

**DRAFT**  
**Assurance Argument**  
**College of Saint Benedict - MN**

10/23/2017

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# 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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The Trustees and leadership of the College of Saint Benedict regularly review the college's mission to ensure it remains relevant to its students and to the needs and expectations of the larger world. The CSB Board of Trustees approved a revised [Mission Statement](#) in May 2017 to more clearly reflect the college's Catholic and Benedictine heritage. The revised Mission Statement reads as follows:

*The mission of the College of Saint Benedict is to provide for women the best residential liberal arts education in the Catholic and Benedictine traditions. The college fosters integrated learning, exceptional leadership for change and wisdom for a lifetime.*

The college's mission, vision, and strategic directions are foundational to the student experience and to decision-making about the college's priorities.

Our programs, services, and student profile are consistent with our mission. The College of Saint Benedict offers only the baccalaureate degree and awards degrees only to women. Our programs and experiences are principally residential; we offer no on-line programs, nor do we offer accelerated programs or other programs for non-residential students. The vast majority of our degree programs are in arts and sciences disciplines. Even our pre-professional academic programs (Accounting and Finance, Elementary Education, Global Business Leadership, and Nursing) are fully grounded in the liberal arts and liberal learning. All programs share the same common curriculum. The college's steadfast commitment to residential liberal arts education has been essential to our distinction and success.

The college achieves its mission in partnership with Saint John's University. CSB and SJU share the same fundamental commitment to high quality residential, liberal arts education framed by the Catholic intellectual tradition. As single-sex institutions, each college's mission and vision is particularly attentive to gender and gender development.

The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University together offer 35 [academic majors](#) and 41 minors leading to the bachelor's degree. In 2016, 72% of all degrees conferred by the college were in arts and sciences disciplines.

In fall 2017, the college [enrolled](#) 1,915 first-year to senior students. 91% of all students live in campus residential facilities or in housing provided by the college for students studying abroad. Nearly all students who live off campus reside in the neighborhoods surrounding the campus. Traditional-age students comprise nearly all students; in fall 2017, 99% of all undergraduates were under age 23. In support of its residential mission, the college provides and supports extensive student program and student support services, including Counseling and Health Services, Career Services, Intercultural and International Student Services, Campus Ministry, Intercollegiate Athletics and Student Activities.

Our graduates overwhelmingly endorse the liberal arts education they experienced at CSB and SJU. We survey alumnae three years after having earned their bachelor's degree. Among alumnae who earned their baccalaureate degree at CSB between 2010 and 2014, nearly 90% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "the liberal arts education I received at CSB/SJU has contributed significantly to my personal and professional development." Among [2014 alumnae](#), nearly all rated the quality of instruction they received as undergraduates as good or excellent, and 94% indicated they would choose CSB again if they could start over.

Commitment to mission also is key to strong governance. We annually provide trustees with an opportunity to formally assess their own performance. Results from our [2017 board assessment](#) survey indicated strong commitment to using mission and values in making decisions. 92% of trustees described the use of the college's mission and values to drive decisions as good or excellent.

Budgeting is closely aligned with our strategic plan, ensuring that the mission guides the operations and financial choices of the college. Among the objectives included in *Strategic Directions 2020* is a commitment to create a long-range economic model to ensure financial sustainability and the achievement of our mission [Strategic Directions 2020](#). Approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2016, the [economic model](#) established a set of strategic assumptions that express key operational and mission values and articulated a set of key financial levers by which financial sustainability could be achieved in both the short-term and the long-run. The financial levers allowed the college to establish a series of broad multi-year revenue and expenditure goals and targets for the period FY 2017 to FY 2020. Alignment of planning and budget priorities is addressed in greater detail in Criterion 5.C.1.

## 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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The college's mission statement and supporting vision and value statements are widely accessible to internal and external constituencies. The CSB/SJU web page provides ready access to mission, vision, and strategic direction statements from the front page. The mission statement is included or referenced by weblink in both the [Faculty Handbook](#) and the [Administrative and Support Staff Handbook](#). The statement also is widely posted in campus buildings, as are banners and posters reflecting the key mission values. The mission is front and center with trustees of the college as well, not only routinely reviewed but included on all meeting nameplates.

The college's mission is central to the vision statement and key strategic directions that frame the [Strategic Directions 2020](#) plan approved by the Board of Trustees on May 18, 2015.

Further reflecting the integration of mission and vision, *Strategic Directions 2020* asserted four core commitments to our students:

1. A **rigorous and engaging liberal arts education** that prepares students for fulfilling and meaningful lives and careers.
2. A **personal teaching and learning experience** that encourages self-reflection, engaged dialogue, and critical assessment.
3. A **powerful and lasting experience of community** sustained by our Catholic and Benedictine values and characterized by a commitment to leadership and service
4. A **transformational experience for women** that prepares them to be leaders, professionals, and scholars and empowers them to make their place in the world.

*Strategic Directions 2020* identifies 17 [outcome metrics](#) that fulfill the plan's goals and the college's broader mission. We update the metrics annually and provide them to our Board of Trustees.

## 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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The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University are committed to the promotion of a diverse community, one in which students, faculty, and staff venture from their comfort zones for the sake of learning, develop a critical perspective on the creation of difference, and pursue self-exploration with the knowledge that understanding yourself requires engagement with others.

In fall 2016, President Hinton challenged the college to explore how it can create an [inclusion eco-system](#). She noted that "the work of inclusion has to be comprehensive and demands that we look at multiple dimensions and perspectives when we think about our campus and the students we serve. Certainly, economic diversity is and will remain a key consideration, as will race and ethnicity. Yet it's not enough to limit our gaze to those visible and/or easily quantifiable metrics. When we think and speak of inclusion, we need to think about geographic, spiritual and ability diversity. Sexual orientation and gender identity, along with diversity of thought and perspective equally merits our attention. If we commit to all having a voice in our community then it is essential that we think through the variety of people we serve and what they add, and expect from, our community."

We have devoted considerable attention to diversity and inclusion. The college hosted two Inclusion Visioning Days in fall 2016 and spring 2017 that together included several hundred faculty, staff, and students. Those meetings resulted in a strong [commitment to inclusivity](#), which we expect to review and approve during the 2017-18 academic year.

The [Intercultural Directions Council](#) (IDC), a shared CSB/SJU committee created in 2005 comprised of faculty, staff and students, plays a key leadership role in relation to the college's diversity and inclusion objectives. It seeks to develop shared understandings and promote actions that advance intercultural competence, to foster a genuinely inclusive intercultural community, to promote active learning toward intercultural competence, and to improve recruitment and retention of a diverse educational community (students, workforce, and management).

*Strategic Directions 2020* addresses two key imperatives: defining our distinction in higher education and assuring that our curricular and co-curricular experience and practice adapts to the needs, expectations, and aspirations of a 21<sup>st</sup> century student body. It includes a number of specific goals and benchmarks related to diversity and inclusivity:

- *Develop and implement a professional development program that strengthens the faculty and staff's ability to meet the needs of the student body. Professional development programming will include enhanced preparation for diversity and intercultural literacy.* In September 2015, the college received a grant from the [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) to focus on professional development for humanities faculty to address successfully teaching, advising and engaging an increasingly diverse student body. The multi-pronged approach included an extensive review of current practices, multiple and dynamic faculty development opportunities and a "crossover evaluation" conducted in partnership with Saint John's University.
- *Create a comprehensive First Year Experience program to facilitate the transition to college and create a foundation for student success.* During the 2016-17 academic year, faculty and staff from across the college conducted a [self-study](#) to assess the effectiveness programs, policies, and procedures on retention and the experience of new students. Among other things, the self-study indicated an opportunity to improve first-year advising and the connections students make with faculty and each other during their first year in college -- particularly for first-generation and historically underrepresented students. The study recommends creating a First-Year Lab Experience that addresses equity.
- *Eliminate retention and completion gaps between majority and under-represented students.* Though [retention](#) and [completion](#) rates for all students at CSB are significantly higher than national averages, significant gaps remain between majority students and students of color. Between fall 2012 and fall 2016, first-to-second year retention averaged 81% for American students of color and 89% for white students. The six-year completion rate for the entering class of 2010 totaled 81% for American students of color, compared to 85% for white students.

In support of the college's student diversity and inclusion objectives, the CSB/SJU Office of Intercultural and International Student Services advocates for, educates, and serves the campus community through programs and workshops that advance self-identity development, diversity, inclusion, and social justice. It seeks to strengthen the intercultural, international, and social justice education and development of all students; to advocate for, serve, and guide the campus community to increased and improved intercultural competence; and to assist international and underrepresented students in their transitions to, retention at, and graduation from CSB/SJU.

We provide a number of other services directed toward student retention and success:

- Student Accessibility Services collaborates with both academic and student development departments to provide community-wide access for persons with disabilities.
- College Navigator, a new position created in 2017, works in both admission and student development roles to assist historically underrepresented students and their families first through the admission process and then through successful completion of their first year in college.
- We host three College Possible "coaches," who work with historically underrepresented students throughout their four years here, helping them to navigate their academic and co-curricular experience, and providing them with counseling assistance on issues like financial aid, student accounts, and academic advising. College Possible is a national

non-profit organization headquartered in the Twin Cities that connects underrepresented students to college opportunities.

In addition to administrative support, the college also offers a number of academic and student development programs and activities designed to support underrepresented students or advance multi-cultural understanding and inclusion, including:

- The Intercultural Leadership, Education and Development Program (LEAD) program, which provides support for talented first-generation students to build on the leadership skills they demonstrated within their high schools and home communities.
- Festival of Cultures. An annual event drawing over a thousand people from the campus and surrounding community, Festival of Cultures is a festival of music, entertainment, food, and culture. It celebrates and recognizes the diversity at CSB/SJU through student performances, cultural food sampling, and a fashion show. Principally hosted by international students, the festival also includes students from the United States who have strong affinity to other countries, as well as varying cultures within the United States.
- Advocates for Inclusive Mentoring, a program for students historically underrepresented at CSB. Piloted in spring 2017, the program seeks to improve retention of underrepresented students, enhance their leadership, academic, personal, and professional skills and develop self-agency and identity.
- Reflection Action Dialogue (RAD), a student organization that hosts interactive theater events on campus as an opportunity to promote inclusivity and shed light on various forms of exclusion that occur on and off campus.

The college has made significant progress in recent years to enroll rising numbers of historically underrepresented students. The number of [undergraduate students of color](#) has doubled since fall 2010, and their proportion of the entire student body has risen from 8% to 17%. First generation students consistently comprise between 28% and 30% of new entering students. In fall 2017, CSB joined the select group of colleges who comprise the American Talent Initiative, committing to the enrollment and success of low and moderate income students.

In part a reflection of local demography, we have been less successful attracting faculty and staff of color. In fall 2014, 9.1% of all instructional staff (inclusive of faculty and others with instructional appointments) were non-white. People of color represented 4% of all administrative and support staff. To better support our commitment to building and retaining a diverse workforce, the CSB/SJU Human Resources Department created a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee in fall 2016. Comprised of both staff and faculty, the Advisory Committee aspires to serve our students and community with a commitment to diversity and inclusion in three focus areas: recruitment and retention, professional development and infrastructure, and community outreach and engagement.

## 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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Service and commitment to community are core values at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. The terms "service," "community," "justice," and "stewardship" each have a long tradition in Benedictine monasticism and Catholic social teaching. Together they provide the context for engagement, service, and learning here.

We influence the world around us through the experiences we provide our students. The [vision statement](#) approved by the Board of Trustees in 2015 articulates not only the way we seek to be understood but, as importantly, the ways we prepare our students for a lifetime of leadership:

*The College of Saint Benedict will be nationally recognized as community that provides a liberal arts education preparing women to think critically, lead courageously, and advocate passionately.*

Promoting the common good through active community engagement and serving others is an integral part of the CSB student experience. A portion of that work is expressed through the Office of Experience and Professional Development (XPD). XPD supports programs that empower students to integrate and apply knowledge and theory gained in the classroom setting to a hands on learning environment, including programming associated with the new Center for Ethical Leadership, funded by a significant endowment gift received in December 2016. The office brings together students, faculty, businesses, non-profit organizations and government partners to promote access to mutually beneficial partnerships through experiential learning opportunities. XPD provides students with access to hands-on experiences that compliment and accompany ideas, theories, practices, and methods taught in the classroom. The experiential learning programs managed by XPD include:

- The Bonner Leader Program, which seeks to improve the lives of individuals and communities by helping meet the basic needs of nutrition and educational opportunity. Today, 39 CSB and SJU students fulfill their Bonner work study at over 15 different locations and complete more than 1,000 hours of service every year.

- The Marie and Robert Jackson Fellows Program, which seeks to empower students with opportunities to serve the common good through community engagement, collective learning, and leadership and professional development. Each year, 10-12 CSB and SJU students are selected through an application and interview process to be part of a cohort of Jackson Fellows. All fellowships involve civic engagement and work devoted to improving community life.
- The CSB Community Kitchen Program, which seeks to increase access to nutritious food and alleviate food insecurity in Stearns County. The meal-delivery program works with local organizations to distribute surplus food from campus dining centers and serves as a catalyst for education, collaboration, and community action.
- The Service-Learning Program works with CSB and SJU students and faculty and organizations in the surrounding community to foster successful service-learning opportunities that are relevant to what is taught in the classroom. The program provides students with opportunities to participate in service-learning opportunities that incorporates ideas, theories, practices, and methods taught in the classroom and to accept, support, and appreciate diversity in all its forms.

The [CSB/SJU 2016 Senior Survey](#) reflects our students' strong commitment to service. Approximately 81% of CSB seniors indicated that they participated in a community service or volunteer activity during their time here. Six in ten indicated that they spent at least one hour per week participating in community service activities. More than 9 in 10 said that "helping others in need" was a very important or essential life objective. 83% described "being active in my community" similarly.

These examples provide only a small sample of the scope of our engagement with the broader public and the ways we serve a common good. Individual students, class sections, and student clubs and organizations often organize and deliver service projects that serve communities. The college actively engages the local community, regularly meeting with St. Joseph community leaders and serving as members of the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce, the Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation, and the Central Minnesota Community Foundation.

## 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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The College of Saint Benedict, together with its partner, Saint John's University, fulfills Criterion One through clearly defined mission and vision statements. Our strategic plan articulates a set of core commitments and aspirations to fulfill both. We lead and operate through the lens of mission. Consistency in the mission over many years has enabled us to nurture a strong sense of identity and purpose, and allowed us to direct our focus to goals, experiences, and activities that clearly move us toward the achievement of the mission. The liberal arts, residential, and Catholic and Benedictine values expressed in our mission provide us with tremendous opportunities to create a true community of active and respectful scholars and learners.

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## 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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The College of Saint Benedict promotes and exhibits integrity through policies and practices that call trustees, faculty, staff and administration to ethical and professional behavior.

The College of Saint Benedict Board of Trustees approves the college's mission, appoints and assesses the president, approves institutional policies related to faculty appointments, approves the annual budget, authorizes debt financing and capital spending, and approves degrees.

The Board fulfills its governance duties as outlined in the governing documents and prescribed by law. The [Articles of Incorporation](#) articulate the institution's purpose "to conduct a Catholic nonprofit institution of higher learning to further the education of young people and adults" and "to further the encouragement of learning and the extension of the means of education generally through teaching, research, and community services." The college's [Bylaws](#) articulate the responsibilities of the board and processes by which the board governs the college, and the board assesses its work annually. Trustees are required to disclose potential [conflicts of interest](#) and refrain from participating in board actions where there is a conflict of interest. In May 2017, Trustees approved changes to the Bylaws regarding [voting board membership](#) to improve independence and reduce conflicts of interest related to faculty and students serving as voting members on the boards (additional details are provided in 2.C.2).

[Committee charters](#) guide committee deliberations and decisions. The [Finance Committee](#) reviews and recommends the annual operating and capital budgets. The [Investment Committee](#) oversees the endowment, recommends draw policies, and monitors investment allocations and investment managers. The [Audit Committee](#) reviews the college's financial statements and control and accounting systems and recommends an independent auditor. In addition, the Audit Committee reviews insurance coverage and ensures that appropriate risk management policies and practices are being followed.

The CSB Business Office employs generally accepted accounting principles to ensure transparent and consistent financial processes. College management receives monthly budget variance reports. CSB's financial statements are audited annually by an independent public accounting firm. The institution consistently receives unmodified audit opinions, reflecting

conformity with generally accepted accounting principles and indicating that financial statements are presented fairly. The auditors present the **annual** and **single audit** to the Audit Committee, which has the delegated authority to accept those reports.

CSB is an [Equal Opportunity Employer](#) and strives for fairness and transparency in employment practices. Human Resources (HR) is involved in all steps of [recruitment](#) and hiring to ensure a diverse applicant pool. In spring 2017, an [HR Inclusion Advisory Committee](#) was created to address issues of diversity and inclusion in hiring. HR also provides orientation for new employees, annual workshops on best recruitment and hiring practices, and a variety of ongoing educational, informational, and professional offerings. A [Joint Benefits Committee](#) comprised of faculty and staff and a [Faculty Compensation and Benefits Committee](#) regularly review benefits and provides input from stakeholders.

Employees are expected to conduct their work with professionalism and integrity and in accord with the college's mission and values. The [Koch Chair in Catholic Thought and Culture](#) and the [Benedictine Institute](#) provide mission-focused activities and lectures. Standards of conduct and institutional and employee policies are compiled in [faculty](#) and [staff](#) handbooks, which are available on-line to all employees. [EthicsPoint](#), an online reporting system, provides an anonymous and confidential way to ask questions or report instances of suspected improper conduct such as discrimination, time abuse, harassment, and public safety. We annually send an email [reminder](#) about EthicsPoint to all employees. HR tracks the reports and initiates follow-up to resolve.

