SUNY Potsdam
Self-Study Report

Prepared for the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

February 2012

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Executive Summary

The State University of New York at Potsdam is a public four-year comprehensive college that serves nearly four thousand undergraduate students and over five hundred graduate students. It offers fifty-one baccalaureate programs through its three schools – Arts and Sciences, Education and Professional Studies, and the Crane School of Music. Twelve programs, mostly in Education, lead to graduate degrees. With deep roots as one of New York State's earliest teacher training academies and as one of SUNY's three designated arts colleges, Potsdam relishes its role as a leader in the arts, education, and especially, music education. The College grounds its undergraduates in the arts and sciences through its robust General Education Program and offers them rich opportunities for high-impact individualized learning experiences through its signature "handcrafted" education. Undergraduate research, internships, and service learning projects are pervasive throughout the curriculum.

The College is guided by its Bicentennial Plan, collaboratively created by faculty leaders and administrators in 2006 under the then recently appointed president, John F. Schwaller. Consistent with the College mission, the plan prioritizes institutional goals and charts a path toward their achievement by 2016, the bicentennial year of the College. With related documents, including the Academic Master Plan and the Facilities Master Plan, the Bicentennial Plan set the College on a course of ambitious, and apparently achievable, institutional renewal. The economic recession that began in 2008 hit New York State, SUNY, and each of its units, with particular force. At Potsdam, the new fiscal reality collided with rising expectations and hopes. The self-study process was initiated, conducted, and completed in this era of severe financial restraint.

Potsdam completed a comprehensive Self Study that focused on identifying and improving ways in which first, the College and its various units promote student success, second the College's mission and goals shape the allocation of resources, and third, information about College programs and procedures is effectively and transparently communicated. Several themes run through its findings. Among the most obvious and least surprising is the impact of fiscal restraint on the various operations of the College over the past few years. No unit of the College was wholly protected. All units functioned with reduced resources. A second theme underscores the extent to which the College has persevered in the face of enormous challenges and despite real hardship. The College delivers an academic program uncompromised in its excellence. Essential services for students remain available. The physical plant stands and critical maintenance continues. A new Performing Arts building is under construction. Donors – friends, alumni, and faculty – have been generous. A third theme centers on the ways in which the practice of assessment has permeated not merely measurements of student learning, but multiple areas of campus operations. A final theme, perhaps never explicit, is nonetheless pervasive. Like any healthy college community, Potsdam is characterized by the lively debate of articulate women and men with different perspectives, values, ideologies, and interests. The Steering Committee called forth those

disparate voices and precipitated spirited, but rarely acrimonious, discussion. Although it would not presume that its findings and recommendations represent the views of every member of the Potsdam community, the Steering Committee was sometimes surprised by the consensus it reached.

The Self Study Report identifies many areas of excellence across the College. It also identifies opportunities that build on its strengths and thereby foster institutional renewal. While many suggestions are woven into the text of the Self-Study, the Report highlights seven recommendations of broad institutional significance. They are hardly visionary, but rather concrete steps the College might take to more effectively and efficiently fulfill its mission. Four recommendations seek to make the processes that link mission, goals, planning, resource allocation, and assessment more visible. Three recommendations build on existing areas of excellence – to increase services that promote student success, to review and update a robust program of General Education, and to enhance the ability of the faculty to effectively deliver the College's educational programs.

Eligibility Statement: Compliance with Federal Title IV Requirements

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Certification Statement: Compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and Related Entities Policy

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Chapter Two
Description of the College

The State University of New York College at Potsdam is a public, four-year, comprehensive college. It is one of the sixty-four units of the State University of New York (SUNY) and one of thirteen SUNY Comprehensive Colleges. SUNY Potsdam is one of three units of SUNY designated as an arts campus. The College currently enrolls 3902 undergraduate and 511 graduate students (http://www.potsdam.edu/about/fact_sheet.cfm). It offers Bachelors and Masters degrees in more than 50 major programs of study and employs 775 people.

A. History

The State University College at Potsdam traces its roots to the St. Lawrence Academy, founded in 1816, making it one of the fifty oldest colleges in the United States. In 1835, the New York State Legislature designated the Academy as one of several colleges with a state funded teacher-training department. In 1867, the legislature designated that the St. Lawrence Academy become the Potsdam Normal School.

Music education had begun at St. Lawrence Academy in 1831. Under the visionary leadership of Julia Crane, the Department became, in 1886, the Crane Normal Institute of Music, and Potsdam became the premier college for Music Education in the nation.

In 1942, the College began granting four-year Bachelor's degrees in Education. Six years later, when the legislature created the State University of New York, the College at Potsdam became a unit of the larger system. By then, the College was offering the Master's degree.

The College assumed much of its present form, physically and academically, over the next quarter century. In the early 1950s, the College moved from the center of Potsdam to its present location on the periphery. The campus, as it currently exists, was constructed between 1951 and 1973. By 1972 undergraduate education was organized into the three schools essentially as they exist at present – the Crane School of Music, the School of Education and Professional Studies, and the School of Arts and Sciences.

The College's proximity to the Adirondack Park to the south and east and to Canada to the north and west is among its greatest assets. Ottawa and Montreal, the nearest large cities, are rich in cultural offerings. The Adirondacks not merely provide abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, but also foster an environmental consciousness. Together, Canada and the Park serve as constant reminders that the social and political dimensions of our lives cross national boundaries and that, ecologically, we are bound in a web of life much larger than our species.

B. Mission

The current mission statement, adopted in 2006, grew organically from the College's history and its location.

The State University of New York at Potsdam prepares students to act as engaged global citizens and to lead lives enriched by critical thought, creativity, and discovery. As an inclusive scholarly community rooted in our historic role in providing exemplary teacher and music education and our leadership in the fine and performing arts, we are committed to the liberal arts and sciences as an academic foundation for all students. With an abiding sense of responsibility to our region and to the world beyond, SUNY Potsdam fosters an appreciation of and respect for the variety of human experience.

C. Student Academic Profile

The Carnegie Foundation classifies SUNY Potsdam as Masters L (Master's Colleges and Universities—Larger Programs). Its undergraduate instructional program is classified as Balanced Arts & Sciences/Professions, with some graduate coexistence and its graduate instructional program is classified as Post baccalaureate with Arts & Sciences (Education dominant). Its enrollment profile is "High Undergraduate" and its undergraduate profile is full time, full year, and selective, with a "higher" transfer in. It is medium sized, residential, and rural.

The vast majority of Potsdam's students, 88 percent, are undergraduates. In keeping with the College's mission to ground every student in Arts and Sciences, that School generates 73 percent of the undergraduate credit hours. Crane and Education and Professional Studies divide the remainder nearly evenly between them. Similarly an analysis of student majors shows an alignment with our mission. Just over 30 percent of undergraduate and 87 percent of graduate students have at least one major in education. The arts are also strong with just over 26 percent of undergraduate and 4 percent of graduate students having at least one major in the arts. (All data were taken from *Academic Department Profile* for fall 2010.)

Almost all undergraduates, some 98 percent, are full-time students. Over half of the graduate students are full time. Roughly one-quarter of new undergraduate students enrolled in fall semester, 2010, transferred 12 or more credit hours from other institutions. The remainder were beginning first year students. Nearly three-quarters of first year students were in the top half of their high school class. The average high school GPA was 87.

D. Student Demographic Profile

If there were a typical Potsdam undergraduate, she would be a white woman, eighteen to twenty-one years old, from upstate New York. Nearly three-fifths (58 percent) of Potsdam's undergraduate students are women. Most are the traditional age of college students. Over three-quarters (76 percent) are eighteen to twenty-one years old. Another 18 percent are twenty-two to twenty-four. Only 5 percent are twenty-five or older. Most students, 87 percent, identify themselves as non-Hispanic whites. Six percent of undergraduates self-identify as Hispanic and 4 percent identify themselves as Black. One percent, each, identify as Native American, Asian, or multi-ethnic.

Just over 70 percent of undergraduates call upstate New York home. They are evenly divided between those from the "North Country" (36 percent) and those from elsewhere

upstate (35 percent). Twenty-two percent of students come from counties in the New York City metropolitan area. Canada (mostly Ontario) and the New England States contribute most of the remaining students (2 percent each). International students, mostly from Asia and Europe, and American students, mostly from the Mid-Atlantic States, account for almost all of the others.

If there were a typical Potsdam graduate student, she would be the undergraduate described above, but slightly older. Two-thirds of Potsdam's graduate students are women. Seventy percent are twenty-two to twenty-nine years old. Almost all of them, 88 percent, are non-Hispanic whites. Slightly more than half of Potsdam's graduate students are from Northern New York (54 percent). Nearly a fifth (17 percent) are from Canada. Beyond the North Country, the rest of upstate New York provides 12 percent and international students from China, South Korea, and India, account for 9 percent.

E. Areas of Emphasis and Excellence

The Arts. As one of three designated arts campuses in SUNY, Potsdam has the distinction of consistently ranking number one among SUNY institutions for access to the arts for all students, regardless of discipline, according the annual SUNY Student Opinion Survey. The campus's rich cultural offerings include over 300 music recitals, concerts, theatre and dance performances. The Art Museum at SUNY Potsdam, a collection of over 1,900 pieces, represents a diverse selection of post-war American and European art, Contemporary art, ethnographic art, early American and European art ranging from Albrecht Dürer to Andy Warhol. The College offers a full spectrum of major and minor degree programs in the arts, including Art Education, Art History, Art Studio, the Visual Arts, Creative Writing, Dance, Theatre, Theatre Education, Music, Music Education, Music Performance, Musical Studies, Music Composition, and the Business of Music.

Experiential Learning. SUNY Potsdam emphasizes experiential learning. Undergraduate research, international study, service learning, and internships define the "handcrafted education." Opportunities for transformational student experiences have become the hallmark of the College. SUNY Potsdam consistently ranks above peer institutions in the National Survey of Student Engagement for access to faculty. It is a point of pride and distinction for the College and is consistent with our emphasis on teaching excellence.

Regional Service. The College also serves students in Watertown, New York, many of them service men and women stationed at Fort Drum, as well as their families. Potsdam serves a large population of Canadian students in both undergraduate and graduate education, making its international community one of the largest in the SUNY system. Our campus also serves as the educational home and partner to residents of the Akwesasne Mohawk nation. With the Salmon River School district, it offers programs that engage Akwesasne youth and support teacher training and professional development.

Student Development. As primarily a residential institution in a rural area, Potsdam also invests significantly in out-of-class opportunities for students. These include a growing leadership program, an award-winning orientation and student involvement program, a robust

Student Government Association, more than 100 active student clubs and organization, a full suite of intramural sports, and NCAA Division III athletics.

General Education. SUNY Potsdam's undergraduate curriculum centers on a rigorous General Education Program that enjoys wide support from both students and faculty. After completing first year experience courses in writing, public speaking, critical thinking, and mathematics, students undertake an exploration of different ways of knowing that we call the Modes of Inquiry. The Modes of Inquiry courses are not "owned" by single disciplines, but are offered by different programs across the curriculum and examine, among others, philosophical, historical, and scientific ways of knowing. As a designated Arts campus, we also require a two-course experience in the arts, one critical and one experiential. As they near graduation, students take a second course in writing and in public speaking that build on their first year experiences. Every General Education course is assessed regularly, on a three-year cycle; the program as a whole is currently undergoing review in order to ensure that it remains a vital part of our curriculum.

F. Recent Developments

SUNY Potsdam is facing some immediate challenges and poised for new opportunities. As it conducts this Self Study, the impact of the national economic situation as well as New York State's budget crisis on SUNY in general and the College in particular is a matter of concern for the entire college community. Students fear loss of access to needed classes, increased class sizes, and loss of valued teachers. Faculty members are concerned about potential loss of colleagues, programs, and increased workload. Administrators worry about both immediate and long-term declines in institutional quality through the loss of programs and personnel and about the impact on morale of difficult budget decisions they are compelled to make.

While the situation remains dynamic, making it difficult to predict what the impact ultimately will be on programs and facilities, the campus community has some reason to hope that the worst is over. One bright sign is the New York State legislature's recent approval of a "rational tuition policy" that allows SUNY institutions to increase tuition by 5 percent each year for the next five years. This will help stabilize institutional resources and facilitate planning, but it falls short of addressing the severe reductions in state funding over the past four years.

Compounding the fiscal uncertainty, leadership in the SUNY system has changed frequently over the last several years, with rapid turnover in both the Chancellor's and Provost's Offices. There is hope that the current chancellor, Nancy Zimpher, will provide stability. Chancellor Zimpher led in the formation and implementation of a SUNY-wide strategic plan designed to guide SUNY from 2010-2015 and to advise SUNY in its development through 2020. That plan, *The Power of SUNY*, identifies SUNY's priority as "the economic revitalization of the State of New York and a better quality of life for all its citizens." The plan centers on Six Big Ideas: to cultivate "entrepreneurial thinking across our entire learning landscape;" to create a "seamless educational pipeline that extends from birth to retirement;" to foster public health, and to improve health care, and access to it; to become a "green incubator" for sustainable and environmentally sound energy; to sustain an enduring

and enriching presence in New York communities; and to "nurture a culturally fluent, cross-national mindset and put it to work improving New York's global competitiveness." Given adequate resources, Potsdam is well poised to contribute to these system-wide initiatives.

On campus, the current President John F. Schwaller, who has now been in office for five years, developed and promoted a Bicentennial Plan for the College, based on several strategic planning processes undertaken by the previous president. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Margaret Madden, led an initiative in 2008 to develop an academic master plan for the College.

Other key leadership positions have changed in the last few years. The Vice President for Business Affairs is retiring and a search is underway for a replacement. There are new deans in all three schools, a new Director of the Libraries, a new Dean of Students, a new Director of Human Resources, and a new Director of Physical Plant. While these changes offer opportunity for the College, such transitions can also cause uncertainty.

Contributing to that uncertainty is the recent mandate by SUNY Administration calling for shared services between SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton. At their June 15, 2011 meeting, the Trustees of the State University of New York passed a resolution calling for the sharing of services among campuses of the university. They established three layers of cooperation: the sharing of services within the system as a whole, the creation of regional networks of cooperation among campuses, and the linking of six campuses in three alliances. Within this latter category, SUNY Potsdam was directed to collaborate with SUNY Canton. (SUNY Delhi was directed to collaborate with SUNY Cobleskill, and SUNYIT to collaborate with SUNY Morrisville.) In these three partnerships, the Board of Trustees envisioned the creation of a single administration for the two campuses of each alliance, up to and including a single president.

Located thirteen miles southwest of Potsdam, SUNY Canton describes itself as Northern New York's four and two-year college for technology, health, management, and public service. It offers nearly 20 majors leading to the bachelor's degree, more than 20 programs leading to the associate degree, and several programs leading to one-year certificates. It enrolls about 3800 students.

At the September 20, 2011 meeting, the Board mandated that President Joseph L. Kennedy of Canton and President John F. Schwaller of Potsdam explore and implement shared services between the campuses and write a report to be delivered to the Board no later than July 15. The report is to make a recommendation regarding shared administration, particularly the desirability of a single president serving the two campuses. The Board of Trustees will then take action on that recommendation as soon as three weeks later. The campuses are currently moving to integrate their Payroll and Purchasing Offices. Conversations regarding collaboration also include Human Resources, Institutional Research, and Interlibrary loan, to name a few. The campuses are currently searching for a single new Chief Financial Officer and Vice President to supervise the business affairs of the two campuses, as well as a shared military coordinator to work with members of the military and veterans as they participate in the educational enterprise of the campuses. Additionally, a

minor in Environmental Technology that requires SUNY Canton courses along with Potsdam geology coursework was recently implemented for Potsdam students.

While the implications of the alliance with SUNY Canton will become clearer in the next year, SUNY has stated explicitly that campuses will retain their individual character. Hence the focus of this Self Study remains on how SUNY Potsdam fulfills its mission.

Chapter Three
Description of the Self-study Process

In fall 2009 and in consultation with his cabinet, President Schwaller, appointed Chip Morris, Dean of Students, and Jim German, Associate Professor of History, as co-chairs for the Self-Study Steering Committee. With the advice of Provost Madden and the co-chairs, President Schwaller appointed an additional twenty-two members to the Self-Study Steering Committee. The committee represented a cross-section of the College community, including academic faculty from all three schools, professional faculty from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Business Affairs, Enrollment Management and Institutional Effectiveness. Two students also served on the Self-Study Steering Committee.

Following their attendance of the MSCHE workshop in November, 2009, the co-chairs immediately partnered with the College's chief assessment officer to design and implement a campus survey to assist the Steering Committee in developing a self-study model. Distributed to administrators, faculty, professional staff, and classified staff – virtually all employees – the survey was organized around the fourteen standards of excellence and asked responders to identify their perceptions of the College's strengths and weaknesses with regard to those Standards. The Steering Committee began meeting in December 2009.

The intended outcomes and design of the Self Study grew out of an analytical discussion of the self-study survey results in the context of the College Mission and Middle States standards. That discussion uncovered significant concern about resource allocation, communication, and transparency. The Steering Committee reached a consensus to complete a comprehensive Self Study with particular focus on ways in which 1) The College and its units promote student success; 2) The College's mission, goals, and planning shape resource allocation; and 3) Information about college programs and procedures are broadly communicated so as to ensure that decision making at every level is transparent and driven by informed analysis (i.e. loops are closed). It identified eight specific Intended Outcomes:

1. Complete a comprehensive study of the institution that will demonstrate the various ways that SUNY Potsdam addresses the MSCHE Standards of Excellence and provide information and analysis that contributes to informed discussion and decision making about the college and its future.
2. Assess the various educational programs offered at the college in light of institutional mission, goals, and resources.
3. Investigate the effectiveness of the college's mission and goals in shaping planning and resource allocation.
4. Examine ways in which avenues of communication may be improved to promote institutional transparency at every level.
5. Determine the extent to which information gathered through both institutional assessment and the assessment of student learning is used to promote institutional renewal and improvements in the curriculum.
6. Determine the extent to which the "Potsdam Graduate" accurately summarizes the learning objectives of the college, and particularly of the General Education

program, and the extent to which institutional resources are appropriately allocated toward that goal.

7. Achieve a better understanding among the College community of how the entire institution is knit together and the ways in which areas complement each other in the interest of student success.

8. Consider the impact of Potsdam's designation as a SUNY "Arts Campus" on the college's Arts and Sciences and Education programs, as well as on its programs in the fine and performing arts, and on the capacity of the college, given its resources, to fulfill that component of its mission.

Nine working groups carried out the bulk of the research and analysis for the Self Study. Formed in the spring 2010, the working groups addressed the research questions outlined in the design document. Each member of the Steering Committee served on at least one working group and a member of the Steering Committee served as chair of each working group. Additional working group members, some thirty-three in number, were chosen for their expertise and perspective from virtually every corner of the College community.

The working groups were divided into two larger subcommittees. The Steering Committee co-chairs each assumed the oversight of one subcommittee. The working groups began their work in fall 2010 and submitted draft reports of their findings and recommendations early spring 2011. The Steering Committee met weekly to review those draft reports. Working groups revised and resubmitted their reports – in some cases, multiple times – in light of the Steering Committee's discussion.

A subcommittee of the Steering Committee met in summer 2011 to review all the working group recommendations, to consolidate them as appropriate, and to select those of college-wide significance as the recommendations of the Self-Study Report. These were then reviewed, revised, and approved by the entire Steering Committee in fall 2011.

A draft "Findings and Recommendations of the Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee" was reviewed by the administration in October 2011 and made available to the entire campus for discussion. The co-chairs moderated discussions about the "Findings and Recommendations" with various campus constituencies – the Faculty Senate, the Arts and Sciences Council, the Crane Faculty Association, the School of Education and Professional Studies faculty, the General Studies Committee, Student Government Association, Student Affairs Directors – before the end of the semester. In light of those broad campus discussions, a revised draft was prepared over winter break and made available to the campus community for another round of review and comment at the beginning of spring semester.

The full report of each Working Group – including its research questions, modus operandi, findings, and recommendations – are in the Documents Collection. The working groups, with their members, appear below. The chair of each working group is listed first. Members of the Steering Committee are marked with an asterisk.

Subcommittee on Institutional Context (*Chip Morris ('78), Coordinator)
  Standards 1 & 6: Mission, Goals, and Integrity

*Deborah Dudley, Director of Marketing
Alex Allen, Undergraduate Student
Brian Doyle, Director of Bands in the Crane School of Music
*Karen Ham, Director of Career Planning
*Mary Jo McNamara, Professor of Art History
Carol Rossi-Fries, Clinical Faculty in Social Studies Education

Standards 2 & 3: Planning, Resource Allocation, Institutional Renewal and Resources
*Blair Madore, Associate Professor of Mathematics
Peter Brouwer ('79), Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies
*Dave Kirwan, Assistant Vice President for Business Affairs
J. Patrick Turbett, Professor and Chair of Sociology Department
*Ryan Williams ('12), Undergraduate Student, Vice President of Student Government Assoc.

