Beginning in AY14-15 results are being [compared across time](#).

The Basic-W (Writing Proficiency) requirement of our long-standing Writing Program has now been incorporated into the Sophia Program. Saint Mary's participated in the [HLC Assessment Academy](#) following its last comprehensive HLC visit and focused on this program. The program uses a portfolio-evaluation system with a rubric generating data to study student learning. The system has been refined based in part on work with the Academy and data used to improve the Program. For example, a [July 2011 IR report](#) detailed three years of data on differences in outcomes by Basic-W course-type. Since the data showed that a two-semester sequence did not improve student outcomes, the College decided to eliminate a two-semester requirement for less-prepared Students in Fall 2011. In 2013, a [second](#) and a [third report](#) assessed outcomes for those Students after this change and found that less-prepared students [were not achieving greater levels of success](#) in the single-semester English basic-writing course. A [task force](#) from the Writing Proficiency Committee was subsequently established to continue investigating ways to support these Students. Other initiatives implemented to support Students with difficulty achieving basic-writing proficiency have included [an individual-learning program](#).

Data analyzed from the Basic-Writing rubrics are regularly reported by Institutional Research ([2013 Key Findings](#)). Faculty members who teach in the Writing Proficiency Program have engaged with the data, looking for additional implications for program improvement. [Findings](#) have indicated that Students entering the College less-prepared academically are more likely to have difficulty achieving basic-writing proficiency, in part due to difficulties with basic skills such as [grammar and mechanics](#). Difficulties with writing, however, are not confined to less-prepared Students. One key response to better serve all Students has been to expand the Writing Center in AY14-15 through a [pilot program](#) that adds a satellite "walk-in" location in the Library, increasing opportunities for Students to meet with Writing Center tutors. The additional walk-in location has increased access to tutors and is another direct way that assessment has informed decision-making aimed at improving student learning.

The Advanced-W requirement (capstone-writing evaluation) is required of every Student in her major. Departments define a writing project or portfolio that is discipline-appropriate and assess writing on a regular basis as described in their assessment plans. In Modern Languages, for example, the assessment of their Advanced-W is included in their regular [assessment cycle](#).

Saint Mary's participation in the HLC Pathways Demonstration project "testing" the Lumina Foundation's *Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)* was a valuable project allowing the Campus community to compare its Sophia Program learning outcomes to a national framework of outcomes at the degree level (See 3.B.1). The most direct impact of the project has been [increased dialogue around learning outcomes and the Sophia Program](#).

### **Academic Programs of Study**

Saint Mary's has also taken great strides forward towards creating a systematic process for the assessment of all programs of study during and after participating in the [HLC's Assessment Academy](#). In order to promote a climate of assessment, the College has increased resources supporting Faculty work on assessment. This was accomplished in part by modifying [the charge](#) of the [Assessment Committee](#) in 2008 so that it focused on providing assessment resources to Faculty as opposed to functioning as a "policing" body. The role of the Committee is to encourage and support assessment activities grounded in best practices by offering [web resources](#), sponsoring [workshops](#), and administering [a program of assessment grants](#). The grants support assessment projects, attendance

of assessment-related conferences, and the ongoing implementation of programmatic-assessment plans, all of which helps Faculty understand and use best assessment practices to do what they care about most: improve student learning. In AY12-13, the College invited [Dr. Thomas Angelo to conduct assessment workshops](#) on formative assessment and assessment of integration of learning. In AY14-15, the College invited Dr. Laura Gambino to [conduct a workshop](#) with Faculty on the use of ePortfolios.

The College first moved towards systematic assessment of its academic programs by ensuring that all course and program proposals for the [Curriculum Committee](#) and the [Sophia Program Curriculum Committee](#) include learning outcomes. Similarly, the [prospectus for a new major or minor](#) cannot be forwarded to the Provost without learning outcomes. The College then required all academic departments and interdisciplinary programs to submit [learning-outcomes-based assessment plans](#) to the SVP/Dean of Faculty during AY10-11. Once submitted, the plans were evaluated by Institutional Research on the basis of a [rubric](#); the SVP/Dean of Faculty then provided feedback to department chairs. The [evaluation](#) showed that a large majority of academic programs had developed assessment plans that included well-written learning outcomes, curriculum maps, and reliable assessment measures. The plans reflect a diversity of assessment methods including portfolios, reflections, surveys, focus groups, juried evaluations, and rubrics.

Implementation of the revised plans began in AY11-12. Chairs are required to submit an [annual Assessment Report](#) due at the end of the academic year detailing the outcomes assessed, the means used to assess them, the results of the assessment, and proposed changes based on results. The Dean of Faculty reviews the reports, provides feedback to the departments, and maintains a [spreadsheet summary](#) of accomplishments and areas for improvement. The Assessment Committee reviews and oversees the dissemination of assessment data to appropriate stakeholders. The Office of Institutional Research provides technical, methodological, and analytical assistance to Faculty, including use of survey technology and focus groups for collection of data. The College has sought to integrate its assessment processes by 1) having programs [use assessment results](#) to support any curricular changes they propose in the Annual Department Review submitted by Chairs, and by 2) having them include pertinent assessment results in [program review](#) reports.

It is a considerable achievement that nearly all academic departments have submitted an annual assessment report since AY11-12. Further, a comprehensive [tracking](#) and [summary](#) of the state of programmatic assessment at Saint Mary's by the Dean of Faculty finds:

- All programs have defined learning outcomes
- Fifteen programs (54%) have specific programmatic assessment opportunities. The rest have identified course-embedded assignments or experiences.
- Ten programs have a systematic approach to assessment assuring all learning outcomes are assessed during a defined period of time.

Further, the Dean found of the 23 assessment reports submitted in AY13-14:

- Fifteen reported using direct measures of assessment
- Fourteen reported results linked to methods identified in their plans
- Thirteen reported changes linked to assessment of student learning
- Six programs are significantly revising plans and developing assessment tools

Examples of departments collecting and using results from over the last three years include [Biology](#), [Chemistry](#), [Art](#), [Music](#), [Humanistic Studies](#) and [Nursing](#). These and other examples of indirect and direct assessments, include:

- Art implemented [curricular changes suggested by a survey](#) and subsequent assessment discussions in [AY13-14](#); [Art's report for this year](#) speaks both to the ongoing curriculum changes and plans for future course development. Art [utilizes methodologically strong](#) methods such as portfolio evaluations for assessing program outcomes.
- Humanistic Studies [enhanced](#) its assessment process to include [rubrics](#) assessing learning outcomes for oral participation and their comprehensive exam. Initial findings indicate Students may need additional support on integration of learning. The Department has identified [potential changes](#).
- Music identified specific elements of its juried evaluations to be modified in their [AY12-13 Assessment Report](#) and implemented those changes in [AY13-14](#). The evaluations consider the various levels of applied study to make instrumental requirements more equivalent with vocal requirements. These include technical studies as well as repertoire requirements. Piano-proficiency requirements were also revised to better reflect program expectations, and entrance audition requirements have been adjusted.
- Biology has been adjusting its gateway-major-course labs in response to survey feedback to improve the impact on student writing within the discipline (see [AY12-13](#) and [AY13-14](#) reports). Assessment based on student evaluations led to reverting from a team-taught approach in their gateway course to a single-Faculty model.
- [Education](#) has revised the criteria for evaluating lesson plans to make them clearer and less cumbersome.
- [Global Studies](#) has revised their language proficiency requirement to ensure that Graduates have proficiency congruent with desired outcomes.
- [Mathematics](#) has planned changes in their approach to problem-solving designed to improve student performance regarding independence and ability to tackle problems.
- Psychology strengthened their physiological psychology requirement, supported in part by [exit-interview](#) feedback.

Many programs [have confirmed](#) through their assessments that present practices in curriculum and instruction are effective and only require minimal adjustments. The College must continue to help programs implement meaningful and manageable assessment. A remaining challenge is that assessment does not always generate meaningful or reliable results that can be acted upon. Small programs with limited resources, for example, can struggle to find time to effectively formalize assessment and face methodological challenges such as very small populations of students. Further, there are still pockets of skepticism towards assessment, and preferences for anecdotal and intuitive approaches to institutional and programmatic improvement.

In response to these challenges, the Dean of Faculty has planned changes that will begin to address these and other issues, including:

- More explicitly linking assessment of student learning to existing program review at the College. The [internal review protocol](#) was revised in AY14-15 to engage programs in a discussion of their significant assessment findings. The previous protocol did not ask programs to discuss assessment results. An additional enhancement linking program review and assessment by asking departments to include use of their assessment results in their internal review report will be presented to the Academic Affairs Council in AY15-16.
- Revision of the [annual assessment report form](#) in AY14-15 to include more details on tools and methods used so that the College can better support its programs. The form now asks programs to indicate any additional resources needed to move assessment forward or implement changes based on results, creating an explicit budgetary link with assessment.
- Individual meetings with programs with weak plans designed to offer additional support and

guidance.

- Assign Assessment Committee members as liaisons to support programs' assessment work.
- Provide additional resources to help programs move from course-based to higher-order program-level assessment making the process more manageable and less sensitive to the differences among individual instructors within a program.

[Learning-outcomes-based assessment plans](#) have been developed for the graduate programs that launch in AY15-16, and assessment will occur in tandem with the implementation of the programs.