Faculty members adhere to the highest levels of scholarly and research practice, supported by the [Faculty Code of Ethics](#) (discussed further under criterion 2.E). Academic and administrative departments model "best practices" and ethical codes of their various professions (e.g., Financial Accounting Standards Board, Society of Human Resources Management, Association of Student Affairs in Catholic Colleges and Universities).

The College has a tradition of shared governance that strives to include administrators, faculty, and staff in policy-making and decision-making. Standing committees such as the Joint Benefits Committee, Faculty Compensation and Benefits Committee, Faculty Handbook Committee, Strategic Directions Council, Faculty Senate, and Student Senate provide faculty, staff, and students with opportunities for discussion, input and feedback. The President's Cabinet meets regularly to discuss and address institutional issues, needs and concerns. An annual campus-wide workshop, strategic planning sessions, and twice-a-year forums with the Presidents bolster an already-strong culture of community.

Institutional processes are regularly reviewed for efficiency, effectiveness, and efficacy. For example, the [Presidents' Charge for the Strategic Directions Council](#) was revised in fall 2016 to refocus their work on implementing Strategic Directions 2020.

The CSB Board of Trustees meets with the SJU Board of Trustees twice annually to discuss the shared academic and student service programs and issues of relevance to both institutions. Additionally, committees of the Boards of Trustees meet together regularly for the same purpose.

A [Memorandum of Understanding](#) and a variety of supporting documents guide the work of the coordinate relationship at the board and administrative levels.

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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 College of Saint Benedict strives for clear and accurate communication with outside audiences throughout its public statements and organizational documents. The college uses a variety of tools and documents to communicate its mission, programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships. These include the CSB/SJU website, social media, academic catalog, Bennie Book, admission and marketing materials, the alumnae magazine, and the CSB/SJU Institutional Profile. Each of these is developed with our mission in mind and undergoes regular review and edits by staff in the respective departments to ensure accuracy and clarity.

In addition, the College provides information and data to the public through a number of mandatory and optional reporting systems. Some examples include state reporting to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, the Annual Campus Safety Report (Clery), and the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System, as well as providing data to surveys from organizations such as U.S. News and World Report.

### Website

The [CSB/SJU website](#) is widely used by internal and external audiences to access information about the College of Saint Benedict. The website is managed by the Office of Marketing and Communications, which provides technical and creative support to academic and administrative departments and has primary responsibility to keep the website updated. Websites for academic departments contain biographical and contact information for faculty, as well as information about majors, minors, student services and career opportunities. Other sites in the CSBSJU domain provide current and historic information from A-Z for students, employees, alumni and the public,

### Academic Catalog

The **Academic Catalog** is the primary tool for communicating information about academic departments and offerings, policies and regulations, and campus support services to current and prospective students. The catalog provides links to specific departments and faculty listings. The Office of the Registrar updates the Catalog annually.

### Tuition and Fees

[Tuition and fees](#) are reported on the website and in admission materials. Students and their families have access to a [Net Price Calculator](#) to help them determine the types of financial aid for which they may be eligible. Each spring, families of returning students receive a letter from the president announcing costs of attendance for the next year.

### Bennie Book

The [Bennie Book](#) is the handbook for College of Saint Benedict students. It is primary communication source for policies, community standards, expectations, and information related to residential life, human rights, sexual misconduct, student activities, and student conduct. The Bennie Book is updated regularly by the Office of Student Development. Published on line annually, all students receive a link to the Bennie Book at the beginning of each school year.

### Admission Materials

The Office of Admission produces print and [online](#) materials for prospective students and their families. These materials are designed to convey the mission and values of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University, to describe the broad range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities at the colleges, and to clearly articulate the rigor of the academic programs offered.

### Social Media

CSB/SJU have a number of social media accounts including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Instagram](#). We use these tools to communicate with internal and external audiences. Staff from OMC monitor all accounts to ensure timely and accurate responses to questions.

### Institutional Fact Book

The [Institutional Profile](#) is the official fact book for the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. It provides a multi-year snapshot of key data and trends related to admission and enrollment, academic activity and productivity, and human and financial resources. The Profile is intended to address questions frequently asked about the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University and provide, in one compendium, macro-level data for planning, decision-making, fundraising and communication.

### Accreditation

Accreditation status is listed on the [website](#) and in the [Academic Catalog](#). Departmental accreditation information is posted on the website and within the department-specific information in the catalog.

## 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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The College of Saint Benedict Board of Trustees operates in relation to the responsibilities outlined in the college's [Bylaws](#). Made up of 25-40 members, the Board holds at least three regular meetings annually.

#### Board's Deliberations Reflect Priorities

In addition to its regular work reviewing the college's mission, approving the annual budget, and authorizing capital projects, the Board deliberates and acts on numerous other significant matters, recently including a strategic plan ([Strategic Directions 2020](#)), a revised [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#), academic program review, enterprise risk management, a capital campaign, and the [hiring of a president](#) (in 2013-14). In 2014, the board enacted a [Governance as Leadership](#) model.

#### Decision-making Includes Constituent Interests

Much of the work of the board is accomplished through its [standing committees](#). Faculty and students serve as voting representatives on the Academic Affairs, Enrollment and Marketing, Student Development, and Buildings and Grounds Committees. A non-voting faculty representative serves on the Finance Committee. This [model](#) helps ensure faculty and students have a voice in important deliberations.

Faculty, staff and students often present directly to the board and to its committees. Broad input on the strategic plan, capital campaign and presidential search was solicited from faculty, staff, students, and alumnae.

#### Board Preserves Independence

Trustees are required to sign annually a [Conflict of Interest](#) statement disclosing any relationships or affiliations that could be perceived as a conflict of interest, and to refrain from participating in discussions where a conflict could be perceived. Further, a document detailing the [role of a trustee](#) is shared annually with the board. It includes information about preserving institutional independence from governmental intrusion.

The college's Bylaws note in article VI that "The Board of Trustees is autonomous and makes decisions in the best interest of the institution. The 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. The Board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters."

In spring 2017, Trustees voted to modify board membership to improve independence and reduce conflicts of interest related to employees serving on the board. The change meant that faculty and students would no longer serve as voting trustees. Drawn from a recommendation from an Association of Governing Boards consultant reporting on best practice in board composition, the change was opposed by faculty and students but ultimately was approved by the board in May 2017. Faculty and students continue to serve as voting members on board committees where their expertise and knowledge contribute to policy recommendations.

#### Delegation of Management

The authority and responsibilities of the president detailed in the college's [Bylaws](#), article IX, clearly state identify the president as the college's chief executive officer responsible. A cabinet comprised of senior divisional leaders reports to the president. Board committee charters identify cabinet-level administrative relationships with standing committees.

Specific duties of the president include organization, administration and leadership of the institution, institutional priorities and goals authorized by the board, appointment of vice presidents and other administrative officers, ensuring compliance with accrediting agencies and federal and state law, primary responsibility for the financial well-being of the college, and preparation of the budget and strategic plan.

#### Faculty Oversight of Academics

The faculty is responsible for curricular planning and review, academic standards, the core curriculum, majors and minors, and graduation requirements. In addition, they set and maintain faculty standards related of tenure, promotions, sabbaticals and faculty development funds. The faculty also oversee the creation and implementation of faculty salary schedules.

The responsibilities are described more broadly in Section 1.4.2 of the [Faculty Handbook](#).

## 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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[Academic freedom](#) is a respected and protected value at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. Faculty rights and obligations related to academic freedom, outlined in the [Faculty Handbook](#), are based on the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom." The college recognizes the value of tenure as promoting not only academic freedom but also the stability of the college as a community of teachers and scholars. [Promotion and tenure policies](#) are carefully structured to assist faculty in their professional development and to allow for careful evaluation of every candidate, creating positive long-term educational outcomes of tenure and promotion decisions.

Students, too, are ensured [freedom of speech and artistic expression](#) via the College of Saint Benedict's student life policies. The CSB/SJU student newspaper, *The Record*, provides a venue for free expression, as do social media, and the student senates. The colleges frequently host outside speakers who represent a rich variety of viewpoints on contemporary issues. Through our Policy Statement for Freedom of Speech and Artistic Expression, we welcome the presentation of diverse views, understanding that the expression of those views may not be welcome by all in the campus community. We retain the right to limit speakers/groups inconsistent with the Catholic mission and character of the colleges.

As Catholic Benedictine institutions, CSB and SJU remain inspired by the [Catholic intellectual tradition](#). Our academic community is dedicated to the intellectual, spiritual and ethical formation of students and to academic excellence in the search for truth. The intellectual life of these campuses embodies and affirms the harmony of faith and reason in addition to the dignity of each person, each central to the Catholic intellectual tradition. We committed to exploring how faith and reason mutually enrich and challenge our understanding of the human condition and the development of the human person. As Catholic and Benedictine institutions, we support and actively encourage freedom to explore the truths of faith, for intellectual and scientific inquiry of all types and for active dialogue about the interactions among these.

The Catholic intellectual tradition has long held that truth is too vast for any one tradition to fully encompass. Thus, those who stand in other faith traditions are no strangers here and are invited to witness to the truth as they see it. There is a place here also for those who do not consider themselves a part of any religious tradition, but who devote themselves with passion and integrity to their disciplines, learning, teaching and to the search for truth. The Catholic identity of CSB and SJU commits us to the practices Benedictine hospitality and an ecumenical welcome extending to all who enter the intellectual community as persons of principle and seekers of truth.

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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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### Integrity of Research and Scholarly Practice

The College of Saint Benedict requires that all research activities involving human subjects comply with the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46). CSB/SJU have an [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) and accompanying policies to protect the dignity and rights of participants in research conducted either on or by members of our two communities. The IRB ensures that risks are minimized and reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits, informed consent is obtained from subjects and appropriately documented, and that privacy and safety of subjects are maintained. Faculty and staff pursuing human subject research must submit an application to the IRB and receive written approval before they can begin recruiting subjects.

IRB members as well as undergraduate students pursuing human subject research must complete ethical training. Students as well as faculty who receive federal funding (e.g., NSF) are required to complete an [on-line ethical training course](#), before data collection begins. The [Office of Experiential Learning and Community Engagement](#) supports undergraduate research and contributes to the integrity of student research practices through grant funding, workshops and training, and by supporting faculty-student collaboration.

### Ethical Use of Information Resources

Library staff members are committed to educating students on the ethical use of information, as demonstrated through the [Information Literacy learning outcomes](#). Information on [copyright laws](#), [plagiarism](#), [accurate citations](#), and [academic honesty](#) are shared online and in library training sessions done during each student's First Year Seminar course.

### Academic Honesty and Integrity

Academic integrity is central to the missions, character and reputation of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. The colleges enforce a [copyright policy](#) and an [academic misconduct policy](#). [Academic honesty](#) and [academic misconduct](#), and the consequences of each, are clearly addressed within the Academic Catalog.

As liberal arts colleges in the Catholic and Benedictine tradition, we uphold ethical standards of conduct that demand integrity in all aspects of our lives, including in the scholarly work of students, faculty and staff. Staff from the Library and the Writing Center are partners with faculty colleagues in providing information and training to students in their first year to help them understand the importance of academic honesty and integrity. The reputation of our institutions, students, alumni, faculty, staff, and benefactors depends on our devotion to high academic standards.

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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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The College of Saint Benedict strives to act with integrity and conduct its operations ethically and responsibly. We have developed policies and processes to ensure financial, academic, personnel and fiscal responsibility and accountability appropriate to an institution founded in the Catholic and Benedictine traditions.

Staff are encouraged to follow professional association standards and best practice. Students are taught about the importance of academic integrity. The CSB mission, bylaws, and board committee charters inform board and committee practice, and trustees and key employees are asked to disclose known conflicts of interest.

The Board of Trustees is committed to preserving and enhancing the College of Saint Benedict while allowing the administration to oversee daily management and the faculty to oversee academic matters.

As a Catholic and Benedictine institution, CSB supports and actively encourages freedom to explore the truths of faith and reason, to pursue intellectual and scientific inquiry of all types and to engage in active dialogue about the interactions among these. Faculty are encouraged and expected to work according to the principles established by their respective disciplines. Controls are in place to ensure research is conducted in an ethical and responsible manner.

## 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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#### Courses and Programs: Current and Appropriate to Degree

The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University offer 37 majors and 40 minors leading to the baccalaureate degree. Credit requirements for degrees and programs meet commonly accepted practices in higher education: students must complete 124 credits, of which 40 must be earned in upper-division courses. The College of Saint Benedict does not offer graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, or certificate programs.

To ensure that courses and programs are current and appropriately rigorous, each department completes a comprehensive program review every ten years or more frequently if required by external specialized accreditation. In each program review self-study, faculty members examine course offerings, learning goals, and program design in the context of the CSB/SJU mission and the programs offered at peer and aspirant institutions. An external evaluator reviews the self-study, visits campus, and submits a detailed report to the provost. Based on the self-study and the evaluator's report, the provost and department define an action plan; in the years between program review, the department documents its progress on the action plan in an annual report. As a result, 100% of programs have undergone program review within the previous 10 years and are able to demonstrate currency and appropriate rigor due to alignment with peer and aspirant colleges.

The appropriate level of performance required for baccalaureate students is further evidenced by student perception of quality and rigor. The Senior Survey, administered each year to graduating seniors, asks “How would you evaluate the quality of your academic experience in your major field of study?” In 2016, 91.7% of CSB seniors responded “Excellent” or “Good”; 87.6% of SJU students responded “Excellent” or “Good”. In addition, 90.7% of CSB students and 81.3% of SJU students who graduated in 2016 strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “My experiences at CSB/SJU prepared me well for my career.”

The level of academic challenge is evident in alumnae/i surveys. The most recent alumnae/i survey indicated that graduates rated their experience at CSB/SJU highly and indicated that their experience developed leadership skills and significantly contributed to their personal and professional development. Over 90% described a high level of academic challenge, commitment to academic excellence and achievement, and overall quality of instruction they received.

Students have also demonstrated that the level of rigor required at CSB/SJU compares favorably nationally with performance on the Collegiate Learning Assessment. CSB and SJU administered the Collegiate Learning Assessment most recently in 2014; entering students and graduating students performed above the 80th percentile in total score. This indicated that students were performing well with regard to analysis, problem solving, and writing mechanics as compared to a national sample of college graduates.

#### Learning Goal Articulation and Differentiation

Learning goals are articulated for undergraduates, the general education program (common curriculum), programs, and courses. These undergraduate learning goals are differentiated from those achieved at St. John's University in the School of Theology.

Undergraduate learning goals are approved by the faculty. The Common Curriculum Committee (Handbook 5.3.3) approves changes to the common curriculum. If the Curriculum Committee approves the revision, the proposal moves to the Joint Faculty Senate (Handbook 5.4) for final approval. In Spring, 2015, for example, the Joint Faculty Senate approved revisions to the learning goals for the Math, Theology (lower division), and Gender learning goals. Likewise, the Academic Curriculum Committee (Handbook 5.3.4) approves all changes to programs and courses.

#### Consistency Across All Modes of Delivery

As residential colleges, consistency in program quality and learning goals for courses are monitored by the Academic Curriculum and Common Curriculum Committees. The undergraduate colleges do not provide distance delivery or dual credit options, do not participate in contractual or consortial arrangements, and do not maintain any additional locations.

For students who study abroad during the undergraduate experience, the colleges offer courses that are equivalent to those offered on campus. These courses are designed by our faculty, taught by our faculty, and approved by the Academic Curriculum Committee or Common Curriculum Committee consistent with all other courses. All courses offered in a study abroad experience

that carry Common Curriculum designations are approved by the Common Curriculum committee.

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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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#### General Education: Appropriate to Mission, Offerings, and Degree Level

The College of St. Benedict/St. John's University approved the requirements for its undergraduate general education program, the "Common Curriculum," in 2006-07. The structure of the Common Curriculum has three layers. First, shared experiences serve as bookends: all incoming first-year students enroll in a two-semester First-Year Seminar and all students complete an Ethics Common Seminar before graduating. These courses share common learning outcomes and are structured around themes selected by the faculty. Second, a mission-driven layer requires that students complete coursework fulfilling learning outcomes related to 1) gender, 2) culture and language, 3) theology (Catholic and Benedictine traditions), 4) experiential learning, and 5) a culminating capstone course in the major. Third, distribution requirements expose students to the "ways of knowing" central to natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and fine arts. A total of 56 credits are required in the general education program for graduation.

#### General Education: Articulated Purpose, Content, Outcomes

A full description of the Common Curriculum is found on the website and is integrated into all students' 4-year plans. The Common Curriculum was developed by the faculty and encompasses the shared experiences, mission-driven elements, and distributional requirements described above. Learning outcomes were articulated for each requirement and courses fulfilling those

requirements are expected to adhere to those approved outcomes. Faculty must apply for a Common Curriculum course designation and must explain how students will achieve the learning outcomes. All courses fulfilling a Common Curriculum requirement are reviewed and approved by the Common Curriculum Committee. In addition, faculty teaching courses with Common Curriculum designations submit samples of student work for assessment to assure that students are indeed meeting the learning outcomes. Teams of faculty members read samples of student work; using a faculty-designed rubric, they rate the student work. That process generates discussion about improving prompts for assignments and refining pedagogy.