Standards 4 & 5: Leadership, Governance, and Administration
*Walter J. Conley, Professor of Biology
Tara Bohon ('12), Undergraduate Student
Maureen McCarthy, Associate Professor and Chair of Community Health
Carol Rourke ('81), Assistant to the President
Michael Sitton, Dean of the Crane School of Music

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment
*Bruce Brydges, Director of Academic Assessment
*David Curry, Associate Professor of Philosophy
Krista LaVack, Director of International Education & Programs
Jenica Rogers, Director of Libraries
*Mary Beth Rosenfeld, Nurse Practitioner in Student Health Services
Alice Sorensen ('11), Undergraduate Student, Secretary of Student Government Association
Judy Singh, Coordinator of Institutional Assessment and Research

Subcommittee on Educational Effectiveness (*Jim German, Coordinator)
Standards 8 & 9: Student Admissions, Retention, and Student Support Services
*Gena Nelson, Administrative Director of Counseling Center
*Tamara Durant, Director of Student Success Center
Joel Foisy, Professor and Chair of Mathematics Department
*Susan Manfred ('76), Director of Academic Transfer Services
William Mitchell, Assistant Director of Athletics
Maria Rotondo ('12), Undergraduate Student, Resident Assistant

Standard 10: Faculty
*Alan Steinberg, Professor of English and Communication
Christine Li ('12), Undergraduate Honors Student
Steve Marqusee, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences
Peter McCoy, Program Administration Chair of Music Education

Michele Pinard, Clinical Faculty in Curriculum and Instruction
Laura Rhoads, Professor of Biology, President of Potsdam Chapter United University Professions

Standard 11 & 13: Educational Offerings and Related Educational Activities
*Toby White ('89), Director of Experiential Education
Amy Guiney ('01), Coordinator of Field Experiences & Teacher Certification
*Kathleen Miller, Associate Professor of Voice in the Crane School of Music
Claire Machia ('12), Graduate Student
*Jan Trybula, Associate Professor of Biology, Chair of the Faculty Senate
Sergei Abramovich, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
Christine Doran, Assistant Professor of English and Communication
Carol Franck, Associate Librarian
Michael Phillips ('96), Distance Learning and Learning Management Systems Coordinator

Standard 12: General Education
*Caroline Downing, Professor of Art History, Director of General Education
Carol Franck, Associate Librarian
*Elizabeth Lucas ('12), Undergraduate Student
David Smith, Professor of Psychology, Former Director of the Honors Program
Lisa Stewart ('06), Teacher Education Advising Coordinator
Lorraine Sullivan, Assistant Professor of Voice in the Crane School of Music
*Louise Tyo ('00), Director of Student and Family Transitions

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning
*Bruce Brydges, Director of Academic Assessment
*Debbie Anderson, Associate Dean in School of Education and Professional Studies
Alan Hersker, Associate Professor and Chair of the Anthropology Department
*Jill Pearon, Assistant Provost, Associate Professor of Voice
Katie Scherhaufer ('09), Graduate Student
Judy Singh, Coordinator of Institutional Assessment and Research
Shailindar Singh, Director of Special Programs in the Student Success Center

This report follows the organizational structure of the Self Study. Each working group report centered on the presentation of its findings relative to the MSCHE Standards and the Steering Committees research questions. The full findings of each working group are presented in italics. The text around them seeks to establish an adequate context or understanding for the findings and to point to the evidence that supports them.   In addition, the sources used by the Working Groups and Self-Study Report authors can be found in **Appendix A**, listed by chapter.

Because there was significant overlap in recommendations from different working groups, we have chosen to present a unified list of recommendations in Chapter 13 of this *Self-Study Report*. A complete list of recommendations made by individual working groups can be found in **Appendix B**.

Chapter Four
Mission, Goals, and Integrity

Standard 1: Mission and Goals
> The institution's mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates who the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are used to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.

The College Mission Statement was developed in 2006 through an inclusive process involving faculty, professional staff, and administration. The new statement represented not so much a revision as a clarification and even a simplification from the previous Mission Statement. At that time, in addition to having completed a Middle States Review in 2003, the College had also completed two cycles of "visioning" under its previous President. As President Schwaller assumed his position at Potsdam, he initiated the mission review that produced the current Mission Statement. The committee that drafted the new statement sought, and received, broad input from faculty, staff, and students, and the revised Mission Statement was ratified by the Faculty Senate.

The Mission Statement has evolved through and from the College's long history, and might be seen as descriptive as much as prescriptive. It highlights the College's focus on student development, the centrality of the fine and performing arts and education, and a commitment to responsible action in the region and the broader world.

Finding 1. The SUNY Potsdam mission statement was developed by broad representation from all sectors of the campus and formally ratified in 2006 by the primary governing bodies. A succinct representation of the institution, it serves as an introduction to the institution's character, purpose and scope. The campus is further defined by a collection of statements that serves to define the institution, explains its individual character, and articulates its values, philosophy, and intended outcomes. These documents delineate the scope of the institution and guide its goals and planning. The critical mission collection consists of the 2006 Mission Statement, The Potsdam Graduate*, and* The Potsdam Pledge*.*

The Potsdam Graduate and *The Potsdam Pledge* serve, respectively to describe the academic and dispositional goals for Potsdam's students, particularly its undergraduate students.

The Potsdam Graduate began as a discussion in the General Education Committee in the late 1980s when the current program assumed its essential shape. It defines Potsdam graduates in terms of outcomes, by the skills and knowledge they master and the experiences they will have. Essential skills include the "ability to judge, appraise and evaluate, in matters ethical, aesthetic, empirical and logical; . . . to reason analytically, formally, symbolically and quantitatively; . . . to solve problems by creative synthesis of knowledge; . . . to organize

thought and communicate in written and oral form" in both English and a second language. Graduates should possess knowledge of "the heritage of Western civilization, including major artistic, scientific, technological, philosophical and social developments; . . . of a non-Western culture and an understanding of the interaction of cultures; . . . of the natural and physical world; . . . of the forms and currents in twentieth century arts and philosophy; . . . of twentieth century social institutions," and "of how language permits communication, shapes thought and changes through time." Finally Potsdam graduates will have significant experience in artistic creativity or performance, in a science laboratory, and in using technology to facilitate learning. *The Potsdam Graduate* describes the academic achievements and experiences Potsdam's students can expect to acquire. It shapes the General Education program in particular, but also defines the academic outcomes the College seeks throughout its various curricula.

The Potsdam Pledge was developed about a decade after *The Potsdam Graduate* and originated in Student Affairs. It defines behavioral and dispositional characteristics that the College seeks to inculcate in its students. It defines Potsdam as a "community dedicated to the pursuit of common goals." It envisions a community that works "together to strengthen teaching and learning;" protects "freedom of thought, belief and expression;" treats all people with "consideration, decency and respect;" fosters individual behavior that promotes the "common good;" protects individual "rights, privacy, and property;" promotes "physical and emotional wellness;" expects "honesty, integrity and fairness" in both academic and extracurricular activities;" celebrates, and learns from, diversity; that acts to promote the "betterment of the campus, the local community, the nation and the world;" and combats "the threats posed by hatred, intolerance and other injustices."

Like the College Mission Statement, *The Potsdam Graduate* and *The Potsdam Pledge* were developed through broadly collaborative processes that included various campus constituencies and were endorsed by the governing and administrative bodies of the institution. They are all used to define the College mission to new students and new faculty at their respective orientations. In its interviews with a broad spectrum of campus leaders, the working group regularly heard references to the Mission Statement, *The Potsdam Graduate* and *The Potsdam Pledge*.

Finding 2. SUNY Potsdam's mission documentation fulfills the Middle States Standards with regard to mission.

In its interviews with a broad spectrum of campus leaders, the working group regularly heard references to the Mission Statement, *The Potsdam Graduate* and *The Potsdam Pledge*. These documents shape the work of committees, academic departments, and offices engaged in strategic planning and in the core business of the College. All three statements are easily accessible from a search on the College website. They are included in the course catalog and reinforced in goals and planning processes of the Faculty Senate.

The Mission Statement itself fulfills the criteria outlined by MSCHE. It states that the purpose of SUNY Potsdam is one of commitment "to the liberal arts and sciences as an academic foundation for all students." It identifies whom the institution serves. The College "prepares students," and it emphasizes its "historic role in providing exemplary teacher and

music education and leadership in the fine and performing arts." It acknowledges the priority of excellence in teaching and exposure to arts and culture as points of distinction. It states the outcome the College seeks to achieve: "students acting as engaged global citizens, leading lives enriched by critical thought, creativity, and discovery," who appreciate and respect "the variety of human experience."

Finding 3. In addition to the mission collection, SUNY Potsdam has a family of documents that articulate key institutional goals, campus vision, and defining endpoints that stem from the character, values and philosophy as defined by the mission collection. The campus goals and planning documentation serves to summarize campus priorities, timetables, and ownership and is the result of periodic review by campus constituents through email surveys, committee reviews and most often (but not always) Faculty Senate ratification.

The Mission Statement, combined with *The Potsdam Graduate* and *The Potsdam Pledge*, demonstrably shapes institutional goals. Campus leaders regularly reference goals and planning documentation as summary guidelines for specific action plans related to each area of campus.

The Bicentennial Plan, designed to guide the College's development to its bicentennial in 2016, is clearly grounded in the College's mission. It envisions Potsdam as "a highly selective residential college of liberal arts and sciences, of uncompromising quality and service to our state, nation, and the world with historic programs of excellence in education, music, and the arts." The Bicentennial Plan identifies clear, recognizable, and measurable outcomes that the college seeks to achieve. Potsdam will become the "leading arts campus of SUNY . . . remain faithful to the 'Handcrafted Education,' . . . strengthen and enhance existing programs and aspire to develop new ones," and "embrace new and emerging curricular and co-curricular opportunities." The College will "celebrate" its "locale and environment" and "become a model for alumni financial support, activism, and personal engagement."

For each biennium, senior administration, in conjunction with the Faculty Senate Goals and Planning Committee and Faculty Senate leadership, translates goals into plans. As the Strategic Goals for 2009-2011 put it, the goals that inform planning represent the accretion of goals from "previous biennial cycles" with new ones added on. Biennial planning recognizes that due to current financial circumstances, all College goals cannot be pursued with equal vigor. Some, in recent years have been deferred. "Nevertheless," the Strategic Goals for 2009-2011 affirm that "merely because we are not currently able to afford to fund certain objectives does not diminish their importance to the campus as goals to which we aspire. Moreover, these goals, taken along with the objectives outlined in the Bicentennial Plan, will give us a template within which to evaluate the funding opportunities which we will confront in the coming years. Consequently, establishing these goals helps us by outlining a course of action which we should pursue in good times and in bad." Similarly, the Biennial Goals for 2011-2013 reaffirm the centrality of the Mission Statement and the Bicentennial Plan in defining the goals of the College.

Faculty and professional staff play a significant role in the articulation of College goals

through the Goals and Planning Committee of the Faculty Senate. The committee surveys the faculty every year. Based on the results, it recommends revisions and reformulations to campus plans for achieving College goals.

College plans reference the campus mission and goals documents. For example the Facilities Master Plan emerged from goals articulated in the College Mission Statement, the Memorandum of Understanding with SUNY (now nugatory), and the Bicentennial Plan, in addition to research data, interviews, and the collaboration of a representative steering committee.

Finding 4. Along with College's mission documents, units of the College also generate mission statements, goals, and plans specific to their areas. These documents comprise the action plans that generally define and shape the work of individual offices, departments, committees, faculty and staff of the institution.

The School of Education and Professional Studies describes the mission of its education programs in a "vision statement" titled *A Tradition of Excellence: Preparing Creative and Reflective Educators.* Teacher education programs seek to create well-educated citizens who analyze and solve problems, organize thought and communicate effectively, understand history and our social and political institutions, understand and respect other cultures and our intercultural world, understand the impact of science and technology on our lives, use technology appropriately, have experience creating and appreciating the arts, have a broad and deep understanding of the subject matter they teach, and model the skills, attitudes, and values of inquiry appropriate to their disciplines. They cultivate "reflective practitioners" who model inquiry, practice, and reflection; use research-based models of curriculum, instruction and assessment; meet the diverse learning needs of students; apply knowledge of local, state, and national standards; use instructional and assistive technology effectively; promote inquiry, critical thinking, and problem solving; create positive learning environments for all students; use research, reflection and discourse throughout their careers; and prepare to become instructional leaders. Finally, the School nurtures "principled educators" who behave in a professional manner; maintain a high level of competence and integrity in one's practice; are flexible, take risks, and show comfort with uncertainty; work well with others; take responsibility for one's own actions; recognize and respect one's own diversity and that of others; and foster positive relationships with students, parents, administrators, colleagues, and agencies in the community to support student learning and well being.

The Crane School of Music defines itself as a community of musician-educators committed to fostering a vital musical society. Thriving programs in performance, composition, music business, and the academic disciplines of music history and theory enrich its long-standing heritage of leadership in music education. Its undergraduate programs are designed to provide a strong and comprehensive foundation across all areas of study, whereas its graduate programs bring greater depth and focus within these areas. In keeping with SUNY-Potsdam's mission as a student-centered institution, Crane students and faculty collaborate in pursuing a broad range of opportunities for artistic, personal, and professional growth. Blending proven traditional approaches and promising educational innovations in a uniquely supportive and cooperative learning community, the Crane School equips students with both

the foundations and flexibility needed for the challenges of the 21st Century. In conjunction with the Dean, the Crane Faculty Association periodically develops and reviews strategic plans.

Currently, the School of Arts and Sciences has no separate mission statement. Though obviously present in the College's mission statement, "commitment to the liberal arts and sciences...for all students," the school is also in the process of developing its own independent mission document. A draft mission statement has been presented to the School's Council, which will be reviewing and undoubtedly revising it over the course of the spring 2012 semester:

> It is the mission of the School of Arts & Sciences of SUNY Potsdam to provide rigorous instruction in the arts and sciences and to engage in creative and scholarly activities in those disciplines. In addition to its major programs in the arts and sciences, the School assumes responsibility for the provision of instruction in the College's General Education Program. The School cooperates with the other Schools and the non-academic divisions of the College to serve instructional, recruitment, retention, and other goals of the College. The School welcomes opportunities to serve the North Country in accordance with the interests and expertise of its faculty.

The Student Government Association (SGA) has its own mission statement, constitution, and by-laws that govern the organization. SGA takes direction mainly from SUNY, and specifically from a task-force appointed by the Chancellor related to student government.

Each academic department reviews its mission in its annual assessment report, linking it to the broader mission of the appropriate school, and to the College as a whole. Student learning is measured against desired outcomes that are identified in departmental mission statements.

Finding 5. While the documentation fulfills MSCHE standards and for the most part functions successfully in serving as a campus compass, it suffers from redundancies evident in the collection as a whole and lack of clarity when revised from one generation to the next.

Finding 6. Different offices and departments reported different levels of direct contact and guidance from the mission, goals and planning collections.

Other than at the level of the academic department, where mission review is linked to assessment of student learning, there are no mechanisms established for the routine or systematic review of the Mission Statement of the College or of its discrete units. The three core documents – the Mission Statement, *The Potsdam Graduate*, and *The Potsdam Pledge* – were initiated and developed at different times, by different units, for rather different purposes. The mission statements of the various units, excepting perhaps those of academic departments, are similarly uncoordinated.

Nevertheless, the College's mission documents function with a remarkable level of consistency. The various administrators and members of the faculty and professional staff

who were interviewed for the Self Study mostly reported that the program or programs they represented were reflected in the College's mission collection. Most units, with the notable exception of the Student Affairs, could identify their area in Goals and Plans developed by the Faculty Senate and Administration. The Goals and Planning documents developed jointly by the Faculty Senate and administration for 2010-2011, at least, seem to say little about Student Affairs and a great deal about Academic Affairs.

Finding 7. The College Mission Statement is deliberately broad with few specifics. This allows the College great flexibility in planning. It is clear that many campus decisions are mission driven and the breadth of the Mission Statement allows flexibility and progress. Some believe, however, that the vagueness leads to decisions that are not driven by mission and suggest that the mission collection be reviewed to include (but not be limited to) the following considerations: faculty research and creative endeavors; graduate programs; the residential character of the College; the essentials of the "Handcrafted Education," i.e. student excellence in scholarly achievement, undergraduate research, capstone experiences, creative endeavors, etc.

The working group reviewed a sampling of mission statements from other colleges and universities and found models that are both more inclusive and specific than Potsdam's Mission Statement. Conversations with faculty and administrators, as well as discussions within the Steering Committee, suggested that the College Mission Statement, along with *The Potsdam Graduate*, *The Potsdam Pledge*, and the mission statements of the various units of the College might be profitably reviewed and revised, with an eye toward consistency. Such a review, and the revisions that might ensue, might help the College better assess the effectiveness of its programs and allocate its resources.

Standard 6: Integrity

> In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.

The ethical values that the College seeks to instill in its students as expressed in *The Potsdam Pledge* – to demand scrupulous "honesty, integrity and fairness" of ourselves and to expect that of others – define the College's standard of integrity. The College and its employees are subject to the ethics laws and regulations of New York State and of the U.S. Department of Education. Changes in those laws and regulations require the College to adjust its own policies and procedures. For example, the College has, in the past few years, developed new policies regarding the use of social security numbers, in student and employee records, and in the management of donor funds.

Finding 1. For every academic and non-academic function administered at SUNY Potsdam there is an internal and/or external mechanism, procedure, policy, review board, accreditation, agency, law, contract or governing body that is designed to ensure integrity. Each division of the College has an extensive framework of accountability in terms of academic integrity, accreditation, financial integrity, employment integrity, and equitable treatment of campus constituents.

A host of policies, procedures, and personnel conspire to ensure the integrity of every aspect of the College's operations.

Academic policies are stated clearly in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs and are available in appropriate places on the College's website. Documentation addressing academic accountability for each school includes the School of Arts and Sciences Bylaws, the Crane School of Music Mission, the Crane Academic Information Supplement, the Faculty Senate Goals and Planning document, and the School of Education and Professional Studies Conceptual Framework, as well as accrediting bodies review and endorsement of particular degree programs. The Institutional Research Board and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee both follow national guidelines, meet regularly, and are publicized on a frequent and regular basis through the weekly *Reporter*, the College's electronic newsletter.

Hiring practices are governed by policies and procedures managed by Human Resources, and are accountable to oversight and collaborations with external agencies such as bargaining units, contractual obligations, New York State and U.S. Federal laws pertaining to affirmative action and discrimination. Purchasing and Payables' practices are governed by internal and external policies that include State Comptroller's office, New York State laws and regulations, and SUNY System and State mandatory reporting structures.

The campus has multiple compliance officers who both monitor and notify departments when and if they are in violation of any regulation and assist departments in taking steps to return to compliance. For examples, the Health and Safety Officer in Physical Plant, the Internal Control Officer in Business Affairs, and the Technology Compliance Monitor in Computing and Technology Services provide these services.

The integrity of student behavior, and of faculty and staff behavior toward students, is governed by the Academic Honor Code (published in both the Undergraduate Catalog and the *Student Handbook*) and by the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct (as articulated in the *Student Handbook* and published on the Office Student Conduct and Community Standards website). The rights and responsibilities of students, procedures for redress when those rights are violated, and the judicial process by which alleged malefactors are held to account, are clearly defined. These policies are shaped by both the behavioral and dispositional values of the Potsdam community as expressed in *The Potsdam Pledge* and by external regulations, including policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees, the laws of New York State, and Federal Regulations such as FERPA, The Cleary Act, and Title IX. The College uses annual surveys, the National Survey on Student Engagement and the SUNY Student Opinion Survey, to monitor students perception of the integrity of their experience.

NCAA membership rules and regulations related to participation in Division III athletics. SUNY Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) and the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference ECAC membership also include oversight, rules and regulations related to continued membership and participation.

Other offices, including, Admissions and Financial Aid are required to annually file a common data set to the Department of Education. The Public Relations/Government Relations are required by law to file monthly, quarterly and annually lobbying reports to both State and Federal Agencies and to funnel all lobbying activities through those College personnel who are registered lobbyists.

Finding 2. In some areas, including Human Resources and Purchasing and Payables, SUNY Potsdam is proactive in developing best practices, policies and procedures that protect the institution's integrity and effectiveness. There are also a substantial number of College employees who take a leadership role in external organizations and associations.

Five examples serve to illustrate the College's leadership in fostering best practices. First, the Campus Dispute Resolution Center was formed to address a need for a source that our employees could turn to when they had conflicts or disputes that did not fit under bargaining agreements, harassment, discrimination and workplace violence. Second, SUNY Potsdam is a leader among the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley in establishing trained mediators to address interpersonal conflicts – another program to assist in resolving conflicts prior to escalation that may call for more formal intervention. Third, the Knowledge Transfer Committee was set up by CSEA employees in partnership with Human Resources to ensure continuity in office management and best practices by using mentors to assist staff who move to new positions within the College. Fourth, the Choose to Reuse program – an internal posting network of equipment and supplies that may not be of use to one department, but may be used by another department – proactively addresses responsible resource management by promoting recycling and reducing waste. Finally, among SUNY colleges, PACES Dining Services has been a leader in supporting local foods. In 2002 PACES worked with local farmers to link local foods with campus customers, and assisted in the formation of the North Country Grown Coop (February, 2005).

Finding 3. In the area of truthfulness, ethical, and equitable treatment of constituencies, the evidence and interviews conducted by the working group identified a few areas that would be improved with some attention to possible inadequacies and inconsistencies.

Four areas might benefit from some specific attention. First, although the College is bound by the United States Department of Education regulations governing misrepresentation, the Office of Public Affairs has no written policy regarding honesty and integrity. Second, although there is evidence of widespread confidence in Potsdam's processes and safeguards related to tenure and promotion, a perception exists that standards are not as consistent as they might be between different schools and different departments. All parties recognize that expectations, particularly relating to scholarship and creative activity, reasonably differ in different disciplines. Yet, there are a variety of opinions concerning the benefits of consistency as compared to flexibility. School and department by-laws exist to ensure that there is integrity of process. Third, some faculty members and staff believe the processes regarding extra-service compensation and distribution of discretionary salary increases could be improved. Under terms of negotiated contracts between SUNY and the UUP, some percentage of the total payroll is generally designated for distribution based on meritorious performance or to rectify existing salary inequity. Supervising administrators make recommendations to the senior administrator in each division for the distribution of these

funds. The process is not particularly transparent, but it is not clear, under contract or law, that it could become so. Perhaps it could become better. Finally, the policies and procedures relating to allegations of student academic dishonesty are currently being reviewed by the Faculty Senate Academic Policies and Procedures Committee with an eye toward developing a more structured interface between faculty and the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

Finding 4. Each division has a good understanding of its own internal policies related to integrity and accountability and operates as a resource to the entire campus. In some cases, the College must make an extra effort to educate campus constituents participating in regulated activities such as fundraising and mandated purchasing practices.

Professionals in the Purchasing and Payables Office in the Business Affairs division are very good at educating and assisting other offices on campus regarding the complex State regulations related to bidding and securing contracts. Their work helps ensure that the College strictly follows the rules and regulations associated with spending money. It assists various offices in making sure that vendors the College hires comply with state laws. It also helps to identify qualified women or minority owned businesses, thereby helping Potsdam meet SUNY mandates. In these ways the Purchasing and Payables Office fosters the integrity of the College's business practices and protects it from inadvertent errors.