### **Additional Assessment of Student Learning: Academic Programs and Co-Curricular**

In AY09-10 a significant cross-divisional program was initiated. The Cross-Currents Program involved the collaboration of the Divisions of Mission, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs on an “umbrella program” housing varied [programs](#) developed by each division, centered around [4 key questions](#) tied to Mission. This program was internally-assessed annually and underwent an [external assessment](#) in AY13-14. In response to external assessment, programming has been changed and the decision has been made to “close the Cross-Currents umbrella” and allow the effective programs to thrive on their own. Many programs, including the First-Year Faculty Advising/Peer-Mentor Program, continue to be strong (See 3.D.2-3)

As mentioned above, Saint Mary's, as an HLC Pioneer Cohort 3 Institution, “tested” the Lumina Foundation’s *Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)*. The [College administered a survey](#) using the “Specialized-Knowledge” learning outcomes of the *DQP* to Students in four different major programs. The survey has yielded important results relative to how Students understand learning-outcome language. [Findings](#) suggest that Students use their academic programs as a reference point impacting their understanding of certain words and phrases used in the *DQP* learning outcomes, even when focusing on outcomes meant to be common to all majors. These results raise critical questions regarding the extent to which Students have a shared understanding of outcome language. This finding has prompted the College to further investigate how Students understand the outcomes of the Sophia Program through a survey item integrated into the [Learning Goals Surveys](#) included in the [Sophia assessment plan](#).

The Center for Women’s Intercultural Leadership (CWIL) has developed an [established process](#) for outcomes assessment of study abroad. This process contains a mix of indirect and direct measures of [quantitative](#) and [qualitative](#) evidence of Student achievement. These objectives have a direct link to the College’s Sophia Program outcomes of Global Learning, Intercultural Competence, and Social Responsibility. This assessment process is well developed and [ongoing](#), informing improvements in pedagogy, policy, advising, and pre-departure preparation.

Co-Curricular assessment at Saint Mary's is largely based on evaluating achievement of individual unit goals rather than learning outcomes. As described in Criterion 5, the College recently began a systematic unit-evaluation process asking all offices to establish measurable goals and report results annually. Offices that contribute to Student learning have adopted assessment methods to ensure that their units meet established goals and continually improve. (See, for example, [Campus Ministry](#), [Office of Civic and Social Engagement](#), [Center for Spirituality](#), [Career Crossings](#), [Residence Life](#), [Student Involvement](#), and [Athletics](#).) The Office of Civic and Social Engagement's [ongoing unit-evaluation](#) demonstrates commitment to evaluating its effectiveness by establishing goals and measures to assess its role in the Sophia [experiential learning outcomes](#), for which the OCSE plays a key role.

Student Affairs participated in two major studies recently: the *Educational Benchmarking Institute's*

(EBI) Assessment of Student Leadership and Student Activities and the EBI Assessment of Residence Life and Staffing. In both cases Saint Mary's was [benchmarked](#) against similar institutions. The results of the Residence Life Assessment have been [reviewed and changes](#) made. Review of the EBI [Student Leadership](#) and [Student Activities](#) Assessments has informed modifications to programs and services in the Office of Student Involvement. These include: additional leadership-development training for Student organizations; collaboration in the form of training and co-sponsored events amongst the largest Student organizations; and a formalized Student organization executive board application process. There are plans to implement leadership workshops in AY15-16. Multicultural Services regularly assesses the Belles Connect Program through annual [focus groups](#). These groups have confirmed the strong positive influence of this Program on the underrepresented Students it serves but have also led to an expansion of the categories of Students invited to participate, an extension of a Student's participation from one to four years, and increased programming conducted by the Belles Connect Student Leaders and the Office of Multicultural Services. The offices under Student Affairs conduct ongoing assessment in order to improve the leadership opportunities available to Students. Another [leadership assessment](#) has resulted in a complete restructuring of the [Administrative RA position](#) into that of the [Senior RA](#).

### **Assessment Technologies**

After completion of the HLC Assessment Academy, the College has recognized that systematic assessment of student learning requires a more comprehensive and systematic approach to collecting, storing, and using its assessment data. As a result, it has [explored various assessment technologies](#) including *LiveText* as a centralized tool for assessment. While the College recognizes the benefits in such a tool, Faculty and Administrators have determined that *LiveText's* limitations, including nearly-exclusive reliance on rubrics, are not adequate for the diversity of assessment methodologies at Saint Mary's. As a result, the College has considered alternative technologies to more effectively advance our assessment efforts. An ePortfolio tool, WordPress, has been selected and implemented in AY14-15 for the collection of artifacts to assess integration of learning. A small group of Faculty is exploring ways to use ePortfolio assessments at the course, program, and general education levels. The College will continue to explore other technologies that could effectively support its assessment efforts.

### **Continuing to Move Forward**

Progress has been substantive, but there is still work to be done. While some programs are already using results to improve student learning, others are still in early stages and have not yet "closed the loop." The College must ensure that: 1) assessment of student learning is systematic and reflects good practices across all academic programs, graduate and undergraduate, so that it generates meaningful results used to make improvements on a regular basis; 2) the effectiveness of the Sophia Program's assessment plan is evaluated with careful attention to Faculty-driven direct measures of assessment; and 3) assessment data is used to inform improvements in student learning. The latter will require the College to improve the collection, storage, management, and dissemination of assessment data. Continued progress will require ongoing support for academic programs in their assessment efforts (such as the newly-created [position](#) shared by the Education Department and Office of Dean of Faculty) and continued review of program-assessment plans to ensure they maintain best practices yielding meaningful information that Faculty use to improve student learning.

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## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

### Argument

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#### 4.C.1.

Saint Mary's goals for student retention, persistence, and completion are attainable and mirror the institution's long-term strengths in these areas. The current Strategic Plan articulates goals for retention and completion in [Recommendation 9](#). The primary goal is to maintain a 10-year-rolling average first-year retention rate of 85%. Over the recent three-year period of 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, Saint Mary's has maintained an average first-year retention rate of 88%. Twenty-five years of retention and persistence rates, including recent rates by race/ethnicity and Pell, is included in the [Fact Book](#). In an effort to continue to enhance already strong retention rates and to set ambitious goals, an [Ad Hoc Committee of the Board of Trustees](#) recently asked the Administration to increase its retention rate by one percentage point to 89%.

[Boldly Forward](#) calls for maintaining the six-year graduation rate at a 10-year-rolling average of 76%. Over the last three six-year graduating cohorts (first-year, full-time Students entering in 2006, 2007, 2008), the six-year graduation rate has averaged 77%, and the most recent 10-year-rolling average was 77%. The [Fact Book](#) provides a twenty-five year history of completion rates. For comparison purposes, [recent national six-year graduation rate data](#) put the national average at 59% for all four-year institutions and 65% for private, non-profit colleges.

Saint Mary's is committed to the timely success of admitted Students. The "[Four-Year Graduation Promise](#)" expresses that commitment, appearing in the undergraduate [Bulletin](#) and on the [Academic Affairs and First-Year Advising website](#). In fact, Saint Mary's Graduates historically have completed their degrees in four years at an [average rate of 93%](#). While the Promise applies to Students who meet its criteria and who do not experience delays due to factors such as completion of additional majors, even Students who do not meet the [guidelines](#) can expect to complete their education in a timely fashion, as evidenced by our already strong rates of completion.

#### 4.C.2.

Summary of information regularly collected and analyzed on retention and completion:

1. A [weekly internal retention report](#) tracking first-year retention of the current cohort compared to previous cohorts on a week-to-week basis which is distributed to relevant Administrators with data summaries showing Fall-to-Spring and Fall-to-Fall rates.
2. Students wishing to withdraw from Saint Mary's [are directed](#) to the [Office of Academic Affairs](#). This Office and academic advisors first direct any such Student to [Campus support systems](#) that might enable the Student to persist. Academic Affairs also administers exit interviews to uncover policies and procedures that might be improved to enhance the potential for Students to succeed. [Interview summaries](#) are distributed to other relevant offices each year.
3. When a Student withdraws, she is also automatically sent an invitation to participate in a College-designed [Withdrawing Student Survey](#). This instrument, launched in Spring 2014, provides [additional insights](#) on why Students withdraw from the College.
4. The Behavioral Concerns Team (BCT), established seven years ago, creates a coordinated, team approach that fosters communication among departments and divisions about Students who may be having difficulties and ensures that departments share with one another the distinct information each holds about Students. The BCT meets weekly to discuss struggling students and develops a plan of action for each one. Members of the team include Administrators from Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, Campus Ministry, and Security. Each Student issue is logged into [Maxient](#), the College's online-incident-report system, as is the follow-up. The team's work allows for data to be collected and utilized for improved understanding of the reasons why Students leave the College. In AY14-15 there were more than [150 referrals](#) to the BCT, indicating the high level of support provided. A [recent report](#) for those not retained from the Class of 2018 indicates a variety of reasons for withdrawal. More importantly, it shows that the BCT had identified all but one Student as "at-risk" for retention prior to withdrawal or stop-out.
5. The Office of Institutional Research collects and compiles considerable information on retention, persistence, and graduation rates for both internal and external audiences. Information on retention and completion will also be collected for graduate programs once they begin in fall 2015.
  - Annual figures for retention and completion are compiled and published in the [Fact Book](#).
  - Saint Mary's monitors its retention and graduation rates in comparison to its peer group of similar institutions. The [2014 Peer Retention](#) report is an example. This information is included each fall in a report to the Board of Trustees, benchmarking several admissions, financial aid, and student life metrics ([BOT Sept. 2013 Report Card](#)).
  - Periodically, IR undertakes a much deeper analysis of factors related to retention. The recent report [Retention at Saint Mary's: What are the Predictors?](#) links the first-year retention of the 2008-2011 entering cohorts to the results of the *CIRP* survey to identify risk factors for Students not retained after their first year.
  - The College frequently monitors retention for various subgroups, including Student athletes and participants in special programs, such as the Student Success Program and Belles Connect ([Tables, AY12-13](#)).
  - Recently, IR dedicated one of its [monthly campus-update research notes](#) to the topic of persistence and completion in order to better educate the Campus community on the College's effectiveness in this area.
6. The College plans to use the technology tool *Degree Works* to better understand various aspects of

degree completion, including length-of-degree completion, patterns of waivers and substitutions, etc. Persistent patterns will be brought to the attention of departments to consider curricular changes that eliminate the need for these accommodations.