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

The Common Curriculum, as a whole, imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess. This assertion is based on the alignment of the Common Curriculum with the work done by AAC&U, which has endorsed six "high impact practices" for higher education. Specifically, CSB/SJU adheres to these practices through:

- A year-long First-Year Seminar that is "writing intensive";
- "Common Intellectual Experiences" including First-Year Seminar, Ethics Common Seminar, language study, and the departmental capstone;
- "Diversity/Global Learning" through an Intercultural course requirement;
- "Field-based 'experiential learning'" through an Experiential Learning requirement;
- "Capstone Courses and Projects" in every major

In the 2016 Senior Survey, graduates agreed that the Common Curriculum does impart "broad knowledge across a number of fields" (86.3% very much or quite a bit). In addition, other indicators on the Senior Survey imply that students believe that the education provided at CSB/SJU has contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the areas of:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Percent "Very Much or Quite a Bit"</b>
Acquiring and applying information to solve a problem	89.2%
Thinking critically about complex issues	90.0%
Working effectively as a team member	87.8%
Leadership skill development	87.3%
Working with others who hold differing viewpoints	84.8%

Communicating well	83.7%
Writing effectively	82.4%
Developing ethical or moral principles	79.7%
Understanding of race, culture and ethnicity	71.8%
Understanding of issues related to gender	68.1%

The Senior Survey also asks students to indicate the degree to which each of the Common Curriculum requirements has contributed to their growth in adapting and succeeding in a changing world. The most impactful requirement, as reported by 2016 graduates (as "very much"), was experiential learning, followed by intercultural, gender, theology, and ethics common seminar courses.

Faculty have noted that these high impact practices do not include distributional requirements traditionally maintained by many higher education institutions. Similarly, students have indicated that the distributional requirements have a lower impact on their success as a well-rounded graduate. As a result, a task force was created by the Faculty to review the Common Curriculum and envision a path toward further improving the general education program. This task force, the Common Curriculum Visioning Committee, completed a comprehensive analysis of current best-practices in general education and created its final report titled "Making Connections".

In this report, the Common Curriculum Visioning Committee points out that the distribution model is not the ideal means of developing the knowledge, skills, and values central to our mission and our programs. The Executive Summary recommends "moving from a general education program where learning goals are delivered in separate, individual courses to a program where courses are scaffolded in a developmentally appropriate sequence, assuring that students encounter, practice and refine key proficiencies and capabilities in multiple settings and in progressively challenging ways." In September, 2015, the Joint Faculty Senate approved the design principles for the new general education program.

#### Engagement in Communication, Inquiry, Creativity, Skills in Changing Environments

From First-Year Seminar through the capstone courses, the curriculum prepare students for work and life in a rapidly changing world. Grounded in the centuries-old Benedictine tradition of learning and reflection in community, the colleges focus on skills, values, and knowledge that serve students well in 21<sup>st</sup>-century lives. The two-semester First-Year Seminar focuses on the critical thinking, writing, discussion, and oral presentation skills that all careers demand; the capstone course in the major requires that seniors demonstrate their mastery of these skills as they present and discuss a project they have developed independently. The Ethics Common Seminar requires students to identify contested ethical issues in contemporary life and to frame coherent, reasoned arguments to support their stances on those issues.

The learning goals of required courses emphasize the importance of collecting, evaluating, and using information. Starting in First-Year Seminar, students learn to identify and evaluate sources of information; analyze and synthesize information; and construct an extended argument that cites sources appropriately. Other Common Curriculum courses build students' skills in collection, analysis, and communication of information. For example, the courses with Natural Science designation "introduce students to a systematic, empirical study of our world, while enhancing analytic skills and precise communication" by requiring that students:

1. Conduct a scientific investigation as part of a lab or field work to answer a given question
2. Solve or analyze challenging problems using qualitative and/or quantitative sources of information
3. Communicate clearly and concisely the methods, results, and conclusions of a scientific investigation
4. Evaluate information, ideas and scientific claims using appropriate criteria.

All degree programs culminate in a capstone experience whose learning goals emphasize independent inquiry and communication of findings:

1. Students will demonstrate appropriate ability to work independently in their major discipline.
2. Students will demonstrate appropriate ability to integrate a variety of resources and learning from their major and, when appropriate, from across their undergraduate studies.
3. Students will demonstrate appropriate ability to present and discuss their work.

Most of our students present their work at our annual Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Day sometime in their four years (see 3.b.5).

### Education Recognizes Diversity

The commitment to diversity stems from the missions of the institutions and further articulated in the Institutional Statement on Diversity, which asserts, "we commit ourselves to cultivate an inclusiveness and a respect that neither denies nor exaggerates differences. Recognizing our Catholic and liberal arts tradition of respect for human dignity, the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University affirm our mission to teach and foster respect for diversity, to embrace the marginalized and break down the privileges that would exclude those who are different or disadvantaged. Embracing the transcendent dignity of the human person, we accept our common call to build a community and contribute to a larger social world that reflects and celebrates the splendor of human diversity."

Curricular and co-curricular programs emphasize the growing diversity of our community and the larger world. The Common Curriculum requirements in language, gender, and culture have specific learning outcomes that promote understanding of diverse viewpoints and experiences. For example, the learning goals associated with the intercultural designation highlight the ways in which social, political, economic, and other forces continually shape "culture." The learning goals also emphasize the framework within which students perceive "difference"; courses with

intercultural designation require reflection on the ways in which students' experiences, beliefs, and values inform their perspectives. See above for Senior Survey perceptions of the extent to which Common Curriculum courses contribute to students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

As a college for women and a college for men founded by women's and men's Benedictine monastic communities, CSB and SJU are particularly attentive to gender in our curriculum and programming. By requiring a course with gender designation, the colleges ensure that all students take a course in which gender is "a primary lens of analysis for examining course content." The learning goals stipulate that students will "identify at least two gendered perspectives from across the gender spectrum (feminine, masculine, trans, queer, etc.)" and "[a]rticulate how gender intersects with at least one of the following: race, class, ethnicity, nationality, or sexuality," and "[d]emonstrate ability to analyze individual or local experiences of gender in light of relevant broader structural and/or theoretical contexts."

Notably, gender-related initiatives are also the focus of our HLC Quality Improvement Initiative. From this report, "Research within our campuses has . . . demonstrated the effectiveness of specific gendered interventions. For example, we know that our Mathematics, Physics, Computer Science Research Scholars (MapCores) program encourages CSB students to persist in these traditionally male-dominated fields. The program, which began in fall 2009, enrolls a cohort of women and includes scholarships, curricular enhancements, one-on-one advising and support activities designed to attract and graduate more women in specific STEM fields. To date, the program has had considerable success in increasing the number of CSB women graduating with majors in mathematics, physics, and computer science. We also know, from our annual senior survey, that students who report participating in gender-specific programs and activities (like men's or women's spirituality groups or men's or women's health activities) are more likely to say that their experiences at CSB or SJU contributed to their understanding of themselves as a man or a woman, and to report that their experience at CSB and SJU contributed to their understanding of issues related to gender."

CSB and SJU have also demonstrated a significant commitment to intercultural learning through our study abroad programs. Our 19 faculty-led semester-long programs include a required course with intercultural designation. From 2014-17, approximately 55% of our students studied abroad; the number of students participating in study abroad programs places CSB/SJU *third* in the nation among undergraduate colleges. In 2012, CSB/SJU received the Senator Paul Simon Award, an honor given to "colleges and universities that are making significant, well-planned, well-executed, and well-documented progress toward comprehensive internationalization—especially those using innovative and creative approaches."

Student perceptions of our success at diversity and inclusion are evidenced through the Senior Survey. In 2016, 57.1% of students were "very satisfied" or "generally satisfied" with the overall diversity of the colleges with respect to background and social identities.

The colleges continue to explore ways to attend to diversity initiatives and to support underserved student populations. For example, both CSB and SJU applied for and were awarded Mellon grants for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017; these grants provide support for pedagogy and course design that meets the needs of our U.S. students of color (15%). MapCore worked to

increase women majoring in Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics, and Physics; FoCuS worked to increase underserved populations in Chemistry). Funding has helped to identify strategies to address the social and cultural barriers and financial support for these students. We are using successful strategies from these past opportunities to develop a program to support underserved students in any STEM field.

#### Contribution: Scholarship, Creative Work, and Discovery of Knowledge

The most significant evidence of students engaging in and contributing to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge is in Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Day, held in April of each year. In 2016, 908 students presented their scholarly and creative work. This annual event offers the opportunity for students to share their research through poster sessions or presentations. No classes meet on Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Day, and both campuses host a full schedule of student presentations. In the 2016 Senior Survey, 36.7% of respondents completed research or creative activity *on an original work*.

Expectations for student scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge is supported through the Common Curriculum and in the major. Students conduct a research project in First-Year Seminar, and this experience serves as the foundation for research projects in more advanced courses. CSB and SJU offer competitive grants for undergraduate summer research; the colleges also offer funding for production of research and presentation of research. In addition, our Experiential Learning and Community Engagement Office has identified sixteen externally funded undergraduate fellowship opportunities.

All students have the option of meeting the capstone requirement for the major through the completion of an All College Thesis. This project may be an extended research project or a creative project. The colleges also offer an award for an outstanding All College Thesis each year.

Music students present junior and senior recitals; art majors exhibit their work in the senior exhibits at the Gorecki Gallery at the CSB Benedicta Arts Center and at the Alice R. Rogers and Target Gallery at the SJU Art Center.

Faculty are also expected to contribute to scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge. The Faculty Handbook (Section 2.5) outlines expectations for tenure-track and tenured faculty scholarship and creative work at third-year review, tenure, and promotion to full professor.

Student-faculty collaborative research is also part of the culture at CSB/SJU.

When hiring tenure-track and full-time term faculty, the colleges specify that commitment to undergraduate research is expected. The colleges support undergraduate research; as the "Undergraduate Research" webpage states:

"The mission of the Undergraduate Research Program at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University is to provide our students with the opportunity to engage in intensive

scholarship, research, or creative work within the students' chosen field of study. The goal of the program is to support student work in a manner which allows for the work to be presented in some form to a larger external audience (e.g., publication, exhibition, scholarly presentation, or public performance). The Undergraduate Research Program provides resources and support to both the students and their faculty mentors that will facilitate the students' scholarly and creative efforts." CSB/SJU honors a faculty member each year with the Linda Mealey Award, a faculty-student collaborative research and creativity award.

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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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Faculty: Sufficiency for Role

Approximately 350 faculty members in 37 departments and programs teach courses, design and assess the curriculum, advise students, and serve in faculty governance roles. The [Faculty Handbook](#) Section 2.10.3 states: “A faculty member’s overall responsibilities include: effective teaching, which is paramount; scholarship and creative work as appropriate to their field; academic advising; service; and the development of professional identity.” The institutions are committed to provide stability for the curriculum and for the intellectual community through the more than 70% of faculty currently tenured or on a tenure-track. The student-to-faculty ration has averaged 12 to 1 for the past five years. The median class size is 19, and the largest classes are 35 students. The small class sizes offer opportunities for students to work closely with faculty and for faculty to provide mentoring to all students.

To provide oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, faculty serve on the Academic Curriculum Committee [Faculty Handbook Section 5.4.4], the Common Curriculum Committee [Faculty Handbook Section 5.4.3], and the Academic Policies and Standards Committee as well as its Assessment Subcommittee (see [Handbook](#) Section 5.4.1). These faculty-governance committees are charged with approval of proposed courses, review of departmental and Common Curriculum assessment, and formulating guidelines and practices that support the integrity of the academic programs.

## Faculty Qualifications

At the time of hire, college staff review transcripts and check references to ensure that applicants meet the credentialing requirements set out in the Faculty Handbook [Faculty Handbook Section 2.1.3, 3.2.5]. Through this process, 100% of faculty are academically and experientially qualified to fulfill the faculty role with 90% of faculty currently hold the terminal degree in their fields. The Academic Affairs office maintains curriculum vitae, submitted initially at the time of hire and updated during program review or more frequently as needed.

## Faculty Evaluation

Department chairs evaluate faculty on a schedule set forth by the Faculty Handbook. Faculty on a tenure-track are evaluated annually until tenure review. Faculty in term positions are also evaluated annually by department chairs. Tenured faculty are evaluated by the department chair every three years. In addition, the Handbook outlines procedures for a post-tenure review of faculty ten years after tenure or promotion review.

Both CSB and SJU uphold Rank and Tenure Committees whose members are faculty peers; these committee members evaluate tenure-track faculty in the third and sixth years, following the guidelines set out in the Faculty Handbook for Third-Year and Tenure review. Departments and Rank and Tenure Committees draw on student course surveys and on the faculty member's reflections on course surveys as criteria for evaluating teaching effectiveness. Other criteria include class observations by the chair and department colleagues as well as review of syllabi and other course materials. The Handbook also outlines criteria for evaluating advising, scholarship and creative work, service to the colleges and to the larger community, and professional identity at third year, tenure, and promotion to full professor ([Handbook](#) Sections 2.5, 2.6, 2.7).

## Faculty Professional Development

Faculty are expected to uphold a current Program for Professional Development (PPD). This document outlines the faculty's teaching, scholarship, advising, service, and professional goals and action plans over a 3-5 year time period. Faculty have a number of resources to stay current in their fields and to advance professionally. The colleges provide support for faculty to present at or attend conferences and workshops; each full-time faculty member is granted \$750 through the department budget each year. Faculty may also apply for Curriculum and Program Development Funds to complete curricular or professional projects. These funds are disbursed through the Faculty Development and Research Committee, and also by the Dean's Office and Provost's Office.

Tenured faculty are eligible to apply for a semester-long sabbatical at full pay or a full-year sabbatical at half pay every seven years, beginning in the year following tenure. For the past 10 years, the colleges have funded sabbaticals for every faculty member whose sabbatical application met the criteria of the Faculty Development and Research Committee.

Faculty have numerous opportunities to improve their teaching effectiveness, ranging from class observations by departmental and other colleagues to assistance offered by the Learning Enhancement Service. Faculty are invited annually to participate in "Technology Day", organized by the colleges' Information Technology Services. These workshops assist faculty with technology integration in the classroom and beyond.

External funding has also been secured to support faculty development. For example, CSB received \$100,000 for humanities faculty professional development to address teaching and advising our increasingly racially diverse student body, and SJU received \$100,000 to enhance our First-Year Seminar (FYS). Between the two programs 58 faculty participated in the two cohorts to increased effectiveness of teaching and advising American students of color, and to increase appreciation for the value of a liberal arts education. Another example is a development program in 2016-17 to assist faculty in developing blended learning initiatives, provided by funding received by SJU.

#### Faculty are Accessible

Faculty are expected to hold office hours and to respond effectively to student inquiries. As advisors and instructors, faculty members are available for consultation with students in office meetings and through email. Faculty work closely with students to answer questions about courses and programs, to provide guidance through intellectual challenges, and to assist with planning for academic opportunities, graduate and professional education, and careers. Over 90% of seniors surveyed in 2016 reported that they would describe their relationships with faculty as "excellent" or "good" and over 92% of students reportedly discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class.

#### Staff are Qualified, Trained, and Supported in Professional Development

Administrative staff and support staff provide services that help students succeed academically. Employment ads specify the credentials required for each position, and job descriptions outline the necessary skills and qualifications. The Human Resources Offices screen applicants and manage the application files. Search teams review candidates and ensure that the administrative and support staff members meet the qualifications outlined in the job descriptions and postings.

Counseling staff hold appropriate degrees; they offer individual appointments, group counseling, and workshops on topics including body image, stress management, alcohol use, sexuality, and depression. Both Counseling Offices also hold "Walk-in Wednesdays." The Health Promotion staff have earned master's degrees; the Health Promotion Office runs programs that emphasize healthy lifestyles and behaviors.

Directors of the Writing Center and Math Skills Center have graduate degrees in their fields. Staff in the Registrar's Office, Financial Aid Offices, and the Business Offices meet the required qualifications for their positions and carry out their functions in compliance with the procedures outlined by the colleges and, as appropriate, undergo audits. All administrative staff are well-prepared for their roles, and all have opportunities for professional development through a campus-wide professional development funding program. Administrative staff who have served

CSB/SJU for six years are also eligible to apply for paid professional leave in order to complete a degree or program supporting administrative service area. CSB and SJU staff can also apply for professional development funding.

Experiential Learning and Global Education Center staff prepare students for learning outside the traditional classroom and provide support for students while on site. Staff members in these offices have appropriate credentials and experience. Career Services staff assist students in exploring possibilities for life after graduation and in preparing for applications and interviews.

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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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### Student Support Services

CSB and SJU provide student support services suited to the needs of its students including:

- Academic Advising (discussed in 3.D.3)
- English as a Second Language and English for Bilingual Students
- Student Accessibility Services
- Writing Center
- Math Skills Center
- Peer tutors
- College Possible
- Counseling and Psychological Services

Students at CSB/SJU are increasingly diverse and have a growing need for academic language services to promote effective learning in the college setting. Although English proficiency is assured at acceptance, English as a Second Language (ESL, serving international students) and English for Bilingual Students (EBL, serving bilingual and multilingual U.S. students) programs offer language advancement courses to strengthen communication and comprehension skills.

Despite a slightly lower overall enrollment over the past few years, the demand for specific kinds of support has increased. Between 2010 and 2016, for example, the number of students working with the Student Accessibility Services Office has risen steadily and sharply, from 131 to 350.

Usage of the Testing Center has also increased dramatically, with staff proctoring 494 tests in 2010-11 and 1032 tests in 2016-17.

Writing well is important to students at CSB/SJU and the college provides a Writing Center to meet that need. As evidenced by data from the National Census of Writing, the utilization of Writing Center services compare favorably to other four-year colleges with similar enrollments. For example, the median number of face-to-face visits to four year colleges with enrollments of 1000-4999 [in Fall 2011] was 796; in Fall 2014 our Writing Center had 1736.

In AY 2015-16, 3337 one-on-one appointments were conducted at the Writing Center. This was the highest number of appointments in an academic year. 938 different students used our services, which is more than 25% of the student body. The majority of these students were first-year students, as 750 first-year students came to the Writing Center for an appointment. These usage statistics are well above average, as measured by The National Census of Writing. Most students who come to one appointment come back at least one more time; of the 938 total students, 525 returned. More than two dozen students came in 10 or more times over the course of the year.

Every appointment should be recorded on WOnline, our online appointment software. Comments have been overwhelmingly positive and, according to the 2016 NSSE, 93% of students agreed to strongly agreed that writing clearly and effectively was a direct result of their college experience.