Professionals in the Office of College Advancement similarly assist the various units of the College in complying with Federal and State regulations regarding fundraising. Many units engage in fundraising, but not all of them understand the relevant rules with equal clarity. When made aware of such activities, College Advancement proactively seeks to ensure that rules regulating fundraising and reporting are carefully followed, particularly as pertains to the College's status as a non-profit organization and Advancement generally seeks to coordinate all campus fund-raising activity.

Staff members in the Office of Student Affairs also recognize the need to actively make students aware of the policies and procedures that govern their lives on campus. It makes a significant and ongoing effort to educate the student population prior to and during their enrollment at the College of the expectations described in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct in order to facilitate a positive student experience.

Finding 5. As a result of New York State's most recent budget crisis, the continued significant reductions and restraint forced on the institution, the College is challenged both to preserve – let alone to initiate – curricular and programmatic offerings and to address the critical maintenance and capital improvements necessary to fulfill the campus mission and goals.

Vulnerabilities appear in four areas. First, the ability of students to graduate within four years may be at risk as funding for adjuncts, class availability, faculty availability for teaching General Education requirements, as well as major and minor required coursework are constrained by limited funds. Second, College goals to improve, and even to sustain, existing retention rates are at risk. While there has been no measurable impact on retention rates thus far, the potential for serious negative consequences is apparent. Third, Goals and

Planning initiatives have been deferred. Finally, budget cuts in Admissions and Advancement may reduce the returns in recruitment and fundraising goals that will affect College's bottom line. While there is no evidence at this point that these potential negative impacts have actualized, the impact of fiscal restraint on the ability of the College to serve its students must be monitored.

Chapter Five
Planning, Resource Allocation, Institutional Renewal, and Resources

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, Institutional Renewal
An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluations of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to maintain institutional quality.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources
The human, financial, technical, physical facilities and other resources necessary to achieve an institution's mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution's mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution's resources and goals are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.

As an institution within the SUNY System, the College is both dependent on funding from the State and subject to the SUNY Administration's mechanisms for distributing those funds. The state legislature also establishes tuition rates at its pleasure. In addition, the College is subject to State law and regulations and SUNY policies in generation of funds through fees and the expenditure of its funds related to procurement, personnel policies, practices and remuneration, financial aid, and physical plant development.

Cuts in the state budget following the economic downturn that began in 2008 have struck SUNY, and the various units within SUNY, with special force. As a College that depends heavily on some funds the state allocates directly and other funds, such as tuition and fees, that the state regulates, Potsdam has endured its share of suffering. At a time when the College seemed well positioned to make real progress toward achieving its goals as outlined in the Bicentennial Plan, it has instead had to make hard choices about how to preserve gains already achieved. Decisions were made it the context of lively discussions about campus priorities.

Some bright spots nevertheless exist in the College's financial picture. While general operating funds have been under restraint, the State has invested a significant amount of funding in capital improvements for SUNY, providing some opportunities for significant improvements at Potsdam. The College has had more that $115 million in capital funding over the last decade. Much of that money comes earmarked for critical maintenance, including new HVAC systems in many buildings, asbestos abatement projects, window replacement, and road paving. The result has been a constant state of construction on the campus over the last several years.

Significant funding for new projects has also become available. Construction has begun on a new Performing Arts Building, the first new academic building on campus since the Crane School of Music complex was completed in 1973. Designed to meet LEED Silver

Certification standards, it is slated for completion by the beginning of spring semester 2014. The College opened new townhouse-style residence halls in 2006 and 2008, the first new buildings on the campus of any sort in more than 30 years. Additionally, a combined heat and power plant has been recently completed. This plant should reduce the College's expenditures on energy – no small thing in the North Country – and significantly reduce waste. Funding was also provided by the State in 2007 to replace 125 pianos in the Crane School of Music to bring the total to 141 and providing the campus with the distinction of being an "All Steinway" school.

Funding has also been approved for several projects soon to be sent out for bidding: $9.4 million to upgrade the science laboratories in Stowell Hall, $700,000 for rehabilitation of the Knowles Conference Center, and $9.8 million for rehabilitation of the Maxcy Ice Arena.

Thus the ability of the campus to obtain funds through the SUNY Construction Fund for new buildings and rehabilitation of aging facilities is a great benefit to the campus. While it does not mitigate the challenges presented by reduced operating budget, it does mean that the College doesn't need to use those precious dollars to address the deferred maintenance issues that most institutions face today.

The College has also enjoyed remarkable success in raising funds through its Office of College Advancement. Within the SUNY system, the Potsdam was among the first to begin external fundraising to supplement State funding. Those efforts have paid off. Among the thirteen comprehensive SUNY Colleges, Potsdam ranks first in undergraduate alumni participation in giving, second in endowment per student, and third in total alumni participation for giving, in total funds raised per student, and in total value of bequests received. Among public masters universities in the nation, it ranks eighteenth for alumni participation in giving. Despite the sluggish economy, the College exceeded its Fiscal Year 2010-2011 fundraising goal by more than $600,000, raising a total of $3,076,976 to benefit students and programs here on campus. This success was due in no small part to the generosity of faculty, staff and emeriti – 326 employees gave a total of more than $1,100,000 – a testament to the commitment to the College shared by the community.

Potsdam is the first, and thus far only, SUNY campus to undertake a third comprehensive fundraising campaign. Since 2009, 30 endowed scholarships and 18 endowed special-use funds, mostly supporting student experiences, have been established as part of this campaign, which has been designed to be completed during the 2016 Bicentennial celebration.

Despite access to monies from the SUNY Construction Fund, and despite the generosity of the College's alumni and many friends, sustained and repeated cuts in state allocations are problematic. The College Financial Plan depends chiefly on state funds and on tuition to meet its operating expenses.

Finding 1. The College's financial situation is fragile.

After enduring many years of ongoing cuts, state support for operating expenses has been reduced from about 40 percent of total spending to about 32 percent of total spending for in the past four years. As tuition is also set by the state, the College has little control over its

revenues. While it has control of its expenditures, it has little flexibility. Roughly 75 percent of Potsdam's annual operating budget is spent on salaries. It is difficult to achieve substantial reductions in expenditures without reducing staffing. Reduction in staffing, however, has significant and often immediate impact on the College's ability to fulfill its mission.

Finding 2. Potsdam has dealt with budget cuts mainly by cutting non-personnel expenses. It has not achieved substantial savings through restructuring. This practice is convenient and humane, but tends not to be strategic.

During the recent round of cuts to state support, the College remained committed to delivering services by saving the jobs of full time personnel. This strategy brought broad, proportional cuts across the institution's divisions and units. It did not seek to achieve the requisite savings through programmatic or systematic changes that might have left deeper cuts in some areas while leaving others relatively unharmed.

Finding 3. The College engages in very short term budget planning.

The nature of institutional support from New York State through SUNY makes it extremely difficult to do any viable long term planning. Funding is so variable and unpredictable that the College is not able to do a multiyear budget plan. It is continually forced into a reactive, rather than proactive, stance. This problem is widely shared by government-funded institutions in New York State. Both state funding for SUNY and SUNY tuition levels are determined annually in the State budget. Although the budget, by law, is supposed to be approved by April 1, in many years it has not been approved on time. Sometimes it has been passed as late as July or August. Even when the budget is passed on time, as in 2011, accurately predicting revenues that will accrue to the College is difficult. Tuition increases, in years when they are approved (as one was in July 2011) come in separate bills passed later than the budget. Moreover, an increase in tuition does not necessarily mean an increase in revenue for the College, as the state, or SUNY, may claim some or all of it, or offset it with a commensurate reduction in state aid.

Once the State budget is set, SUNY determines how funding is distributed to the campuses. Up until 2008-2009, SUNY funds were allocated according to a model that allowed a measure of predictability. Since then the model has been variable. SUNY is working towards developing a new model that will again help campuses better predict their state support. How that new model might affect Potsdam's revenues is far from clear.

SUNY's fiscal year runs from July-June. There have been years when the College has begun its fiscal year without knowing the amount of funding it will receive for that year. When the State has budget shortfalls, midyear "corrections" are possible and have occurred, with the College having to give back funding that was allocated for that year. Given the realities of New York State and SUNY, planning for a single academic year is difficult enough. Planning more than two or three years ahead requires making improbable assumptions about an unpredictable future.

Finding 4. The College has contingencies in place and a process for allocating contingencies but financial constraints have resulted in smaller reserves than would normally be

expected. The College has been forced to use contingencies for ongoing recurring operating expenses.

In past years, the College has sustained a contingency fund of about $1,000,000 that it has carried from year to year. For several years, a portion of those funds has been used to address the impact of the budget shortfall on academic offerings. Other, essentially one-time revenue sources, also contribute to the current operating expenses of the College. In the current year, higher enrollments than predicted generated more tuition than anticipated and heating costs in 2010-2011 were lower than anticipated. Restoring contingency funds and budgeting adequately for possible fluctuations in utility costs are challenges for the future.

Finding 5. There is a clear rationale between planning and budgeting when adding resources. This rationale is not as clear when removing resources.

Budget cuts made necessary by reduced state support in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 were shared across the board. That is, each division of the College suffered an equal percentage reduction in its budget. As additional funds became available, they were allocated in accordance with the essential academic mission of the College.

Finding 6. Significant effort has been made in recent years to improve the transparency of budget allocations.

The Resource Transparency website grew out an agreement between faculty, staff, and administration that more information about campus resources and their allocation would serve the College's interests. While the website provides some information about where money is allocated, it provides little information about how decisions are made to allocate that money. It has not been updated since the 2009-2010 fiscal year and the data presented is not directly comparable from year to year.

As that effort was not wholly successful, a new initiative is underway and will be unveiled early in 2012. Increased communication of the rationale for budget decisions remains a campus wide goal. NYS budget practices make it very difficult to get useful detail about actual expenditures in an efficient manner. Evidence-based decision-making regarding allocation of resources occurs but the evidence is not always shared or readily available. There is substantial hope that the new "Budget Book" will address these concerns.

Finding 7. A culture of assessment exists on our campus.

Examples of assessment driven decision making are evident throughout the College. The Libraries, for example, use periodical usage data in to decide on subscriptions. Departments use student demand, evident in enrollment figures from prior semesters, to schedule classes. The schools, along with the Office of Academic Affairs, use enrollment figures and faculty/student ratios when they prioritize faculty positions requested by departments. The programs in the Student Success Center routinely monitor academic success and retention of students they serve and adjust their programs accordingly.

Finding 8. There is an apparent lack of vertical integration of planning processes.

Biennial Plans are formulated by the collaboration of senior administrators and Faculty Senate leadership. Planning processes at the College level are not always reflected at the school level much less the departmental level. We have top down planning processes and bottom up planning processes yet none have completely integrated our planning. The processes sometimes seem disconnected from each other, as channels of communication do not operate as effectively as might be hoped.

Finding 9. Physical Plant is working with minimum staffing.

The Physical Plant pool of employees has been more fluid than others on campus. In recent years, the college has achieved savings by routinely holding vacated positions open for a while (generally four to eight weeks) to gain some salary savings. Although some losses in staff positions have been recouped, overall Physical Plant staffing remains minimal.

Despite the strains on staffing in the Physical Plant, anecdotal evidence from remarks made by prospective students and their parents at open houses and other visitors to campus and the fact that students are much more likely to matriculate if they do visit campus suggests that the campus is attractive and appealing. There is little evident deterioration of facilities or deferred maintenance as can be seen at other colleges. The red brick buildings lend a coherent academic aura to the campus and the grounds are well maintained. The campus is, indeed, very attractive.

Finding 10. The College has a limited and relatively static portfolio of academic offerings compared to our SUNY peers.

A more diversified portfolio would allow Potsdam to better weather changes in the market. This is particularly true at the graduate level, where most programs are in teacher education and thus subject to market forces in a single profession. Unfortunately, SUNY System Administration has been unwilling to approve a graduate program that would have contributed to diversification, a Masters of Public Health, citing competition with SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, over 140 miles away.

Finding 11. We have a Facilities Master Plan.

The Facilities Master Plan was developed 2009-2011 in cooperation with and funded by the Construction Fund of the State University of New York. Outside consultants constructed the plan in consultation with an advisory group composed primarily of those at the Dean and Director level. The Facilities Master Plan seeks to project the development of the facilities of the campus into 2022 and will become the basis for campus requests to the Legislature for capital funding. While the prediction towards 2022 cannot possibly be totally accurate, the Facilities Master Plan does provide an excellent guide to identify, prioritize and structure project requests for capital funding and related surge space needs. It will be tremendously helpful in decisions being made this year concerning backfill of areas that will be vacated by programs moving into the new Performing Arts Building. Doubtless adjustments will be made as funding decisions are made or new needs arise, but it will still provide direction for a number of years to come.

Finding 12. While recent initiatives to replace classroom furniture have been welcomed, overall funding for academic equipment is inadequate.

As part of critical maintenance and regular technology budget, many classrooms have been upgraded with new furniture, refurbishment, and presentation technology. In addition, the Comprehensive Campaign has included such upgrades. For instance, five new projection classrooms were created through a wonderful collaboration of the Student Government Association, Hewlett Packard Corporation, and a generous alumnus.

In some years SUNY has not provided equipment funding. In the years that it does fund Academic Equipment Replacement, that funding does not necessarily translate into equipment, as funds may be reallocated based on the overall needs of the college.

Finding 13. An annual independent audit of the State University of New York's financial statement is completed after September 1st each year at System Administration in Albany.

SUNY Potsdam's financial activity is a component of that independent audit. In addition, SUNY Potsdam is subject to random topical audits that are conducted by the Office of the State Comptroller and the SUNY Internal Audit Office. SUNY Potsdam has also instituted an Internal Control Program that has been developed in accordance with SUNY Internal Control Guidelines. The Internal Control program is re-certified annually by the President and forwarded to the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Chapter Six
Leadership, Governance, and Administration

Standard 4 – Leadership and Governance
The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill the responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.

As one institution in a State system, the College operates within parameters for leadership and governance established at the system level. The SUNY system operates under a Board of Trustees, appointed by the Governor that sets policies for the system without consultation or consideration of the impact at each individual campus. For example, central administration has mandated aspects of the General Education Program and aspects of the transfer and articulation policy.

Each SUNY institution has its own College Council, also appointed by the Governor, whose members come from the local community. This body has little formal role in policy setting, but can serve as an important channel for information.

The College's tradition and culture play a role in how system parameters are interpreted and integrated into College operations. For example, the College has chosen to create a single organization, the Faculty Senate, for shared governance that includes all professional personnel, both academic faculty (classroom teachers and librarians) and professional faculty (non-teaching professionals) – a model not followed by all SUNY institutions. Though not a member of the College Council, the chair of the Faculty Senate is routinely invited to attend and report at meetings of the College Council.

The individual schools as well as other organizational units within the College have developed their own models for leadership and governance that vary from unit to unit.

Finding 1. The policies and procedures of the State University of New York at Potsdam are the responsibility of a hierarchy of governing bodies.

Finding 2. Collegial or shared governance is fundamental to the SUNY system and our campus.

System-wide faculty governance, in the form of the University Faculty Senate, has worked with the Chancellor's Office, the Provost's Office and the Board of Trustees to study issues important to the improvement of our structure and operations. The Potsdam faculty members elect one of their number to serve as University Senator.

Finding 3. The primary governing body for the College regarding curriculum, academic policies, and planning is the Faculty Senate, which is advisory to the President. The Faculty Senate fulfills its primary functions.

The Bylaws of the Faculty Senate define its role in the college: "The Faculty Senate is the representative governing body of the Faculty. It is empowered to recommend to the Faculty policy relating to academic affairs, student affairs, personnel, facilities, and any other matters of general faculty concern; to act on college policy relating to such matters; to organize itself with officers elected from voting faculty members; to receive and act upon reports of its committees; and to recommend to and communicate with the President of the College, the College Council, the Chancellor of the University, the Board of Trustees, the University Senate, or any other appropriate individual or body."

Senate membership includes all unclassified employees, whether their appointment is academic, professional, or management/confidential positions. Faculty Senate meetings are open to the entire campus community. Voting delegates to the Senate are elected from each of the academic departments in the college, and from the various sub-divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, College Advancement, and Business Affairs. Additional voting delegates are elected at large. The Bylaws outline the determination of representation. The delegates meet monthly. The Full Faculty meets twice a year, once each semester. The agenda for these meetings is posted in the campus newsletter, *The Reporter*, a week in advance to each meeting. The minutes are also published in *The Reporter* and on the College's website.

The Faculty Senate is autonomous and independent of senior management. The body is not chaired by the College's chief executive officer. All members of the voting faculty are eligible to serve as Faculty Senate delegates, except, by reason of their offices, vice presidents, deans, and directors in positions parallel to those of deans, who have a voice, but not a vote in Faculty Senate and some are designated as *ex officio* members of certain committees.

The Faculty Senate is advised by its eight standing committees, each of which is elected by the faculty. They include: the Academic Policies, Standards, and Advising Committee; the Academic Programs and Curriculum Committee; the Admissions Committee; the Business Affairs Committee; the Goals and Planning Committee; the Graduate Affairs Committee; the Student Affairs Committee; and the Nominating Committee.

Finding 4. The biggest challenge faced by faculty governance is encouraging faculty members to volunteer for leadership positions.

There is a constant struggle to find officers and committee chairs. The position of secretary was vacant for two years. Generally, slates for officers have only one candidate. Frequently, slates for committees have only the number of nominations needed to fill vacancies. Generally faculty members perceive service to the College to be at the bottom of the criteria for promotion and tenure. Once tenure is earned there is little incentive for many to engage with Faculty Senate. Rewards for Senate service are not clear in all areas of the campus.

Finding 5. Each of the three Schools has a governing body that expresses the principle of shared governance.

The Arts and Sciences Council serves as the governing body for the School of Arts and Sciences. It is chaired by the Dean, whom it also advises. Chairs of each of the academic departments in the school sit on the council, along with council members elected at large by the faculty. The council generally meets every three weeks. Meetings are open to all. The governing body for The Crane School is the Crane Faculty Association. It includes all members of the faculty and is chaired by a President, elected by the faculty. It meets as a whole on a monthly basis. In the School of Education and Professional Studies, the entire faculty meets on an annual basis. A Moderator, elected by the faculty, chairs the meeting.

In each of the three schools, standing committees whose membership is elected by the faculty advise the governing body and the Dean. In the School of Education and Professional Studies, the standing committees are the Academic Affairs Committee, Personnel Committee, and Scholarship and Awards Committee. In the School of Arts and Sciences, the standing committees are the Curriculum Committee, Nominations Committee, and Interdepartmental Programs Committee. In Crane, the standing committees are the Nominating Committee, Scholarship and Professional Development Committee, Undergraduate Program Committee, Graduate Program Committee, Personnel Committee, Student Affairs Committee, Library Committee, and Admissions Committee.

Finding 6. There is no formal assessment of the functions of the Faculty Senate. Members of senior management of the College are reviewed annually by their immediate supervisors.

The President is evaluated annually on a performance program established by the Chancellor. The Chancellor requests feedback from those who report directly to the President and collects considerable data about the college before completing the review. Similarly, Senior Management have performance programs which usually cite benchmarks for assessment and supervisor review is based largely on the accomplishment of that program.

Finding 7. The College Council reflects constituent and public interest.

The College Council serves as an oversight and advisory body to the administration. It is composed of members of the community who are appointed by the Governor and one student who is elected annually from among the student body. The College Council is responsible for recommending to the SUNY Board of Trustees candidates to serve as president of the College. Typically, the chair of the search committee is a member of the Council and Council members serve along with College staff on the search committee. The Council typically meets four times a year and is charged with approving certain College policies. There is a process for the orientation of new members to College Council.

Finding 8. The Potsdam College Foundation Board assists in the generation of resources.

The Potsdam College Foundation is a non-profit corporation, established in 1968, to steward the continued growth of private giving in support of SUNY Potsdam and oversee the management of said giving. The Foundation is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees that includes representation from SUNY Potsdam's alumni, faculty, faculty emeriti, and students, as well as the regional and national community.

Finding 9. All faculty and staff are subject to New York State ethics laws.

Standard 5: Administration
The institution's administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution's organization and governance.

As the chief executive of the College, the President has the responsibility and authority to establish the administrative structure of the College. Changes in presidential leadership – and external circumstances – have resulted in some changes to the administrative structure at various times over the last decade.

The President must operate within, and may be constrained by, collective bargaining agreements that cover all non-management personnel as well as other SUNY and State laws and regulations.

Finding 1. The leadership structure of the College can be found in administrative organizational charts.

Finding 2. Direct methods, including comparison to other SUNY comprehensive colleges, and indirect methods, such as performance program analysis, are used to determine the appropriate administrative structure for the College.

While Potsdam's structure is similar to other SUNY comprehensive colleges, such as Fredonia, Oswego, and Oneonta, each campus has evolved to meet its unique mission. Annual staff reviews, evaluations and existing systems of program performance and analysis provide guidance to appropriate staffing levels at the College.

Finding 3. The responsibilities of some individuals in leadership roles has been communicated by the President of the College on multiple occasions through verbal (e.g. Convocation, Faculty Senate) and written methods (e.g. The President's Notes).

Finding 4. The College is organized into five divisions – Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Business Affairs, Institutional Effectiveness and Enrollment Management, and College Advancement, – each of which is headed by a vice-president who reports to the President. Each division has its own process of decision making in accordance with its role and function.

Finding 5. For most of the past ten years, the body charged with final decision making responsibility has been the Administrative Cabinet, consisting of the President and five vice presidents or division heads. There was a transition in decision making during the former president's tenure from the Leadership Council, which also included academic deans and directors as well as the Chair of the Faculty Senate, to the Administrative Cabinet.

Finding 6. Believing that more information and a stronger voice from the academic units of the college was needed, especially in light of the fiscal problems confronting the campus, the current president modified his chief advisory group to include the Academic Deans.

The President's Council now consists of the Vice Presidents, Deans of the three schools, and the Dean of Students.

Finding 7. In 2010 the Leadership Council was replaced by the Leadership Forum, which serves as an instrument for communication rather than a decision making body.