#### 4.C.3.

The Vice-President for Student Affairs is tasked with formal oversight of retention initiatives, but retention is a widely-shared responsibility. Student Affairs clearly has a large piece, but many major day-to-day responsibilities for activities impacting retention fall within the Academic Division, particularly with Faculty and the Office of Academic Affairs.

In 2009, as part of the Lilly-funded [Cross-Currents Program](#), the Office of First-Year Studies restructured the first-year-advising experience. One of the stated goals was to provide incoming Students with a substantive connection to the Institution, aiding their first-year transition. Students were paired with one of their fall Instructors who taught, advised and shared in a college-wide common experience. The Program was [so successful](#) that the College continued it following the end of the Lilly-Grant period. The first-year Faculty-Advising Program is now structured around a [one-credit course](#) that pairs Faculty and Students in the fall semester and includes several common first-year experiences. (See 3.D.4)

The [Belles Connect](#) program, initiated by Student Affairs in Fall 2011, is intended to address the retention and success of historically-underrepresented Students at the College. This three-day, pre-orientation bridge program provides additional mentoring and preparation for college life. Beginning in Fall 2015, first-generation Students are invited to join the Program. Initial data on [retention](#) and [focus groups](#) of participants suggest the program's overwhelming success at improving the Student experience. (4.B and 5.C describe Program modifications based on these focus groups.)

In response to the Board of Trustees' *Ad Hoc* Committee's goal to increase retention by 1%, a [number of initiatives have been developed, implemented, and funded](#), including:

- Piloting a technology system, *EBI MapWorks*, designed to track students at risk for leaving the institution based on factors research has shown are correlated to retention. Ultimately, this system did not provide additional insights beyond what was learned at the local level through the Behavioral Concerns Team and other College Staff and so was discontinued.
- Development of a robust exit-interview program designed to increase insight into causes of withdrawal by connecting College Staff with withdrawing Students.
- Adjusting Student Affairs parent-weekend programing to focus more on Student retention.
- Working closely with Students who are more than 80 days past due on financial payments to the College to ensure that they and their families can effectively manage payment issues.

#### 4.C.4

Saint Mary's follows standard IPEDS definitions to establish first-year, full-time cohorts entering in the fall for tracking and reporting retention and graduation rates. The College has a Student population that largely follows this traditional cohort path making IPEDS definitions ideal for tracking retention, persistence, and graduation rates. That said, the six-year completion rate accounting for transfer Students [exceeds 90% according to the National Student Clearinghouse](#), if Students who leave Saint Mary's are tracked to completion at other institutions.

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## **4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary**

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### **Summary**

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#### **Strengths**

- Establishment of a regular cycle of external and internal program review
- Establishment of a improved comprehensive general education and programmatic assessment cycle found deficient during the previous HLC visit
- Significant efforts to support a culture of assessment through Faculty development
- Excellent long-standing retention and completions rates

#### **Future considerations**

- Continue efforts to revise the internal review process in response to experience and practice
- Consistently use best practices in assessment across all academic programs
- Increase the usefulness and application of student learning assessment results

### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

### Argument

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#### 5.A.1.

##### Fiscal

Saint Mary's has a sound financial base, as evidenced by its audited financial statements ([FY06](#), [FY07](#), [FY08](#), [FY09](#), [FY10](#), [FY11](#), [FY12](#), [FY13](#), [FY14](#), and [FY15\(Draft\)](#)). The College has a history of relatively-balanced operations on a cash basis, though negative on a full-accrual basis, and relies primarily on student-related revenues, endowment spending, and contributions. Net-tuition-and-fees revenue decreased from \$28.1 million in 2009 to \$26.6 million in 2014 as a result of a particularly-small 2010 entering class and an increasing overall tuition-discount rate. Net-tuition-and-fees revenue increased in 2015 to \$27.2 million. The net-tuition-and-fees revenue decrease was offset by growth in endowment spending and contributions. These financial resources provide an offset to declines in enrollment and net-tuition revenue with FY2015 expendable resources equal to 229% of operations and 261% of outstanding debt. The College has [total net assets of \\$238,008,961](#). When divided by our Fall 2015 FTE, this comes to approximately \$149,409 per FTE Student. In terms of assets, Saint Mary's has a sound financial-resource base.

The College is aware of the serious challenges related to stabilizing and growing its net-tuition revenue. The [Strategic Plan](#) directly identifies recruitment and retaining students as a key goal towards this end. Specific [strategies](#) include increasing first-year retention, recruiting Latina and international students, recruiting athletes, and better articulating the value of a Saint Mary's education. An *Ad Hoc* committee of the Board of Trustees worked specifically on developing methods of revenue enhancement and [approved funding](#) to launch a branding initiative that will

redesign College materials and the external website, to increase staffing within Enrollment Management, to improve retention efforts, and accelerate the launch of graduate programs. Likewise, efforts continue to increase Alumnae participation in annual giving following the successful conclusion of the [Faith Always, Action Now](#) campaign. Cost-saving measures have also been successfully realized through energy and Employee [health-care-plan savings](#).

The US Department of Education offers an external measure of financial responsibility in its annual [Financial Responsibility Composite Score](#) calculated from the Institution's audited financial statements. To be considered financially responsible, institutions must reach a score of 1.5 or higher. In each of the last seven years of available data, Saint Mary's has remained above the minimum threshold for financial responsibility and in five of those years received the highest possible score (3.0). These strong scores are included in [data submitted annually](#) to the HLC.

In June 2015, the outlook for Saint Mary's was revised by [Moody's](#) as stable and the A3 rating on its revenue bonds was affirmed.

Saint Mary's endowment provides a stable source of funding during periods of flat tuition revenues. For the year ending May 31, 2015, the [value of the endowment](#) was \$164.9 million and the year's spending payout, unrestricted and restricted, was \$6.6 million. Beginning in June 2012, the College significantly changed its long-term-pool investment strategy and purchased units in the [University of Notre Dame Investment Pool](#). This opportunity is available only to Holy Cross religious affiliates. The Board has established an [Endowment Fund spending policy](#) that aims to balance the long-term objective of maintaining the purchasing power of the endowment with the goal of providing funds to underwrite the educational needs of current and future Students.

The Board of Trustees has approved increasing tuition and fees to address inflation-driven costs, increases in financial aid packages, and other market forces. For [AY15-16](#), total tuition and fees were \$37,400 and average room-and-board costs were \$11,320. A [ten-year history of Student costs](#) is also published. More than 90% of Students [receive Institutional-aid](#) and the [average Institutional-aid package](#) in 2014-15 was \$18,929. A challenge for Saint Mary's is the decline in the amount of grant and scholarship funds awarded to Students from federal and state sources. From [2005-2006 to 2014-15](#), the average federal-aid package received by undergraduates increased 56% compared to an average increase in Institutional-aid of 92%. Similarly, the average state-aid package has decreased by 5%, leaving Institutional dollars to fund Student need. True to its Mission, Saint Mary's takes very seriously its obligation to help meet the financial need of Students, which has increased since the economic recession of 2008. For example, in AY06-07, 12% of first-year Students were [Pell-grant recipients](#). This increased to 23% for first-year Students entering in Fall 2014. The College has addressed the challenge of Students' growing financial need in part through [endowed-scholarship initiatives](#) in its recent Capital Campaign, [Faith Always, Action Now](#). At its conclusion, the Campaign's endowed-scholarship initiatives [were funded at 172% of the Campaign's goal](#). These initiatives complement the strong foundation of annual revenue streams and endowment, continuing to maintain the College's sound financial base.

### **Physical Facilities** (see also 3.D.4)

In 2014, Saint Mary's commissioned Ayers Saint Gross (ASG) to provide a Comprehensive Master Plan focused on facilities and Campus space needs. During AY14-15, Ayers Saint Gross [began collecting feedback from the Campus community](#) and initiated planning sessions to set goals and priorities. The final plan is expected in Fall 2015.

Saint Mary's has five buildings dedicated to housing Students. From Fall 2005 to Fall 2014, [an](#)

[average of 85%](#) of the main-campus Student body has resided on Campus, reflecting our residential mission. A [residency requirement](#) exists with the College guaranteeing housing for Students. The College can accommodate more than 1,300 Students (including female graduate Students) in the following Halls: [Le Mans](#), [Holy Cross](#), [McCandless](#), [Regina](#) and [Opus](#). All residence halls have necessary living amenities on each floor. ASG is in conversation with the President of the Sisters of the Holy Cross about accommodating the College's future housing needs as the Sister's housing needs decline.

Saint Mary's currently has seven buildings dedicated to educating Students through coursework. A short summary of [recent enhancements](#) to each building is attached, including significant renovations of the Science Hall and Greenhouse space for research and teaching now underway. A recent utilization [report](#) from Fall 2014 demonstrates sufficient space available throughout the day to house classes, but this space may not be distributed optimally. For example, the Communicative Science and Disorders Program will already have outgrown its space with the advent of the new Master of Science in Speech Pathology, concerns considered in the new Master Plan. (For performance and clinical spaces, see 3.D.4.) Support for a planned remodeling of Library space has been sought in the [Faith Always, Action Now](#) campaign. The remodeled space will bring Students and Library Faculty together to encourage information literacy.

The Office of Facilities supports Mission by maintaining everything inside and outside the building envelope of the facilities. In 2009, the consultant firm Fanning and Howey completed a comprehensive [full building-condition audit](#), identifying buildings with the most need in regard to safety, exterior envelope, mechanical infrastructure, and physical appearance. Current space utilization was also noted within the report. Deferred maintenance presents challenges but the debt policy of the College anticipates these by refinancing existing debt to free up capital for infrastructure projects. The upcoming Master Plan also includes initiatives to this end. Facilities maintain accessible electronic files related to [building-floor-plans](#), [mechanical](#), [electrical](#), fire-protection, card-access, [plumbing-systems](#), and [asbestos documentation](#). Facilities update the [Fire Department Site Plan](#) utilized by the Notre Dame Fire Department to identify critical information and more efficiently respond to disasters within buildings.