The Math Skills Center provides support for students in a number of ways. Peer tutoring allows for students to get help with their homework on a drop-in basis. The peer tutors also assist students in preparing for standardized tests, such as the GRE and PPSST. Tutoring is also available to assist students in any deficient areas. Usage of the Center is on the rise, **increasing by 50% in the past two years**. The Math Skills Center also provides diagnostic skills tests for instructors to use in their courses. Students then have the opportunity to work in the Math Skills Center to improve any weak areas. One of the main functions of the Math Skills Center is to target students who have not met the math proficiency requirement. These students are contacted and encouraged to enroll in a Math Preparation course or to work with the Math Skills Center to improve their proficiency. Diagnostic tests are given to determine the areas of weakness. Individualized study plans are then created to help the student in achieving a passing score on the math proficiency exam. The Math Skills Center administers the proficiency exams and works with both Academic Advising and the Registrar's Office to ensure that students are on-track. In addition to teaching numerous Math Preparation courses, the Director of the Math Skills Center also teaches a Math Skills course, for those with permission from Student Accessibility Services, as well as courses in the Math Department.

In addition, students have access to health and counseling services. CSB/SJU Counseling and Psychological Services staff enhances the mental health of students by providing prevention, intervention, consultation, and referral services to CSB/SJU students, as well as consulting and training to the campus community. CSB/SJU Counseling and Psychological Services staff enhances the mental health of students by providing prevention, intervention, consultation, and

referral services to CSB/SJU students, as well as consulting and training to the campus community.

### Learning Preparation/Directing Entering Students

Academic Advising and Student Accessibility Services staff begin working with students before they arrive on campus. Using an online survey, the Academic Advising Office is able to review students' academic profiles and intended areas of study. This allows the Academic Advisors to create first-semester schedules crafted specifically for each student. An added benefit to this approach is that Academic Advising is able to collect and share summary information on course demand for the incoming class with Academic Affairs Administration. Before the first-year registration commences, CSB/SJU will make adjustments to course offerings which matches demand and reduces unused seats.

Student Accessibility Services conducts large numbers of intake interviews with students prior to the start of the school year. This allows SAS to create and distribute academic accommodation letters and facilitate the provision of said accommodations in a timely manner.

### Academic Advising

Students accepted for admission to CSB/SJU receive the support of academic advisors who provide the support and advice needed for undergraduate success and preparation for career and/or graduate school. Academic advising begins at first year orientation and continues through graduation and beyond. First-Year Seminar faculty serve as academic advisors for first-year students; these faculty members review midterm grades and provide guidance for course selection and registration. At the end of the first year, students begin working with advisors in their chosen area of study.

Academic advisors regularly meet with First-Year Seminar classes to discuss four-year planning and the importance of a liberal arts education. The First-Year Seminar professor is also the faculty advisor for each student in the class. This creates a situation where students see their faculty advisor at least twice a week during the entire first year. Faculty advisors and Academic Advising staff continue working with students through the senior year. A high percentage of graduating seniors in 2016 rated the quality of academic advising as "Excellent" or "Good" (80.5%). Additionally, CSB/SJU have developed cohort programs that advise underserved students such as First Gen, FoCus, College Possible, and I-LEAD.

### Infrastructure and Resources for Teaching/Learning

CSB and SJU maintain resources and facilities that support effective teaching and learning. The Provost Office conducted a survey of faculty for classroom functionality, seeking input about various aspects of each instructional space on both campuses for faculty and staff who used the spaces. That information was shared with a task force made up of representatives from the faculty, students, IT Services, Library, Buildings and Grounds, Student Accessibility Services, and the provost's office. The task force conducted research on best practices and developed standards for learning spaces and plan for upgrading learning spaces.

## Technology infrastructure

The mission of our IT Services is to provide innovative and reliable technology and services to enable teaching and learning for students, faculty, and staff at CSB/SJU. Training and workshops are offered through IT Services on a variety of software programs and systems available to all faculty, staff, and students (e.g., Power Point, Excel, Canvas, building web-based course resources, security best practices, 3D printing, et cetera). IT Services staff are also available to assist faculty on an individual basis. In addition, the IT Services department meets regularly with faculty to solicit input to determine future information technology needs for the campuses. All faculty are provided a personal computer, either desktop or laptop, as well as access to printers and scanners. IT Services provides technical support to students and faculty from 8 am - 5 pm during the week as well as some evening and weekend hours while classes are in session.

The computer facilities consist of 95 presentation-ready classrooms and 29 laboratory/studio classrooms (98% of classrooms; 31% of laboratories; overall 88% of formal learning spaces), 15 computer lab facilities, and 44 residence hall computer clusters. There are 941 computers available for student-access (computer labs, residence halls, and other areas). All areas have modern computers offering the latest versions of software for e-mail, web browsing, office productivity (word processing, spreadsheet, database, and presentation), graphics, and discipline-specific needs. Our campuses offer 3D modeling and printing at no cost for academic use. Computer facilities are available weekdays, evenings, and weekends for students' convenience, some 24 hours. Students are not required to own a computer, though over 98% of students bring one to campus. Students have access to printers in designated computer lab spaces and can print from both campus computers and their own personal devices.

All classrooms are equipped with digital TV screens or projectors, in-classroom computers, and laptop computer connections. In addition, some classrooms are equipped with Apple TVs or Kramer VIAs to facilitate wireless presentation. These implementations are growing across the campus in an effort to improve the ease of access for faculty and students to present in classrooms. Each campus classroom and seminar rooms is equipped with a whiteboard or blackboard as well. VCRs, TVs, cameras, video cameras, and projectors are maintained and readily attainable for checkout from Media Services.

## Scientific laboratories

Students have access to excellent laboratory facilities and equipment to support their learning in the natural sciences and other fields. These spaces are developed in coordination with faculty in order to ensure that they meet the specific needs for their learning outcomes. One example of these spaces is our Nursing Simulation lab area, which includes state-of-the-art simulation rooms, a full video recording system, pan-tilt-zoom cameras, and digital screens, all designed with the specific purpose of enhancing the student experience and better preparing students in the nursing major.

Other scientific laboratories include those located in Ardolf Science Center (CSB) and Peter Engel/New Science Center (SJU). These spaces are dedicated to biology, chemistry, nutrition, physics, and computer science. Ardolf houses labs for general chemistry as well as organic

chemistry, analytical chemistry, physical/inorganic chemistry, and biochemistry. The Chemistry Department continually updates and modernizes its equipment; the department currently has more than \$1 million in modern instrumentation. The Bailey Herbarium at SJU is the largest private college herbarium in the Minnesota with nearly 32,000 specimens of vascular and nonvascular plants, representing both local and global collections ranging in age from modern to over 150 years.

The colleges are surrounded by diverse natural habitats, which serve as a focus for study in both classes and independent research. The 2400-acre St. John's campus features a large oak forest with stands of maples, pine and spruce, a restored oak savanna and tall grass prairie, both natural and restored wetlands and a diversity of large and small lakes. The College of St. Benedict also owns about 300 acres of natural habitats, including prairie and wetland restorations and 100 acres of relatively undisturbed "big woods" deciduous forest on the campus.

### Libraries

Clemens Library (CSB), built in 1986, comprises 55,000 square feet, has a shelving capacity of 200,000 volumes, includes five group study rooms, and maintains a seating capacity of 372. The public space is all one level, which simplifies service delivery and staff functions. IT Services maintains a computer lab in Clemens with 60 desktop computers, including several stand-up workstations, and an 18 workstation training classroom. Student use of the building is heavy, with all study areas well populated in the afternoon and evenings, particularly the group study rooms. In our first year of collecting group study room usage data, the five rooms were reserved 4,723 times during the academic year.

Alcuin Library (SJU) was designed by modernist architect Marcel Breuer and built in 1964. While distinguished architecturally, it became insufficient to support best practices in contemporary teaching and learning. The 90,000 square foot building was completely remodeled in 2016, reopening in January 2017 with a student-centered design. In August 2017, the connected Learning Commons opened, providing an additional 20,000 square feet of learning spaces. Library staff rehoused the nearly 500,000 volume collection in high density shelving, freeing up space for new functions while retaining the significant legacy collection on site. The renovated library and addition have over 600 seats and include new collaborative rooms, classrooms, IT Services training and assistance, the Writing Center, the World Languages Center, and expanded Media Services. The new Creative Commons supports constantly evolving modes of digital scholarship by providing equitable access to resources, especially equipment and software, for everyone on campus; making space available for experimentation and collaboration; and housing technology experts who can provide assistance, training, and consultation.

The Libraries are responsible for providing collections and services that meet the curricular and research needs of our community. While the role of academic libraries has been rapidly progressing beyond collections, we continue to add value to the educational experience of students through the quality of our information resources. While our print book circulation has declined consistent with trends at libraries nationally, use of ebooks, electronic journals, and other online resources has increased. Continual changes in access and delivery platforms for

digital resources make it challenging to track usage over time. However, with one representative scholarly publisher, *JSTOR*, we saw an increase in ejournal use of 9%, and a nearly 300% increase in ebook use from 2016 to 2017. We continue to buy resources in the formats best suited for use, meeting both our commitment to local curricular support and our national collecting responsibility.

### Performance venues

The colleges maintain venues for rehearsal and performance of concerts, plays, and other events. The Escher Auditorium at CSB seats over 1000; the Stephen B. Humphrey at SJU seats 500. Smaller venues at CSB include the Gorecki Family Theater, the Colman Black Box Theater, the outdoor Darnall Amphitheater, and the Helgeson Dance Studio. The colleges hold lectures and readings in many of these spaces and in the Pellegrine Auditorium at SJU.

### Museum Collections

Visual arts galleries on both campuses host exhibits of work by invited artists, faculty, and students.

The Saint John's University [Hill Museum and Manuscript Library](#), serves the world through digital preservation of cultural resources, focusing on manuscripts in endangered or remote locations. HMML today is a world leader in photographic preservation of manuscripts. It makes both manuscript images and its catalogue available through online tools for teaching and research.

### Guidance for Effective Use of Research

CSB and SJU hire well-qualified staff in the libraries; all librarians hold an ALA-accredited degree in Library and Information Studies. Reference librarians work closely with faculty to help students improve their information literacy. The Libraries have implemented an assessment plan to measure student learning progress toward these goals. In Spring 2017, for example, librarians tested students' ability to match research needs and search strategies to research tools; and to design and refine search strategies based on search results.

Beginning with First-Year Seminar, librarians assist students with research projects. Reference librarians meet with classes at all levels to provide direction as students search for, evaluate, and document sources of information. An online form allows students to make individual appointments with reference librarians, and a "chat" feature of the library page allows librarians to address questions immediately. At both libraries, reference librarians are available to answer students' questions and to help them use databases and other tools. Students and other patrons can request research help from a librarian by chat, text, email, or scheduled appointment as well as seek drop-in assistance. Appointment-based reference has grown as the primary way librarians and students investigate topics in depth. The number of research appointment requests rose to 843 in AY17, up 50% from just five years ago. In addition, in the past year the Libraries took on responsibility for coordinating the All College Thesis program, further strengthening their association with student research.

## 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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#### Co-Curricular Programs Suited to Mission and Contribute to Experience

CSB Residential Life has designed a four-year residential living experience focused on women's development as leaders and citizens of the world. This is achieved through an intentional cohort model for housing, grounded in Catholic and Benedictine traditions, which supports women's holistic development through the experience of community living. The Residential Curriculum identifies the learning goals of the program: leadership for the common good; respect for all persons; and developing a meaningful life.

Through its Residential Life program, Saint John's University promotes the development of men within the context of living and learning in community. Saint John's creates a supportive learning environment that encourages respect for others, good stewardship, and tolerance, while assisting students in their vocational discernment. Students living on campus benefit from connections with others, opportunities to develop a balanced lifestyle, use of campus facilities, and the continued reflective exploration of their own faith. Therefore, we seek to provide a living, learning environment that enhances individual growth and development intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, all within a just and caring community.

Student Activities and Leadership Development (SALD) sustains a vibrant campus life through social programming and leadership development. SALD oversees club processes, advises the Joint Events Council, and coordinates the Orientation program. Students have a wide range of opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities. CSB hosts 11 varsity sports, while SJU hosts 12 varsity sports; the colleges host 16 club sports. CSB and SJU together host 100 clubs and organizations. Among these organizations are pre-professional clubs, including the Pre-Law Society and the Pre-Dentistry Club; clubs affiliated with majors, including the French Club, Math Society, and the Drama Club; and special-interest clubs, including the student newspaper staff, *The Record*, the editorial board of the literary journal, *Studio One*, KNJB Radio, and the Asia Club.

#### Demonstrating Claims

The claims that we make about our contribution to a student's educational experience are:

- Mission-based claim: to provide the best/distinctive residential, liberal arts education in the Catholic and Benedictine traditions;
- Goal-based claim: to establish clear expectations and outcomes for the curricular and co-curricular experience through the common curriculum, their academic major, study abroad and experiential learning, and their co-curricular experience.

*Students will acquire a strong capacity for critical and creative thinking and cognitive complexity*

Our students will demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking and the ability to understand and manage cognitive complexity. These skills include the ability to approach problems in integrative ways from multiple perspectives as well as the ability to acquire and apply information and communicate in multiple formats.

The CSB/SJU learning experience will provide students with opportunities for reflective learning, analytic inquiry, investigation and application, problem solving, creativity, and communication.

Results from our most recent surveys of alumnae/i indicate that over 90% of our alums described the level of academic challenge, our commitment to academic excellence and our level of instruction as excellent or good. Additionally, the alumnae/i rated indicated that their education contributed to their acquiring broad knowledge, communicating well, writing effectively. Graduating seniors indicated their education at CSB/SJU contributed to thinking critically about complex issues (90%), communicating (83.7%), writing effectively (82.4%), using quantitative reasoning (76.1%), effective learning on own (89.5%).

*Students will navigate multiple dimensions of identity*

Our students will demonstrate the skills of identity awareness, inclusivity, and cultural agility. These skills include an ability to learn from and work with people whose identity is different from their own, an ability to view and engage the world through the lens of gender, and an understanding and appreciation of human differences.

The CSB/SJU learning experience will provide students with opportunities to reflect on their own cultural and personal identity, engage diverse perspectives, and experience cultures and values different from their own.

From our most recent surveys of alumna/i and seniors indicate that 81% alumnae/i believe that CSB/SJU contributed to enabling them to work effectively with people whose views or values are different from their own, and over 2/3 of alumnae/i and graduating seniors indicated that CSB/SJU developed them to better understand people whose race, ethnicity or culture is different than their own and understanding issues related to gender.

*Students will engage globally*

Our students will demonstrate a commitment to global engagement, civic engagement and citizenship. These skills include an understanding of a common good, knowledge of world systems and their points of intersection and divergence, and awareness of social responsibility.

The CSB/SJU learning experience will provide students with opportunities to reflect on their place in the world, experience different cultures, and practice social responsibility and leadership.

Approximately 55% of our students study abroad during their four years. In a study completed by Spinader and Retka published in *The Forum on Education Abroad* (2015) found that CSB/SJU students on our faculty-led programs demonstrated impressive gains on the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Alumnae/i and student surveys indicate that they attribute to CSB/SJU their ability to understand social, civic, or political issues and to be engaged. CSB/SJU are leaders in the production of Fulbright Scholars (CSB ranked 26<sup>th</sup> among all baccalaureate colleges nationally), as well as ranked 20<sup>th</sup> nationally in Peace Corps Top Colleges. CSB had a Rhodes Scholar in 2016.

*Students will discover meaningful life purpose through service and leadership*

Our students will demonstrate a commitment to personal reflection and development, service and leadership. Grounded in our Benedictine heritage, these skills include an understanding of spirituality as an important aspect of identity, a commitment to community and principled leadership, and the ability to live a purposeful and satisfying professional and personal life.

The CSB/SJU learning experience will provide students with opportunities to reflect spiritually, to develop ethical and moral principles to guide their actions and choices, to integrate and apply knowledge and theory gained in the classroom in hands-on learning environments, and to integrate professional development, personal development, and community engagement.

The most recent surveys indicate that nearly 9 in 10 of alumni/ae respondents credit CSB/SJU with developing them to perform their work ethically and with integrity; over 80% credited CSB/SJU contributing to their own understanding of themselves, as well as developing a meaningful life purpose.

*Students will develop the skills and attributes of personal and professional success*

Our students will demonstrate an ability to refine and articulate their educational, career and life goals. These skills include appropriate use of campus resources and services, resilience and agency when addressing challenges and opportunities, and development of habits for personal success.

The CSB/SJU learning experience will provide students with opportunities and resources to make informed academic, personal and professional choices.

According to the most recent surveys 90% of alumni/ae believed that the liberal arts education at CSB/SJU significantly contributed to their personal and professional development; over 86%

indicated that CSB/SJU prepared them well for their careers and over 95% of those attending graduate or professional school credited CSB/SJU with preparing them well; 90% of respondents credited CSB/SJU with giving them the ability to work well in teams; 83% with embracing challenge and accepting risks.

DRAFT

### **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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## 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 Program Reviews

The College of St. Benedict, in collaboration with the St. John's undergraduate program, has had a Program Review process in place since 2000-2001 that is conducted every ten years for all Majors, Minors, Academic Programs and offices including the Registrar, Office of Experiential Learning and Community Engagement, and Global Education Center. A similar review process is used for student development offices.