The President reorganized and expanded the former Leadership Council to include more of the College's staff at the director level. The newly constituted Leadership Forum now serves as a mechanism for communication and consultation, and to facilitate communication among the administrative units of the College. The Leadership Forum meets twice each semester for reports from the President, Provost and others.

Finding 8. Shortly after his arrival, the current president empowered administrative officers to take more independent action within their respective divisions.

The budget process was changed to allow members of the President's Council greater flexibility to expend funds in their divisions rather than making decisions centrally.

Finding 9. The process for evaluating and establishing the goals and objectives of the College is shared widely.

Throughout the past ten years, the biennial process of establishing goals began most often during the summer retreat of the Leadership Council. Other members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee were also invited to the retreat to increase representation in the planning process. At the end of each biennial period, the Goals and Planning Committee of the Faculty Senate analyzes the successful execution of the Goals and Objectives and presents a report to the Faculty Senate and the Administration. This is one of the key documents used at the planning retreat each summer to begin deliberation and identification of goals for the next biennium.

Finding 10. The Faculty Senate approved Guidelines and Procedures for School-wide Faculty Input for Review of Academic Deans *in October 2011.*

This codifies processes that have been used to provide faculty input to the dean for self-improvement in the third year and to inform the Provost's evaluation of the dean on the fifth year.

Finding 11. We have healthy and robust systems of self-reflection.

Over the past decade the College Community completed Visioning (1999) and Visioning Re-focused (2004-2005), and is engaged in biennial cycles of goals development and assessment. Each process has been inclusive, engaging faculty, students, and staff. During each cycle there is a significant amount of energy and commitment invested to provide support to our mission to serve our students.

Finding 12. We have little control over our income and have been forced to adjust quickly to declining state support. As a result, we have postponed some goals embraced by the campus community.

For instance, the 2010-2011 Academic Affairs goals lists numerous goals that had to be deferred due to the financial situation, including increase resources to departments to foster collaboration, enhance professional development, reinstate sabbatical funding, examine workload in administrative and academic areas and address shortcomings, fund start up packages related to research, increase LTEC staffing and funding, add to salary pool as resources allow, increase average starting salary for new faculty, reduce teaching workload incrementally, provide incentives for professional development, provide appropriate levels of staffing in CTS, and increase resources to enhance technology. In Student Affairs, the goal to increase funds for student activities to improve the experience outside of class has not only been deferred, but those funds have actually been reduced. Other divisions of the college would most certainly have their own lists of deferred items. Some of these things we have addressed to some small extent, but none to the level that we would have had the financial picture of the college remained stable or improve modestly as seemed likely in 2008.

Finding 13. It is the responsibility of the President to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals and s/he is responsible for administration of the institution.

Finding 14. President John F. Schwaller possesses a combination of academic credentials, background, professional training, and other qualities appropriate to an institution of higher education and the institution's mission.

Chapter Seven
Institutional Assessment

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment
The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

The College's assessment efforts have advanced tremendously since its last accreditation visit. It established a specific unit to oversee assessment activities in the mid-1990s with the hiring of a Director for Academic Assessment in the Office of Institutional Research within the division of Academic Affairs. Currently, responsibility for assessment at the institutional level is in the Division of Institutional Effectiveness and Enrollment Management, reflecting both the increased prominence and scope of assessment activities. The Vice President of the division served the College previously as the Director of Assessment and so brings that expertise and experience to the leadership of the entire division. The assessment arm of the division now has two full-time staff members, a Director of Academic Assessment and a Coordinator of Institutional Research and Assessment.

Finding 1. SUNY Potsdam has documented, organized, and sustained institutional assessment processes to evaluate and improve most programs and services. These processes collect a large amount of data from a wide variety of sources and use these for an equally broad assortment of decision making, planning, and resource allocation. These processes could be improved with the development of a comprehensive, systematic and well-communicated institutional assessment plan.

Examples of routine assessment include periodic internal control reviews in Business Affairs, annual audits of the Foundation Board, and the Annual Evaluation of Performance Programs for professional staff and senior administrators. All academic programs, including the General Education program, are on a regular, periodic review cycle. Departments assess student learning outcomes annually and file program assessment reports. The College annually implements the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Student Health Services periodically administers the American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment Survey. A variety of program specific accreditation groups, including the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE), and the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC), review relevant programs against national standards.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness makes a great deal of assessment data available on its website. Data on the productivity of academic departments, including credit hours generated, majors in programs, faculty FTE, and degrees awarded are presented for each semester for the most recent five years. For each major, data including high school GPA, rank, and average test score, is provided by age, gender, and ethnicity. A daily statistical

report tracks enrollment up to the census date for each academic term. The "Student Fact Book" provides fall term enrollment data for undergraduate and graduate students, academic programs, degrees granted, and retention/graduation rates. The "Common Data Set" that Potsdam uses to report on itself to a variety of agencies, institutions, and media, is also available. Similarly, statistics on Potsdam's workforce are available, as are data from surveys of Potsdam graduates about their employment. An enormous amount of information is collected and presented in easily accessible formats.

Finding 2. Nationally it would seem that there are few models of institution-wide assessment and hence there is a good deal of confusion within the SUNY Potsdam community regarding the components of institutional assessment as distinct from assessment of student learning outcomes.

Finding 3. In spite of institutional assessment processes in place, data generation at SUNY Potsdam is often reactive, or generated specifically for planning or decisions as they arise. Administrative decision making often relies on a synthesis of assessment data some of which may have been gathered specifically for this purpose. This makes it difficult for stakeholders to know if there is, or could be, other data which would be relevant to decision making.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness engages in a significant number of ad hoc data gathering exercises each year. These typically arise out of a perception that there is a specific problem of some sort to be solved, or a specific question to be answered. For example, it recently surveyed faculty and students about their perceptions of the Winterim term. It conducted one survey on student tobacco use and another on students' level of physical activity. It surveyed students about their satisfaction with the library, with campus food service, with distance learning, and with academic advising. All these things are good and useful in themselves. But they offer one-time snapshots and generally cannot provide reliable longitudinal data. The information generated doubtless informs decision making, but how it does so is not always clear to the broad campus community. To the extent that some of these areas are also addressed in NSSE annually and SUNY Student Opinion Survey every three years, such one-time efforts can be seen as appropriate in-depth explorations in areas about which there are related longitudinal data. In order to better identify student health factors affecting academic performance, and to ultimately improve the health and welfare of our students, Student Health Services will again administer the American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment Survey during spring semester 2012.

Finding 4. University financial data, particularly resource allocation data, are limited to communication of outcomes. Key stakeholders, such as the Faculty Senate Goals and Planning Committee and the Faculty Senate Business Affairs Committee, express their need to know more about the process of allocation or how these amounts are determined.

As noted in the findings regarding institutional resources and their allocation, the Resource Transparency Website reveals, at best, the allocation of Other Than Personal Service (OTPS, NYS jargon for operating expense) funds to each area of the College, but does not provide transparent rationale for the allocation of these funds or even for actual expenditures. The President provides a financial report at full faculty meetings at least twice per year and often

provides updates in his regular President's notes, which are distributed via e-mail and posted on his web page. The Chief Financial Officer presents such reports, as well, at the spring full faculty meeting and when updates are requested or new developments occur.

Finding 5. While each Unit has a good sense of its own assessment practices and the degree of rigor in which they are conducted, there appears to be a limited culture of communicating these processes and results to other units. Communication is often restricted to those in a supervisory capacity, who are responsible for personnel decisions and resource allocation within the particular unit. As a result, it is difficult for stakeholders to determine the extent to which the assessment loop is being closed.

Although assessment activities are pervasive across campus, the results of those activities are not shared broadly. This is generally true even of the areas in which assessment is most routine: departmental program assessment, academic program reviews, annual assessments of student learning outcomes, and library internal reviews.

Finding 6. Over the last five years, the administrative and corresponding financial support for institutional assessment at SUNY Potsdam has expanded both to improve institutional effectiveness and to increase professional development opportunities.

The College has made considerable progress in creating an institutional infrastructure that supports assessment. In 2007, it elevated the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to the status of one of the college's six divisions and combined it with Enrollment Management. The chief assessment officer, the Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Enrollment Management sits on the President's Cabinet, signaling the College's commitment to make assessment driven decisions the norm. Institutional Effectiveness also appointed a full-time Director of Academic Assessment in 2007. In 2010, it appointed a full-time Coordinator of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. It has sponsored, or co-sponsored, workshops for faculty and administrators that focus on integrating academic and institutional assessment. It has also established regular cycles for technology renewal.

Chapter Eight
Student Admissions, Retention, and Support Services

Standard 8: Admissions and Retention
> The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the student's educational goals.

The Admissions Office has responsibility for all processes related to recruitment and admission of undergraduates, including transfer admissions. The Admissions Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, is an advisory group to the Admissions staff in matters of policy. The Committee also participates in decision making regarding all "special admissions" – considering those students who do not meet all the criteria for regular admissions, but have potential for success at the College and may fit into a special program.

Graduate departments establish admissions standards and admit students into their programs. The logistics of graduate admissions are handled by the Graduate Studies Office. The Graduate Affairs Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, is an advisory group to the Graduate Affairs Office staff.

The Student Success Center was established in 2001 initially to integrate academic services for students and plays a key role in retention. The Center now has a comprehensive role in providing a variety of opportunities for all students, with special attention to those at risk.

At different times, the College has charged task forces to address specific retention issues and make recommendations to the administration within the scope of the charges.

A web-based recruitment strategy was recently developed and implemented. It includes an enhanced website, a virtual tour, and admissions chats, blogs, etc. This media refocusing was in direct response to prospective students' internet-based fact-finding methods and enhances our ability to assist students in finding and choosing a good "fit" in their college selection process.

Finding 1. The innovative materials and varied means of electronic access to SUNY Potsdam admissions information provide prospective students with the necessary resources to make an informed college choice that fits their needs.

All evidence indicates that the Admissions Office has been successful in targeting Potsdam's message to the appropriate audience. Results of recent surveys indicated that 85% of current freshmen and 82% of seniors felt they had made a good choice in attending Potsdam and would make the same college choice if they had to do it again.

Finding 2. As a direct result of the College's goal to admit qualified applicants who will be academically successful, Potsdam's Test Optional Policy was developed and approved for Fall 2010 implementation. This policy has met with enthusiastic support from guidance counselors, parents and prospective students.

By every measure available thus far, the test optional policy has proven successful. Applications and enrollments are up. A comparison of Fall 2010 to Fall 2009 freshmen enrollment profiles shows an 11.1% increase in applications and an 11.5% increase in enrollment. The high school grade point average is up, albeit slightly (0.1%), from 88.19 to 88.29. According to the reports of Potsdam's team of admissions counselors, high school guidance counselors have been very receptive, even enthusiastic, about the test optional policy. Parents and prospective students similarly expressed enthusiasm about the policy during Fall 2010 open house programs. A thorough analysis of student outcomes as a result of the test optional policy is being planned. The initial data, meanwhile, looks good. Fall to spring semester retention rates for the Fall 2010 freshman cohort improved over the Fall 2009 cohort, from 90.5 percent to 91.0 percent. Long-term approval of the test optional admissions policy from SUNY Administration will be determined based on these and future reported numbers.

Finding 3. Resources for staffing in the Undergraduate Admissions Office (current support staff, full-time counselors and part-time recruitment "road runners") are adequate for daily operations. Recent state-wide budgetary problems and erosion of available OTPS funding continue to present challenges.

Recruiting appropriate students has significant costs. Visiting high schools and colleges is an important component in Potsdam's individualized recruitment plan. Staff members from the Office of Admissions currently attend all appropriate high school and college fairs in New York and contiguous states. Similarly, open house programs at Potsdam, sponsored by the Admissions Office, offer critical opportunities for prospective students to visit the campus. While these are costly, they are highly effective in recruiting students. The College has a higher enrollment conversion rate for prospective students who have visited than for prospective students who have not. The Admissions Office is constantly exploring ways to reduce costs. Increased recruitment through the Internet, thereby reducing the high cost of mailing, is one example. Faculty members are particularly willing to assist the Admissions Office in its efforts to recruit top-quality students. They regularly volunteer to staff Open Houses, and often assist in other ways as needed.

Finding 4. Undergraduate enrollment goals are being met or exceeded while maintaining the profile recommended by the Faculty Senate Admissions Committee. The Admissions office is proactive in developing short- and long-term recruitment strategies in anticipation of changing demographics.

Undergraduate enrollment on campus has increased steadily for the past few years because of careful strategic review and adjustment of recruitment activities and retention efforts. Total undergraduate enrollment goals have been met or exceeded since fall 2004. In its last external review, conducted in 2005, the Admissions Office met or exceeded all expectations for recruitment strategies and admission. Profile goals are regularly met or exceeded. The GPA goal for the fall 2010 first year students was 87.42. The average GPA of the enrolled first year class was the 88.29. The average of SAT scores or enrolled first year students was 1177, whereas the goal was 1074. For transfer students, the goal, 3.0 GPA, exactly matched that of enrolled transfer students.

The continued success of the Office of Admissions to meet enrollment targets is dependent upon sustaining sufficient funding. Budget reductions would negatively affect Admission's ability to meet Campus enrollment expectations.

Finding 5. In 2004, new teacher certification requirements became effective in New York State. Consequently, graduate numbers spiked to a record high, as the many part-time graduate students in certification programs accelerated their degree progress to comply with the old requirements, rather than having to take additional courses to meet the new ones. Since 2004, overall graduate enrollment numbers have been declining and are of concern. The decline has been exacerbated in recent years by the reduced job market for teachers as the state's support for K-12 public education has forced elimination of teaching positions. A great many teachers have been laid off in New York State, particularly in the upstate region that is the College's primary market. The investment in graduate education in this area is no longer as attractive as it was even five years ago.

Overall graduate enrollment numbers have been declining over the past decade. Between fall semester 2006 and fall semester 2010, the number of graduate students declined by 16 percent, from 642 to 541. The decline in graduate credit hour production was even greater, 27 percent, from 8108 to 5903.

Graduate enrollment numbers for the three M.S.Ed. programs taught in Watertown, NY have remained consistent since 2007, while the M.S.T. program has increased from 31 to 43 enrolled students over the same time frame.

Finding 6. The Graduate Admissions Office has made significant technological advances in its internal data processes over the past five years.

The office has made the conversion from an obsolete computerized process to Banner (the official institutional database for student records). Both information inquiry and access to the graduate application to print out are available online. An application that can be completed online, including the ability to pay fees, will be going live very shortly. Initiatives are being pursued to complete the entire graduate application process on-line, as well. The Graduate Office continues to explore new markets.

Finding 7. Policies and procedures regarding transfer credit are clearly articulated and available on the College's website and catalog. The two-year college transfer course equivalency and articulation agreement/advising websites are visible confirmations that Potsdam is "transfer friendly." The website is also valuable to Potsdam advisors and current students. Supporting technology for the transfer course equivalency is minimal.

The Admissions Office has made significant contributions to the goal articulated in the Power of SUNY to create a "seamless educational pipeline." In 2004, the College received the State University of New York Council for University Advancement (SUNYCUAD) Award of Excellence – Best of Category for its interactive, dynamically searchable transfer course equivalency website. The site identifies Potsdam course equivalents, including General Education designation as appropriate, for course offered at each of New York State's SUNY and CUNY community colleges, the six SUNY Colleges of Technology, the Community College of Vermont, and St Lawrence College in Ontario. The site is widely

used, receiving 6,818 hits in 2009 and 7,239 in 2010. Considerable evidence indicates that Potsdam students and their faculty advisors regularly consult the course equivalency website. Transfer articulation agreements and major advising sheets for students at two-year colleges are also readily available on Potsdam's transfer website.

Transfer issues figure significantly in discussions among faculty, particularly committees charged with oversight of academic policy. The General Education committee and the Academic Programs and Curriculum Committee (APCC) routinely consider the extent to which proposed changes will facilitate the ability of students to move between colleges in general, and particularly within SUNY. Some departments have gone further to make the students' path through SUNY as seamless as possible. The Computer Science department, for instance, developed about 20 articulation agreements with SUNY community colleges that clearly show students how, after completing their Associate's degree, they can complete the B.A. in Computer Sciences in two more years of study. They also obtained a significant grant from NSF to support their transfer initiative. As a result of these efforts, Computer Science enrollment increased by 25 percent fall 2010. Two scholarship programs specifically target Computer Science transfer students from community colleges.

As is the case across the campus, the resources necessary to sustain these efforts are thin. The FileMaker data management software and file server which stores the transfer course equivalency data are antiquated and in need of upgrading. CTS is in the process of phasing out the server that houses the database.

Finding 8. Scholarship information, grants and financial information for prospective and new students are clearly articulated and available on SUNY Potsdam's website, distributed at high school and college recruitment visits, highlighted during campus visits and mailed to qualified applicants upon admission acceptance.

Renewable scholarships were awarded to all qualified freshman and transfer applicants based on the scholarship matrix. In fall 2010, 205 first year students (nearly a quarter of the class of 909 students) received a total of $445,400 in renewable scholarship money. Thirty-three transfer students received $54,500 in renewable scholarships. Additional funds for scholarships will be extremely helpful in attracting more students for whom Potsdam is a good match. The Comprehensive Campaign has made student scholarships a high priority and has raised considerable contributions towards them thus far, some creating large endowments for scholarships for specific groups of students. In addition to many scholarships that cover tuition and fees, two endowments have been funded that provide assistance to students to study abroad.

Anecdotal evidence accumulated by Admissions and Financial Aid staff suggests that the College's SUNY peers offer incoming freshmen and transfer students of the same or similar profile more scholarship money. While, in most years, Potsdam awards scholarship to between 25 and 30 percent of it incoming first year students, SUNY Plattsburgh, for example, awards scholarship money to 45% of its entering first year students. Potsdam annually expends about $1 million, on scholarships. Plattsburgh spends $3 million. That being said, we have exceeded our recruitment target in the last five years and maintained or improved the quality of students.

Finding 9. Scholarship, grant and other financial information for returning students are clearly articulated in the Catalog, on the College website, and in various general and academic department publications. Each school has its own scholarships and systems for advertising, soliciting nominations, vetting, and making awards. The Provost passes grants applicable to particular majors along to department chairs. Faculty members are aware of and promote their respective departmental scholarships. However, several respondents reported that there is little interdepartmental understanding of and communication about what scholarships are available to students.

Finding 10. Although the Office of Financial Aid is maintained at a minimally acceptable level, allocated resources are not sufficient to fully support incoming student needs. Compared to institutions of similar size, the office may be understaffed.

In May 2006, an external review completed by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) recommended the addition of three staff positions. Since that review, the only staffing increases have been to increase the half-time scholarship coordinator position to a full-time line and to upgrade a three-quarter time position to full-time. The Financial Aid Office is challenged to keep up with its customer demands and customer service. Staff members would like to be in a better position to complement recruitment efforts by having the resources to upgrade their communication plan and to distribute financial aid packages in a timely manner. Optimal response times are 24 hours for phone and e-mail and 48 hours for mail. Currently, while phone calls are ordinarily returned within 24 hours, e-mail responses are within 48 hours, and mail responses within two weeks; during peak processing months e-mail responses can take as long as three weeks and mail as long as eight weeks. Potsdam's financial aid packages have typically been sent several weeks later than our competitor's packages, a critical concern when prospective students are deciding between colleges.

Additional, unanticipated tasks increase response time. For example, a late and unexpected tuition increase approved during the summer of 2011 delayed the billing process and required that all financial aid packages be reviewed and adjusted. TAP awards also required a manual review. Even-numbered calendar years are random verification years which increase the volume of work. Though anticipated, the regulatory changes for the next review, which will require additional data collection, have not been released yet. The process will likely further increase the backlog.

Finding 11. Resource allocation is not sufficient to the Financial Aid area to support returning students' success. In addition to addressing the staffing concerns outlined in Finding 9, consideration of alternative funding models and additional funds for scholarships will be important to best support recruitment and retention. Those interviewed proposed such measures as augmenting the Federal Work Study program through internal funds, creating more graduate assistantships and paid internships, instituting "retention" scholarships for academically-successful returning students, working toward decreasing reliance on use of state funds for scholarships by increasing management via Foundation, and consideration of merit-based scholarships using earnings from the ongoing Comprehensive Campaign.

The need for funds to help students and their families cover the ever-rising cost of education is omnipresent and growing. A weak economy and tuition increases, whether predictable or not, exacerbate that need. The cost of attendance at SUNY Potsdam continues to rise, from $18,540 in 2009 to $19,020 in 2010 to $19, 260 in 2011. Meanwhile some grant funds, including Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG) and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) grants have ceased to exist, while others, such as Pell Grants, fluctuate unexpectedly. Administrators, professional staff, and the 2006 NASFAA external review perceive that the Financial Aid Office needs additional staffing and office space to keep pace with changing regulatory requirements, new aid programs and a growing student population.

Finding 12. Retention efforts have been developed, implemented, shared, and assessed but could be intentionally coordinated between divisions and better communicated campus-wide.

Retention of undergraduate students has increased through deliberate programs involving many departments. In the past five years first- to second-year retention has increased from percentages in the low 70s to percentages in the high 70s. Potsdam's retention rate to second year for the 2009 freshman cohort was 78%, a figure that compares favorably with that of SUNY peers. The College continues to aspire to a goal of 80%, as this leading indicator will in turn positively impact a trailing measure, i.e., graduation rate.

Retention is assessed by continued monitoring of numbers and is conducted for both internal purposes and for the U.S. Department of Education. Review is mostly cohort-based (term or semester of entry and type, such as first-time, full-time freshman) with some periodic assessment for specific groups. Assessment by major is done every semester. Retention efforts and measures are presented on the Institutional Effectiveness website. Additionally, presentations generally featuring summary data on specialized issues are offered to various members of the campus community as appropriate. Retention goals were outlined in the College's MOU with SUNY Central Administration. With leadership turnover in System Administration, the MOU is no longer in effect, but it still provides general direction to the campus. Although some information about retention is available, retention goals, strategies, and accomplishments should be more effectively communicated to the campus community.