## **Technology**

The Information-Technology team consists of four core areas of support: Administrative Computing, Network Services and Support, Instructional Technology, and Help Desk/ResNet. The College's IT infrastructure is sound and continually evolving. More than 80 learning spaces are equipped with computer technology and there are over 300 computers available across Campus. In 2013 and 2014, IT added over 500 new wireless-access points and increased internet bandwidth by 500%, enhancing the overall network experience of Students and Staff. The College added an additional Director of Instructional and Support Technology for Graduate Programs and remodeled an underused area for Faculty training. A description of the core areas and recent improvements and enhancements is available [here](#). (See also 3.D.4.) The College has adopted an [IT Strategic Plan](#) that includes recommendations for expansion of needed services through 2017. Recommendations include the introduction of a college portal, the integration of cloud services (*Hobsons*, *IModules*) for administrative needs, the integration of *Degree Works* into our degree auditing, and the inclusion of an eFellowship Program for Faculty.

## **Human Resources**

Saint Mary's employed [397 full-time](#) and [116 part-time Employees](#) as of the Fall 2014 Human Resources census. The [Fact Book](#) provides a full-time Employee-breakdown by category.

[Instructional Faculty as defined by AAUP](#) for Fall 2014 consists of 129 full-time and 66 part-time Faculty for a full-time equivalent of 151 Faculty. The [average class size](#) in Fall 2015 was 17.5 and the [student-to-faculty ratio](#) was 10-to-1. The Board of Trustees adopted a new student-to-faculty ratio goal of 11-to-1 at its October 2014 meeting. While Saint Mary's is proud of its small classes and one-on-one Student-Faculty contact, it walks in the tension between small class sizes and the efficient use of resources. To ensure sound planning when adding new instructional positions, departments are asked to provide [evidence](#) and [a staffing plan](#) justifying the need. These are outlined in a [process document](#) developed for Department Chairs on hiring new instructional Faculty. All education completed by individuals hired is verified via transcripts from their degree-granting institutions (see 3.C.1 and 3.C.2). The hiring process for other Institutional Staff requires a new or revised [position description](#) that includes necessary qualifications prior to posting and filling the position. All new and replacement positions at the College are reviewed by the Cabinet.

### 5.A.2

The Vice-President for Finance and Administration outlines the [budget process](#), emphasizing the importance of the College's Mission and avoiding allocations not aligned with Mission. The commitment to Mission is reflected in resource allocations during this period of declining net-tuition-and-fee revenue. In FY2014, [instructional programs and academic-support expenditures](#) were 51.0% of operating expenditures. At peer institutions, the average spent on these two categories in FY2014 was 47.5%. The recently completed [Faith Always, Action Now](#) campaign demonstrates the College's financial commitment to educating Students through [funding initiatives directly connected to this mission](#). The College gives attention to Mission-driven resource allocation in numerous ways, for example, asking select donors to make contributions offsetting the cost of regional events held in cities across the country during the *Faith Always, Action Now* campaign. Several of these events were completely underwritten by donors.

Likewise, the College maintains a [Donor-Funded Construction-Projects Policy](#) ensuring that any new construction project is fiscally sound and won't adversely impact the College's fulfillment of its Mission. Saint Mary's has received an Indirect Cost Rate of 52% from the Federal Office of Budgets and Management. Effective January 2014, the College established an [Indirect-Cost-Distribution Policy](#) for grants in which indirect costs are recovered. The distribution of funds from the indirect cost awarded by the grantor are: 65% to the College, 25% to the department awarded the grant, and 10% to the vice-president's office supervising the grant.

### 5.A.3

Initiatives from the current Strategic Plan, [Boldly Forward](#), were developed to be realistic in light of current resources. The President speaks to this in the [third paragraph](#) of the Plan's prologue. The fact that Saint Mary's has [achieved or continued](#) many of the goals in its previous Strategic Plan, ["A Path to Leadership"](#) (2006-2011), demonstrates that strategic goals have been realistic and achievable. [Strategies, tactics and initiatives](#) in the current Strategic Plan were developed with costs in mind. In some instances, the College has needed to be flexible with its strategic recommendations in light of current resources and, as such, [delayed work](#) on recommendations where necessary. Additionally, all administrative units develop goals linked to the Strategic Plan and evaluate them based on collected evidence. This [continuous evaluation process](#) helps ensure that goals are achievable and realistic as the process takes place annually.

### 5.A.4

[Institutional position descriptions](#) outline the minimum education and experience required for each

position. Staff are expected to come to us well-trained, but, where necessary, training in-house is offered. Ongoing training is available on a one-to-one basis in skill areas such as Banner, PRISM, and Excel. For example, [recent training](#) from IT focused on the SQL reporting language. Department travel budgets are used judiciously in sending key Staff members to conferences in their fields. Recently, College personnel have taken advantage of less-costly training through teleconferencing technologies. When available for Staff training, resources are maximized by opening training to as many Employees as possible. In most semesters, the President's Council on Multicultural Affairs advances diversity development through [Community Dialogues](#) that bring together all Employees to discuss inclusivity and Institutional climate. Additionally, in order to better educate the Campus community on Title IX issues, [mandatory training](#) has been provided to all Employees beginning AY14-15. The College recognizes that budget allocations for the professional development of Staff have fallen below optimal levels. Recognizing its importance, the College has included improving professional development as a strategy toward *Boldly Forward's* Recommendation 20, which is focused on [improving the work environment and increasing compensation](#) for Faculty and Staff. Additional effort is still needed.

[More than 90%](#) of full-time instructional faculty in Fall 2014 held a doctorate or other terminal degree (see 3.C.2 for specifics on faculty credentials). No courses at Saint Mary's are currently taught by teaching assistants (see 3.C.2 and 3.C.6). The [Center for Academic Innovation's teaching and research grants](#) as well as [budgeted resources](#) supporting travel to professional conferences help faculty remain current in their field. The College's [sabbatical program](#) allows faculty to apply every six years for a sabbatical taken in the seventh year (see 3.C.4 for faculty development).

#### 5.A.5

The President's Cabinet also functions as the Budget Committee and determines the annual operating and capital budgets prior to the Board's consideration and approval at its April meeting. Administrative officers prepare budgets for their departments in a consultative [process](#) with budget managers in their respective divisions. As part of this process, a budget model is created under the leadership of the Vice-President for Finance and Administration. The model plans/forecasts revenues and expenditures based on past, current, and planned future activities. The model includes an analysis of the sources of funds and trends affecting those sources. As a means of attending to the College's financial health, the model also relies, in part, on enrollment and financial aid projections to better predict and plan endowment funds, contributions, grants and awards, and other sources of income. The [Budget Committee](#) reviews the above-mentioned model as it is continually revised with the latest data. In concert with the President, this Committee reviews the total College budget, including proposed changes to tuition and fees. In addition to a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year, a projected budget for the next three years is developed. The President and the Vice-President for Finance and Administration present the proposed budget to the [Finance and Budget Committee of the Board of Trustees](#), who in turn consider and make recommendations ensuring the fiscal stability and long-term health of the College.

The Business Office, under the leadership of the Vice-President for Finance and Administration, has implemented processes to review and monitor all financial activity. Generally-accepted accounting principles are employed to ensure consistent and transparent financial management and a strong internal control environment. The College undergoes an annual independent audit of its financial statements by Crowe Horwath, a nationally recognized firm of independent accountants. As an entity that expends more than \$500,000 of federal awards in a year, the College is subject to a [Single, or A-133, Audit](#) in order to provide assurance to the US government regarding the management and use of federal funds by the College. This audit encompasses an examination of a recipient's financial records, financial statements, federal-award transactions and expenditures, general management of its

operations, and its internal-control systems. Saint Mary's has always received an unqualified audit opinion on both the financial and compliance components of the Single Audit.

The Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees serves as the representative of the Board, helping to ensure that the Board and the College meet their fiduciary, statutory, and compliance obligations to their multiple constituencies. The Audit Committee has responsibility for oversight of the College's risk-management process, financial practices, internal controls, financial management, and standards of conduct. The Board approves the annual budget, and members of the Finance and Budget Committee review the budget on a regular basis throughout the year.

All account activity is tracked in the College's ERP system, Banner. [Budget reports](#) for each unit are prepared monthly and department heads can monitor their budgets online. It is expected that department heads do so regularly. The [Unit Goals and Evaluation Plans](#) may be consulted and considered within each division when budgeting to ensure effective progress on the Strategic Plan. Additionally, Saint Mary's recently reinstated a [budget analyst position](#). The analyst assists in budget preparation, provides regular, comprehensive monitoring, and helps to ensure that spending is in line with the College's Mission and goals.

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## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

### Argument

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#### 5.B.1-3

Saint Mary's engages its internal constituencies in governance; it has a knowledgeable Governing Board that provides oversight and meets legal and fiduciary responsibilities; all of its constituents are structurally-enabled in setting academic requirements, policy and processes. The argument below shows that the following entities promote effective leadership and support a collaborative process: Board of Trustees, President, Faculty, Staff, and Students.

#### Organization

The Board of Trustees governs the College. While the President and Board are chiefly responsible for the governance and operation of Saint Mary's, [all members of the College community](#) participate in shared governance. The College's [Governance Manual](#) fully articulates the governance structure. The argument below outlines how internal constituencies participate in Saint Mary's College governance.