The [program review process](#) includes: 1) An extensive self-study which includes a reflection on the mission, learning goals, assessment data (including alumni surveys), and resources for the program. It also includes a list of specific questions to guide the external review process. The self-study draft is reviewed by Academic Affairs, the Office of Academic Assessment and

Effectiveness (OAAE), and the assessment subcommittee overseen by the faculty committee, Academic Policies, Standards, and Assessment Committee (APSAC). 2) The final draft is shared with an external evaluator who then conducts a two-day site visit, and responds with an evaluation and suggestions. 3) Upon receipt of the external evaluator's report, the department constructs or revises an action plan meant to guide the program for the next 5-10 years. All components are reviewed by Academic Affairs, OAAE, and APSAC, and ultimately must be approved by the Provost, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Boards, and the Joint Board of Trustees. Programs provide progress (or any changes) of their Action Plan in yearly reports to Academic Affairs, the OAAE, and APSAC. Midpoint-Program Reviews are completed should the Action Plan need major reform or has been completed. The Program Review process records, sustains, and supports improvement of academic excellence at CSB. A [dashboard](#) highlights the department/program participation in Program and Annual reviews at CSB since its onset.

Examples of actions as a result of program review include:

1. The School of Theology (graduate study) and the undergraduate Department of Theology have had ongoing restructuring, with greater autonomy for both as well as profoundly improved coordination for staffing purposes; the program review also resulted in revised learning outcomes for the THEO 111 and the upper-division Theology course required of all students, a faculty hire in comparative religion, advising and community-building initiatives designed to increase the number of majors and minors, all successfully achieved;
2. The renaming and reconfiguration of the Natural Science major to an Integrated Science major to better meet our student's interests in interdisciplinary interactions in STEM as well as future interdisciplinary demands in science and health;
3. The renaming and reconfiguration of the former Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures department to "Languages & Cultures," which allowed the department to incorporate more successfully the former "Humanities" major, now named "European Studies," and to update the French Studies major to better align students' needs and staffing on campus.
4. The Music Department developed courses in the technology of music production and delivery, and increased their offerings in contemporary musical genres and modes of performance;
5. The Environmental Studies program is building up the Social Science element of their offerings with a faculty recruitment for hire in August 2017, in response to student survey data, the external evaluator's counsel, and their own self-assessment;
6. The Political Science Department, having met their curricular revision goals arising from Program Review in AY2011, conducted CSB/SJU's pilot Midpoint Program review in 2015-2016, sending their revised curriculum to the same external evaluator, who confirmed the wisdom of their revisions and urged increased hiring the International Relations area; conversations with Academic Affairs are on-going.

A final benefit of the Program Review Process including annual progress reports is that Academic Affairs can see areas of mutual benefit between departments and programs as we allocate faculty lines and resources.

#### 4.A.2 and 4.A.3 Evaluation and Quality of Credit

The CSB/SJU academic program policies governing the transcription of credits are authorized by three faculty committees: Academic Curriculum Committee (ACC) responsible for department and program credits, Common Curriculum Committee (CCC) responsible for general education credits, and the Academic Policies, Standards, and Assessment Committee (APSAC) responsible for Academic policies, as described in the [Faculty Handbook](#). These policies and guidelines, as approved by the committees, are strictly adhered to by the Registrar's Office and Academic Advising when working with students and credits outside CSB/SJU. Policies that regulate approved coursework are clearly articulated in our online academic catalog and the Registrar's Office homepage each year.

*Credits earned outside CSB/SJU:* These policies apply to transfer, readmit, new first-year students or any current students who want to take summer courses and/or transfer credits back to complete their degree requirements. These policies are clearly articulated in our online course catalog and the Registrar's Office homepage each year. All transfer course work is evaluated on an individual basis, but our general guidelines state: "CSB/SJU will accept credits from another college that meet the following criteria: 1) The transfer institution must be regionally accredited (i.e. Higher Learning Commission); 2) A grade of C or higher is required in order for the course work to transfer; 3) The course level must be equivalent to college level course work (normally 100 level or higher) and credit bearing; 4) The course content must be similar to courses offered at CSB/SJU." Transfer course work is evaluated for its applicability of elective credits, general education requirements and, if approved, by the respective department chair towards major or minor degree requirements. Grades earned for transferred coursework are not calculated into the student's cumulative GPA.

Students who matriculated into CSB/SJU prior to Fall 2017, require at least 45 of the 124 credits required for a degree to be earned from CSB/SJU. At least half of the credits required for the major, excluding supporting courses, must be earned from CSB/SJU. For new students entering in Fall 2017 or later, at least 76 of the 124 credits required for a degree must be residential credits earned from the CSB/SJU. Residential credits include credits earned at CSB/SJU or one of its sponsored or approved study abroad programs. At least half of the credits required for the major, excluding supporting courses, must be earned from CSB/SJU. For transfer students, at least 45 of the 124 credits required for a degree must be residential credits earned from CSB/SJU

*International Student Transfer Credits:* Incoming international transfer students who attended a college or university outside of the United States are required to have an official World Evaluation Services (WES) evaluation completed and submitted to the Registrar's Office.

*Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP):* CSB/SJU revise and publish policies annually on what scores are required on each test for AP, IB and CLEP. This work is coordinated by the Registrar's Office for each academic area. In order for credit to be granted, the student must have the official test results mailed directly to the CSB/SJU registrar.

*Study Abroad Credits:* Students earn CSB/SJU credit through approved off-campus programs. Courses that are a part of the designated abroad program, whether instructed by CSB/SJU faculty or designated faculty at off-site accredited institutions, are approved via the Academic Curriculum Committee (and the Common Curriculum Committee should these courses include designations towards general education requirements). Courses considered an elective that have not been pre-approved through the above process but are taught regularly are evaluated in a similar manner as a transfer credit (as stated above).

For students choosing abroad programs not offered through CSB/SJU, students must submit a study abroad application. The program must be approved by the Center for Global Education with appropriate, designated guidelines. Credits must be approved using the transfer policies as described above. Courses counting towards a major, minor or the common curriculum must also follow the appropriate policies for approval (stated in section 4.A.3).

*Internships and Independent Research:* Experiential learning opportunities require CSBSJU faculty supervision. The most common form of credit-bearing opportunities are internships, independent research, and All-College thesis opportunities. The Office of Experience and Professional Development has a policy on the credit allowance and facilitation of an academic internship. Students conducting independent research requires faculty supervision and can be conducted for both credit and non-credit. Policies offering credit to independent research opportunities are facilitated through Independent Learning Projects. Students can also gain independent research credits through the All-College Thesis.

*Military:* Credit for programs completed through the military are evaluated by the Registrar and Academic Advising per the ACE (American Council on Education) guidelines.

*Evaluation for credit that counts towards a Major, Minor or Common Curriculum requirement:*

Transfer course work is evaluated for its applicability of elective credits, common curriculum requirements and, if approved, by the respective department chair towards major or minor degree requirements. The institution has standards and policies to ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer. In addition to the general guidelines noted above, the Registrar's Office has been given the authority by the Academic Curriculum Committee and the Common Curriculum Committee as well as the Academic Dean to review course descriptions of the transfer credits to be applied as elective credits or towards common curriculum requirements. The Registrar's Office follows guidelines as authorized by these committees. If the course does not meet the normal guidelines, then the student will be directed to the Academic Advising Office for further evaluation for elective credits or common curriculum requirements.

Grades earned for transferred coursework are not calculated into the student's cumulative GPA. A preliminary transcript evaluation is completed once an unofficial or official transcript is received. For a final transcript evaluation to be completed and credits applied to the student record, an official transcript must be received by the Registrar's Office directly from the college at which the courses were completed. Grades from designated, approved courses as part of a study abroad program and approved internship and independent research credits are calculated into the student's cumulative GPA.

#### 4.A.4 Authority over Courses

Institutional authority is authorized at various levels to maintain the rigor, student expectations, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all programs at CSB/SJU. The Board of Trustees provides oversight of student learning at multiple levels. For example, the Board and its Academic Affairs Committee endorse all program reviews, institutional policies bearing on faculty appointment, promotion, tenure, and dismissal, and are provided regular updates on curricular matters. The Academic Affairs Office has direct oversight of curricular matters at all levels. Representatives act as *ex-officio* members of faculty governance committees, are responsible for hiring and maintaining excellent faculty, and provide oversight on learning facilities. The Joint Faculty Assembly, a collective group of faculty from CSB/SJU, are responsible for the educational goals of CSB/SJU as defined in the Faculty Handbook. This includes admission and graduation requirements and the curricula. In addition, a faculty-elected and constructed Joint Faculty Senate (JFS) "deliberate[s] and make[s] decisions on matters related to the academic policies and programs, faculty rights and responsibilities, and the general academic environment of the institutions. The JFS communicates and consults with faculty, administration staff, and the Boards in formulating, developing, and implementing the CSB/SJU educational mission." Finally, faculty committees, including the Academic Curriculum Committee, Common Curriculum Committee, and Academic Policies and Standards and Assessment Committee, maintain oversight and approval of different aspects of the curricula.

*Course prerequisites:* All prerequisites for a given course must be specified in the initial course proposal which requires evaluation and approval by the Academic Curriculum Committee. All prerequisites are explicitly stated in each course description in the Academic Catalog. The registrar maintains Course descriptions, titles and prerequisites. In addition, prerequisites for each course are highlighted during the registration process (students require approval from the instructor or department chair if the prerequisites have not been completed). Should a course also propose a designation in the Common Curriculum, prerequisites for this course must also be listed in the proposal and evaluated by the Common Curriculum Committee.

*Rigor:* Rigor is the responsibility of Academic Affairs and the Faculty. Faculty, with oversight from Academic Affairs, is responsible for the implementation of academic programs, policies, and admission and graduation requirements. Faculty work to maintain high academic standards for student learning across the curricula. Rigor of a course is measured with several criteria: credit hour expectations, course "level" grades, and through the expectations of teaching effectiveness expected of Faculty. Credit hours demand an expectation of student learning time. As defined in the Academic Catalog, "one credit ordinarily represents three hours of work each week, including private study and research as well as scheduled class meetings." The expected hours of student work increases as the number of credits increases. Courses are designated as 100, 200 (both lower division undergraduate courses), 300 (upper-division undergraduate courses), or 400 level courses (graduate courses). The rigor expected of each level has recently been defined and will be added to the Academic Catalog in AY 2019. Faculty are responsible for applying a grade to student work. Expectations for specific letter grades are delineated in the Academic Catalog. Finally, as defined in the Faculty Handbook, faculty are evaluated on their "teaching effectiveness." Part of this measurement includes the "ability to identify course-

appropriate student learning goals.” Inherent in this measurement is a faculty’s understanding and commitment to appropriate rigor in each of his/her courses.

Rigor of transfer credits is regulated by policies that ensure coursework is similar to those taken at CSB/SJU. See above.

*Access to Academic Resources:* Support for student learning requires an effective structure. Academic Affairs, including the Provost, Academic Dean, and Dean of the Faculty maintain Institutional authority over student learning. Department and Program Chairs facilitate and oversee learning within each individual program. This includes oversight over the curricula, facilities, and budget. A Director of the General Education Curriculum has recently been appointed to oversee the learning experience within the general education program. Academic Affairs also oversees the a newly developing Academic Success Center which includes Academic Advising, Student Accessibility Services, the office of Experience and Professional Development, the Libraries, the Writing Center, and the Math Center. In its mission to “empower students to learn and connect,” the center is developing to support student learning (i.e. the offices mentioned above) and opportunities (career opportunities, internships, fellowships, and research opportunities). Student Accessibility Services (SAS) was established in 2011 as an ongoing support mechanism to our student community. SAS is responsible for developing appropriate accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities. Academic accommodations are made on an individualized and flexible basis. The primary goal of this office is to ensure that all students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in both academic and non-academic campus activities. As another support service and a staff of 31 individuals, the Library has a large and growing investment in information literacy services; this investment reflects national trends and local needs for enhanced learning opportunities for students encountering the complex array of information types and formats. The libraries have been connected to students via the curriculum through the First Year Seminar, part of the previous Common Curriculum and will continue to access students with the **First Year Seminar and First Year Experience**.

Finally, the registrar, responsible for student enrollment of courses, regulates access to resources. In addition, the Director of Environmental Health and Safety regulates access to laboratory settings and ensures that faculty, staff, and students are properly trained to work in these conditions.

*Faculty qualifications:*

As defined in the Department Chair's Handbook requests for tenure track positions are evaluated by the Provost’s office with final recommendations proposed to the Presidents of CSB/SJU. If approved, the department chair of the respective program will establish a hiring committee which will work closely with the Dean of the Faculty and Human Resources to follow appropriate procedures during the hiring process.

Ranks are established as defined in the Faculty Handbook. As stated in 2.1.3, “At the time of initial appointment of a full-time or reduced-load faculty member, the provost, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty (including the dean of the School of Theology when appropriate),

the Academic Dean, the Senior Budget Analyst, and the Department Chair, makes a judgment about rank for the initial contract using the criteria” described in section 2.1.3. This includes an earned degree of an appropriate nature depending on the rank.

When students study abroad as a part of our condoned programs, students have access to different faculty. On 15 of our 17 programs, a CSB/SJU Faculty member travels and teaches at least one course to students. In addition, at some locations the Center for Global Education will hire faculty at those partner sites with similar qualifications as designated in the Faculty Handbook. In other cases, the Center will arrange with a partner school to hire appropriate faculty to teach designated courses. While the Center for Global Education does not have direct oversight of these particular hires, it does maintain a curriculum vitae of those faculty that teach regularly for our programs. Occasionally, it is appropriate to hire instructors who do not hold advanced degrees, for example, in providing one on one language instruction for our Guatemala program. However, these instructors are following methodologies and a program designed by CSB/SJU Hispanic Studies and other qualified faculty.

*Dual credit:* CSB/SJU has several dual degree programs:

1. CSB/SJU students can complete a Bachelor's of Arts and either a Master's of Arts in Ministry or Master of Theological Studies degree in five years. Undergraduate students must earn a minimum of a 3.2 grade point average in theological coursework to enter into the five year program.
2. There are some dental schools that admit students after three years of undergraduate study if all of the pre-requisites are met. A three/one program is available at CSB/SJU. Students must complete all general education and major requirements except for four upper-division courses within the natural sciences that could be transferred from the participating dental school. Approval must occur from the department chair. Sufficient credits may then be transferred from the first year of dental school to complete the CSB/SJU degree requirements.
3. CSB/SJU offered a dual credit program with St. John's Preparatory School until AY 2017 when it was discontinued.

#### **4.A.5 Specialized Accreditation**

The following CSB/SJU programs are accredited by specialized accrediting agencies:

- The Education Department adheres to all state and national accreditation requirements programs and were approved by NCATE (CAEP - Council for Accreditation of Education Programs) and the MN Board of Teaching in 2012. State accreditation must be renewed every two years. The program was approved by EPPAS (Educator Preparation Program Application System) in Fall, 2014. The next NCATE (now CAEP) accreditation occurs in 2019.
- The Nursing Department is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The department was last reaccredited by CCNE in AY2017. The next

reaccreditation visit is scheduled for AY2025. Additionally, the department is approved by the Minnesota Board of Nursing (MBON). Continuing program approval is received annually from the MNBON through demonstration of national accreditation and compliance with MBON rules through completion of the annual compliance survey.

- The Didactic Program in Dietetics, an area of concentration within the Nutrition Department, is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The department had their last positive reaccreditation in April, 2016. Reaccreditation is required every seven years.
- The CSB/SJU Chemistry Department is approved by the American Chemical Society (ACS) and in this capacity is authorized to confer ACS-certified degrees. In 2008 the ACS Committee on Professional Development (ACS-CPT) made significant changes to its program guidelines and approval process. The ACS-CPT changes allowed the Chemistry Department to pursue nationally recognized curriculum reform while maintaining ACS approval. Curricular innovations at CSB/SJU were funded in part by a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to the CSB/SJU Chemistry Department (Chris Schaller, PI). Dissemination of this reform has been accomplished through publications in peer-reviewed journals focused on chemical education, numerous presentations and workshops at national meetings on chemistry and chemical education, as well as media coverage from Chemical and Engineering News and the Wall Street Journal. The Chemistry Department received continued approval in 2017.
- The Music Department is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and successfully completed its latest reaccreditation in July 2014. The next reaccreditation visit by NASM occurs in AY2023.

#### **4.A.6 Success of our Graduates**

CSB/SJU are committed to collecting and disseminating information about the success of our graduates completed primarily by a “First Destination Survey” of the graduating class and an annual survey of alumnae and alumni three years after graduation.

The First Destination Survey collects data on employment, service, and education outcomes of students immediately following their graduation from CSB/SJU. Administered by the Career Services Office, the survey collects information over a 12-month period from the point of graduation. The number of contacts varies from one to six, depending on the graduates’ status at the time of contact. The commitment to repeated contact over an extended period of time has resulted in very high participation rates. Among 2015 graduates, 97% (CSB)/93% (SJU) provided information about their employment, service, or education status. The class of 2015 reported a situated rate of greater than 99%, confirming that they were able to find opportunities upon leaving CSB/SJU. In total, 77% of CSB graduates, 87% of SJU graduates, reported that they were employed full-time, inclusive of paid employment, military service, and full-time volunteer commitments. Approximately 20% of CSB graduates and 12% of SJU graduates indicated that they were continuing their education. Less than one percent indicated that they were unemployed and still seeking opportunities 12 months after having graduated.

Results of the First Destination Survey are widely disseminated on campus and posted on our institutional website. The full report on recent graduates is available on the Career Services webpage under the heading “Graduate Outcomes.” In addition, we have posted a multi-year searchable database on our Admission webpage under the heading “**Graduate Success.**” The site allows anyone to search graduate outcomes by major, location, name of business, and continuing education degree, among other choices. The site currently includes results for six graduating classes. CSB and SJU are two of only three colleges in Minnesota that make a searchable database of recent graduates available on their website.