Campus-wide retention efforts are data driven. They are based on findings grounded in evidence derived from campus research. For example, both the adoption of BearDen and the Test Optional Admissions Policy are outcomes of findings.

The College lacks a seamless, coordinated retention plan that can be effectively implemented across divisions. While the Division of Enrollment Management and Institutional Effectiveness is chiefly responsible for designing, initiating, and coordinating retention efforts, it has no sure means of securing the investment and cooperation of the many personnel outside that division – those in Academic Affairs or Student Affairs, for example – on whom successful retention efforts also depend. In recent years, the Provost, Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, and Dean of Students have met to coordinate efforts

and discuss new initiatives but these are largely implemented within divisions and are not well articulated to the campus as a whole.

The Student Success Center augments retention efforts and serves all students, including identified populations of students that it serves. It offers tutoring and accommodative services to students with disabilities and those who do not meet the normal criteria for admission, but provide other evidence of their potential or academic success. Although it regularly measures and reports the success of its programs – retention rates are a key metric – the data of these successful initiatives are not consistently communicated campus wide.

Other special academic programs also use retention measures to assess their effectiveness. For example, the Learning Communities program conducted a review of retention of students who enrolled in First Year Interest Groups (FIGs) in the fall of 2010. FIGs are clusters of courses in which a cohort of first year students are enrolled. Students who enrolled in FIGs returned for their sophomore at a higher rate than those who were not in FIGs in all three schools (in Arts and Sciences, 80% vs. 67%; in Crane 100% vs. 88%; in Education and Professional Studies, 82% vs. 76%.) The pattern was similar when data were analyzed by gender, ethnicity, and whether students had declared a major.

Within academic departments, retention efforts can be sporadic and are not always known or acknowledged by department members.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.

The College has a strong tradition of collaboration between the academic and student affairs areas in support of student learning and success. The governance and leadership structures include all faculty – both Academic and Non-teaching Professionals – in a single organization (Faculty Senate) facilitating this collaboration.

Finding 1. Professionals who provide student support services and services supporting the admission and retention of students have appropriate qualifications.

At minimum, each non-teaching professional staff member hired in student support services holds a bachelor's degree in an appropriate/relevant field. Search committee procedures are followed according to College guidelines. Staff members participate in extensive internal training as well as attending professional conferences and staff development. State, federal, and SUNY standards are met by all departments.

Finding 2. The primary goal of the work within the Student Success Center to develop and support students' academic skills to promote their success and retention.

The Student Success Center offers services to at-risk populations of students through a variety of programs. These include Bridges (a program for students who do not meet normal admissions requirements but evidence promise of academic success), the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Accommodative Services, Student Support Services, and the

Academic Support Office. Additional student populations, such as ESL students, could surely benefit from targeted services. Programs that have been successful in improving the success and retention rates of first year students might be extended to sophomores.

Numerous services are provided through programs offered by the Student Success Center, including group and one-to-one peer and tutoring, group and individual study skills programs, metaskills classes, academic accommodations, and academic mentoring. The effectiveness of these programs and the services they provide are evident in the improved retention rates and GPAs of the students who use them. When asked if the College "provided the support they needed to help them succeed academically" on the 2010 NSSE, 81 percent of seniors responded by selecting "Quite a bit" or "Very much."

Finding 3. College Counseling and Student Health Services are able to minimally meet the needs of students.

Approximately 10 percent of the student population uses counseling services, creating a counselor student ratio of 1:112. While this is within national norms, best practices suggest that additional staffing would make it possible to increase the frequency a student could be offered counseling, which, in turn, might have a positive impact on retention. Master's level interns are utilized at the Counseling Center in order to serve as many students as possible. Due to the lack of psychiatric care in St. Lawrence County, the College recently hired a psychiatrist. Feedback from parents indicates that having a psychiatrist in the Counseling Center has expanded the breadth of counseling services available to students in ways that make them more comfortable sending their sons and daughters to Potsdam. The Student Affairs staff believes that at least twenty-four students have been retained at SUNY Potsdam due to the Psychiatric services implemented this past year.

Student Health Services had 6785 patient visits during the 2009-2010 academic year. This falls within national norms. Basic appointments are 15 minutes long and can be expanded up to 90 minutes as determined by need. Recently purchased electronic medical record software will increase office efficiency and allow students to make appointments and communicate with their medical provider over a confidential electronic portal.

Finding 4. The Student Leader Conference Program and Emerging Leaders Program have both won SUNY awards for outstanding student affairs programs and have become an integral part of the College's efforts to support students in leadership training and opportunities.

The Student Leadership Program sponsors a variety of student development programs, including two annual Student Leader Conferences for students in leadership positions; the Potsdam Leadership and Character Education Series (PLACES); and the Emerging Leaders program (which is co-coordinated by Campus Life and The Fund for Potsdam). These programs are designed to "enhance the skills of current leaders as well as motivate more students to become involved in leadership activities." The number of participants involved in leadership programs has grown steadily since their inception. For example, participation in a leadership conference held prior to the start of the fall semester has grown from 59 students in Fall 2004 to 125 students in Fall 2011.

Core components of the leadership program are the integration of alumni to foster the connection between current student leaders and alumni who were leaders as students themselves as well as to help students see how their student leadership experiences can be important to their future in both their personal and professional lives. The program fosters the exploration and development of understanding of oneself as a leader in order to bring out the best in self and others. Dr. Millard Harmon, Founder and President of Harmon Associates, a non-profit independent think tank committed to increasing understanding in domestic and international arenas, has established a significant endowment for the fall Leadership Conference program. Other funding for both the fall and spring program comes from the Pratt Student Fund.

The award-winning Emerging Leaders Program is an innovative collaboration between Student Affairs and Advancement. It identifies "committed and motivated students who seek to develop their leadership skills and give back to SUNY Potsdam," thereby promoting "student philanthropy and volunteerism." Student interest in the Emerging Leaders Program has been strong. At its inception, it had planned to admit twenty students per year. During its first three years, it has served more than one hundred students. In the first year, thirty-nine students were recruited. Sixteen of them were retained with the program through spring 2011. In the second year, thirty-three students were recruited and 30 students have been retained. The third year group, 2010-2011, included 46 students and the 2011-2012 includes a total of 68 active members.

Finding 5. Career Planning effectively supports, reinforces and extends the college mission beyond the classroom, and offers career development services to the entire campus and alumni based on individual need.

Career Planning's mission is to provide "an array of career development programs, services and resources to enable students and alumni to take full command of their lifetime career development so that they can be productive, contributing members of society, integrating their academic preparation with their interest, their competencies, their experiences and their values." Career Planning services are an integral part of student learning in and beyond the classroom. The professional staff offers an average of sixty-two classroom and thirty-four non-classroom presentations per year. Many faculty members integrate career planning assignments into their courses.

The Career Planning Office averages 1,018 individual appointments per year. It has developed and refined appropriate assessment instruments to measure the success or the various programs it offers. These include: *A Major Affair*, which introduces students to the range of majors at Potsdam and the careers to which they lead, a *Graduate Fair* for students considering graduate programs, a *Job Expo*, and a variety of services, such as career counseling, workshops, and class presentations. Outcomes based assessment results are used to improve programs and services.

Finding 6. Potsdam's current academic advising model has developed organically over time and has assisted in the retention of current and prospective students but may require enhancements.

Generally, Potsdam undergraduates who have declared majors are advised by a faculty member in the department of their major. Virtually every teaching faculty member serves as an academic advisor, and many non-teaching faculty members do so as well. Each of the three schools has a designated advising coordinator that works out of the Office of the Dean. Although their roles vary in the different schools, they all assist students who are not yet settled into majors, students who are seeking to change majors or advisors, and to coordinate advising within their school. In Crane, first year students are advised by special Freshman Advisors and are then reassigned in their sophomore year to a permanent advisor for the duration of their academic career. In the other schools, students are assigned an advisor in the department of their major when they declare that major. The Student Success Center maintains an Office of Academic Advising that coordinates advising across the campus, offers ancillary advising services to students, and conducts advising workshops for faculty and staff. All undergraduates are required to visit an advisor prior to registering for classes each semester. Advisors are encouraged to confer with their advisees about broader academic goals and career plans, as well as to verify that required courses are completed in a rational sequence.

Recommendations from a task force on academic advising have resulted in some changes in the past five years. A Coordinator of Advising has been appointed in the School of Arts and Sciences and advising has been given a prominent place on the Faculty Information Form that teaching faculty file each year. Nevertheless, there is a perception that advising may still be undervalued by faculty and administrators, despite its importance to retention. Although the College recognizes that individual faculty members differ in their skill and inclination to advise students, it has made a firm commitment to have the student/faculty relationship be central to the academic process. Students, however, often seek out advising with faculty or professional staff with whom they are most comfortable. Those faculty members perceived as good advisors sometimes have disproportionate advising loads. Similarly, some students choose to rely heavily on the Student Success Center staff or the advising coordinators in the schools rather than their designated faculty advisor. Some faculty advisors, and apparently some departments, are content with this practice. Undeclared students are assigned an advisor with whom they are familiar in order to promote the student's connection with their advisor and therefore the College, aiding retention. Not all faculty members want to advise undeclared students, and not all departments want their faculty to add undeclared advising to their workload. Assisting advisors in remaining current in their knowledge of requirements is an ongoing challenge. Workshops on advising are held regularly, but faculty participation is relatively slight.

Among the significant recent improvements in the advising process has been the implementation of BearDeN, a degree navigator program. BearDeN gives students and their academic advisors an immediate analysis of their progress toward their degree. It tracks requirements completed and lists ones yet to be completed for the General Education program, each of the various major programs of study, and additional College degree requirements. For students and faculty alike, it has significantly simplified the advising process and substantially reduced the potential for error. Because advisors no longer have to spend a large portion of advising time determining what requirements still need to be

fulfilled, they can spend more time speaking with students about matters such as how to improve their academic performance or longer-term career goals.

Despite some imperfections in the process, students rate the quality of academic advising at Potsdam very positively. On the 2010 NSSE, 75 percent of seniors respondents and 84 percent of first year respondents replied "Good" or "Excellent" to the question: "Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?" Only 12% of students overall expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of advising they received. In addition, advising surveys of students have consistently asked for additional trained advisors.

Finding 7. On-campus living provides support for students, aiding in admissions and retention efforts.

Over half of Potsdam's undergraduate students, 2200 in all, live on campus, where they have convenient access to academic buildings, libraries, athletic facilities, support staff and services. The College offers a wide variety of residential options, including townhouses, apartments, and double rooms. It also offers housing options that center on a variety of diverse themes, including the arts, the honors program, and international students. Other options focus on substance-free living and intensive study. Campus housing units feature state-of-the-art technology, including 24-hour keyless entry.

Most notably, Potsdam developed and offers a First Year Experience (FYE) program that includes themed housing and has attracted national recognition. Potsdam was the first comprehensive college in the SUNY system to offer an integrated, collaborative first year program including orientation, academics and residential living components. Groups of students live together in the First Year Experience (FYE), take blocks of related course together in Freshman Interest Groups (FIGs) that are generally themed around a major, a career objective, or an interest, as well as enroll in a First Year Success Seminar (FYSS) that works on building skills and habits to ensure student success.

Residence Life employs live-in resident assistants, academic peer mentors, and wellness advocate peer counselors who support students' psychological, judicial and administrative needs. The staff prepares and presents informational, educational and developmental programs to on-campus students in residence halls throughout the academic year.

Most undergraduate students who do not live in campus housing live within a one mile radius of campus, participate in campus life, and contribute to the residential character of the college.

Students' satisfaction of residence halls and residential services are within norms compared to other SUNY comprehensive colleges. On the 2010 NSSE, the mean score for Supportive Campus Environment for both seniors and first year students was significantly higher than those of Potsdam's Mid-East Public peers. First year students also rated their campus experience significantly higher than comparable Carnegie Masters institutions and NSSE respondents nationwide.

*Finding 8. The Athletic department and varsity sports programs are regulated in the same
manner as other departments on campus, are evaluated in consultation with the College's
administering body (Intercollegiate Athletic Board [IAB]), and adhere to all policies and
procedures as defined by the College.*

Compared to other SUNY comprehensive colleges, the College's Athletics Department has
an uncommon reporting structure in that it reports to the Vice President of Business Affairs.
Departmental budget development, hiring and employee evaluation procedures, purchasing
procedures, academic policies, procedures, and standards all follow College guidelines and
restraints. The Athletic program is regulated by the membership organizations to which it
belongs. As required by the NCAA, the campus IAB oversees operations of the Athletic
Department. The campus IAB meets monthly to oversee budget development and
departmental policies as well as to manage arising issues. There was a perception among
some members of the Athletic Department that the College-sponsored Activity policy is not
well understood or consistently implemented by faculty.

*Finding 9. Athletics, including intramural programming and facilities, play a meaningful
role in admissions and retention.*

For intercollegiate sports, the College offers basketball, cross country, golf, hockey, lacrosse,
soccer, and swimming for men and basketball, cross country, equestrian, hockey, lacrosse,
soccer, softball, swimming, and volleyball for women. Some of the sports the college offers,
such as ice hockey and lacrosse, are strategically matched to the region in order to draw in
more students. Approximately 270 students are members of an intercollegiate sports team.
In the past (1998-2004), the graduation rate of student athletes (68 percent) significantly
exceeded the graduation rate of non-athletes (60 percent.) In the 2010, 4 percent of senior
NSSE respondents and 12 percent of first year student respondents indicated that they were a
"student-athlete on a team sponsored by the institution's athletic department."

Seventeen intramural sports and other activities are offered each year in order to promote
commitment, team work, and responsibility toward others, as well as to develop friendships
and establish a sense of community on campus. These include basketball, broomball, dodge
ball, flag football, indoor soccer, racquetball, co-ed soccer, co-ed softball, and volleyball.
The Athletic Department also sponsors a canoe swap and 5K run. Many of its facilities,
including the fitness center, climbing wall, ice rink, and pool, are available to the both
students and the Potsdam community.

Consistent with its status as a NCAA Division III athletic program, no scholarships or
financial aid may be awarded with any consideration of athletic ability. The College was
sanctioned by the NCAA in 2011 for an inadvertent violation of rules regarding Financial
Aid Packaging. It was found that the College's International Initiative Grant
disproportionately benefited student athletes, which occurred because the proportion of
athletes who are international students is higher than the proportion of nonathlete students
who are international. (Canadians find it attractive to attend SUNY Potsdam to play certain
sports.) The NCAA noted that the "violations were unintentional." The case is being
resolved through the summary disposition process with the full cooperation of the College
and has resulted in a complete restructuring of the International Initiative Grant Program.

Finding 10. Resources are allocated to Athletics in a manner sufficient to support student academic and athletic success.

The operational, or non-salary, portion of the Athletic Department's budget is funded from the across-the-board athletic fee charged to current students. As required by NCAA, resources are managed in a manner that is consistent with operations of other campus departments. In addition to the resources that academic support services provide to the general campus student population, since 1994 (per NCAA regulations) each intercollegiate sport program has had faculty and/or staff volunteer Academic Coordinators who provide academic support. The Academic Coordinators meet with the athletic staff once per semester to discuss issues and seek solutions to sustain and provide consistent academic support. This group is a valuable resource at no cost to the College.

Finding 11. Policies and procedures that ensure student privacy, confidentiality and right to due process are utilized and are outlined in various campus resources.

College policy prohibits any staff member from giving out confidential information without the express written consent of the individual student. FERPA rights are outlined in the *College Catalog* and on the Registrar's Office webpage as are the College policies regarding FERPA. Banner, the College's student data management system, has recently converted to an entirely "social security number free" format.

Student rights and responsibilities are clearly spelled out in the student handbook. The judicial process is also described in considerable detail. The appeal process is clearly outlined and available for students. Protocols to hear, respond to and record student grievances are outlined in the College Undergraduate Catalog and the College webpage. The Institutional Review Board protects human subjects in research projects and national standards are strictly regulated by appointed faculty and staff representatives.

Chapter Nine
Faculty

Standard 10: Faculty
The institution's instructional, research, and service programs, are devised,
monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.

The State University of New York, in its *Polices of the Board of Trustees*, and its collective
bargaining contracts, defines "faculty" as all those working in professional positions outside
the civil service system. Faculty members are further identified as "Academic" (including
both those who formally design and teach the curricula that leads to a degree and librarians)
and "Non-teaching Professionals" (including those who carry out functions in student
support, business affairs, advancement, and physical plant). "Academic" faculty members
carry rank, are eligible for tenure and promotion, and are evaluated for tenure and promotion
based on the traditional criteria of teaching, scholarship, and service. "Non-teaching
Professionals" do not carry rank. While eligible for tenure (called "continuing appointment")
they work under annual performance programs and annual reviews of those programs.

Faculty recruitment and retention is overseen by a complex mix of constituencies: the SUNY
Board of Trustees, the System and the College administration, the faculty of the College
(through a variety of personnel committees), the union (United University Professions), the
College's Human Resource Department including the Affirmative Action officer, among
others. College hiring policies and procedures administered by Human Resources provide
for uniformity and consistency in the recruitment process. Tenure and evaluation policies,
while prescribed at the System level, may be interpreted differently across schools and other
administrative units. For example, both Crane School of Music and the School of Education
and Professional Studies have school-wide personnel committees, while the School of Arts
and Sciences does not. Within Arts and Sciences, some departments have an elected or
appointed personnel committee; others have a department-wide one.

In addition, administrative units, including each of the three schools at Potsdam, have their
own operating policies, procedures and culture that have evolved over time and may
influence faculty perceptions of college-wide issues.

SUNY Potsdam faculty members are remarkably engaged and successful in their professions.
There is no comprehensive database of these activities, but perusal of the annual reports from
the three schools will show the many publications, professional presentations, recitals,
concerts, recordings, exhibitions, and other activities of faculty each year.

In academic year 2010-2011, School of Arts and Sciences faculty had more than 60 articles
or books published, over 120 presentations at professional meetings, and more than 70
publications or presentations of creative endeavors.

In keeping with the mission of the college, much of the scholarly activity of faculty also
engages students. A large number of faculty members and students took part in Title III
funded curriculum development and collaborative faculty/student conference presentations

between 2008 and 2011.   Title III grants have supported conference attendance for 36 faculty members (23 of these from Arts and Sciences) and 75 students (44 from Arts and Sciences) to present collaborative work. In addition, the Office of the Dean of Arts & Sciences supported student travel to conferences during the 2010-2011 academic year: 15 students presented at national meetings, 25 students attended (two of whom presented) professional meetings held in New York State, and six students planned and participated in the Wilderness Education Summer Experience, all with the oversight of faculty mentors.

In the School of Education and Professional Studies, faculty members teach, engage in scholarly activity and contribute to the school, college and community through service. Over the past year, faculty members in the School of Education and Professional Studies have presented at national and international professional conferences, authored books and published numerous journal articles. In addition, faculty members in our NCATE-accredited teacher education programs are active in supervising teacher candidates in the schools as well as providing professional development opportunities for local teachers. The School has formed a number of Professional Development Schools with local K-12 school districts. A number of collaborative research projects are underway that involve SUNY faculty and students working with closely with school teachers and students. Faculty members in Community Health and Business Administration supervise student internships in a wide variety of professional settings. Faculty members in Wilderness Education lead hiking, camping, and climbing trips, including an extended annual multi-week wilderness leadership trip in the Western United States.

The School of Education and Professional Studies continues to attract talented young faculty. A recent hire received the Presidential Distinguished Doctoral Dissertation Award from her university. The School also attracts very capable students. One of our prospective Mathematics teachers recently received the prestigious and highly selective Knowles Science Teaching Foundation Fellowship. The Dean's office supported 30 pre-service teachers in traveling to state professional meetings this past year. The Rebecca Sheard Literacy Center has secured a number of grants and private donations and offers a number of outreach programs that touch the lives of hundreds of local school children annually.

Crane School of Music faculty are active as performers, scholars, and leaders in many facets of the musical profession. Recent Crane faculty performances have occurred across the nation and in Europe, Asia, Canada, and Latin America. Crane music education, musicology, theory and performance faculty have recent book and article publications receiving national and international acclaim, and recordings by Crane faculty are distributed internationally to significant critical and press recognition. Crane musicians are frequently heard in major venues and with high-profile ensembles in the U.S., Canada, and in other countries, and they are presenters and panelists at major conferences.   In addition to activity off campus, Crane faculty members' frequent performances on campus enrich the college experience and community incredibly. In 2010-2011, faculty members performed in over 130 recitals and concerts, most of which involved several faculty.

Faculty members are also successful in obtaining grants to support their research. For example in 2009-2010, twelve faculty members received grants from numerous

governmental organizations and foundations, including the American Chemical Society, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Science Foundation, National Security Agency, North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council, Northern New York Audubon, NYS Aids Institute, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Research Corporation, St Lawrence River Research and Education Fund, and U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity.

The Potsdam Institute for Applied Research, which is directed by faculty members, received contracts to do assessment work from multiple sources, including the NYS Education Department, Office of the NYS State Superintendent of Education, Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of Oregon, Clarkson University, AIM Independent Living Center, Jefferson-Lewis BOCES, Morristown Central School District, Saint Lawrence Lewis BOCES, and Seaway Valley Prevention Council.

Finding 1. That the College is able to fill its positions with qualified faculty and that many of them choose to stay at SUNY Potsdam suggests that the College policies are reasonably effective; efforts to recruit and retain minority faculty remain an area for continued attention.

In the current academic year, 2011-2012, the College employs 363 teaching faculty members. This is up thirty positions (9 percent) from the previous year, but down fourteen positions (4 percent) from 2007-2008. Most members of the teaching faculty (233 of 363, or 64 percent), hold academic rank as professors, associate professors, assistant professors, or instructors. One-third of faculty holding academic rank are professors, one-third are associate professors, 27 percent are assistant professors, and 7 percent are instructors. Virtually all faculty members holding academic rank are full time. Four-fifths of faculty members with academic rank hold a Doctorate degree. Many others in the arts hold terminal degrees in their fields.