[Board of Trustees](#) (see also 2.C.1-2)

Committees of the Board exist at various levels, which allow for constituent participation. [Standing committees](#) of the Board include the Executive, Audit, College Relations, Academic Affairs, Finance and Budget, Investment, Mission, Student Life, and Trusteeship Committees. The Board convenes in October, February, and April of each year for regular meetings and during June for a summer retreat. During the regular meetings, the Board receives reports from the Administration, Faculty, Staff, and Students. The committees of the Board meet separately and report to the full Board. In preparation for Board meetings, the administrative officers of the College prepare relevant documents and reports that are made available to Board members [electronically](#). [Representation on the Board](#) includes a broad range of professionals as well as members of the Congregation of Holy Cross, Alumnae, Faculty, and a Student representative.

New members of the Board of Trustees participate in an [orientation session](#) in October, providing them information on their responsibilities as Trustees. Likewise, Trustees receive annually a copy of the Saint Mary's College [Fact Book](#) and other appropriate documents through a [secure website](#), including [Dashboards](#) and [other reports](#) from members of the President's Cabinet and Faculty

Assembly.

### President

The President is appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Corporation of Saint Mary's College and serves at the pleasure of the Board. The Board vests authority in the President, including responsibility for all College educational and managerial affairs. [Specific responsibilities](#) of the President may be found in the [Governance Manual](#). The President's Cabinet includes Vice-Presidents from all divisions and the Executive Assistant to the President. The Cabinet works to integrate policy among all administrative branches, coordinates work of the Administration, and advises the President on matters central to the administration of the College. The Office of Institutional Research reports to the President and provides data and analytic support for the President and all College offices. This includes, but it is not limited to, internal needs related to planning and external reporting requirements (IPEDS, etc.).

The Budget Committee ensures that all administrative and academic areas are represented in the budgeting process. The [Committee on Rank and Tenure](#) reports to the President and establishes criteria and procedures for tenure and promotion of Faculty, and reviews and recommends candidates to the President for tenure and promotion. The Provost, Dean of Faculty, and three elected tenured Faculty members above the rank of Assistant Professor compose its membership.

The Academic Affairs Council (AAC), chaired by the President, has become the primary body in which shared governance occurs between Faculty and Administration. [This Committee](#) includes significant elected Faculty representation, including the Chair of Faculty Assembly, appointed academic Administrators, and two Student representatives appointed through the Student Government Association. Policy changes originating with [College committees that report to the Council](#) or initiated by the Provost or Dean of Faculty are shared with this body as recommendations to the President. The AAC supports collaborative involvement by Faculty, Administrators, and Students in decisions that affect academic policy and governance. This forum allows for the expression of concerns and responses to them. [Discussion](#) of the establishment of an [internal review policy](#) provides an example. The mediated dialogue seen in this discussion between the Council, Faculty members on the Council, and the Chair of Faculty Assembly represents one of the ways that shared governance occurs at Saint Mary's.

The President must consult with the Faculty Assembly before acting on recommendations concerning major changes of academic policy. This occurred in 2010 when the Associate Dean of Faculty, on behalf of the Faculty *Ad Hoc* Committee on General Education, [recommended the adoption](#) of a new general education curriculum, entitled "[The Sophia Program in Liberal Learning.](#)" [The President had previously consulted](#) with the Faculty Assembly, heard a variety of opinions, invited feedback, and ultimately presented the Sophia Program to the Board of Trustees, recommending its adoption.

[Other bodies exist](#) (e.g. Student Affairs Council, President's Council on Multicultural Affairs, Parent's Council, Mission Council, and President's Circle) to assist the President on important matters central to Mission. These standing committees have a diverse representation including Faculty, Administrators, Staff, and Students, and report to the President.

[Faculty](#) (see also 2.C.2)

The Faculty at Saint Mary's are central to the governance of the Institution, especially in academic matters. As stated in the [Preamble to the Constitution of the Faculty Assembly](#), Saint Mary's Faculty

are "obligated to contribute to the realization of the objectives of the College as stated in the By-Laws of the Board of Trustees; therefore, it is organized into a Faculty Assembly." According to [Article II of its Constitution](#), the purpose of the Faculty Assembly is "...to furnish an ordered structure for the faculty as a body to carry out its responsibility as officers of instruction." Membership consists of those holding the academic rank of instructor or higher and professional librarians. Those who hold an administrative rank higher than department Chair are not included, with the exception of the Dean of Faculty who attends only when invited. The President and the Provost are also invited to the Faculty Assembly on occasion. Decisions of the Faculty Assembly are referred to relevant College committees, councils, College officers, or the President. The Assembly [elects](#) faculty members who serve on Faculty Assembly and College committees/councils and as the faculty member of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committees of Faculty Assembly and the officers of the Board of Trustees meet twice a year, enabling Faculty to dialogue regularly with the Board of Trustees. Faculty are often invited to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees and serve on many other Board committees. The Faculty Compensation Committee, composed entirely of elected Faculty, prepares an [annual report](#) to the Finance and Budget Committee of the Board, with recommendations regarding salaries and benefits. Across committees at Saint Mary's where academic matters are discussed, faculty Representation takes priority and as such, elected membership originates with the [Faculty Assembly](#).

Despite these structures, the College recognizes concerns expressed by many Faculty over administrative and Faculty collaboration, one example being the implementation of the internal review process. Implementation was suspended in AY13-14 due to a vote in the Faculty Assembly. Additional challenges arose as a result of the College's decision to accelerate the review of many of its small programs in AY14-15. Faculty in those programs questioned this decision and other aspects of the process. With three decisions possible (affirm the program, give a grace period for recovery, or eliminate the program), all the programs reviewed in the first two years had been given an affirmation. Two language programs received the 2nd recommendation from the Faculty-led PRC, i.e. to develop recovery plans due to unsustainably-low enrollments. Ultimately, one of the programs (Italian) voluntarily requested termination of its major and the President made the decision to eliminate the French major. Needless to say, any decision to terminate a program, especially one of such long standing as our French major is both painful and controversial. Other examples include a decision by the President to split the position of Senior Vice-President and Dean of Faculty into two positions, i.e. a Provost/SVPAA and a Dean of Faculty. Faculty disagreed with the vetting process used, i.e. consulting the Academic Affairs Council and the Faculty as a whole through invited emails instead of consultation with the Faculty Assembly.

Results from the [2014 HERI Faculty Survey](#) indicate that many Faculty are not satisfied with the degree to which the Administration considers Faculty concerns when making policy. Similarly, there is a feeling among some Faculty that they are more at odds with Campus Administration compared to Faculty nationally. Both Administrators and Faculty are working to increase dialogue around this issue. Efforts to improve this situation have begun. These include the establishment of evaluations of the [President](#) and [Provost](#) by Faculty as well as increasing dialogue among (1) the [Executive Committee of Faculty Assembly and the President, Provost, and Dean of Faculty](#) through regular monthly meetings, and (2) the Faculty Assembly and [the Board of Trustees](#) and [the President](#). Faculty are exploring ways to strengthen shared governance and have recently put forth a [motion](#) to consider the establishment of a Faculty Senate. Sometimes collaboration is fruitful, as in a recent consultation with the Faculty Assembly regarding whether to reduce the TIAA-CREF contribution or to delay the Faculty/Staff compensation plan. The Faculty Assembly have recommended the latter and the Administration have pursued their recommendation with the Board of Trustees.

*Staff*

Staff are an important internal constituent at the College. The President has been committed to appointing Staff representatives on many of the above-mentioned committees and other *Ad Hoc* committees created over the last ten years. The President also regularly [updates](#) Employees on key developments at the College during the year through email, at all College meetings with the President, through a series of teas with invited Staff and Faculty, and at the annual [College Forum](#). These opportunities allow for questions and dialogue with the President.

[Students](#) (see also 2.C.2 and 3.E.1-2 *Women's Leadership*)

Saint Mary's believes it is critical that the Student voice is consistently present in the governance of the College. Students hold a voting Trustee position on the Board, representation on Councils and Committees, and membership in the [Student Government Association](#). The Student Affairs Council, which has significant Student representation, advises the President on matters impacting Student life and is an important voice in procedures related to a search for the Vice-President of Student Affairs. The Committee on Student Affairs reports to the Student Affairs Council and has among its representatives the Student Body President, the Student Government Association Vice-President, the President of the Residence Hall Association, and the President of the Student Diversity Board. This Committee provides a campus-wide forum for discussing Student life and giving recommendations and feedback to the Division for Student Affairs. In addition to these committees focused on Student life, Student representatives sit on many other College committees such as the Academic Affairs Council and the President's Council on Multicultural Affairs. Finally, the Student Body President sits on the Student Life Committee of the Board of Trustees, giving voice at the highest level to issues pertaining to Student life.

Students also participate in shared governance through the Student Government Association (SGA). The SGA is an autonomous governance body of the students. The [SGA Constitution](#) and the [mission-and-structure](#) statement outline the SGA's mission, structure, and procedures. Saint Mary's will create a graduate student association when its graduate Students begin in AY15-16. Data from the *College Senior Survey* suggests Saint Mary's undergraduate Students [are more engaged](#) in Student government than students at other Catholic colleges; 83% of Seniors in 2014 reported voting at least occasionally in Student elections compared to just 64% of students at other Catholic colleges.

### *Regular Meetings*

The College has developed structures that contribute to shared governance among Faculty, Administration, and Staff. The President's Cabinet, made up of the divisional Vice-Presidents, meets weekly to provide updates and guidance to the President. Within Academic Affairs, the Provost holds [regular meetings](#) with her [Academic Administrators](#) to ensure the effective function and collaboration with the Division. She also meets with those Faculty and Staff groups planning graduate programs. The Dean of Faculty regularly convenes the [Council of Chairs](#), which includes all academic department Chairs and Program Directors/Coordinators to ensure effective communication. Regular committee meetings are scheduled within all divisions. Most of these committees have membership that includes Faculty, Administrators, Staff and Students. Regular department and Staff meetings take place in all divisions and departments to facilitate proper communication and effectiveness of College operations.