The annual Alumnae and Alumni Survey provides evidence of what graduates are doing three years after earning their degree at CSB/SJU. As importantly, the survey also provides us with an opportunity to gather information about their assessment of the quality of their experiences at CSB/SJU and their perceptions of the degree to which their experiences here prepared them for and have contributed to their personal and professional development. The Class of 2013 survey was fielded in summer 2016. In total, 39% (CSB)/30% (SJU) of the class completed the survey. The results indicate important outcomes. Nearly 9 in 10 graduates believe that faculty and staff at CSB/SJU “recognized and appreciated their talents and helped me to develop them” and that “my experiences at CSB/SJU prepared me well for my career.” Nearly three-quarters of those young graduates who reported that they were working reported that their job uses skills they gained as undergraduate students, is related to their desired career path, and is work they find meaningful. While the vast majority of young graduates reported full-time employment as their primary activity, 11% had already completed a master’s or professional degree and an additional 25% (CSB)/30% (SJU) were working toward completion of a graduate or professional degree. Survey results are available to the campus community on the Institutional Planning and Research website under the header “**Reports.**”

CSB/SJU also reports data about its graduates gathered by external sources. The success indicators reported on the Bragging Rights page of our Admission website include:

- CSB ranked 26<sup>th</sup> among all baccalaureate colleges nationally in the production of Fulbright scholars in 2016-17. In 2016, CSB graduate Rachel Mullin was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship.
- In 2015, CSB ranked 20<sup>th</sup> nationally in the Peace Corps Top Colleges 2015 rankings of small colleges and universities. Since its establishment in 1961, 145 CSB graduates have served in the Peace Corps.
- The *Wall Street Journal* ranked SJU 13<sup>th</sup> nationally for best returns on investment (ROI) for liberal arts majors. The story, headlined “Are Prestigious Private Colleges Worth the Cost?” showed SJU tied with Yale University and Colgate University with an annual ROI of 6.5 percent.

## 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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This accreditation review occurs at a point when CSB/SJU are undertaking several simultaneous efforts to improve and integrate student learning in the curricular and co-curricular spheres. The argument in 4.B therefore indicates developing efforts where appropriate but also necessarily emphasizes the learning goals and their assessment in the current curricular and co-curricular programs.

#### 4.B.1 Learning Goals and Effective Processes for Assessment of Student Learning

CSB/SJU have clear learning goals for their undergraduate curriculum (common curriculum and degree programs) and their co-curricular programs, and we are working to improve these goals.

##### Holistic Institutional Learning Outcomes

Previous to 2017, CSB/SJU had separate Academic and Student Development learning goals for undergraduates. The Academic Learning Goals were approved by the Joint Faculty Assembly on November 30, 1994. The Student Development Learning Outcomes were initially developed in 2006, adopted in 2007, reviewed and revised in 2009, and most recently again in 2017. Beginning in spring 2017, Academic Affairs and Student Development representatives collaborated to construct an integrated and holistic set of Institutional Learning Goals. These goals encompass curricular and co-curricular learning to provide a curriculum map, and are currently being vetted by faculty, staff, and students.

##### First Year Experience Program Learning Outcomes

In AY 2016-17, CSB/SJU collaborated with the John Gardner Institute to conduct a thorough self study of the student [first year experience](#). As a result, a team of representatives from the faculty, academic affairs, and student development offices are working to develop learning

outcomes that integrates academics and student development goals in our first year programming. The team will also develop an assessment plan.

### Curricular Learning Goals -- Common Curriculum

The Common Curriculum (CC) is our general education program at CSB/SJU; it replaced the previous Core Curriculum in AY 2008. The [CC learning goals](#) and their respective requirements have been approved and revised incrementally. Most were approved in September 2006 and April 2007, with the later addition of Experiential Learning in January 2009 and Intercultural in May 2009. All learning goals were approved by the Joint Faculty Assembly (JFA) and then, after its creation, the Joint Faculty Senate (JFS). As a result of ongoing assessment and program review, three learning goals -- Theology, Mathematics, and Gender -- have been modified via proposals endorsed by the Common Curriculum Committee and approval by the Joint Faculty Senate in AY 2015. The CC learning goals in their current formulations are available on the CC website. Assessment of these current CC learning goals is discussed in sections 4.B.2 and 4.B.3.

As we teach and assess the Common Curriculum, we are striving to improve general education at CSB/SJU. Following the Program Review of the CC in 2010, and in conjunction with extensive discussion with faculty and staff on campus, the JFS began an effort to design a new general education curriculum. It authorized the creation of the Common Curriculum Visioning Committee (CCVC), which began a two-year evaluation of the literature on general education. Its report and recommendations, "Making Connections: Transforming the General Education at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University," was presented to and endorsed by the JFS in September 2015. The JFS reauthorized the CCVC to develop a mission, learning goals, and curriculum model in keeping with the "Making Connections" report over the next two years. In March 2017, the JFS endorsed a new set of learning outcomes. In April 2017, the JFS voted on and endorsed a curriculum model that incorporated these learning outcomes, but the JFA narrowly defeated the proposal in a vote in May. After an external review of the curriculum reform process in September, 2017, the JFS has established a new ad hoc committee to continue model development still maintaining the "Making Connections" principles and learning outcomes endorsed in March 2017. We expect to vote on a curriculum package at the end of AY 2018. Although this process has not yet yielded a new curriculum model, the efforts of many members of the CCVC, the JFS, the faculty generally, and staff represent a tremendous commitment on the part of CSB/SJU to improving its curriculum and providing a stronger, more coherent general education program that reflects best practices.

### Curricular Learning Goals -- Academic Departments and Programs

Each department and program has its own [learning outcomes](#), which are designed by departments and programs but require approval by the faculty governance committee, the Academic Curriculum Committee. These curricular learning goals are available on departmental websites and on the Office of Academic Assessment and Effectiveness website.

Additional programs that support the curriculum or high impact practices have a set of learning goals including the Study Abroad programs facilitated through the [Center for Global](#)

[Education](#) and the [libraries](#) . We are currently vetting a set of learning outcomes for an Academic Student Success Center that encompass the goals of many of our service departments and programs including the Writing Center, Math Skills Center, Undergraduate Research, Experience and Professional Development, among others. Upon approval, these outcomes will be assessed with the help of our programs aimed at facilitating academic student success.

### Co-Curricular Learning Goals -- Student Development

The Student Development Vice Presidents of CSB and SJU, are charged to lead collegial efforts to develop learning goals that foster the full and holistic development of young women and young men, to implement programs in pursuit of those learning goals, to assess the success of those programs, and to re-design them on an ongoing basis in light of assessment results.

Student Development at CSB and SJU has a shared set of learning outcomes with a gender specific focus. These outcomes were developed in 2007 as part of an initiative to create a “culture of assessment” within the divisions. We engaged Keeling and Associates to come to campus and to provide initial training on the value and process of assessment. This led to a small committee of program directors who developed a draft of learning outcomes for the division of student development. These outcomes were further refined in a series of meetings with all program directors and finally with feedback from all of the CSB and SJU Student Development division employees. That same year, these outcomes were reviewed and adopted by both Student Development committees of the boards as the foundation of our assessment plan. Finally, once our divisional goals were adopted, each program director was responsible for creating learning outcomes for their department using the divisional outcomes that pertained most to their area. Assessment plans were then built around measuring those defined outcomes.

### Effective Processes for Assessment:

Recognizing we have had struggles and successes in assessment of our curricular programs, CSB/SJU continuously strives to improve our processes for assessment.

The evidence presented for section 4.B.2 and 4.B.3 below strongly demonstrates that assessment is conducted with reasonable regularity and effectiveness when it falls under the purview of academic departments; this pertains to both departmental learning goals and the relevant common curriculum goals assessed by departments. While a structure is now in place believed to provide the leadership necessary for assessment of the cross-disciplinary components of the Common Curriculum.

A leadership structure for assessment has varied since our last accreditation review in 2008 due to changes in Academic Affairs both in structure and personnel as well as fluctuation in the faculty committee, Academic Policies, Standards, and Assessment Committee (APSAC). Academic Affairs and faculty governance are working to improve collaboration and thereby assessment of student learning, as follows:

Assessment processes at CSB/SJU allow for informed and data-driven decisions that positively impact student learning. To facilitate, the Office of Academic Assessment and Effectiveness

(OAAE) collects, maintains, and supports program review and yearly assessment of departmental and program goals. In addition, it provides resources and support for faculty as it relates to effective assessment practices. This office reports directly to the Provost and works closely with the Academic Dean as it relates to assessment processes and impact on curriculum and the Dean of the Faculty as data-driven decisions impact faculty development. The Academic Dean is an *ex-officio* member of the of the faculty-led committee, Academic Policies, Standards, and Assessment Committee (APSAC) and its Assessment Sub-Committee. The Director of OAAE is a consultant to the assessment sub-committee. APSAC and the Assessment Sub-Committee are responsible for reviewing department/program annual assessment reports as well as their self study document during program review. The OAAE, the Academic Dean, and APSAC work together to monitor and provide feedback on annual assessment reports for departments and programs. The OAAE is responsible for collecting and managing assessment of the institutional and first year experience learning goals upon implementation. The assistant director of OAAE also works with Institutional Planning on Research to manage and analyze retention, persistence, graduation, and graduate success.

In the past several years, to ensure data collection, discussion, and integration, we have learned that a leader is vital for regular and effective assessment of the Common Curriculum. Therefore, we have recently provided faculty re-assignment for a Director of the Common Curriculum to oversee assessment of the Common Curriculum. The director is responsible, with the help and support of the OAAE and Academic Affairs, for ensuring assessment is completed, connected, and used effectively and comprehensively where appropriate. To further support assessment of the cross-disciplinary learning goals within the Common Curriculum, we have provided faculty stipends to a single faculty member for each of the cross-disciplinary components, with the assistance of the Director and the OAAE, to lead this process. The director of the first year seminar conducts assessment for these courses. Disciplinary goals are assessed by their appropriate divisions and departments. While assessment has been completed regularly by departments within each division, the data has not been combined or discussed collectively. To resolve this issue, the Director and APSAC's assessment sub-committee will work with divisions to integrate this process.

Faculty governance is currently reexamining the role of APSAC with respect to its assessment-related duties.

Each department and program is responsible for assessment of its own learning goals. Departments are expected to have a curriculum map that identifies a timeline for assessment of each goal. Departments and programs submit assessment results annually to Academic Affairs, APSAC, and the OAAE. As discussed in 4.B.3, different structures exist within a department/program to facilitate assessment.

#### **4.B.2**

##### *Common Curriculum: Cross-disciplinary learning goals*

Assessment of cross-disciplinary goals (First Year Seminar, Ethics Seminar, Gender, Experiential Learning, and Intercultural Learning) has been variable over the past ten years

but the leadership structure described in 4.B.1 above is now in place to enhance the assessment process for the Common Curriculum. For example:

- First Year Seminar: the Common Curriculum director and/or First Year Seminar Director has actively assessed the First Year Seminar learning goals (a two semester sequence) with a focus on writing.
- Assessment of Ethics, Gender, and Intercultural Learning was enhanced with the appointment of an assessment coordinator in AY2012. Assessment reports were submitted to Academic Affairs for Ethics, Gender, and Intercultural Learning. However, with the loss of that position, assessment waned.

Teams of faculty who teach these courses conduct assessment of the respective learning goals. Reports are available on our Sharepoint site and results and next steps are discussed in workshops throughout the year.

#### *Common Curriculum: Disciplinary learning goals*

#### Disciplinary-divisional:

It is expected that the four divisions (Fine Arts (FA), Humanities (HM), Natural Sciences (NS), and Social Sciences SS)) conduct assessment of the divisional learning goals. Therefore, departments teach and assess the common curriculum learning goals corresponding to their respective divisions in addition to, often overlapping with, their departmental learning goals. For example:

- Theater assesses Fine Arts goal 1 in THEA 105
- English assess Humanities goal 1 in [add course example]
- History assess Humanities goals 1 and 2 in all 100-level courses
- Chemistry assesses Natural Science goals 1, 2, and 3 in CHEM 201
- Nutrition assesses Natural Science goals 1, 2, 3, and 4 in NUTR 110 and NUTR 125
- Political Science assesses Social Science goals 1, 2, and 3 in POLS 111, POLS 121, POLS 399, and the MFT for Political Science
- Psychology assesses Social Science goal 3 in PSYC 111 Lab

The [Fine Arts Experience](#) (FAE) is satisfied by attendance at eight approved fine arts events, not coursework.

Because assessment methods, tools, and timelines were built within departments, there has been limited collaborative opportunities and little to no summative assessment of the divisional learning goals completed. However, early on in its delivery, as noted in Annual Reports, very few departments actively reported divisional assessment results. To enhance the summative assessment process, in AY 2017, discussion of assessment methods was conducted within each division. While direct assessment methods are used by all programs/departments, because of the variation in departmental delivery of knowledge to meet the learning goals, it was decided by departments that a common rubric or assessment method was not feasible for the remaining years of common curriculum delivery. However, (some) divisions agreed on a similar scoring

mechanism so results could be compared. In addition, during this year, departments agreed to an assessment timeline to facilitate a more informative and regularly published summative report. This plan is being implemented for the remainder of the common curriculum delivery.

Reporting of disciplinary-divisional goals has increased dramatically. In AY2012, only one department included common curriculum assessment results in their Annual Report. To mediate these issues, the instructions for the Annual Report were changed to include a question specifically regarding assessment of the Common Curriculum in AY2013. Since then, the number of departments/programs including divisional assessment analysis for the Common Curriculum has significantly increased. For example, in AY 2016, all Natural Science departments that submitted Annual Reports reported assessment for the Common Curriculum Natural Science learning goals. This was also true for the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Fine Arts.

#### Disciplinary-departmental:

Departmental goals were designed for Mathematics and Theology. Assessment of the approved common curriculum goals was developed by these individual departments and can be found in the department's annual reports. The timelines for assessment are included in the Common Curriculum timeline. These goals have been assessed regularly and as a result, both math and theology learning goals have changed within the past five years. In addition:

- Mathematics has adopted alternative pedagogies and changed textbooks as a result of assessment data.
- Theology, during their discussions of assessment data, shared assignments, prompts, and different pedagogical approaches to help reach specific goals.

Departmental goals were designed for the departments of Languages and Cultures and Hispanic Studies. Assessment of the approved common curriculum goals was developed by these individual departments and can be found in the department's annual reports. Numerous changes have resulted from assessment in attempt to enhance student learning. For example, changes in software to enhance language learning has been adopted, alternative pedagogies to support learning, and changes in syllabi. Additional examples include,

- French created their Talk Abroad program to enhance listening and speaking skills.
- An English for Bilingual Students (EBS 210-211) course was created in fall 2010 to better serve bilingual US students and address the global language proficiency requirements.

#### Capstone

The Capstone requirement is associated with and assessed within the major.

### *Department and Program learning goals (majors)*

Departments and programs submit their assessment data annually. A compliance dashboard suggests a substantial increase in submission and participation in assessment since its onset in 2009. By the 2014-2015 academic year, almost every department submitted an annual assessment report. Accountability for completion of departmental and common curriculum assessment is monitored by the faculty-led Academic Policies, Standards, and Assessment Committee (APSAC). The degree of compliance and accountability has varied depending upon the functioning of APSAC and its collaboration with Academic Affairs. In fall 2016, Annual Reports were evaluated for the inclusion of Assessment. Over the last five years, an average of 85% of departments/programs that submitted Annual Reports included an assessment report for their program/department. This data further supports the participation of most departments/programs in their own assessment.

Each department develops its own assessment plan to assess student learning for disciplinary goals; this process often overlaps with assessment of Common Curriculum learning goals. For example:

- Exercise Science and Sport Studies uses several direct and indirect methods to assess its five learning goals over several courses; it completed its five-year assessment plan in AY17.
- Computer Science assesses its five learning goals annually, including direct measures via lab exams and the Major Field Test in Computer Science.
- Art has assessed all seven of its learning goals for Art majors annually since program review in 2011-12.
- History assesses two of its six learning goals each year, one for general students and one for majors, and will complete its second round of assessment in AY19.
- Economics collects evidence regularly for its three learning goals and eight objectives for analysis on a three--year rotation; for example, in AY 16 it evaluated three semesters worth of senior research papers to assess learning goals for student writing.

Departments use both direct and indirect methods of assessment for their programs. Typically senior surveys are conducted (and alum surveys during program reviews) along with direct assessment using student assignments, writings, exams, and class activities. Rubrics are common to evaluate student writings.

### *Honors*

The Honors program underwent program review in AY2016. As a result, the director is redefining the mission and goals for the program and creating an assessment plan in tandem.

The Honors curriculum has been embedded within the Common Curriculum coursework with the additional expectation that active teaching pedagogies and rigor increases within Honors designated courses. These courses undergo assessment as part of specific departments or programs and also as part of the Common Curriculum. Student and alum surveys have been used

to measure whether active pedagogies and rigor are embedded in Honors courses. Surveys indicate this does occur, but no formal mechanism to assess these expectations has been completed as of yet.

#### *Assessment in accredited programs*

Chemistry, Education, Music, Nursing, and Nutrition all conduct assessment in conjunction with their respective accrediting bodies. For example, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) determined that the Nursing department fulfills its mission and goals and uses "data on program effectiveness [...] to foster ongoing program development."

#### *Assessment in the Center for Global Education*

The Global Center currently offers 17 semester long abroad programs and approximately 10-12 short term programs each year. 15 of the semester long programs are faculty-led programs where a faculty member from our institutions directs the program and teaches one class while abroad. The coursework must be approved by the Academic Curriculum Committee (ACC) and if appropriate, the Common Curriculum Committee (CCC). Both committees contain faculty members and ex-officio members from Academic Affairs. If a part of the Common Curriculum, faculty are expected to participate in the assessment process as described for the Common Curriculum.

The Global Center has a set of common [learning goals](#) for all abroad programs. Assessment is conducted indirectly through student surveys and end of semester reports by faculty directors.