Demographically, men significantly outnumber women at a ratio of about 3:2 in ranked faculty positions. Men predominate at the higher ranks, women in the lower. The difference is sharpest among professors, where only one-third of the faculty members are women. At the associate level, 42 percent are women. Among assistant professors, women have a slight majority at 53 percent. Over two-thirds of instructors are women. In ethnicity the faculty mirrors the student body, nearly exactly: 88 percent identify themselves as non-Hispanic whites. (Both students and faculty are more diverse than North Country New York, which is 93 percent non-Hispanic white.)

The 130 members of the teaching faculty who serve in visiting positions, as lecturers, or as adjunct instructors, are in positions of "qualified academic rank." Slightly more than four-fifths of these faculty members are adjunct instructors. Only about one-fifth hold full-time positions. For most, the Masters degree is the highest earned, but 15 percent hold the Doctorate. Sixty-four percent of faculty members in positions of qualified rank are women, while 94 percent are non-Hispanic whites.

Considering the 363 members of the teaching faculty collectively, 71 percent, hold full-time appointments and 44 percent hold tenure. Ninety percent are non-Hispanic whites and half are women. The full-time teaching faculty is balanced evenly between those with more than ten years of service and those with fewer than ten years of service. The average length of service for teaching faculty, excluding adjuncts, is twelve years. Half were initially appointed prior to the beginning of fall semester, 2001. The average length of service for adjunct instructors is seven years. Half have five or more years of service.

Policies and procedures regarding the recruitment, appointment, reappointment, and conditions of employment of faculty are by SUNY Board of Trustees policies and the Collective Bargaining agreement between SUNY and the UUP. They are clearly outlined in the *Faculty Handbook* which is easily available at the Human Resources website.

SUNY Policies and the UUP contract are, of course, designed to outline policies and procedures for the wide range of institutions and faculties that comprise SUNY, leaving many details to be defined locally. At Potsdam, the policies and procedures defined by the Offices of the Provost, the Deans, as well as the various departments, shape conditions of faculty appointment and tenure. Additionally, the document *Guidelines for Academic Appointment and Promotion* defines expectations and procedures specific to Potsdam. It was developed by a joint Labor Management Committee and ratified by both UUP and the Administration in 2005.

Finding 2. There is considerable variation among the schools and between departments on precisely what kinds of research and creative activity are required for tenure as well as what constitutes teaching excellence and how it is measured.

Much of this variation would be expected, given the diverse disciplines represented at the College. A creative performance, a scientific publication, and a social scientific analysis of a local or regional problem for a non-governmental organization, for example, are not exactly comparable. But standards may vary depending on departmental expectations and policies, the practices of particular personnel committees, or the level of detail expected in a reappointment portfolio as established through precedent. The deans of each of the three schools seek to ensure consistency within their schools. The provost seeks to ensure consistency among the schools.

Finding 3. Once an Academic faculty member receives continuing appointment, much less evaluation takes place. This is of concern to some.

Evaluation of tenured faculty members occurs when they seek discretionary salary increases or apply for promotion. To be considered for an annual discretionary salary increase, faculty members must submit Academic Faculty Information Forms and student evaluations of their teaching. Promotion to professor, of course, calls for a full review. If a tenured faculty member chooses not to seek a discretionary raise or promotion then there is ordinarily no formal evaluation of that member's service to the college. Roughly two-thirds of the faculty members file the Academic Faculty Information Form annually. Most non-filers hold tenure.

Finding 4. There are a number of programs and initiatives available to faculty to help support their teaching, scholarship, and service, though there is disagreement about how effective these programs are – especially in difficult financial times. There is some disagreement, as well, as to how evenly the funds are distributed. It is difficult to measure the accuracy of these perceptions.

Faculty development funds are distributed through a number of College programs. Sources of funding for professional development include the SUNY/UUP Joint Labor-Management Individual Development Awards Program, various programs administered by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, the Learning and Teaching Excellence Center (LTEC), the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Offices of the Deans of the three schools, the NEH Faculty Development Program, and the U.S. Department of Education Title III grant for strengthening undergraduate research. Some of these funds support faculty attendance at conferences such as New York State School Music Association, where their work is arguably service to the College more than professional development. Others support student research, in which the sponsoring faculty member may or may not be a collaborator in ways that contribute to her professional development. This already confusing situation is further complicated by the fact that some programs, more than others, have access to funds provided by Foundation or IFR (fee supported) accounts. There are perceptions that professional development funding is viewed as an expendable resource; that more professional development funds are available/utilized for administrators than for faculty; and that there is a lack of faculty input in decision making with regard to these resource allocations. Again, the accuracy of these perceptions is difficult to assess. It is sometimes impossible to draw a line between professional development and institutional service. All parties agree that developing mechanisms for incorporating faculty input into decisions about resource allocation is a desired, but not yet realized, goal for which we strive.

Monies available for faculty development from some of the sources listed above, particularly those that are externally funded (NEH and Title III) and those that were secured through collective bargaining agreements (Individual Development Awards) have remained constant or increased over the past five years. Overall funding for faculty development, including programs funded by the College, by external agencies, and by other sources, declined by roughly 34 percent over the past five years. The funds available to faculty members through the Provost's Office, and the Deans' Offices, all declined precipitously. Declines were greater in some areas than in others. Allocations from the Provost's Office, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs all declined by more than 50 percent because they involve operating budgets funded from the devastated state allocations. The Comprehensive Campaign is seeking to raise funds for professional development to help ameliorate this problem.

Also, tapping expertise of faculty on campus is another way to provide professional development with diminished budgets. Activities of the Learning and Teaching Excellence Center are described later in this chapter. One professional development activity that is robust is the New Faculty Seminar. Rather than the marathon two-day orientation common at many colleges, first year faculty members attend workshops spread throughout the first year on many topics designed both to introduce them to the resources of the college and to

provide professional development on activities related to teaching. Begun ten years ago, the seminar has evolved over the years in response to feedback gathered from participants.

Finding 5. Diverse processes are in place, both informal and formal, to measure the success of faculty in delivering academic programs. Despite, or perhaps in part because of the diversity of method and format, a substantial number of faculty members and administrators perceive both a lack of rigorous consistency in the way various departments or schools conduct the measurement of faculty success, and a relative lack of continued evaluation once the faculty member has attained tenure or continuing appointment.

Evaluation of faculty success begins with the initial appointment process, both in the job description and in the expectations expressed for continuing appointment. With some variation for prior service credited, faculty on term appointments undergo a thorough review for reappointment, and ultimately continuing appointment (tenure) in their second, fourth, and sixth years. Faculty on temporary appointment are evaluated, albeit less formally, at every reappointment.

Course syllabi are collected and may be reviewed, as appropriate by departments, chairs, school curriculum committees and deans, the General Education Committee, the Honors Committee, and the Provost. Faculty members are encouraged to and often request other faculty to formally visit their classes and make written observations, particularly in support of reappointment or promotion.

Additionally, most faculty members make use of confidential student evaluations, either those administered by the Provost's office or by the individual or department. The question of how accurately these student evaluations reflect faculty effectiveness and how honestly they reflect actual student opinion, given as they are at the end of a semester, is a much-debated topic. Nevertheless, the use of the standard paper form, administered through the Office of the Provost, is widespread. In addition, the same form is available on a Blackboard website and some faculty utilize it there. In fall 2010, faculty members requested paper forms for 583 sections and requested access to the online version for another 51 sections, which represents 64 percent of the sections taught. In spring 2011, paper forms for 501 sections and 55 requests for the online form occurred, representing 62 percent of the sections offered. By contract, faculty may also use their own forms and submit them for personnel evaluations where teaching evaluations are required, so these percentages do not reflect the total who administer teaching evaluations. Some departments have a form tailored to their programs (e.g., Crane) and some individuals prefer their own format.

Additional measures of academic success are used, depending on the degree and program. For example, teacher education programs measure the percentage of students passing the battery of exams required for certification. On whole though, course syllabi and other course materials, student evaluations, samples of actual student work, and reports on classroom visits by colleagues form the heart of the faculty member's portfolio in support of reappointment, tenure, and promotion decisions.

Finding 6. Though the particular method and format for determining the academic and

research programs of the College may vary from department to department and school to school, there seems to be ample evidence that the faculty is a major determiner of the academic programs. The deans may set the parameters, but generally it is the faculty of each program or discipline, working collectively or through curriculum committees, who both establish and monitor the educational and research programs.

Courses and academic programs originate with faculty in departments and are thoroughly reviewed by faculty committees, generally at multiple levels. In the School of Arts and Sciences, course and program proposals go from departments to the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee for recommendation. Courses recommended by the Committee go to the Dean for approval. New programs or program changes go from the Curriculum Committee to the Arts and Sciences Council, which makes a recommendation to the Dean. In the Crane School of Music, course and program proposals are reviewed by the Crane Undergraduate Program Committee or the Graduate Committee. Program changes are then considered by the Crane Faculty Association, which makes a recommendation to the Dean. In the School of Education and Professional Studies, course proposals and program changes are reviewed by the SOEPS Academic Affairs Committee, which makes a recommendation to the Dean.

Many courses pass through one or more levels of review beyond the school level. Courses seeking to carry a General Education designator are reviewed by the General Education Committee. Courses offered for the Honors Program are reviewed by the Honors Committee. Online and hybrid courses are reviewed by the Distance Learning Advisory Committee.

The Faculty Senate plays a central role in shaping academic policies and programs. Three standing committees review proposals and advise the Senate. The Academic Policies, Standards, and Advising Committee recommends academic policy to the Faculty Senate concerning undergraduate matters, including academic advising policies and standards, scholarships, the grading system, academic performance standards, academic grievances and appeals, academic honesty, registration and class attendance. The Academic Programs and Curriculum Committee recommends policy to the Faculty Senate concerning undergraduate academic matters and reviews proposals for addition, deletion or revision of undergraduate programs. The Graduate Affairs Committee recommends policy to the Faculty Senate concerning graduate academic matters and reviews proposals for addition, deletion or revision of graduate programs. The Faculty Senate acts on the recommendations of its committees in matters of academic programs and policy, passing its recommendations on to the Provost and President.

Finding 7. Perceptions vary about the degree to which Academic faculty feel supported to do their work. Generally, however, many believe that indeed more is being demanded of faculty, while the resources to support the faculty are either remaining static or are being diminished.

Each school is involved to a different extent in performance courses, laboratory courses, and field experiences, so it is difficult to gain a consistent, comprehensive perspective. Performance faculty, for example, find the extensive recruitment of talented students to be an

expected activity, one "standard for faculty at schools of music." Faculty members from the other schools have not been expected to recruit in the past and, therefore, can find it an added burden.

There is a perception among academic faculty that many tasks and responsibilities have shifted from administrators or support staff to faculty, while chair stipends have been reduced. At the same time, some believe there to be too many administrative or support staff positions on campus relative to faculty positions, so these two views are not immediately reconcilable.

Recent years brought a substantial expansion, followed by an equally substantial contraction, to the Academic Affairs workforce. The expansion was largely due to the project to reduce the faculty teaching load incrementally, which then had to be terminated when the financial crisis occurred. Outside of Academic Affairs, a far less dramatic expansion has been sustained. For the academic years 2008-2010, the workforce grew both inside and outside of Academic Affairs, but it grew significantly more in Academic Affairs. In Academic Affairs the growth was 11.82 percent, while it was only 0.56 percent for the rest of the College. All of the gains in Academic Affairs were lost in the academic years 2010-2012, while outside of AA the slower pattern of growth continued. In 2011-12, Academic Affairs shrank by 8.47 percent, while outside of Academic Affairs the workforce grew by 1.26 percent.

Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (IPEDS) measures workforce differently, by primary function rather than by administrative units. Rather than capturing Academic Affairs as a whole, IPEDs data separates out instructional faculty from academic administrators (Provosts and Deans), non-teaching professional staff (principally computer services, library staff, and the staff of the Student Success Center at Potsdam), and classified staff. Nevertheless, the IPEDs data points to the same conclusions. From fall 2008 to fall 2010, the most recent year for which data is available, the overall number of full-time employees at Potsdam dropped by 46, from 716 to 670, or 6.42 percent. The number of full-time employees categorized as primarily instructional dropped by 26, from 270 to 244, or 9.63 percent. The number of full-time employees in all other categories dropped by 20, from 446 to 426, or 4.48 percent.

The numbers the College reports for IPEDs for part-time employees tells the same story. From fall 2008 to fall 2010, the overall number of part-time employees at Potsdam increased by 5, from 150 to 155, or 3.33 percent. The number of part-time employees categorized as primarily instructional dropped by 4, from 99 to 94, or 2.67 percent. The number of part-time employees in all other categories increased by 9, from 51 to 60, or 17.65 percent.

Measured over a longer term, from 2003 to the present, the total College Workforce (full-time) grew from 602 to 670, or 11.30 percent. In that period, instructional faculty increased by from 224 to 244, or 8.93 percent, while the remainder of the workforce increased by from 378 to 426, or 12.70 percent.

Nevertheless, IPEDs data indicates that Potsdam maintains a higher ratio of teaching faculty to other employees than its sister campuses in SUNY. In 2008, 37.7 percent of Potsdam's

faculty were "Primarily Instructional" compared to 33.5 percent for the SUNY Comprehensives as a whole. In 2010, the numbers moved closer, 36.4 percent for Potsdam, and 34.2 percent for the entire set.

Even as the College seems committed to reducing the teaching load of academic faculty, faculty workload is perceived to be increasing. Teaching faculty members believe that they have become more involved in traditional staff activities, with recruitment, fundraising, purchasing, advising, and clerical and committee work most often being cited. There is also a strong feeling that the number and variety of accreditation activities have added to the faculty workload. Increased expectations for the rigorous and routine assessment of student learning have demanded faculty time and energy, as well. The automation of some processes, such as those relating to student degree program audits, textbook ordering, and purchasing, seems to have, at least temporarily, pushed increased work toward departments and their faculty. Similarly, the transition from Blackboard to Moodle as the College's course management system is demanding additional work. Some faculty members also believe that these demands have increased at the very same time that enrollments have risen and that professional research and performance expectations have increased as well. In short, a good number of faculty members perceive what they term "workload creep." The extent of this "creep" is difficult to measure with much accuracy.

Measured by faculty/student ratio, however, teaching loads are trending upward. From fall semester 2006 to fall semester 2010, faculty/student ratio, college wide, increased from 16.49 to 17.34, roughly 5 percent. Perceptions vary because experiences vary. In Arts and Sciences, the faculty/student ratio increased from 19.41 to 20.50 (6 percent). In Education and Professional Studies faculty/student ratio decreased from 21.01 to 19.51 (7 percent).

Whatever sense of frustration members of the faculty may feel about their work, it is may be exacerbated by relatively low faculty salaries at SUNY Potsdam. Across the board, Potsdam faculty members were paid 11 percent less than the average salary at the other SUNY comprehensive campuses in 2009-2010. At every academic rank, the College is in the bottom quartile among the SUNY colleges. In many ranks, it is at the very bottom. It should be noted, however, that the administration has been monitoring faculty salaries in relation to AAUP data since 2002 and, prior to the recent financial crisis, devoted more than a million dollars to the faculty salary pool to increase salaries across the board. A regression model that considered rank and length of service was used to determine the amount to raise salaries and mitigate the compression that occurs when average newer faculty salaries increase without addressing those of longer-term faculty. This effort increased salaries from below the 10th percentile in 2002 compared to AAUP peers to, in May 2011, above the 30th percentile for full and associate professors, above the 20th percentile for assistant professors. Thus considerable progress was made, although still short of the goal of reaching the 50th percentile. It is hoped that the College will be able to continue to address this as its financial situation stabilizes.

Administrators and professional staff members at Potsdam also are compensated at a lower rate than their peers at other SUNY comprehensives. IPEDs data reports percentages of employees whose salaries fall within given ranges. The benchmarks are at $40,000, $50,000,

$65,000, \$80,000 and \$100,000. At two of the benchmarks, \$65,000 and \$100,000, Potsdam essentially ties with a sister campus for the lowest percentage of non-teaching professionals and administrators who attain or exceed that level of compensation. At the other three benchmarks, Potsdam is the lowest.

Finding 8. There is ambivalence among Academic Faculty about the value of graduate programs. The question of graduate education at the College is the subject of continued discussion within the various schools, particularly those with limited resources for support of graduate education; yet, given the bleak current budget situation, there are not many viable solutions immediately available. Much, therefore, depends on the faculty member's workload and the school or department's recognition and appreciation of such service to graduate education.

Graduate programs vary from school to school and from department to department, both in their distribution and their centrality. In some programs, because there is no designated graduate faculty, and graduate teaching is not differentiated in load from undergraduate load credit, there are challenges in scheduling consistent graduate offerings alongside necessary cycles of undergraduate courses. Thus, some of the programs are stuck in an untenable position of small numbers that do not easily make for a true graduate cohort or graduate experience, yet without the ability to grow to a size that would be truly viable. As a result, the experience for those graduate students may just be "undergrad+". Nevertheless, Potsdam's graduate programs do seem to serve important needs for those students who have compelling reasons to be in the region, require advanced degrees to maintain teaching certification, or who are drawn to the particular configuration of a program, or to particular faculty. Graduate programs can allow faculty opportunities to teach and research in areas that they might not be able to do so at the undergraduate level, or do so with such thoroughness and intensity.

Chapter Ten
Educational Offerings and Related Educational Activities

Standard 11: Educational Offerings
The institution's educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.

While the President of the College has the ultimate responsibility and authority over the College's programs, the faculty develop and shape the content of the curriculum. Changes in degree programs or new program initiatives most often originate in academic departments with occasional "seed planting" from Deans, the Provost, or the President.

Each School has its own policies and procedures for managing the design and development of new or revised courses and programs. There is also an advisory group at the College level that reviews distance learning and hybrid courses. Once the School policies and procedures have been met, new programs and significant changes to existing programs must be reviewed and approved at the College level by the Faculty Senate, before being submitted to the Provost and President.

The College also must submit all new programs and substantial revisions of existing programs to SUNY System Administration which, in turn, submit them to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), for approval before students can be enrolled.

Finding 1. Clear policies and procedures determine the development of undergraduate program and course offerings.

Initiatives for curricular development derive from various external and internal sources. SUNY policy, for example, shapes the broad outlines of the General Education program. NYSED expectations, along with those of NCATE, shape teacher education curricula at both the undergraduate and graduate level. National accrediting bodies play a key role in some programs, including music, theatre, and business. In all cases, external and disciplinary standards play a key role in shaping the programs and courses the College offers. In some cases, particularly in Crane and in the School of Education and Professional Studies, external expectations most clearly define curricula.

The Assistant Provost has spent considerable time and effort creating resources to assist faculty who are developing or revising programs to negotiate the maze of local, SUNY, and state approval processes. A web site with links to procedures for obtaining approval for various categories of proposals can be found on the Provost Office web page. In addition, lists tracking the status of proposals communicate progress through the approval maze.

The mission, goals, and plans of the College, its three schools, and several departments, are a driving force in the development of programs and courses across the campus. Most disciplines in the Arts and Sciences, for example, devote a significant portion of their

resources to the General Education program. Many of them also develop curricula in support of teacher education programs. All offer major programs leading to the Bachelor's degree. The work that they do reflects the mission of the College to ground all students in the arts and sciences and to train teachers, as well as missions of the various departments that center on the cultivation of learning in particular disciplines.

In all three schools, individual and collective faculty genius plays a critical role in developing course and program offerings. Potsdam boasts a selection of courses that arose from the particular expertise of individual faculty members. Its students have been able to study the "Politics of Bruce Springsteen" or the "History of Life on Other Planets," for example, because particular faculty members are eager to shape their expertise to programmatic needs. Entire programs have blossomed from the collective interests and expertise of faculty. The Environmental Studies Program, for example, emerged out of the coincidental interest of a number of faculty members in a variety of arts and sciences disciplines – ranging from Art History to Geology – who developed curricula for a major program of study out of a common interest and expertise. That program served nearly eighty majors in 2010-11.

The process by which courses and programs are developed and approved is described under Finding 6 for Standard 10, Faculty, above.

Finding 2. The challenges, which may shape future program and course offerings, include the demands of the General Education curriculum, the number of majors in a department, and resources available to departments, particularly staffing and funding.

For many departments, particularly those in the School of Arts and Sciences, tension between offering courses in service of General Education requirements and offering courses in service of departmental major programs is ongoing and constant. Every department feels, quite properly, an obligation to provide its majors with a rigorous and varied curriculum that will ensure the success of its graduates. But departments also feel, equally rightly, an obligation to serve the broader mission of the College. In an era of constricted resources, there is no easy formula for mediating those conflicting obligations.

Resources available to academic departments vary significantly. Departments with more faculty members have more flexibility in developing programmatic offerings than departments with fewer faculty members. OTPS (operating budget) allocations vary, partly by department size, partly by historical allocations, and partly because of differing needs articulated by departments. Chemists need more classroom equipment than historians. Departments also have widely varying resources available from the Potsdam Foundation. Some departments have done better at cultivating alumni donors than others. The graduates of some departments doubtless have more resources than others. They give more. In a similar vein, some programs have been more successful at generating resources than others. Some programs, particularly in education have been entrepreneurial – the Ottawa and Korea initiatives, for example – with mixed success.

Finding 3. A culture of assessment either exists or is being cultivated in all departments.

Finding 4. Student learning outcomes are assessed on both the microscopic and macroscopic levels across campus by a variety of measures that include rubrics, portfolios, exams, and student teaching supervisors.

Student learning outcomes play a significant role in program and course offerings. Assessment practices vary by school and department. In some programs, external accrediting bodies play a key role in defining learning objectives. Departmental and program mission statements, along with course-specific learning outcomes, shape assessment practices. As a result, assessment is an important tool in curriculum development and revision campus-wide, though it is not practiced in uniform ways. While all departments are engaged in some form of assessment, some departments are ahead of others in acquiring sufficient data to support curricular improvement.

Assessment occurs at a variety of levels. Individual faculty members measure student learning against explicitly stated learning objectives in their own course. Departmental assessment committees annually measure student learning against the outcomes defined by their programs. Campus-wide committees, such as General Education, assess learning in a wide range of courses across campus. The Office of Institutional Assessment collaborates in the development and execution of assessment plans.

Finding 5. Undergraduate program and course offerings reflect and support the institutional mission, goals, and planning.