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## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

### Argument

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#### 5.C.1

Mission [continually guides](#) the allocation of resources at Saint Mary's. The [current](#) and [past](#) Strategic Plans reflect this (see 1.A.3). Progress on the Strategic Plan is [monitored](#) and funded accordingly. At all Board meetings, Trustees are provided a printed version of the [College's Mission](#) and the Mission Statement is read aloud at the beginning of each Board meeting. This serves to keep Mission at the forefront of all discussion and subsequent decision-making.

Approximately half of all operating expenditures is allocated to instruction and academic support. This represents a [greater percentage](#) than that of peer institutions. Promoting a life of intellectual vigor is done centrally through the College's rich academic programs and, as such, the College funds them accordingly. The College continually assesses how it is allocating resources in alignment with its Mission, as evidenced by a [recent presentation](#) by the Vice-President for Finance and Administration to the Board of Trustees.

Providing access to an outstanding education is a pillar of the Saint Mary's Mission and so the College invests a significant portion of its budget on [financial aid](#) each year. This allocation allows affordable access to a Saint Mary's education for Students with limited financial resources. The *New York Times* recently [recognized](#) Saint Mary's as one of the most economically-diverse top colleges in the nation, reflecting the College's commitment to the core value of economic justice. Further details on the College's response to the financial need of Students are outlined in the College's [Fact Book](#).

Admission to the College is a need-blind, holistic review of Students' academic and extra-curricular accomplishments. Attempting to balance a competitive academic profile with affordability, the Vice-President for Enrollment Management utilizes the services of Hardwick-Day, a financial aid consulting firm. Detailed analysis of past enrollment outcomes and predictive modeling informs a financial aid awarding strategy. Once deployed, the strategy is [monitored](#) and adjusted accordingly.

The [fifth principle](#) and [Recommendation 23](#) of *Boldly Forward* call for the continued commitment to sustainability in all its forms aligned with Mission. While limited resources have admittedly not allowed for as much progress as hoped, efforts supported by College funds have been ongoing, as

outlined in the recent [2009-2015 Campus Green Initiatives Report](#) by the Going Green Committee.

In addition to the College's academic programs, critical Mission-centered offices such as the [Office for Civic and Social Engagement](#), Office of Student Involvement, Office of Multicultural Affairs, [Center for Spirituality](#), [Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership](#) and [Campus Ministry](#) are included in the allocation of resources. These offices play a central role in fulfilling Saint Mary's Mission of educating women to actively make a difference in the world and promoting a life of religious sensibility and social responsibility. Students are able to connect with the diversity of the outside world through civic engagement, spirituality, and faith. (See also 1.C.2, 1.D.1, 3.E.)

As part of the [Faith Always, Action Now](#) campaign, the College has created four new awards to recognize, inspire, and support Faculty excellence in 1) teaching, 2) scholarship, 3) service, and 4) Senior comprehensive mentorship. Donors have provided funding for all four awards. Likewise, with a realized bequest of \$1 million during the *Faith Always, Action Now* campaign, the College has established and endowed the [Neuhoff Summer-Science Research Communities](#) that supports Faculty-Student research.

### 5.C.2

In the past, planning and budgeting was primarily guided by strategic planning, but strategic planning itself was not always guided by explicit evaluation and assessment. This has changed at Saint Mary's. Illustrative examples presented below include the addition of graduate programs, systematic evaluation within administrative units, and use of key performance indicators for committees of the Board of Trustees, among others. The argument below shows that assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting are linked processes.

At the Board of Trustees level, most committees have recently initiated the development of [Key-Performance Indicators \(KPIs\)](#) to guide and understand progress towards strategic goals. Performance on these metrics impact and inform budgeting decisions promoting efficient use of resources that achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan.

The College identified the importance of implementing a systematic approach to evaluating its administrative units and tracing their progress towards goals in the Strategic Plan and in response has instituted a [Unit-Evaluation Process](#) in AY13-14. All units collaborate with their Vice-Presidents to set goals that align with the Mission and Strategic Plan ([Unit-Evaluation Template](#)). Throughout the process, units develop methods to measure their progress, track their results and plan for changes based on those results. Results can be used to inform budgeting.

Assessment plans for all academic programs are reviewed annually with the Dean of Faculty. The Dean recently added a response option (# 6) in the [annual assessment report](#) form, which allows departments to articulate resource needs related to assessment results, thereby creating a formal connection between assessment and budgeting. The results of the assessment of the Basic-Writing Proficiency Program provides an example of budgeting based on assessment. As indicated in the [HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning Results Forum Impact Report](#), assessment findings indicated that Students were not benefiting from a two-semester course with an intensive focus on writing. Courses were restructured and the two-semester course offering was eliminated in Fall 2012, reducing the adjunct-salary needs. As described in 4.B, the Writing Proficiency Program continues to use its assessment results as a means of determining what resources and support would best assist Students. One key response was the establishment of an additional Writing Center location to better serve Students. In another example, as a part of their [assessment](#), the Psychology Department conducted an exit survey of graduating majors who believed that they were not achieving

a particular course's learning outcomes. The Department determined that it needed to realign the specialization of one of its tenured lines and a budgetary decision was made to shift funds in order to adequately equip the lab required for the specialization of the new Faculty member.

Assessment of the general education curriculum (the Sophia Program) comes under the purview of two Faculty committees (the [Sophia Oversight Committee](#) and the [Assessment Committee](#)). The Oversight Committee led the implementation of the Sophia Program [assessment plan](#). [Results](#) are already available and being reviewed by the Oversight and Assessment Committees. The Oversight Committee has received and reviewed recommendations for changes to the Sophia Program, some of which have been sent to the [Academic Affairs Council for approval](#).

In appropriate cases, the College utilizes outside expertise to assist with planning. For instance, the current Strategic Plan contains an initiative to begin graduate programs, and this decision was not made without external assessment and evaluation. External consultants from the Council of Graduate Studies, followed by teams from appropriate fields, were brought in to evaluate the readiness of the College to begin the programs. A marketing firm [assessed the marketability](#) of the proposed graduate programs. On the basis of these reports, the College applied for and received \$1,000,000 each for two of its programs and budgeted the revenue produced by the programs to cover its costs. Prior to the start of the program, quasi-endowment funding covered the start-up costs of these new initiatives.

As part of good practice, Saint Mary's evaluates the cost effectiveness associated with its programs and services. The College hired the Pappas Group to provide an analysis of its short and long-term financial challenges (see 5.C.4 below). Pappas' recommendation to review all academic programs graduating fewer than ten majors a year led the Provost to hire the Austen Group, who provided an analysis of the [cost effectiveness of its academic programs in 2010](#). Subsequent to this report, the Academic Affairs Council formed a Faculty subcommittee to create and implement an internal review policy providing a more holistic approach than that of the Austen Group (see 4.A.1). [A report from Institutional Research](#) is used as the basis for the quantitative portion of internal program reviews. Results have been integrated into the planning and budget processes (see the Department of Chemistry's [proposals](#) to streamline its curriculum embedded within its Internal Review report and also 4.A.1).

Each of the above evaluations and assessments contributes to a comprehensive planning and budgeting process. The Budget Committee may utilize reports and findings to guide budgeting decisions that ensure funding of areas critical to the College's Mission and Strategic Plan. Each Vice-President is responsible for resource allocation within her/his reporting area. Institution-wide-spending allocations are agreed upon, special initiatives funded, and budgets established through a collective process. All capital needs are discussed and funds are approved by the Board ensuring critical needs are met. Budgeting decisions are informed by sound data, including the use of a [regional peer group](#) and competitor institutions in planning. Some examples include: benchmarking [tuition and fees](#), [room and board](#), [admissions](#), and [financial aid](#).

### 5.C.3

In 2006, President Mooney called together Faculty, Staff and College Trustees to work with her on her first Strategic Plan, [The Path to Leadership](#). This plan reflected the collaborative establishment of institutional priorities, including such initiatives as a revision of the general education curriculum by the Faculty, an exploration of an Honors Program, and development of a new advising program. Many were completed over the plan's five years. One of the most significant accomplishments was a revision of our long-standing general education program, resulting in the new Sophia Program in Liberal Learning (see 3.B.1-2).

In October 2011, a [Strategic Planning Committee](#) was formed to work on a new plan. In conjunction with the work of this Committee, the President held campus-wide [listening sessions](#) to consider the following questions: what Saint Mary's does well; what the College should focus on during the next five years; how the College can work smarter; and, finally, any other issues the participants wanted to bring to the President's attention. Through the Committee's work and listening sessions ([see the Strategic Plan website](#)) a new 5-year Strategic Plan was created: [Boldly Forward: A Strategic Plan for Saint Mary's College](#).

Institutional planning flows directly from the Strategic Plan, and is thereby linked to the College Mission. Divisional Vice-Presidents identify and assign areas of focus. College and administrative initiatives and goal-setting then begin. One direct result of the planning process was the development of the previously-mentioned [Unit-Evaluation Process](#) that explicitly links administrative units' goal-setting and evaluation to the strategic initiatives in [Boldly Forward](#). Progress towards these initiatives is captured in the Cabinet's [planning dashboard](#).