#### *Student Development*

Metrics for student learning trends are assessed through a variety of surveys administered by Institutional Planning and Research including the New Entering Student Survey, Enrolled Student Survey, Senior Survey, and the Graduate Survey. In addition, CSB/SJU Health Promotion in conjunction administers one of the following self-designed surveys over a three year rotation; General Health Survey, Alcohol and Other Drug survey, and the Sexual Violence Campus Climate survey that complies with new federal legislation. These surveys have guided an ongoing assessment process which has resulted in a variety of revisions as highlighted in section 4.B.3 For example, the divisional learning outcomes are living documents which were formally reviewed and updated in 2015-2016. Changes were made in light of feedback from program reviews as well as changing student demographics, behaviors and needs.

#### *Experience and Professional Development (XPD)*

XPD was formed in AY2017 with the merge of the Office of Experiential Learning and Community Engagement (ELCE) and Career Services. This office facilitates internships, service learning, and career opportunities on campus. During this merger, ELCE also underwent program review. These two processes have supported a need for learning goals associated with the opportunities they provide and have been embedded in the Academic Student Success Learning Outcomes.

### 4.B.3

#### *Assessment of student learning has led to strategic institutional goals for CSB/SJU*

Assessment data has been a growing and important piece of CSB/SJU's institutional decisions. SD2020 has goals driven by assessment data. There three major examples. First, one of SD2020's goals is to "create a leading and innovative liberal arts curriculum emphasizing preparation for life." This goal was driven not only by the Common Curriculum Program Review but also by a three year study led by CSB/SJU to evaluate the impact of our current Common Curriculum on student learning. Assessment data influenced this decision and has led to undergo curricular reform described in 4.B.1.

Second, another of the SD2020 goals is to "meet the needs and aspirations and exceed the expectations of a 21st century student body." This goal is a result of numerous assessment data that includes retention data and an extensive self-study of CSB/SJU's overall first year experience. As a result of this data, the institution is already identifying needs and steps to take to create a more inclusive campus as well as how to enhance the first year student experience from an academic and co-curricular level.

In summary, the institution has used data to drive major decisions and long term planning. As a result, actions are already being taken to better address student needs and learning potential.

#### *Assessment of student learning has led to changes in the curriculum*

Institutional Changes in Student Learning: It is anticipated that with the alignment of both curricular and co-curricular learning goals in the development of institutional learning goals, as described in 4.B.1, assessment of the these goals will help us better understand how well our institutions approach the holistic development of our students.

Improvement in the Common Curriculum: Changes that have occurred as a result of assessment are several fold. Because we have been in the process of developing and strengthening the assessment of our general education program, many changes have occurred in the language of the learning goals as well as in the process of assessment. For example, several student learning goals have been changed to better meet student learning including the goals for Mathematics (2015), Theology (2015), and Gender (2015), and a lengthy description of the learning goals was created Ethics (2013). As another example, modifications have been made to rubrics as assessment was conducted to better clarify what is expected of students. Finally, assessment has resulted in changes in pedagogy as well as assignments and learning tools used to help students meet these goals.

Program review and an extensive additional assessment of our current Common Curriculum has led to a multi-year process in the development of a new general education curriculum as described in 4.B.1. We are in year five of curricular reform with continued discussion of a model to best achieve the newly developed learning outcomes.

Improvement in Programs and Departments : Programs and departments have made a wide variety of changes as a result of assessment data. These changes range from changes to learning goals, the assessment process (they did not measure what was desired for student learning), pedagogy, teaching tools, and even coursework and curriculum. For example:

- Art uses assessment results to ensure consistency of the evaluation process
- Theater uses assessment as a teaching tool for instructors and a learning tool for students
- English uses assessment to translate common curriculum learning goals into English-specific goals and improve data collection
- History uses assessment to improve Humanities-History rubrics and improve the data collection process
- Chemistry used assessment to improve a large-enrollment, multi-section, foundational laboratory course (CHEM 201)
- Nutrition used assessment to monitor and improve student learning in course with different audiences (NUTR 110 for general students, NUTR 125 for science majors)
- Political Science employs a multi-instrument approach to measure student learning at the introductory and senior levels to facilitate discussions of pedagogy
- Psychology used assessment to improve a multi-section introductory course (PSYC 111 Lab) by improving assessment instruments, sharing results, and fostering collaboration within the department.

In addition, our study abroad programs have undergone changes as a result of assessment. For example, modifications have been made to faculty training to support teaching towards the desired outcomes and programming has been modified in attempts to help students better reach the specified goals.

*Assessment of student learning has led to improvement in Student Development:*

In 2008 Student Development began a formal process of program review. Each program in the division is on a five- to seven- year review cycle that mirrors, to a certain degree, program reviews for academic programs. Guidelines were established for program review which link assessment to student learning outcomes. All departments in Student Development have been through at least one cycle of program review and we are now well into our second cycle. While each program review has its particular nuances, there are typically three major phases: The first is a self-study based on program review guidelines. The second engages external evaluator(s) who review the self-study, visit campus, meet with the department and a campus-wide cross section of individuals who represent the departments with which that department works, and then to provide a written report noting the program's strengths and opportunities for improvement. The third and final component is a response from the director that becomes the departmental strategic plan. The Vice Presidents for Student Development work with each director to make any fiscal, human or programmatic changes as needed to improve student learning and enhance the student experience. Examples of improvements made in response to program reviews include: moving Career Services from Student Development to Academic Affairs and reforming it into the Office of Experience & Professional Development (XPD); increased full-time staffing in Life-Safety Services; combining two grad-assistant positions into a permanent chaplain position in Campus Ministry; and re-organization within the Athletic Department.

#### 4.B.4

##### *Stakeholders participate in Assessment*

As described in 4.B.1, an effective structure is in place to ensure assessment is conducted at an institutional, general education, and departmental/programmatic level. The Academic Dean and OAAE manage and oversee assessment for Academic Affairs and also serve as a support and assistance network for faculty. Systems are also in place for departments and programs to submit their assessment and its resultant progress on student learning.

As mentioned in 4.B.1, all Programs/Departments establish an assessment plan and have established structures to conduct effective assessment. Since 2008, assessment by programs and departments has increased dramatically and we have evidence of strong, broad-based faculty participation in department level assessment. Of the 32 academic departments and programs, 20 have an assessment coordinator; in other cases, the chair, a committee, or faculty in some rotation coordinate assessment work. 16 departments report that 100% of faculty participate in annual assessment work; a further 7 report that 40-80% participate annually. Overwhelmingly, department and program chairs report that they discuss assessment to improve curriculum, pedagogy, and/or the assessment process itself. Since, AY2012, over 75% of departments routinely "close the assessment loop" by discussing assessment results in their annual reports (this number has risen to above 80% since AY2015).

Participation in assessment of the Common Curriculum has increased. As described in 4.B.2, when asked to submit assessment results for the Common Curriculum, 100% of those departments/programs with courses with Divisional learning outcomes submit results. In addition, participation in Common Curriculum assessment of cross disciplinary learning goals is increasing. For example, in AY2016 approximately 20% of coursework submitted artifacts for assessment of the Ethics learning goals. In AY2017, this participation rose to 84%.

The assessment of the Gender designation of the Common Curriculum provides a good example of faculty participation. In May 2017, a team of 9 faculty from 8 departments met for a two-day workshop to assess artifacts from GE courses taught in AY 2017. On the basis of GE assignment from AY 2017, they assessed goal 3: "Articulate how gender intersects with at least one of the following: race, class, ethnicity, nationality, or sexuality." Their report was the subject of a brown bag discussion in late August, at which point 17 faculty from 12 departments discussed the need for further training for teaching intersectionality and laid initial plans for follow-up work in AY 2018. All told, 23 faculty from 14 different departments participated in this one assessment cycle of the Gender designation. The departments represented were:

- Theology
- Exercise Science and Sport Studies
- Sociology
- Economics
- First Year Seminar

- Philosophy
- Languages and Cultures
- Art
- Nursing
- History
- English
- Communication
- Chemistry
- Theater

### *Training and Support for Assessment is in Place*

Since 2008, CSBSJU faculty and staff have received assessment training both on campus and off. From 2008-2012, 39 faculty (12% of the FTE at that point) and 14 administrative and staff members participated in the “Assessment 101” training on campus supported by the Teagle Foundation and administered by CSBSJU personnel on campus. In addition, faculty from a wide variety of departments have received training in many off-campus workshops and conferences. An internal survey conducted in April 2017 revealed that faculty from 23 departments and FYS as well as administrative and staff members from Academic Advising, Counseling, the library, Campus Life and other offices received Teagle or other, off-campus assessment training. Respondents indicated that they used that training in the assessment of common curriculum and department learning goals, student development and other institutional goals, as well as service on APSAC or curriculum development efforts.

In past years, training by the OAAE has been variable. As part of our creation of effective assessment processes described in 4.B.1, systematic training opportunities are being built to support assessment on campus by this office.

As a result of training and continued development of a culture of assessment, CSB/SJU is demonstrating an increasing and more pervasive use of assessment to make decisions regarding student learning.

## 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 Goals for retention, persistence, and completion.

CSB/SJU is very attentive to Retention, Persistence and Completion and achieve excellent outcomes overall. The current Strategic Plan for 2020 has very specific goals regarding retention and completion. Specifically, we aim to achieve and sustain a first-second year retention rate of 90% (our average for the past three years is 89%). We aim to achieve and sustain a four-year completion rate of 78% (our average for the past three years is 74%). In addition we are working to eliminate retention and completion gaps between majority and under-represented students (our first second year retention rate for majority students is 89% and for students of color is 84%; our four-year completion rate for majority students is 78% and 71% for students of color). Achieving these numbers will take intentional work. To begin this work, in the summer of 2016, we joined the Gardner Institute for an intensive self-reflective study of our students' first year experience. With the development of a first year experience, we anticipate results will increase our retention rate for both majority and under-represented students.

Even as our student population has changed, becoming more academically, socioeconomically, and racially and ethnically diverse, our retention and completion rates have remained above national averages and are consistent with averages at peer liberal arts colleges.

#### 4.C.2/4 Collection and Analysis

CSB tracks retention, persistence, and graduation rates using the IPEDS methodology. This tracks entering cohorts of full-time, first-time degree-seeking students which aligns with the

majority of our population and is therefore, deemed an appropriate measurement technique. Retention and completion information is available on the Institutional and Planning Research website

We work closely with students in a number of ways, principally through Academic Advising, Residential Life and Counseling, to address issues before departure becomes the clearest or only choice. The Student Support Team (comprised of the Deans of Students and representatives of residential life, counseling, academic advising, and campus security) meets regularly during the academic year to review students who might be at-risk academically and/or behaviorally and to develop a plan to assist those students as needed. In addition, the Retention Committee monitors student enrollment throughout the year, integrating the work of the business offices, academic affairs, the registrar, student development, and financial aid to insure a coordinated approach to addressing the needs of individual students and to maximize the number of students who register each term.

To support retention, persistence, and graduation, CSB/SJU has developed and works with a number of programs. For example, we have recently hired a College Navigator whose position focuses on providing support for first-generation students, locating and connecting already existing support on campus for these students, and helping the incoming class of first-generation students successfully transition into the college environment and culture.

The *Fact Book* provides "a multi-year snapshot and briefing of key data and trends related to admission and enrollment, academic activity and productivity, and human and financial resources [for CSB/SJU]...Information includes: admission and new entering student data, undergraduate student data, academic and instructional data, alumni data, financial and human resource data, and private college comparison data."

#### **4.C.3 Use of information**

Each year, the Retention Committee reviews persistence data to make improvements in our registration and student outreach processes. Significant changes we have made in recent years include earlier outreach to students and parents to prepare for class registration and requiring completion of course registration as a condition for participation in the campus housing lottery (all CSB and SJU students are required to live on campus).

Retention, persistence, and completion were driving factors for the self study completed for the first year experience. As a result of the self study, steps are being taken to collaborate on a set of learning outcomes that will drive a first year program.

## **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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The College of St. Benedict and St. John's University have developed systematic approaches to undergo data-informed, ongoing reform to enhance student learning. Assessment timelines are established and used to assess learning goals at the institutional, student development, general education, and departmental/program level. Data is reported and maintained and used to guide decisions as it relates to the assessment process, pedagogical change, as well as curricular change. In ten years, the culture of assessment is growing and with structures now in place, we expect this culture to expand into the future.

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## 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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The College of Saint Benedict is committed to maintaining and strengthening the educational experience provided to our students. Strategic Directions 2020 (SD2020) is the foundation for improvements to the educational experience and the basis for making resource allocation decisions. As a strictly residential, undergraduate institution, all resources are allocated in support of and consistent with our educational mission.

#### *Fiscal Resources*

The College of Saint Benedict has consistently improved its financial base through increased gifts to the endowment and annual fund, prudent management of the budget, and transfers to reserves as summarized in the [financial statements]. Over the last 10 years, net assets have increased by 62% from \$107 million to \$174 million. Three sources of revenue provide the primary support for the educational and general budget: net tuition and fees (76%), endowment and annual fund (10%), and auxiliary operations (10%). The College has consistently had operating budget surpluses through prudent budget management.

In spring 2016, the College closed on a \$38 million bond issue that supports SD2020 as well as addresses several deferred maintenance projects without impacting the operating budget as the

debt was structured to not increase the annual level of debt service. The College maintained its bond rating of Baa1 with a stable outlook. The [Moody's report] noted the assignment and affirmation of the Baa1 rating reflects the college's strategic alignment with nearby Saint John's University, fiscal stewardship and conservative budgeting practices that are reflected in strengthening operating cash flow, good growth of cash and investments and manageable proforma debt service.

In addition, our partnership with Saint John's University provides both of us with added operating efficiencies, enables budget flexibility, and provides scale that would otherwise be difficult to achieve. The institutions share faculty and all academic departments, admissions, IT and library services, registrar, human resources and many other departments. 60% of our total faculty and staff are shared by the institutions.

While the endowment is moderate, it is on an upward trajectory. Improved fundraising and strong cash flow have supported continued growth in investments. Between FY10 and FY17, the endowment grew by nearly 93% going from \$37.3 million to \$72.1 million. The College is in the quiet phase of a \$100 million campaign--\$25 million for facilities projects, \$60 million for endowment, and \$15 million for annual fund. As of July 31, 2017, the campaign has raised \$62 million [IA Financial Report 063017]. The College is planning the public phase of the campaign which will begin in FY19.

In addition, the fourth pillar of SD2020, Shared Future, Sustainable Future, called for the development of a long-range [economic model](#) that aligns with the other goals in SD2020. This plan is updated annually with a four year look forward and is being used to make resource allocation decisions annually that align our resources with the strategic plan while being realistic about our challenges and opportunities. We have allocated funding toward the goals in the plan, including funding in support of the First-Year Experience, the work on the new curriculum, classroom renovations, development of new athletic fields and renovation of administrative and academic spaces. [Key metrics](#) were incorporated into SD2020 and progress toward the goals are monitored annually.

### *Facilities*

Facilities are our largest investment, totaling approximately \$287 million. As such, it is very important that we be effective stewards of our facilities. The College's facility [master plan] was developed in 2006/07. Most of the components of that plan have been or will be completed in the near term and as such, the development of a new master plan will begin this academic year.

The College is currently constructing new athletic fields that support the SD2020 goal of the Holistic and Transformational Development of Women. In addition, the College has purchased three buildings from the Monastery that will be renovated for administrative space thus freeing up space in the Main Building, the most historical building on campus, to be renovated for the departments of Economics, Computer Science, Math, and Psychology. These renovations will begin in the fall of 2017. Completely renovated space for the Nursing Department was completed in 2015 and provides state-of-the-art learning spaces for our students. Under the Provost's direction, the College has completed a classroom inventory and is systematically

renovating classrooms spaces with a goal of all spaces being improved over a five year time frame. Improvements to first-year housing were completed summer of 2017 with additional improvements slated for summer of 2018.

In addition, the College has a long-term facility plan and annual funding to address on-going plant renewal, facility adaption and catch-up maintenance. The most recent bond issue included a number of projects that provided significant funding toward deferred maintenance issues.

### *Technology*

The department is led by the Director of Information Technology Services. The departments provides a wide range of services, including computer and network support, enterprise applications, web services, technical support and telephone support. Information Technology Services has a strategic plan (IT Strategic Plan 2015-2020) in place that directly supports the institutional goals in SD2020. The plan covers learning space design, user-friendly tools for teaching and learning, providing superior service and support, data for analytics, anytime, anywhere access, the right tool for the right job, expanded partnerships across campus, process improvement, and system security. Working with the academic area, IT Services will create new standards for classrooms, advancing the model for learning space design, which will be integrated into instructional space planning, technology planning, budgeting, staffing and management.

ITS underwent program review last fiscal year. Several strengths were noted in the program including: having talented and skilled staff, having a plan that is closely aligned with the institutional strategic plan, regular cycle of funding replacement computers for faculty and staff, maintaining up-to-date technology infrastructure that is appropriate for its mission, modernizing classrooms and focusing on access for students with an emphasis on mobile technologies. As a result of the review, Media Services will be integrated into ITS this fiscal year to provide better and more consistent classroom support.

### *Human Resources*

Faculty and staff are the College's greatest assets in delivering our mission. Under the fourth pillar of SD2020, Shared Future, Sustainable Future, the College has developed a [faculty and staff composition design] that manages both the student-to-faculty ratio and the student-to-staff ratio in ways that are consistent with our mission, educational commitments and economic constraints. Based on the Fall 2016 IPEDS-reported data, the College employs 162 faculty FTE and 307 staff FTE for a total employee base of 469 FTE. Approximately 95% of the faculty FTE is full-time and over 75% of those full-time appointments are tenured or tenure-track. Students report a high level of interaction and satisfaction with the support they receive from faculty.

The College has an annual employee evaluation process that is designed to promote dialogue between employees and supervisors reflecting upon the employee's job performance, goals and professional development aspirations. In addition each Vice-President has developed divisional goals that align the current year with the goals in SD2020 (VP divisional goals). The College has

an active concern for the professional development of its staff and provides annual funding for professional development opportunities through department funding as well as institutional grants that are administered by the Administrative Professional Development and Support Staff Development Committees. A professional development series is also provided on-campus through the Human Resources department and encompasses a wide range of topics including supervisory training, diversity and inclusion, financial wellness, health and wellness, technology training and compliance.