The College's historic role, acknowledged in its mission statement, as a leader in teacher education and the fine and performing arts is clearly reflected in the large number of courses and programs offered in education and the arts. Nearly a quarter of the credit hours generated in any given semester are in the arts.

In all undergraduate programs, the General Education curriculum plays a critical role in preparing students "to act as engaged global citizens." All students must take at least one course focused on some part of the world outside of Europe and North America. All students must take an additional course focused on some historical aspect of Western Civilization, excluding North America. Throughout the College, but particularly in the humanities and social sciences, international perspectives are infused into the curriculum. The departments of Anthropology, English, History, Modern Languages, and Politics are particularly strong in this regard, as are interdepartmental programs in Africana and Asian Studies. Other departments are working to build international perspectives into various course and curricular offerings, as appropriate to their disciplines. The Office of International Education and Programs oversees study abroad programs for students wishing to spend part of their academic career abroad, provides assistance to international students who come to study at SUNY Potsdam, and offers advice and assistance to students, faculty, and staff who are interested in an international dimension to their study, teaching, or research. The College President has championed curricular development that centers on student encounters with the world beyond North America, both in the traditional classroom and in travel. In countless ways, Potsdam's educational offerings foster the informed and active engagement with the larger world, and thus prepare its students for global citizenship.

The General Education program also plays a central role in cultivating "critical thought, creativity and discovery" in Potsdam's undergraduate students. All students must complete a course that focuses on critical thinking, another course in the laboratory, and two courses in the arts. But these goals, of course, are integrated into every aspect of the curriculum and would be affirmed by every member of the faculty.

Expanding opportunities for undergraduate research make the College's commitment to developing critical thought, creativity, and discovery both concrete and highly visible. The College won a 5-year (2008-2013), $1.6 million dollar Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant Award from the U.S. Department of Education to promote undergraduate research across the curriculum and foster an institutional culture of inquiry-based student learning. The program funds faculty development, course development, and program development, both within departments and across disciplines. It encourages individual faculty members to integrate an undergraduate research component into individual courses and encourages departments to structure undergraduate research opportunities into a sequenced program. It nurtures interdisciplinary learning communities, for first year students as well as for upper-division students, that center on undergraduate research. The program also provides travel funds for collaborative faculty-student presentation of their work at conferences. Furthermore, the College has created the Center for Undergraduate Research that sponsors workshops for students and faculty as well as provides funding in support of student research, collaborative research between students and faculty members, and student research presentations. The Center will sustain and enhance undergraduate research after the Title III grant is completed. The Comprehensive Campaign is promoting donations to replace Title III funding in the future. The first such gift, a $500,000 endowment that created the Kilmer Fund, is already providing support for undergraduate students for their research projects.

Finding 6. Expectations and understandings regarding Information Literacy are not consistent across departments and faculty members.

The College Library has taken the lead in integrating information literacy into the curriculum. It experimented in 1999 and 2000 with a discrete, one-credit hour, information literacy course. While many things about the course worked, scaling it to the entire first year class proved daunting. The College, led by library staff, moved toward an approach centered on integrating information literacy instruction into the General Education Foundations course, generally completed in the first two or three semesters of a student's experience at Potsdam. This strategy infuses components of information literacy into required First Year Writing (FW), First Year Speaking (FS), and First Year Critical Thinking (FC) courses. Because literacy is taught as a skill required for success on concrete projects in these courses, the College expects that it is likely to be more meaningful to students and, therefore, more effective in achieving student learning outcomes. This approach is not without some disadvantages, as it is difficult to preserve consistency and avoid duplication in the large number of sections that teach some component or another of information literacy. Working to maximize the strengths of an integrated approach while overcoming the disadvantages has been an ongoing challenge.

Some instructors use the Library's information literacy sessions, while others choose to cover the material independently. Only about one-third of departments/programs explicitly list

some form of information literacy in their student learning outcomes, but that does not mean that information literacy is not being presented. However, even when explicit, the rigor of that instruction is not clear. Stated learning outcomes regarding information literacy are often minimal, overly general, and not necessarily assessed. It is not evident that the expected information literacy components are always included in the First Year writing, speaking, or critical thinking courses, or that when included, they are taught in a consistent, and consistently rigorous, way. Assessment data, gathered by the College Library, the Office of Institutional Assessment, and the General Education Committee in 2011 highlighted these problems.

In an effort to address these concerns, the library staff created a sequence of web-based information literacy tutorials. Each of the three first year "Foundations" courses – writing, speaking, and critical thinking – now has an accompanying Information Literacy tutorial, as well as a required assignment. This significant revision of the way that Potsdam integrates information literacy into first year courses should lead to improved student learning. The new system is closely monitored by the Library staff and the General Education Committee and will be assessed in the regular General Education assessment cycle.

Despite these revisions of the way the College develops the information literacy of its students, the Library staff believes that additional efforts are essential to effectively serve the entire population of undergraduate students. At present, a segment of students are served very well, and many more are served in an acceptable but unsatisfying way. The number of students and courses served grows each year. However, as the College must ensure that all of each year's incoming students receive thorough information literacy instruction before they reach upper-division coursework, and that we graduate information literate students from every major program, additional work must be done. Deeper faculty engagement, better integration of information literacy learning outcomes into course and program design, and closer collaboration with information literacy experts on the library staff would help move the College towards its goals. Alternatively, a stand-alone course or courses might be created in the first year General Education Program.

As information literacy falls under the special purview of the General Education Program, it is sure to figure prominently in the review of that program as described in Standard 12, Finding 5, below.

Finding 7. Academic departments across all three schools state that their courses are rigorous, of high educational quality, and are consistent across their degree plans.

Collectively, course rigor and educational quality are viewed in various ways across the College. Some departments view their courses as appropriately rigorous and of high quality if their students do well on national standardized exams or if the program does well on the assessment of its student learning outcomes, which in some programs, are based on nationally standardized benchmarks. Other departments also measure the percentage of students who pass required courses, particularly those courses that serve as gatekeepers in particular programs. Rates of acceptance into graduate programs and success in securing relevant employment are significant indicators in some programs.

Consistency in the content and rigor of undergraduate courses is sustained various ways. Published student learning outcomes are, perhaps, the single most important way that individual courses are shaped by the needs of the programs they serve. Faculty who develop courses for the General Education program, for example, must explicitly show how those courses are designed to ensure that students will achieve the desired outcomes. Departments, sometimes acting through curriculum committees, perform a similar function for courses designed to support a particular program of study. Departments, sometimes acting through assessment committees, measure outcomes and recommend revisions in programs and courses based on the results. External program reviews and visits by accrediting agencies help ensure that course and program offerings are consistent with national norms.

The college also has an impressive array of interdisciplinary programs which build upon the strengths of the faculty and reflect the increasing importance of interdisciplinarity in academe. All three schools are involved in interdisciplinary offerings, but most are housed within the School of Arts and Sciences. Arts and Sciences faculty supported 30 interdisciplinary FIGS serving approximately 370 students in fall 2011, four interdisciplinary FIGS serving 50 students in Spring 2011, and 28 interdisciplinary FIGS serving 415 students in Fall 2010. In Fall 2010 over 500 students majored or minored in one of our interdisciplinary programs: 327 students were in an interdisciplinary major (Archeology, Biochemistry, Environmental Studies, Criminal Justice, Women's and Gender Studies, Music Business, and the self-designed major); 189 students had an interdisciplinary minor (Africana Studies, Asian Studies, Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, Museum Studies, Native American Studies, Classical Studies, Women's Studies, Criminal Justice, and Human Services.)

Finding 8. A variety of indicators evidence that faculty are prepared to deliver the curriculum.

These begin with the search process itself which centers on identifying candidates with the expertise and skills to teach in their disciplines. Full-time teaching positions are filled through national searches that work, as appropriate, through professional disciplinary organizations. A terminal degree provides initial evidence of qualifications. The biennial review that leads the successful candidate to continuing appointment (tenure) requires faculty members to reflect on their teaching and strive to improve it. Where appropriate, mentoring might be specifically recommended by a department or dean. Faculty members participate in teaching circles, some of which are formally convened and many others of which happen as faculty members with overlapping interests and concerns meet informally. The annual Academic Faculty Information Form asks teaching faculty members how they measure their success in the classroom and what steps they plan to take to improve upon it. Annual program assessment asks the same question of departments.

Finding 9. Resources supporting faculty development in teaching excellence are available, but not evenly so and not in sufficient amounts.

The College's Learning and Teaching Excellence Center (LTEC) sponsors a variety of events each year to encourage and share best teaching practices. The LTEC has developed over the last decade into the College's main venue for meeting and working in the pursuit of

excellence in learning and teaching. It provides a forum for collaboration, debate, and exchange of ideas that encourage reflection, experimentation, and creative innovation. It encourages coordination and nurtures initiatives across the campus. It offers a regular program workshops and events on a wide range of topics, including assessment, undergraduate research, integrating technology into the classroom, working with the IRB, working with students with special needs, and instructional design. It hosts the special workshops for new faculty members, so as to introduce them to the teaching culture of the campus. The LTEC also funds faculty development through the Facul-TE award program that sponsors travel to conferences and workshops and the Faculty Fellows program (currently suspended due to budget cuts) that supports original scholarship in teaching and learning. A separate LTEC Program funds faculty projects that integrate new technologies into teaching and learning.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs also directs some funds towards faculty projects focused on teaching and learning through the Curriculum Development Program and the Faculty-Undergraduate Summer Research Program. Both programs are currently suspended for financial reasons. Other offices provide assistance, but not funding, for various aspects of course development. Blackboard and Moodle experts housed in the Office of Extended Education, for example, aid online course development and delivery through individual tutorials and group workshops. In 2011-2012 multiple activities are being offered to assist faculty as the college transitions from the Blackboard to the Moodle course management system.

The Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley, an independent not-for-profit educational consortium that supports the missions of its four member colleges – Clarkson University, SUNY Canton, SUNY Potsdam and St. Lawrence University – sponsors a variety of workshops and presentations each year. In addition to providing substantive content, these joint efforts serve to connect faculty with similar interests across the four colleges.

Perceptions of departmental support for faculty development in teaching and learning, and for new technologies that innovations sometimes require, vary drastically among departments. Some department chairs believe that institutional support for faculty development is sufficient. Other chairs find that OTPS allotments do not cover basic operating costs, and thus support faculty development through the use of fees, equipment grants, or foundation accounts. Still other departments have little access to these sources, and must rely entirely on OTPS funds. These latter chairs feel that support of faculty in the classroom and for professional development is woefully insufficient and dangerously low. The age and tenure structure of different departments also has some impact on their perceptions.

Finding 10. Graduate programs and course offerings are consistent with our institutional mission, goals, and planning.

Seven of Potsdam's twelve graduate programs are in the field of education, which is clearly consistent with the College's mission. Two others are in music. The remaining three – English and Communication, Mathematics, and Organizational Performance, Leadership and Technology – were developed in response to perceived local demand.

The graduate programs in education are designed to meet NCATE and NYSED standards. Student achievement is regularly measured by those standards. Until recently, the faculty of the Educational Technology Specialist and Organizational Performance and Leadership Technology (OPLT) programs had been appointed in the School of Education and Professional Studies, but a recent merger with the Computer Science Department brought them into Arts and Sciences. Although some details of the merger remained to be worked out, the Educational Technology Specialist and OPLT programs continue to be assessed effectively, and assessment data is being used to improve courses and both programs. Similarly, the graduate program in English and Communication was recently revised in response to assessment results. Program assessment plans provide evidence that the assessment of Masters degree programs across all schools at the College are being conducted effectively, and that the data is being used to improve the programs and the courses they offer.

Finding 11. Learning resources such as the Libraries and instructional technologies in the classrooms are presently adequate to support the College's education offerings. Like many other areas of the college, however, they are currently under stress due to budgetary restraints. While creative management can mask some of the impact caused by reductions in learning resources (in both positions and time) in the short term, real decline in learning resources and support are likely to lead to a negative measurable impact in the future.

Along with other units in Academic Affairs, the College Libraries have been operating with a substantially reduced workforce since 2010. Its budget allocations for permanent positions (PSR) and the number of full-time staff have declined by more than 10 percent since 2010. Allocations for temporary positions (TS) have precipitously declined by 65 percent in the same period. The impact of these cuts is compounded by the inefficiencies they cause. Full-time unclassified staff members (CSEA) now work the circulation desk for fifty hours a week, replacing much less expensive student workers.

While workload for librarians has increased, core library services have been cut. The Libraries offers less instruction in information literacy, is less responsive in providing Interlibrary Loan service, and less effective in management of online resources. Contrary to the wishes of student users, both Crane and Crumb Libraries are open fewer evening and weekend hours.

Non-personnel resources (OTPS) available to the Libraries are also minimal. Two-thirds of its budget is allocated in support of ongoing commitments to service providers and annual subscriptions to information resources and encumbered on the first day of the fiscal year. Vendors raise costs by 5-10 percent each year, but the budget remains flat. To compensate, print periodical subscriptions have been cancelled to a bare minimum. Reductions in monograph acquisitions or in infrastructure are the remaining options.

Fueled with Title III grant money, faculty and students demand more resources and services. As the College seeks to expand undergraduate research, real cuts in information resources are particularly problematic.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities
The institution's programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.

Experiential learning is a key component of the "handcrafted education" that the College intends for its students. Potsdam supports and promotes student engagement through service learning, undergraduate research, internships, and study abroad. The Office of Experiential Learning, the Office of International Education and Programs, the Center for Undergraduate Research, and the Center for School Partnerships and Teacher Certification provide institutional support for these goals. Individualized experiential learning has become pervasive in all three schools at Potsdam.

The College has also expanded its accessibility beyond the Potsdam campus with offerings in other geographical locations in the region and increasing numbers of online or hybrid courses. The Office of Extended Education coordinates off-campus, hybrid, and online teaching and learning.

Finding 1. A number of programs integrate experiential learning into program and degree requirements.

A cohort analysis of students who graduated in 2008 and 2009 shows that 76 percent of students participated in some form of significant individualized academic experience during their tenure at the college. For example, in the 2009 class, 49 percent participated in an internship, 46 percent in student teaching, and 14 percent in some other form of practicum. (Some students would have done more than one of these, so percentages represent duplicated headcount.) Data by major will be allow the college to encourage programs where students were less likely to engage in experiential learning to develop and encourage such opportunities.

The culminating experience in all teacher preparation programs at SUNY Potsdam is student teaching. The Center for School Partnerships and Teacher Certification offers personalized academic advising, provides unique hands-on experiences and is dedicated to developing future educators through partnerships with public/parochial schools and their highly qualified faculty/staff. Student teaching provides experiential learning opportunities structured to comply with New York State Education Department and NCATE regulations and policies. Student teachers are generally placed throughout the North Country and Upstate New York. Special programs exist to secure placements in Ontario, New York City, and Australia.

Several other programs, including Community Health, Business Administration, Music Business, and Environmental Studies, also integrate experiential learning into degree requirements. Community Health Majors complete a required 12 credit hour, full-semester internship. Students select two internship sites, spending eight weeks at each placement. Interns are placed with organizations including the New York State Health Department, the Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Seaway Valley Substance Abuse Prevention Program, Planned Parenthood, the Centers for Disease Control, and the St. Lawrence County Health

Initiative. Students majoring in Music Business are also required to complete a 12 credit hour internship. Placements have been made at Yamaha International, Samson Technologies, The Metropolitan Opera, Symphony Space, the Sarasota Opera, the North Carolina Symphony, and VH1. Environmental Studies majors complete a required 3-6 credit hour field experience, typically in the summer after their junior year. A number of interns are placed in paid service-learning positions for one or two months as Adirondack fire tower interpreters under the supervision of NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and a local citizens' committee. Other students meet this requirement through internship programs offered by organizations such as the Student Conservation Corps and Greenpeace. Although not required in the Business Administration programs, students are encouraged to pursue opportunities to obtain internships related to business administration in general, as well as to more specialized areas within business, including marketing, finance, operation, accounting and management.

In addition to internships, students engage in numerous scholarly and creative projects. Every April the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs organizes a Learning and Research Fair. In 2011, the Fair presented 61 projects involving 37 faculty members. Of these, 66 students worked solo, or in small tutorial groups, led by a professor or professors; 252 students presented results of research done as a group project in a course. Sixteen of the projects included collaborative student/faculty research.

As an Arts campus, we provide multiple opportunities for showcasing student creativity. For instance, in Academic Year 2010-11, the Department of Theatre and Dance supported 14 dance/theatre productions. Students were involved at every level in all of these productions. In Academic Year 2010-11 The Art Museum hosted 13 art exhibitions. Three of these showcased SUNY Potsdam student work. With an exciting gift to the campus, in spring 2011 SUNY Potsdam will host the first annual Lougheed-Kofoed Arts Festival which will showcase student and faculty creative endeavors. The donors have pledged annual gifts to support this festival, with an eventual bequest that will create an endowment of over a million dollars to support it in perpetuity. Of course the new Performing Arts Building will begin serving and showcasing student performances in fall 2014, which will most certainly increase their number and enhance their quality.

The Comprehensive Campaign seeks to enhance funds to support exceptional experiences for students. To date, substantial endowments have been created to bring a world-class conductor to campus annually to conduct the Crane Chorus and Orchestra in a significant choral work; to support a biennial performance of the Crane Chorus and Orchestra in prestigious venues outside of Potsdam; to provide for visiting master teachers to work with Crane students and faculty and music educators in the region; and to sponsor a competition of new operatic compositions and performance of the winning works at Crane.

Finally, faculty continue to support students in independent studies and tutorials. The cohort analysis of 2009 graduates showed that 18 percent of students had had an independent study, 5 percent had had a tutorial, 10 percent had done a senior project and 11 percent had participated in a research project of some kind. Despite the worry that the financial strains on the college will decrease faculty willingness to engage students in these kinds of

activities, such activity has continued. However, we have not yet completed the analysis of the 2010 graduates to see if there has been a decline. In the meantime, though, the Dean of Arts and Sciences reports that, in Academic Year 2010-2011, 62 Arts and Sciences faculty members taught 124 tutorials to 106 students, so there continued to be a good deal of that type of activity.

Finding 2. The quality of experiential learning opportunities is assessed in some programs more rigorously than in others.

Student learning outcomes are continually assessed in teacher preparation programs through department and program meetings, and established review committees. Participating teachers evaluate the success of student teachers. Teacher education programs revise curriculum and review placement sites based on assessment data. Student success is paramount and quality controls are in place to assure both student and site are meeting expectations. Experiences that put theory into practice strengthen the teacher candidate's skills, confidence, and marketability.

It is not evident that the internship programs in the Business of Music or Community Health have formal assessment procedures in place.

Finding 3. The Office of Experiential Education coordinates academic internships for all three schools and coordinates site placements for courses that center on service learning.

Experiential Education's primary efforts focus on various programs in the School of Arts and Sciences, where internships are widely available options to students in most programs, both on and off campus. The office also assists in the coordination of Community Health and Music Business internships. Policies and procedures for obtaining academic credit are established and information is easily available to all students, faculty and employers on the Experiential Education website.

The recent fiscal restraint has measurably impacted the internship program. Until 2009, faculty who sponsored interns received some small remuneration. Cuts to the Academic Affairs budget required suspension of that program. The total number of academic internships dropped by nearly 10 percent in the 2010-2011 academic year. Reinstating the Faculty Compensation Program for those who sponsor internships above their normal teaching load would seem consistent with College goals relating to the "handcrafted education."

Finding 4. Students are satisfied with the availability of internships and agree that their faculty sponsor and Experiential Education Office staff support them in securing and participating in academic internships or service learning classes.

Students are engaged at their internship sites, are completing the academic components of their programs, and are achieving expected learning outcomes. Site supervisors report satisfaction with the student interns from SUNY Potsdam and the overall policies and procedures provided by the Experiential Education Office.

Finding 5. SUNY Potsdam's Center for Lifelong Education and Recreation (CLEAR) offers a variety of non-credit courses based on local and regional market demand.

CLEAR courses are assessed and instructors are appointed based on credentials needed for each course. CLEAR is financially stable, other than not being able to pay for its four staff salaries. As of July 1, 2011, 50% of revenue generated will stay within the office of CLEAR and 50% will be directed to the Business Office.

Finding 6. Potsdam offers a robust program of non-credit instruction.

The 2009 Non-Credit Instructional Activities (NCIA) survey report shows that, compared to our peer group of comprehensive colleges, Potsdam has a very robust program. This point is especially salient when considering the location and size of the College. It offers the largest number of activities and has exceptionally strong enrollment figures. Student customers spend significant amounts of time on campus. If Potsdam chose not to provide non-credit programs, members of the local communities would simply not have many options for enrichment, as the region is lacking in continuing education and youth and fitness programs.

Finding 7. Although the Ottawa part-time M.S.T. program in childhood instruction was accredited by the Ontario Ministry of Education, approved by the Ontario College of Teachers, and has enrolled students for three consecutive years, the decision was made not to apply for the renewal of initial accreditation for the program due to insufficient enrollment. Students currently enrolled will complete the program, but no new students have been admitted to it since 2010.

The Ottawa M.S.T. program was conceived at a time when there was a teacher shortage in Ontario, but it took nearly ten years to achieve the approval from the various governing bodies of Ontario. Unfortunately by that time the combination of the slumping economy and overproduction of teachers reduced available jobs and, therefore, interest in the program.

Finding 8. SUNY Potsdam has had a long-term commitment to supporting the educational programs serving Fort Drum and North Country families.

The College has long maintained a presence in Watertown, where it serves Jefferson and Lewis Counties, and particularly the men and women stationed at Fort Drum. Most courses are offered on the campus of Jefferson Community College. Potsdam currently operates its Watertown programs as an extension site. An application to designate the Watertown program as branch campus has been submitted to SUNY System Administration. Once the necessary Master Plan Amendment is approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees it will be submitted to the NY Department of Education and finally to the Governor.