External constituents are critical for the College's planning process. Stamats has conducted [recent research](#) incorporating external constituencies (prospective students, parents, etc.). The Career Crossings Office engages local employers through [internship partnerships and job/career fairs](#). Saint Mary's received a matching grant in 2008 from the Lilly Endowment's *Initiative to Promote Opportunity through Educational Collaborations* with the goal to create programming and structures to build community partnerships with Indiana organizations and employers. Programs initiated through the grant, under the *Cross-Currents-Program* umbrella, helped Students discern their passions by considering four key questions focused on vocation, and connected them with organizations and employers in Indiana. The [final evaluation](#) of the project engaged both external and internal stakeholders to assist with planning about the Program's future following the conclusion of the grant period. [The lasting effects](#) of the grant continue to be mutually beneficial for Saint Mary's students and the State of Indiana.

#### 5.C.4

Saint Mary's contracted with the Pappas Group in 2010 to examine its current capacity, especially given the impact of fluctuations in the economy and sources of revenue, such as enrollment and state financial aid. State support for Indiana students, who make up [approximately a quarter](#) of the Student population, has declined [significantly](#). The impact of the economic downturn was felt as early as October 2008. [Enrollment](#) dipped during this period due to [declines in the size](#) of the first-year entering class. From 2008 through 2011 the [endowment declined, but has since recovered](#).

An "[Action Plan](#)" was developed in response to the Pappas Group Report; the President [reports to the Board of Trustees on its progress](#). The Pappas Report is updated for each Board of Trustee meeting. Board members review this report as needed. Some Board committees request a more expanded response, e.g. [Academic Affairs Committee](#). The College continually assesses its current capacity by monitoring its expenses using financial projections based on available institutional data, [benchmarking with peers](#), and analyzing our [student-admissions characteristics](#) to evaluate and adapt to changes in demographics, financial need and/or enrollment behavior. The Office of Institutional Research conducts an annual [Survey of Admitted Students](#) to help understand why admitted Students did or did not choose to attend Saint Mary's. Furthermore, [historical data](#) is compared and analyzed to determine changes and trends, identifying those that can be affected through internal operational changes. [Areas of improvement](#) include efforts to bring more students to campus for visits and improved articulation of the value of a Saint Mary's education.

Once a Student enrolls, retention is a priority to ensure our capacity remains consistent with stable revenue as the College monitors Student persistence on [a weekly basis](#). While the College has a high [retention rate compared to its peers](#), it nevertheless strives to continually improve its ability to retain and graduate Students by understanding the factors that cause a student to withdraw (see 4.C).

During AY13-14, the Finance and Budget Committee of the Board of Trustees created an *Ad Hoc* Committee to address fiscal challenges associated with the goal of increasing Staff and Faculty salaries. Local market analyses revealed that Staff and Administrator salaries were trailing benchmarks; Faculty salaries were also behind the set benchmark, according to ongoing analyses of Faculty salaries with our [Regional Peer Group](#). The *Ad Hoc* Committee offered a set of recommendations in three areas to address the fiscal challenge of meeting this goal. The Board has accepted the recommendation of the Administration to implement a significant number of these recommendations. Progress is [reported](#) to the Board of Trustees.

Planning informed the launch of the recent *Faith Always, Action Now* campaign as consultants recommended maintaining the planned June 1, 2008, launch despite uncertainty in the investment climate. The length of the campaign was increased from five to six years in response to the downturn in the economy. As a result, the College has closed a very successful Capital Campaign recording more than [\\$44 million in gifts and pledges](#) allocated to the endowment. Through the generous support of donors, *Faith Always, Action Now* contributions totaled nearly [\\$105 Million](#). While favorable market conditions contributed to the recovery of the endowment, another key factor was the decision by the Board of Trustees to make a change in endowment management. At its June 2012 meeting, the Board unanimously [approved](#) a proposal to purchase units in the University of Notre Dame's unitized investment pool. A short summary of this change is included [here](#).

### 5.C.5

Use of data from a variety of available sources guides the College in planning for external impacts, including the current climate of higher education, demographic shifts, technological changes, and globalization. This includes tracking admitted Students and applicants in order to understand how they navigate the admissions process (see 5.C.4). Saint Mary's has recently contracted with Stamats to conduct [branding awareness studies](#) to assist with marketing its undergraduate and graduate programs. Royal and Co. conducts an annual search campaign of prospective students while Hardwick-Day and Predictive Edge conduct data analysis in order to better understand applicants and maximize enrollment.

Stamats research for introduction of graduate programs focused on assessing the demand of potential programs. Demographic shifts and graduate students' interaction with technology were [taken into consideration](#), resulting in a recommendation to offer selected graduate programs online. Later, Stamats was hired to develop [marketing materials](#), including microsite and digital marketing for the new graduate programs.

In response to technology demands and on the basis of an assessment of [declining summer-session enrollment](#), Saint Mary's now offers a substantial portion of its summer courses online. The flexibility this technology provides has [increased summer enrollment](#) from 2009-2012. The Provost repurposed a faculty-development fund for training in online teaching. This initiative, based on assessment and planned budgeting, is helping to make it possible for the College to offer two of its graduate programs in hybrid form.

Recommendations anticipating the impact of globalization are infused through the College's [Strategic Plan](#). Saint Mary's has put in place many initiatives in response to potential global impacts. These

include internationalization of its Faculty, opportunities for exchanges, working closely with the Sisters of the Holy Cross [to send Students on volunteer or study-abroad programs in Africa, South America and Mexico](#), [developing a relationship with the Soong Ching Ling Foundation](#) in China, among others. The College has also created a new position in Admissions working solely on the [recruitment of international students](#), particularly in South America (see 1.C.2). Focused attention on planning and budgeting for the recruitment of international students [has led to](#) modest increases in international enrollment.

The College engaged in an [Internationalization Lab](#) sponsored by ACE in 2009. One outcome from this planning included a new Global Studies major that is [growing](#). The [past](#) and [current](#) Strategic Plans include an initiative to increase the Student population studying abroad to 50%, and the College has already [exceeded](#) this goal. Finally, Saint Mary's recognized the importance of globalization within its newly-designed general education program by infusing learning outcomes in [intercultural competence and global learning](#).

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## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

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The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

### Argument

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#### 5.D.1:

##### Academic Performance

Evidence of performance is collected on all academic programs and support services. The objective is to sustain the overall health of the Institution through the improvement of curricular programs via a systematic and cyclical evaluation process. At Saint Mary's this happens in numerous ways:

An [internal review](#) of all academic programs takes place on a rotating six-year cycle. [External reviews](#) from outside peer reviewers also take place on a regular cycle (see 4.A). A defined assessment process for academic programs includes annual assessment reports to the Dean of Faculty, providing opportunities to collect information about student learning (see 4.B). Retention and persistence of Students is also closely monitored (see 4.C).

##### Employee Performance

Evidence of effective [Staff](#) and [Administrator](#) performance is documented annually. The comprehensive Employee-evaluation [form](#) allows the Employee to reflect on achievements/activities and set goals for professional development for the coming year. Supervisors engage their Employees in both [summative](#) and [formative](#) evaluations that speak to the College's Mission. The results are then shared with divisional Vice-Presidents. Faculty are reviewed annually by the [department Chair](#) and [Students](#) (see 3.C.3). The President submits a performance evaluation annually to the Board of Trustees. Her performance was reviewed at the five-year mark and by Faculty in her 10<sup>th</sup> year. The Faculty also recently reviewed the performance of the Provost. The Dean of Faculty's performance is planned after 5 years of service.

The Department of Residence Life and Community Standards facilitates an [annual survey](#) of the services its Staff members provide to the residential Student population. Similar to Employee evaluations, Resident Advisors complete [self-evaluations](#) to coincide with their evaluation by supervisors. The resulting quantitative and qualitative data serve to improve areas of need. [Major improvements](#) have included restructuring the Resident Advisor Community Development Model, increasing intentional interactions with residents, diversifying programming opportunities, structuring Staff training to meet the needs of an ever-changing Campus climate, and [reorganizing the departmental values and mission](#).

##### Overall Institutional Performance

The President utilizes a [dashboard](#) to collect and monitor evidence of effectiveness on various

performance metrics important to the operation of the College. This dashboard is [reviewed with the Board of Trustees](#) and provides current-year data compared to the highest and lowest values for the previous ten years, the average of the last five years, and the previous-year's value. The dashboard allows for a visual and numerical representation of Institutional strengths and areas for improvement.

The Strategic Plan Goals and Recommendations guide the College's operations. A [detailed tracking](#) of the progress made on each recommendation is centrally-monitored and updated frequently. First, strategies under each recommendation were identified, and from these strategies actionable tactics were developed. The leaders responsible for these tactics have identified any additional costs incurred by the tactic and have developed a timeline for achievement. Within this tracking dashboard, measures of success are noted and the current status is displayed. This allows for a continuous monitoring of progress towards goals in the Strategic Plan.

Beginning in AY13-14, the College instituted [Unit-Evaluation Plans](#) whereby all administrative units identify their goals, link them directly to the Strategic Plan, develop evaluation methods, and [report results and recommendations](#) for change based on those findings. Goal-setting and evaluation have always guided operations, however the College has recognized the importance of directly involving all administrative units in a more systematic approach to tracking and evaluating its progress towards the Strategic Plan. Now all units collaborate with their Vice-Presidents in setting goals that align with the Mission and Strategic Plan. Each year the results of the evaluation and subsequent changes or recommendations are discussed between unit heads and their Vice-Presidents. After their review from the Vice-Presidents, the planning documents are provided to the Office of Institutional Research where they are stored, aggregated and [analyzed](#) to broadly understand how administrative units are addressing Strategic Plan initiatives.