Human Resources recently established an HR Inclusion Advisory Committee in support of SD2020 with a commitment to building and retaining a diverse workforce. The committee began meeting spring of 2017 and established a framework and action plan that will be implemented this fiscal year. The committee aspires to serve our students and community with a commitment to diversity and inclusion in three focus areas: recruitment and retention, professional development and infrastructure, and community outreach and engagement.

### *Resource Allocation*

The College's annual budget process is directly aligned with the Long-Term Economic Model that was developed several years ago and has been closely followed since its development. Beginning last fiscal year, the comprehensive price was set for the College in the fall in response to the change in FAFSA filing using prior-prior year. Typically, this would have been done at the March meeting when the entire budget was presented for approval. Through the use of the model, the Board has had confidence in setting the price earlier. This has also meant that it was incumbent on the institution to follow the expense parameters that were laid out in the model. However, the model is not static; the College continually revisits the parameters in response to changes in the higher education marketplace and the annual [environmental scan](#). New budget requests must be aligned with SD2020.

Once set, the budget and other key metrics are monitored by the Cabinet and Finance Committee through a series of dashboard reports. The Business Office has established good internal controls in place to monitor and review all expenditures and to monitor budget activity. Monthly budget reports are sent to all budget managers as well as the appropriate Vice President. The College undergoes an annual audit which is approved by the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees. The entire audit is also provided to the full Board of Trustees. The College consistently has received unqualified opinions on the annual audit.

## 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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The College of Saint Benedict's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and engage community involvement through collaboration within and with Saint John's University. Cross-divisional and campus representation on governance, faculty and administrative committees exemplifies an inherent transparency within the organizational structure that drives operational performance in the fulfillment of our mission.

5.B.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.

The College of Saint Benedict's Board of Trustees governance oversight required to meet its legal and fiduciary responsibilities was described in 2.A and 2.C.

New Trustees are required to participate in Board of Trustee orientation to ensure they are knowledgeable about the College. Orientation continues throughout their first year with divisional overviews occurring at each scheduled board meeting. In addition, developed reference materials will provide new members with resources that will enable them to understand the governance structure and responsibilities associated with trustee membership.

5.B.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.

The College of Saint Benedict's unique relationship with Saint John's University dictates a high level of shared governance throughout the organization. Due to the high level of overlap, joint operations in key areas involve collaboration and coordination between the organizations, Trustees, faculty, administrators, staff, and students.

Trustee:

Shared governance at the Trustee level was previously described in 2.A

Administrative:

The president and president's cabinet represent administrative senior leadership on campus. The cabinet meets throughout the year focusing discussion on institutional priorities and challenges. Depending on the issue, faculty, administrators, staff, and students may be invited to attend to provide input/feedback on matters, which may include policies and procedures approved by this body. The Provost, Vice President for Admissions and Financial Aid, and the Vice President for Planning and Public Affairs sit on both cabinets.

The cabinets from the two institutions meet several times a year (Coordinate Cabinet) to discuss joint matters and strategic priorities. The chair and vice chair of the faculty are included in these meetings.

Jointly the two institutions have established the Strategic Directions Council (SDC). The committee is responsible for leading a collaborative process in the development of a strategic plan (SD2020) and monitoring the progress of the initiatives incorporated into the colleges' strategic plan.

SDC membership is comprised of representative members from both cabinets as well as the faculty chair and vice chair. Other members include the Director of Information Technology Services, the Dean of Admissions, the Executive Director of Financial Aid, and the Senior Budget Analyst. The Provost and Vice President for Planning and Public Affairs lead the committee.

Other standing administrative committees involved in policy and procedure formulation that include faculty and/or student representatives were discussed in 2.A. Ad-hoc committees are used for specific purposes such as capital projects and can include membership from trustees, faculty, administration, staff and students. An example of this is the faculty who are involved in the planning for the renovation of the Main Building.

In addition to these formal approaches to internal communication and involvement, the President holds open sessions after every Board meeting to provide community updates and allows time for questions and dialogue. The President has begun hosting listening sessions on key topics this fiscal year to gather community input for the next strategic plan.

Faculty:

Faculty participate in institutional governance through the standing faculty committee structure outlined in the Faculty Handbook. Faculty participate and have representation at the Board (non-voting) and board committees. At the May 2017 Board meeting, the Presidents outlined a plan for a healthy future around shared governance. The methods of engagement outlined enhance faculty input beyond board membership in many key areas. In addition, the Presidents have

outlined a process to further explore shared governance that creates an opportunity for continuous improvement. Additionally, faculty participate in administrative, divisional, departmental, and ad hoc committees.

Student:

The leadership body of the student body is the Student Senate. Senate meets regularly and employs the practice of inviting relevant stakeholders from within administration/faculty to discuss, provide input, and receive feedback on institutional matters, which may include policies and procedures.

5.B.3 Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Faculty take on the key role and responsibility in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes for the institution. The practices in place, as described below, demonstrate a collaborative process that incorporates the inclusion of relevant key stakeholders from within the institution.

- As stated in the Faculty Handbook (section 5.0.1), “The primary role of the faculty in governance is the implementation of the educational goals of the College of Saint Benedict and St. John’s University. In this capacity the faculty is responsible for curricular requirements including but not limited to: admissions and graduation requirements, the Common Curriculum, additions and deletions of majors, minors, or programs.” These decisions are ultimately voted on by the Joint Faculty Senate, Academic Affairs Committee (Board of Trustees) and full Board where required.
- Faculty is responsible for academic policies and standards:
  - The Academic Policies, Standards, and Assessment Committee (section 5.3.1) “oversees the quality and functioning of the entire undergraduate academic program and formulates guidelines for achieving and maintaining integrity and excellence in academic programs.” This committee reviews, rewrites, and revises any academic policies and/or standards. This includes “establish, periodically review, and revise -- in cooperation with the Offices of Admissions and Academic Advising -- academic standards for admission, academic probation and dismissal, and graduation.” The policies are maintained by the Registrar’s Office in the Academic Catalog. They report any changes to the Joint Faculty Senate.
- Faculty is responsible for the curriculum.
  - Should reform be desired for a curriculum (requirements, number of requirements, course restructuring, etc.) or a single course (i.e. name change, course description), a proposal must be submitted to the Academic Curriculum Committee. This is a faculty-designed committee and the Academic Dean, Registrar, Director of Academic Advising, and the library are ex-officio members. This committee reviews the changes and in some instances will also work with faculty-led Academic Planning and Budget Committee (APBC) on the cost impact of selected changes. ACC approves or rejects the proposals.

- Should faculty members want to teach a general education course, it must meet the learning goals of that course and must go through an approval process led by the faculty-led Common Curriculum Committee (CCC). Upon review, the committee will approve/reject a proposal. (Ex officio members as on the ACC sit on this committee.)
- Changes to the learning outcomes, requirements for the Common Curriculum must be approved by the Joint Faculty Senate. Therefore, if a faculty member were seeking a change to a learning outcome that is part of the CC, they would likely bring the modification to the CCC for review. The CCC, upon endorsement, would bring the change to the JFS for final review and approval.
- Additions and/or deletions of programs, majors, minors goes through the ACC and then to the JFS for approval prior to final Board of Trustee action.

Although led by the faculty, the process of setting academic requirements, policy and processes is a collaborative process involving faculty, administrators, staff, students, and Trustees

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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 - The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

The institution relies on *Strategic Directions 2020* to guide resource allocation decisions. During the development of *Strategic Directions 2020*, there was a very conscious effort to link the plan to the institutional budget process. As part of the fourth pillar of the plan, *Shared Future, Sustainable Future*, the institution developed a new economic model that balances long-run revenues and expenses. The primary goal of developing such a tool was to better understand the primary financial "levers" the institution needs to consider and how changes to one metric (enrollment, for example) impacts the financial outlook of the institution over the next five years. One of the goals was to implement a plan that would, when necessary, reduce expenses in ways that are mission appropriate and that would support the long-term sustainability of the institutions. These guiding principles for the work were presented to the Board of Trustees in November 2015 through [these materials](#).

As part of the budget construction process each year, a narrative guide is produced that explicitly address the connection to mission and priorities. The [Fiscal Year 2017](#) and [Fiscal Year 2018](#) versions specifically link the budget decisions to Strategic Directions 2020 priorities.

A *Strategic Directions 2020* progress update is regularly updated and shared with both the Strategic Directions Council and the Board of Trustees. The [November 2016](#) version clearly outlines the progress toward goals outlined in *Strategic Directions 2020* and identifies resource allocations decisions that have been made in support of that work. Similarly, the [SD2015 Summary](#) document identifies numerous instances of resource allocation decisions that were made as a result of the priorities and goals included in that plan.

The practices cited above ensure the resource allocation process align with the mission and priorities of the College.

5.C.2 - The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

As outlined in criteria 4.A.1, departmental program reviews are an essential part of this. The program review process helps inform resource allocation, especially in relation to staffing.

FYX - The assessment that was done by the Gardener Institute likely drove (or will drive) some resource allocation decisions.

Did we end up sharing [this document](#) with the board? I know it was reviewed in SDC.

Student Development program review examples (cited in 4.B.3)

5.C.3 - The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

The construction of *Strategic Directions 2020* was a very collaborative process that incorporated perspectives of numerous constituent groups. Prior to the beginning of the formal planning process, the Strategic Directions Council prepared a broad [environmental scan White Paper](#) articulating the key issues influencing the future of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. The environmental scan was shared with trustees, faculty, and staff. In addition, at the beginning of the planning process a dedicated web page for *Strategic Directions 2020* was created. The web page served two broad purposes: it provided a digital space to post and share all of the input we gathered during the planning process and it offered a link to provide people with an opportunity to submit comments or questions about the plan or supporting materials. In summary, the following steps were taken to ensure we received input from both internal and external constituent groups:

- We hosted one all-campus forum and nine campus conversations. All faculty and staff were invited to participate in those activities. Approximately 550 faculty and staff (more than half our workforce) participated in one or more those events.
- Both Student Senates were engaged by the presidents and again by the Student Development divisions. In addition, we also engaged the Institute for Women's Leadership at CSB.
- All divisions conducted independent planning sessions throughout the fall and into the winter. Those typically were held as part of regularly scheduled divisional or departmental meetings.
- Both presidents engaged their respective monastic communities at Chapter meetings. At CSB, the Sisters of Saint Benedict participated in a lengthy structured planning exercise. At SJU, members of Saint John's Abbey also participated in a more limited planning exercise. Both the Prioress and the Abbot were invited to prepare an assessment of planning priorities on behalf of their communities – which both did (together) in spring 2015.
- CSB hosted five alumnae listening sessions around the state and country attended by approximately 150 people. In addition, CSB also hosted a listening session with St. Cloud community and business leaders. Approximately 60 people attended and

participated in the St. Cloud event. SJU held one alumni listening session in Minneapolis that was attended by 30 people.

- We received 161 unique suggestions of planning priorities for consideration for inclusion in *Strategic Directions 2020* from faculty and staff, approximately half from faculty alone.

The Board of Trustees was actively involved in the development of the plan as well. Individual committees of the board, including the [insert committee names and links to agenda materials] had an opportunity to provide input at various points during the process. The Board provided feedback on a [draft of the plan](#) in February 2015 that led to the construction of the final plan. [The plan was ultimately presented to and endorsed by the Board of Trustees in May 2016.](#)

5.C.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.

This was a vital piece of the work that was completed on the long range financial plan that accompanied *Strategic Directions 2020*. The tool developed makes it clear to the management team the impact of shifts in revenue streams and what that implies regarding the expense structure of the institution. Before developing comprehensive revenue and expense models, the largest drivers of the institution's finances were reviewed and shared with campus leaders and the Board of Trustees in [fall 2015](#) and subsequently updated and shared with the Finance Committee of the Board in September 2017. The plan has served the institutions well since it's development. The plan has been a living document that is updated with each term's tenth-day enrollment and tuition discounting values. [Here is an example](#) of the update that was included in the February 2017 finance committee materials.

In addition to the long-range plan, the institution has an adopted [budget revision plan](#) that outlines the process by which a budget shortfall or surplus during any given year will be approached.

5.C.5 - Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Each year, the *Strategic Directions Council* is tasked with preparing an Environmental Scan. This document is framed around four key ideas, including accessibility, affordability, accountability, and sustainability. The purpose of the document is to identify key issues external or internal to CSB and SJU that influence the goals and objectives of Strategic Directions 2020. A [special version of the scan](#) was developed specifically to guide the SD2020 campus conversations. [The most recent version of the scan](#) was completed and shared with the Board of Trustees in November 2016

## 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 The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

The college regularly produces and shares evidence of performance in its operations to both internal and external constituencies.

The institution undergoes an annual audit review that is presented to and endorsed by the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees. A summary of this audit, along with a copy of the financial statements, is posted to the business office website and is available to any interested party. In addition to these annual audits, the Finance Committee is also presented with a ratio review that compares key financial indicators for the College to that of other institutions in the Minnesota Private College Council. This review provides the Finance Committee and Board with a high-level understanding of the College's financial strengths and weaknesses relative to peers.

The College most recently had its bond rating reviewed by Moody's in 2016. In the [credit opinion](#), Moody's clearly documents performance in the College's operations including favorable operating results that result from a culture of fiscal discipline.

Enrollment is the primary driver of revenue for the College. Given that, new student enrollment and discounting are tracked closely throughout the year. During the first-year yield cycle (typically March through August) the Division of Admission and Financial Aid produces and distributes a [weekly report](#) that tracks first-year and transfer applications, admissions, and deposits. This report is disseminated widely across campus to ensure any departments that may be impacted by the size of the incoming class (e.g. housing, finance) can be aware of the progress toward the enrollment goal and adjust plans accordingly. In addition, the financial aid strategy is developed and monitored in conjunction with Applied Policy Research. In addition to [tracking reports](#) developed regularly during the spring and summer, a full report is developed each fall after tenth-day census. In addition, the Office of Institutional Planning and Research develops an annual [fall enrollment summary](#) that is distributed to the senior leadership team. Strategies for subsequent years are informed by the findings of these reports.

There was a conscious effort during the construction of *Strategic Directions 2020* to include [measurable performance metrics](#) that would be regularly monitored through the course of the plan.

In addition to the operational performance indicators that are tracked in the specific areas cited above, the Office of Institutional Planning and Research annually generates an *Institutional Profile*. The [Institutional Profile](#) is the official fact book for the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. It was created to provide a multi-year snapshot and briefing of key data and trends related to admission and enrollment, academic activity and productivity, and human and financial resources. The *Profile* is intended to address questions frequently asked about the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University and provide, in one compendium, macro-level data for planning, decision-making, fundraising and communication. Information in the *Institutional Profile* is presented in six chapters: admission and new entering student data, undergraduate student data, academic and instructional data, alumni data, financial and human resource data, and private college comparison data.

5.D.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

The College regularly acts to improve based on the results of regular monitoring and tracking outlined in 5.D.1.

The regular monitoring of enrollment and discounting data has allowed the institution to feel confident in its ability to meet the goals outlined in the long term financial plan that was constructed as part of SD 2020. In particular, based on recent experience, the institution realized it was not prudent to continue to budget for an incoming class of 525 new freshmen each year. The data suggested this may not be a realistic target, so the goal was lowered to 510, which has proved to be a wise choice. By having a model available to measure the anticipated impact of this shift on the institution's resource base, the institution was able to plan in a way that would still result in a balanced budget.

Administrative units across campus go through program review processes similar to that of academic departments, although not on a schedule as clearly defined. In recent years, some of the reviews that have resulted in the most change in operations were within the IT Services, Experiential Learning & Community Engagement (ELCE), Career Services, and the Libraries, .

As part of the review of the IT operations by an external consultant, there has been a renewed focus on the academic mission of the department and institution. Information Technology Services regularly assesses the software and systems used at CSB/SJU, as well as appropriate staffing to support those tools. In the [assessment from the external consultant](#), recommendations were provided around staffing levels, organizational structure, and several software systems that could be rearranged to create efficiencies and improve resource usage. In addition, IT Services utilizes the Strategic Directions 2020 plan to influence their internal strategic planning and budget allocation. As part of previous needs assessment work, it was determined that our faculty and students needed a more modernized Learning Management System. To accomplish this, IT

Services re-aligned funds to enable the purchase of a more expensive LMS, Canvas, which was better aligned with the needs of the CSB/SJU campuses.

Both ELCE and Career Services underwent program review in 2016. As a result of those reviews, an opportunity for improved services became evident. Both departments came to the realization that students would be better served if they combined their operations. For example, credit-bearing internships were overseen by ELCE while non-credit-bearing internships were overseen by Career Services. The two departments were combined in early 2017 and now operate under a newly-defined department named Experience and Professional Development (XPD) Office. The institutions firmly believe this will students with a more seamless experience when interacting with these offices and is the first step toward the ultimate goal of establishing an Student Success Center that would also include Academic Advising.

The CSB/SJU Libraries regularly learns from their operational experiences and institutes changes based on those findings to improve service. For example, a [2013 Library Service Analysis](#) showed some patron dissatisfaction with the library web site. The director of libraries dedicated resources to further usability studies and made gradual refinements, followed by further usability studies. The libraries continue to allocate resources to improvement of this essential service. The libraries also conduct usage analysis, including cost per use ratio, for all electronic resources at renewal. While this is just one aspect of collections decision-making, they do not renew low-use, expensive subscriptions. The library staff survey faculty and students on a semi-regular basis to inquire about their preferences for print or electronic books, and allocate resources to print or electronic budgets accordingly. The libraries conducted a survey of student social media use to determine how best to communicate with them and allocated marketing resources based on findings. All of these examples point to ways in which the Libraries take a continuous improvement approach to their operations.

## **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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