The College offers one undergraduate program, the B.S. in Business Management, and five graduate programs in Watertown. Four of the graduate programs are in education, including Childhood Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Literacy Specialist and Literacy Educator. The remaining program is in Organizational Leadership. The programs and course offerings at the Watertown location are generally treated the same as the comparable programs and classes offered at Potsdam. Potsdam departments play the central role in developing and delivering the curricula, but the extent of full-time Potsdam faculty involvement varies. All

courses and programs at Watertown are hosted in academic departments at Potsdam, and go through the same assessment and approval process. All courses and instructors are approved by the appropriate Potsdam academic department chair. Potsdam full-time teaching faculty members are deeply involved in the education programs in Watertown, often traveling there to teach courses. Some full-time faculty members in the Computer Science, Organizational Leadership and Technology Department, which administers the Organizational Leadership Program in Watertown, are disaffected from that program. The Office of Extended Education maintains full-time coordinator and a half-time advisor for the Watertown programs.

Finding 9. All study abroad programs offered at SUNY Potsdam follow well-defined processes for approval and review.

Short-term faculty-led study abroad courses are approved through the curriculum review process in place within each School and meet the same standards for academic rigor, educational effectiveness, and support services as courses offered on campus. Long-term study abroad programs with overseas institutions are approved through formal Memoranda of Understanding and program approval processes required by SUNY System Administration. The purpose of these agreements is to ensure quality control and educational effectiveness. The MOUs are reviewed every three to five years depending on the requirements stated in each agreement. Potsdam currently has fourteen active MOU's with overseas institutions where students can study abroad for one semester or one academic year.

At present, formal assessment procedures to evaluate student study abroad experiences are not in place. The Office of International Education and Programs is working with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to formalize assessment plans for all study abroad programs beginning in fall 2011 with a specific pilot program for the faculty-led Jamaica Field Service Abroad Program.

Finding 10. Distance learning activities at SUNY Potsdam are aligned with the institutional mission and goals.

Finding 11. Recruiting, training, and quality-assurance measures have been established to ensure faculty are well prepared for the online environment in terms of course design, online pedagogy, and interaction/communication. In turn, this ensures a high-quality learning experience for Distance Learning students.

Finding 12. On-going assessment provides data for continued improvement and growth within Distance Learning. Feedback from students and faculty shapes our quality-control measures, as well as identifies an increasing demand for additional Distance Learning courses in a variety of subject areas.

Online and hybrid course offerings have increased dramatically in recent years. Since 2005, the number courses offered has increased by near six times. The number of students served as tripled. The Office of the Provost has actively encouraged this development with financial incentives for course development.

A full-time Coordinator of Distance Learning coordinates offerings. The Distance Learning Curriculum Advisory Committee, composed of faculty members from every academic area of campus, reviews course proposals. The reviews are rigorous and thorough. As appropriate, the committee suggests revisions to the faculty member or forwards the course to schools for review and approval. In the schools, online and hybrid courses go through exactly the same approval processes as other courses. Policies and procedures for preparing online courses are clearly articulated and available online.

The Office of the Distance Education offers online course development workshops for faculty each semester. It also conducts workshops for faculty that center on the mastery and effective use of Learning Management Systems. It has been particularly active in support the ongoing transition from Blackboard to Moodle.

Online and hybrid courses are advertised on the college website. Most online courses are offered in summer and Winterim sessions and most students who enroll in them are full-time matriculated Potsdam students. The courses are generally developed and delivered by full-time members of the teaching faculty and grow out of existing offerings within departments. Surveys of Potsdam's students help the faculty assess need and market demand.

The program for assessment and evaluation of online and hybrid courses is more rigorous than for courses offered in a traditional classroom. They are reviewed as a regular part of program assessment by the departments that offer them. In addition, the Distance Learning Advisory Committee reviews all online and hybrid course offerings on a three-year cycle.

In conclusion, in spite of the recent financial challenges, the students at SUNY Potsdam are very satisfied with their experiences. For example, in the 2010 NSSE Survey Benchmark scores, seniors' ratings were statistically significantly higher than their Mid-East Public peers on the measures of Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experience, and Supportive Campus Environment. They were equivalent to peers on the other two Benchmarks: Level of Academic Challenge, and Active and Collaborative Learning. Thus, students feel they are well served by the academic and student support services at the college and faculty and staff should be commended for their commitment and hard work in assuring that students have the conditions for success.

Chapter Eleven
General Education

Standard 12: General Education
> The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and
> demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills,
> including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative
> reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.

The College's current General Education Program was put into place in the late 1980s as a result of college-wide discussion and analysis. At the time, it was highly innovative in several ways, including its emphasis on basic (first year program) and advanced skill development (writing and speaking); the use of epistemologically defined "modes of inquiry," as opposed to distribution requirements; and its inclusion of both language and physical education requirements. The program enjoys considerable support from both faculty members and students, as evidenced by surveys conducted in 2010. Seventy-three percent of faculty members responded that the program is "fine as it was" (30 percent) or in "need of minor revisions" (43%). Student response was equally positive, with 70 percent responding that the program was either "fine as it was" (36 percent) or "in need of minor revisions" (34 percent). Since the program is approaching its twenty-fifth anniversary, the Committee decided that the time was appropriate for a thorough review of the program. Research will be conducted during academic year 2011-2012, with changes being discussed and brought forward for approval during academic year 2012-2013. Implementation would begin at the earliest in fall 2013.

The program is managed by a director, selected through an open search process from among the academic faculty and appointed for three-year renewable terms. The Director reports to the Provost. The Director is assisted by the General Education Committee that is comprised of members representing each school and the various disciplines (Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences). Some members are elected by the faculty; others are appointed by the deans of the three schools (one appointment each) or by the Faculty Senate (one appointment).

Since its inception, the program has undergone constant revision, though the basic structure has remained the same. The most dramatic revision came in fall 2001 in order to comply with the SUNY Board of Trustees mandated general education requirements.

Finding 1. The General Education Program is regularly reviewed and modified in response to ongoing assessment, to mandates from SUNY, and to stakeholder concerns. It retains the conceptual framework and overall structure developed in the late1980s (a system of designators for skills, experiences, and modes-of-inquiry distributed across disciplines and overseen by the General Education Committee).

General Education requirements are regularly examined by a variety of stakeholders, the most significant being Faculty Senate, the Student Government Association, and the General Education Committee itself. Each designator has a subcommittee that reviews 1) courses

submitted for consideration, 2) the criteria defining the designator, when issues have been raised, and 3) assessment of student learning. The full committee debates and recommends action in response to subcommittee reports. The data we collect during our three-year assessment cycle, data from commercial instruments, such as the NSSE, and local instruments, such as our student satisfaction surveys, all contribute to the review of our General Education requirements.

Internal stakeholder concerns have resulted in some modifications of the General Education program for Crane students and for students in Childhood Education programs. As performance is integral to their program, music students are not required to complete a Speaking Intensive course. The number of required practice hours made it impracticable to also require a lab science. In an effort to keep their required hours reasonably close to 120, Childhood Education students have been exempted from the Philosophical Inquiry requirement.

The most thorough modification of the existing program resulted from SUNY mandates. The Board of Trustees made courses in Western Civilization, "Other" World Civilizations, and U.S. History required of all students. Potsdam revised its "Historical Inquiry" category into two categories, Western Civilization and American History. Its "Cross Cultural" category was modified to exclude the study of subcultures in Europe and North America, becoming focused on the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, or Oceania, or on those people indigenous to the Americas.

An area already identified by the General Education Committee as in need of modification is information literacy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Library has taken the lead in integrating this requirement through three of the college's first year requirements. Online tutorials for students were developed by library staff over the past summer, and are currently being implemented. A subcommittee of the General Education Committee is now working on both information and technology literacy.

In close cooperation with the Office of Institutional Assessment, the General Education Committee developed and implemented a three-year assessment cycle of each General Education designator. Assessment data has prompted efforts to rework criteria for some designators, such as First year Writing in 2004. Work on rewriting the criteria for all designators, so as to cast them in more explicit outcomes language, is an ongoing task.

Finding 2. Institutional mission, goals, planning and resource allocation represent an adequate commitment to General Education.

The Provost's Office provides a half-time course reassignment and a summer stipend for the Director of General Education. The operating budget allotted to the General Education Program suffered, in common with other special academic programs, a 40 percent reduction in Academic Year 2010-11. It was partially restored the following year.

The responsibility for delivering the General Education Program falls primarily, but not exclusively, on the School of Arts and Sciences. In recent years of severe financial restraint, adequate resources have been provided to Arts and Sciences to serve the General Education

needs of students across the schools of the college. Fiscal restraints imposed for the academic year 2011-2012 threatened to strike with particular force at General Education offerings, as it appeared that many adjunct faculty members would not be reappointed. Restoration of funding allowed for the appointment of enough adjuncts to mitigate the situation. Several General Education designators, including Arts Critical (AC), Freshman Critical Thinking (FC), Laboratory Science (LB), Modern Language (ML), Philosophical Inquiry (PI), and Physical Science (SP), saw reductions in the number of seats offered. The most substantial reductions occurred in FC (Critical Thinking, down 130 seats), ML (Modern Languages, down 142 seats), SP (Physical Science, down 464 seats), and PI (Philosophical Inquiry, down 91 seats). A significant increase in the enrollment of first year students in fall 2011 exacerbated the shortfall. At the same time, other designators saw increased offerings, most notably AH (American History, up 114 seats) and WI (Writing Intensive, up 543 seats). The AH increase can be attributed to course redesign. Improved software has provided better tracking of student needs for particular General Education designators, allowing for data driven decisions to be made about additional sections needed.

Full-time faculty members on probationary or continued appointment are heavily invested in the General Education Program. Eighty-three percent of tenured or tenure-line faculty members regularly teach one or more General Education courses. Success in teaching General Education courses is essential to reappointment and tenure.

The peculiar configuration of the General Education Committee reflects broad institutional investment. Although headed by a faculty member and run by faculty members, some elected and others appointed, it is not a committee of the Faculty Senate. Rather, it reports to the Provost. Since 2008, the Director sits as an ex officio member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. "Resource People" from each of the schools and from various academic and student support offices on campus advise the General Education Committee.

Finding 3. The General Education Committee, which represents faculty from all three schools, administrators, admissions and transfer services, staff, and students, is primarily responsible for ensuring the quality of General Education courses. The Committee ensures program quality through a network of subcommittees, each concerned with a particular designator or designators, and one subcommittee for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes.

Achievement of student learning outcomes is measured in a three-year cycle that ensures success in each designator, as per the General Education Assessment Plan as approved by the Faculty Senate in 2002. In addition, "closing the loop" questions have been added to the assessment reporting forms. The General Education subcommittee for assessment works with the campus Director of Academic Assessment to formulate, implement, and evaluate assessment plans. Beginning with the spring 2010 assessment cycle, the Committee assessed the Potsdam General Education Student Learning Outcomes, which are considerably more comprehensive than those of SUNY System Administration General Education. Subcommittees analyze assessment results and make broad recommendations for improvement for each designator.

In Academic Year 2007-08, the General Education Committee instituted a review of all courses approved more than five years earlier. Course syllabi are reviewed by the appropriate subcommittee to ensure that General Education offerings continue to meet General Education criteria.

New faculty members are made aware of the learning outcomes associated with General Education designators at new faculty orientation. The learning outcomes are also published on the General Education website. In 2010-2011, the General Education Committee, in collaboration with the campus Director of Academic Assessment, initiated a series of workshops to prepare and guide faculty members teaching courses with designators that are scheduled for assessment.

Finding 4. The extent to which General Education requirements relate to, integrate with, and are interwoven into academic major program requirements is quite variable, depending on the academic program in question.

The integration of the General Education Program with major programs varies considerably between the three schools, and among various programs. The major requirements for some programs, Childhood/Early Childhood Education, for example, require courses from so many different disciplines that that students complete General Education requirements within the major. The situation is very different for Crane students, who generally complete the fewest General Education requirements within their major. Within Arts and Sciences, some major programs, including English and Anthropology, offer many courses that carry many different General Education designators. Others, including Computer Sciences, offer very few. To the extent that General Education requirements demand that students complete the Modes of Inquiry in a variety of departments, they discourage the integration of General Education into major programs of study. Students are not allowed to count more than eight hours from any one department or to complete their Aesthetic Experiential and Aesthetic Critical requirements the same departments.

In most programs, students can complete the advanced skills components of General Education (Speaking Intensive, SI, and Writing Intensive, WI) in their major department. This is true for all departments in the School of Education and Professional Studies and for nine of the seventeen departments in School of Arts and Sciences.

Finding 5. Faculty, student, staff and administrative support for the General Education Program remains high.

Discussion about the General Education Program across campus is ongoing. In campus surveys, teaching faculty, administrators, and non-teaching professionals claim a high level of awareness (88 percent) about General Education, and a high level of confidence (79 percent) about the quality of the College's General Education Program. Most faculty members believe that the General Education Program is "fine as it is" (30 percent), or that it needs only "minor revisions" (43 percent). Nevertheless, some faculty members favor streamlining the program by reducing some requirements, while others would like to add additional requirements. Most students also express satisfaction with the General Education

Program as it is currently configured. Thirty-six percent say the program is "fine the way it currently is" while another 34 percent say that it "is in need of some minor revisions."

Evidence of success in meeting student needs includes a recent survey of students indicating a positive perception of the value of the objectives of the General Education Program. The program assessment cycle provides a regular measure of student success in meeting program objectives. While roughly half the faculty and students believe *The Potsdam Graduate* adequately reflects and represents the goals of the General Education Program, a significant minority of both groups thinks that revision is necessary. Outcomes relating to scientific knowledge (particularly with regard to environmental issues), aesthetic experience, technological competency, and information literacy are seen by some as inadequate or vague.

In summary, the General Education Program at SUNY Potsdam is regarded by many as one of its strengths, more robust than those at SUNY sister institutions. While a review is timely and important, the program does provide a broad and deep liberal arts foundation for all baccalaureate programs at the college.

Chapter Twelve
Assessment of Student Learning

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning
Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

Since 2003, SUNY Potsdam has emphasized the assessment of student learning outcomes. In 2003-2004, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness published its first Report and compilation of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans. Between 2005 and 2007, regular portions of the Council of Chairs were devoted to professional development and discussion regarding the improvement of student learning through the assessment of student learning outcomes. In July 2008, a Director of Academic Assessment was hired and in fall 2008 a Campus Academic Assessment Committee (CAAC) consisting of assessment coordinators from each department or program was formed to address the many dynamics of the academic assessment process. The charge of the CAAC can be found on the Institutional Effectiveness website, along with the annual reports of student learning from academic departments.

Finding 1. Assessment of student learning is becoming an integral part of the life of the institution.

Considering the virtual absence of buy-in for outcomes assessment a decade ago, SUNY Potsdam has experienced a remarkable culture shift. The discussion of the process of student learning outcomes assessment is happening on a departmental/program level for a large majority of departments both in formal and informal settings. Similarly, in a survey conducted in November 2010, 86% of responding faculty (n=90) strongly agree or agree with the statement: "Based on assessment data, I make changes to courses and/or curricula delivery in a manner that I think will improve student achievement." While the intensity of both the discussion and use of assessment data are uneven across departments, programs, and schools, the data do suggest a culture for assessment of student learning outcomes is taking hold within most departments and that the assessment of student learning culture is developing across the campus. The regularly updated *Assessment of Student Learning Plans* for all departments and programs at SUNY Potsdam also can be found on the website available to both current and prospective students at each school's webpage or on the Institutional Effectiveness website.

Finding 2. All assessment plans are linked to College, School, and Department/Program mission statements or The Potsdam Graduate *as required. While the majority of assessment plans identify a clear link to one of the relevant mission statements and/or* The Potsdam Graduate*, it is unclear how the various mission statements and* The Potsdam Graduate *are linked to each other.*

Finding 3. While there have been resources and many opportunities for professional development in Student Learning Outcomes assessment, additional strategies are necessary to create effective assessment programs in all areas and to build upon the developing culture of assessment campus-wide.

Developing, implementing, and revising outcomes assessment consumes a considerable amount of faculty time and energy. Members of the teaching faculty indicate that they need more time to assess student learning effectively and to utilize the results for beneficial curricular change. Workloads have been impacted by implementation of outcomes assessment. Departments and programs have not, in general, been allocated additional resources to support the increasing expectations. Indeed, increased expectations for assessment, especially in recent years, have come at a time of diminished resources. Many faculty members find it difficult to find time to redesign course plans so as to reflect an emphasis on specific learning objectives, and to revise courses based on assessed metrics. Some system, perhaps involving teaching reassignment, would do a great deal to nurture the growth of the culture of assessment on campus.

Because departments and schools are at varying stages in the process of implementing assessment of student learning outcomes, professional development needs are quite diverse. Data indicate that there is little or no sharing of best assessment practices across schools, departments or within SUNY. There is an expressed desire for sharing of best practices across departments. A few faculty members, however, question the value of student learning outcomes assessment.

Finding 4. Communication and transparency related to the process of assessing student learning outcomes is available but there is limited evidence that these data are used for planning, goal setting, policy making and resource allocation.

There are limited established processes for the communication of the results of assessment of student learning outcomes to senior administration for planning, goal setting, policy making and resource allocation. All departments and programs have published an Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Plan for their majors on the SUNY Potsdam website which is available to current and prospective students. Departmental Program Review guidelines explicitly require both assessment plans and an accounting of the ways in which programs have been enhanced through the assessment of learning outcomes. An analysis of randomly selected course syllabi reveals that the vast majority of the syllabi communicate expected student learning outcomes to students, however there is a range of clarity and measurability in these student learning outcomes. While there remains some mistrust by a few faculty of how administration uses assessment data, this has decreased greatly since the last MSCHE Review.

Chapter Thirteen
Summary and Recommendations

The Steering Committee reviewed all recommendations from the working groups. Seven broad issues of campus-wide concern surfaced. These comprise the central recommendations that the Self-Study Report offers. The many other recommendations of the Working Groups are compiled in a single document titled "Suggestions" (see Appendix B). The Steering Committee urges the appropriate units of the College to work them into its ongoing programs for institutional renewal.

In the Steering Committee's view, the recommendations, particularly the first four, are deeply interrelated with each other. None can be followed, with any hope of success, without due attention to all. Clarity of mission and effective institutional assessment are equally essential to transparent decision making, particularly in relation to the allocation of institutional resources.

The last three recommendations are also integrally related to each other, and to the first four. Rethinking our core educational offering, the General Education Program, begins with institutional mission and ends with assessment. Efforts to enhance both the ability of the faculty to deliver the College's academic programs and of students to succeed in those programs depend upon the mission-driven allocation of resources and effective measurement of the outcome of those efforts.

1. **Mission.** Charge a broadly representative task force with reviewing and, as appropriate, recommending revisions of the College's core mission documents (the Mission Statement, *The Potsdam Graduate*, and *The Potsdam Pledge*) to ensure that they are current, fully integrated with each other, and sufficiently clear to be directive in planning, decision making, and the allocation of resources.

   The mission statements of the various divisions and units of the College should be linked to the College mission documents in such a way as to demonstrate how each division and unit contributes to the College's mission through their programs, curriculum, and pedagogy.

   Successfully addressing this recommendation is a prerequisite for addressing several of the following recommendations.

2. **Resources.** Create a broadly representative process to ensure that the structure, actions and budget allocations of the College reflect our mission, values and priorities. Most fundamentally, this process must ensure that sufficient support is delivered to academic programs, recognizing that every division of the College contributes to the overall academic success of our students.

3. **Transparency and Communications.** Develop a single location, such as a searchable intranet archive, for critical institutional information, including policies, practices, and data, at the College, division and unit levels. This material should be presented in such a way that makes the rationale for key decisions transparent. This information should

include all mission documents, annual assessment data, annual reports, summary budget allocations and annual expenditures, minutes of governance meetings, performance programs and summary periodic assessment reports of chief administrators, the facilities master plan, annual facilities plans, school bylaws, compensation policies, reappointment, continuing appointment, and promotion policies, along with other materials that are of critical concern to the campus community.

4. **Institutional Assessment.** Charge a broadly representative task force with consolidating the existing but isolated elements of institutional assessment into a comprehensive and systematic Institutional Assessment Plan. This plan must ensure that the College's mission and goals, and the mission and goals of each of the units of the College, are clearly articulated to faculty, staff, students, and the public. It must further ensure that the work of each unit and program of the College is measured with assessment instruments that provide reasonably accurate, timely, and useful information. Outcomes data must be communicated clearly and used to inform improvements, planning, decision making, resource allocation, student learning, and otherwise enhance the ability of the College to fulfill its mission and achieve its goals.

5. **Workload and Compensation.** Work diligently and as a high priority to address the workload, compensation and support issues recognized in the Academic Master Plan and the Bicentennial Plan in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The current economic situation and recent institutional budgetary decisions call attention to the urgency of this task. A variety of issues must be addressed to improve the learning environment, to encourage participation in governance, and to improve morale.

   Recognizing that there are many competing demands on the College's limited resources, among the most important issues to be considered are to evaluate the role of released time and stipends within the overall assignment of workload; the means whereby the College may proceed towards an 18 credit hour teaching load; how the College can provide adequate staff for all vital support services; how best to identify and reward excellence in advising; and how to improve the system of support for research, scholarship, and professional development.

6. **Student Success.** Investigate ways to strengthen programs that demonstrably contribute to student success as defined by the College mission. This should include, but not be limited to, exploring alternate advising models that ensure the quality of advising; considering ways to expand scholarship offerings for prospective and current students, and enhance communication and cooperation between departments about scholarships; communicating, clearly and consistently, campus retention goals, and consider the expansion of programs that have proven successful in enhancing retention to include other at at-risk student groups; and exploring the potential benefits of expanding programs offered through distance learning and satellite campuses insofar as they contribute to student success and are consistent with the College mission.

7. **General Education.** As the Steering Committee began the Self Study, it became evident that a systematic and thorough review of the General Education Program was in order. Accordingly, the General Education Director, with the support of the General Education

Committee, initiated such a review in September 2011. This process will begin with a review and possible revision of *The Potsdam Graduate* as an explicit statement of the goals of the Program. Both Skills and Modes components of the Program will be considered in light of College Mission and SUNY General Education Requirements. Outcomes assessment goals should be integrated into the defining criteria for each designator and assessment practices should ensure that students demonstrate achievement of appropriate outcomes. This review of the General Education Program represents a critical initiative currently taking place in the College.