#### *Performance within Units*

Financial Aid [monitors expenditures](#) by line and by class on a weekly basis, and provides reports to key Administrators. Admissions monitors admission funnel numbers (prospects, admits, enrollees) on a [weekly basis](#), and provides this report to the Cabinet and other Administrators. A ["live" dashboard](#) was created so that the Office of Admissions can view detailed tracking of the enrollment pipeline based on state of origin, counselor, and other important characteristics. [Monthly dashboards](#) with key admission and financial aid indicators are also shared with the Student Life Committee of the Board of Trustees. Using IPEDS data, a [Report Card](#) is updated and distributed to the Student Life Trustee Committee annually. This report compares Saint Mary's to a number of peer institutions in key admission, retention and financial aid indicators. Admissions utilizes an annual [Survey of Admitted Students](#) to track its effectiveness in areas that influence a students' decision to attend. *Ad hoc* reports ([see example](#)) are frequently developed to monitor the academic profile of individual groups. The totality of these reports guides planning and informs adjustments to policies.

The Vice-President for College Relations maintains a dashboard of annual key performance indicators, including one to monitor [giving](#). College Relations utilizes a [monthly development income](#) report tracking unrestricted and restricted outright gifts by donor group, and compares year-to-date gift totals with those of the previous year. In February 2014, College Relations implemented the Reeher-Platform fundraising dashboard that measures internal performance, provides predictive models for identifying likely donors, and provides access to peer benchmarking and best practices. Each fiscal year [a report](#) is sent to academic department Chairs and Program Administrators providing them information on the resources available in endowed and restricted funds supporting their units. Endowment-fund donors receive an [annual stewardship report](#) from the Office of Donor Relations, providing the investment performance of the College's endowment and donor funds along with the annual disbursement from each fund. Other evidence of performance within College Relations is

outlined [here](#).

In an effort to improve sustainability, the Office of Purchasing moved its requisition process for purchasing products from a paper-based to an [online system in 2008](#). Likewise, the College now only purchases recycled-content office paper. Admissions has also contributed to improved environmental sustainability by moving the majority of its student application file process online. True to Mission, the College strives to increase the diversity of its Employees. Human Resources has established an Employee [diversity-tracking system](#) to monitor the diversity of applicant pools and new hires (see 1.C.2). For further description of these and other improvements made by Purchasing and HR please click [here](#).

In 2007, the Facilities Department implemented a Computerized Maintenance-Management System (CMMS) known as SchoolDude. This program enables the College to electronically track work orders. Prior to 2007, work orders were tracked by hand and given to a Staff member to address. SchoolDude allows a variety of reports to be generated, including a [work-order-cost report](#) and [Employee-productivity](#) report. This allows the Institution to better understand and address issues associated with work orders, such as time to completion and costs. [Preventative-maintenance](#) and [deferred-maintenance](#) are tracked, allowing the College to effectively plan for maintenance work critical to infrastructure. SchoolDude allows the creation of an inventory of all equipment and its [scheduled preventative maintenance](#). Additionally, Facilities has implemented many other [systematic improvements](#) in recent years, enabling progress on the Strategic Plan initiatives to address Campus maintenance and reduce the College's carbon footprint. One such effort related to sustainability focuses on reducing overall energy use on Campus by developing and implementing a [plan](#) to replace current lighting with LED alternatives. The College has already reduced energy costs as a result of this effort. Likewise, Saint Mary's actively encourages recycling and [tracks its total recycling](#) each month in an effort to better understand its progress toward creating a more sustainable Campus.

Many offices utilize internally-designed evaluation instruments to assess their effectiveness. For example, the Associate Dean of Advising has assessed the success of the first-year advising program by collecting data from [Faculty advisors](#), [Students](#), and [Student peer mentors](#). Assessment through these instruments has informed changes to the first-year-experience course, including the selection of required readings. The Writing Center recently incorporated an [instrument](#) to assess the effectiveness of its tutorials for Students who use the Center. The College has long utilized [internally-designed evaluation instruments](#) to evaluate its study-abroad programs. Summer courses are also [evaluated](#) regularly by both Students and Faculty, including our distance-education offerings. The College has worked to improve the technology for these courses, and evaluations have demonstrated improvement in Student experiences with technology.

### *National Surveys*

Saint Mary's has a long history of collecting evidence of its performance benchmarked to similar institutions nationally through participation in surveys. These include:

1. The [Cooperative Institutional Research Program \(CIRP\) survey](#) has been administered at Saint Mary's nearly every year since 1973. The survey covers a wide range of incoming student indicators. Use of this data is frequent, including a unique [thirty-year trend report](#). Results are also connected to college data for further understanding of [retention](#).
2. The CIRP's companion survey, the [College Senior Survey \(CSS\)](#) is administered to Seniors and allows comparison of [Student-Student results](#) from first-year to senior year, tracking growth over the four-years.

3. The [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) is administered every three-years to first-year and senior Students. NSSE collects information on student engagement indicators that research has shown correlate with learning. While this survey doesn't directly assess student learning, results point to areas where colleges and universities are performing well and [where they can improve](#). Data from NSSE also provide student-level-linked data that assess changes over four-years at Saint Mary's (see 2010 [presentation](#) to the Board of Trustees).
4. The [HERI Faculty Survey](#) is administered to Faculty every three years. It allows Saint Mary's to better understand Faculty pedagogical practices, Faculty goals and expectations for Students, research and service activities, sources of stress and satisfaction, and the connection between learning in the classroom and practices in the local and global community. Results of this survey are [shared broadly](#) with the Administration and Faculty. [Trend data](#) are tracked to monitor changes over time.
5. The [Voluntary Support of Education \(VSE\) survey](#) is the authoritative national source of data on charitable giving to higher education and private K-12 institutions. The survey yields hundreds of variables related to fundraising in public and private colleges and universities, and a small number of precollege institutions. Saint Mary's participates each year in the survey. The Development Office uses the national data to [benchmark](#) performance with peer institutions.
6. A [phone survey of prospective students](#) and parents and a web survey of Alumnae are conducted on a biannual basis by Marketing and Communications through a third party. The findings guide strategy and messaging for Admissions and other offices.

#### 5.D.2

Saint Mary's benefits significantly from the evidence it collects in the program reviews, assessment and evaluation processes, dashboards, and surveys described above.

Since 2012, Saint Mary's major and minor programs of study have [undergone internal review](#) in over a dozen departments. Since 2008, external peer reviews have taken place. [Combined results](#) from these reviews include the [revision of some majors and the elimination of duplicative major tracks](#), and the provision of additional resources. The internal review of the Religious Studies Department led them to examine Religious Studies departments at peer institutions in order to consider whether the name of the department best reflected its current offerings. The undergraduate Nursing Program capped its program at 56 students per class-year in part because of the internal review.

External reviews of units outside academic departments have also taken place. [An external review](#) of the Department of Information Technology in 2012 resulted in an overhaul of this support unit. New leadership at all director levels has implemented many of the recommendations (virtualization of servers, cost-saving move to Gmail, widespread wireless connectivity, increased speed). Additionally, a new Chief Information Officer was hired in April 2012 and put in place a prioritization process. An [external review](#) of our Cushman-Leighton Library in 2013 has resulted in recommendations and a [Memo of Understanding](#) (MOU) outlining next steps in response to the external review findings.

Results from internal Institutional surveys are disseminated to appropriate Campus constituencies according to each Vice-President's discretion. Results from national surveys play a significant role in the assessment plan of the Sophia Program. Survey items have been mapped to Sophia learning outcomes and results are tracked. These data are shared with the Assessment Committee and made available more broadly via the [Campus intranet site for longitudinal tracking](#). In AY12-13, the College participated in Educational Benchmarking Institute's (EBI) suite of assessments, including the Resident Assessment. Results have directly informed initiatives and goals for Residence Life. Areas

for improvement included facilities, hall programming, and services provided. The [results and responses by Residence Life](#) have been shared with the College's Board of Trustees.

Based on information collected and distilled from the [Survey of Admitted Students](#), updates to marketing, admission and financial aid materials were made in response to changing student perspectives on the value of a Saint Mary's education. Results for the incoming class in 2015 show that these efforts bore fruit since a [significant increase](#) was seen in the perceived value of a Saint Mary's education. Through thorough analysis of the conversion of applicants to enrolled Students based on their state of origin and/or financial profile, adjustments are made annually to [recruitment strategies](#).

The data from the [CSS-CIRP Report](#) have been enlightening, allowing a better understanding of areas where the Saint Mary's experience is having significant impacts and where it can still improve. For example, Saint Mary's students report experiencing significant growth in [writing ability](#), [self-understanding](#), and [tolerance of others](#), but do not report as much growth in [active engagement with environmental concerns](#). The latter is in part being addressed through the [Strategic Plan's sustainability goals](#), including the development of a ["Going Green" committee](#) focused on sustainability initiatives.

Within the Student Affairs Division, the Office of Multicultural Services collaborates with Institutional Research annually to assess its Belles Connect program through Student focus groups. Belles Connect provides an early orientation program for incoming Students of color and first-generation Students designed in part to increase retention (see 4.C.3). Results of these [focus groups](#) have led to numerous changes, including expanding the categories of participants, extending the participation length from one to four years, and increasing programming conducted by the Belles Connect Student Leaders and the Office of Multicultural Services.

Saint Mary's learns directly from its experiences as well as from the evidence it collects. As an example, the recent Capital Campaign during a struggling economy gave the College Relations Division [valuable information](#) through donor feedback, operational experience and engagement with Alumnae. Additional examples of learning from operational experience from the College Relations are included [here](#).

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## **5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary**

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### **Summary**

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#### **Strengths**

- Successful Capital Campaign concluded at the end of AY14-15
- Resource allocation ensuring the primacy of Saint Mary's educational mission
- The Board of Trustees is knowledgeable about Saint Mary's and engaged with its Mission
- Improved strategic planning since our last accreditation, resulting in a Strategic Plan that is current and Mission-driven

#### **Future considerations**

- Continue to grow net-tuition revenue
- The challenge of balancing resource allocation with increasing Student financial need
- Faculty dissatisfaction with some elements of shared governance
- Continue with a master plan designed to improve physical infrastructure
- Consider the establishment of a Staff Council

### **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*