

Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students of

Williams College

Williamstown, Massachusetts

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after study of the institution's self-evaluation report
and a site visit on October 22-25, 2017

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This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation status.

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Introduction

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges team (the “Team”) for considering the reaccreditation of Williams College visited Williams from October 22-25. We had the benefit of the Williams Self-Study (the “Report”) which we had received well in advance. We met with administrative leaders (including the president, provost, CFO, vice presidents, and deans), faculty (including representatives from throughout the academic programs the College offers as well as those in various governance leadership positions), Board members (including the Board chair), and students. We held open sessions for faculty, students, and staff. In all respects, the various groups from Williams were extremely helpful and cooperative, providing all information we requested, both before and during the visit. Our many discussions were open and robust. As a result, we felt the visit was very successful in giving us an opportunity to evaluate Williams with respect to the Standards, as well as to offer the views of colleagues from outside the College on the various programs, approaches, and culture within the College, which we hope will be helpful.

While there will be a number of specific comments with respect to the standards in the following sections of this report, in this summary introduction we want to highlight two features: namely, the several areas in which we felt Williams has and exhibits great strength, as well as some overarching concerns that manifest themselves in several ways where we feel Williams should be considering evolution.

Williams College is an extraordinary institution. It has a faculty and administration that is deeply devoted to the institution, the education it offers, and its students. The outgoing president and his team have a deep commitment to excellence. The sense of ownership by the faculty of the programs of the College is a great strength. The financial management along with the related capital planning of the College is excellent in thought, strategy, design, and execution. The Board is devoted to the College’s success. The diversity and inclusion efforts are intense and thoughtful, and have shown dramatic positive results. The students are excellent, the application pool strong, and the College highly selective. Significant attention is successfully addressed to student life issues in a highly collaborative manner. Thus, we were impressed with many fundamental features of Williams, and those involved should be proud of their accomplishments.

One of the cultural features of Williams that was described to us many times, and which we observed at other times, was a profound cultural commitment to distributed authority. All colleges have some degree of distributed authority as reflected in shared governance and related matters, and this is certainly a healthy feature of colleges. There are many aspects of distributed authority at Williams that are extremely positive, and it certainly contributes to the sense of faculty ownership. Nevertheless, there were several discussions we had, and questions we raised, where we felt there was a real question as to whether the balance was right in this distribution, and whether or not the extreme version of this practiced by Williams was actually serving the College well.

In this introduction, we will mention three concrete examples, although the issue comes up in other ways as well. We present these not in the sense that we propose concrete alternatives of what should be done, but rather to encourage the faculty and the board to consider the issues, and work together with a new president to come to an understanding as to whether some evolution around these structures and organizational culture is merited.

The first concerns the question of a clear statement of what “liberal arts at Williams” means. In our discussions, it was clear that there is no such statement. We were told individual departments have their own view of this, that no one wanted such a statement, and that “you knew it when you saw it.” There is a part of the (required) mission statement in the Report that could easily be adopted into such a statement as one faculty member observed, but this is certainly not a statement that there seems to be widespread awareness of or support for as a “College statement.” It is particularly odd that some felt that departments could define liberal arts their own way, as by definition liberal arts is a more holistic view than that of one particular field. There seemed to be lack of clarity in this regard as to the distinction between overarching values and goals of the education on one hand and the ways it was realized in different departments (which of course will be different) on the other.

The Team had concerns as to whether this is a healthy approach. Among the issues it raises: students, as we saw in our discussions with them, do not themselves have a clear holistic view of their education; it becomes difficult to evaluate issues such as double majors, which was identified as a concern by a number of faculty, without some common understanding of what you are weighing it against; it gives no basis on which to make a set of other resource allocation decisions, such as addressing enrollment pressures; and when things become difficult, as will inevitably happen at some point, there is no principled statement on which to lean for support, and one is left making it up on the spot. Given the level of faculty governance, it could also be an impediment to clarity about the priority of careers programs, which we heard from students to be an issue.

A second concern about the level of distributed authority concerned faculty governance directly. Every institution seeks an appropriate balance between centralization and decentralization, and the degree of “faculty governance” in an environment of “shared governance” is one example of this. One ultimate test of the nature of the balance is what types of decisions does the structure enable to be made well and what does it not enable to be made well. As the nature of decisions required evolve over time, so too will a structure’s capacity for good decision-making. Williams’ faculty governance plays an extremely valuable and important role. It is effective and appropriate in a great deal of decision-making. But the stated extreme cultural aversion to the exercise of central authority, even a collaborative such exercise, creates real questions. For example, if it is difficult to make either rapid or forceful decisions at key moments on key issues, that is a problem. There are some basic examples that bring up this question. Given the rapid rise of data science and the impact on a broad array of disciplines, how can one decide to make a major investment in this area and what will it look like? Many institutions are moving rapidly and the situation is very competitive. Do Williams’ decision-making processes and the nature of its distributed authority serve it well around this

question? The same is true, although perhaps with less urgency, around the nature of global engagement. Both of these have serious implication for curricula and Williams' long-term competitive position. It is perfectly plausible for different institutions to come to different conclusions. Our concern was not what decisions were being made per se. Rather, there seemed to be little awareness among the faculty that there is a tension and implicit trade-offs in the nature of the distributed authority that exists, and frankly a great deal of complacency in the nature of the existing structure. The complacency is compounded by a lack of trust. In our many conversations during the visit about governance, we were struck not only by the extreme nature of distributed authority, but the underlying lack of trust of faculty in administrative authority, and even lack of trust in some of the faculty committees. We believe that this is not an issue of personalities or performance, but rather of institutional culture.

A third manifestation of the distributed decision-making that we found questionable concerned master planning. We were told there is no master planning, but rather planning in "sectors." The Williams campus is not so large that master planning is unwieldy. This was another case of "distributed authority" that frankly seemed very odd. It seemed more designed to protect an embedded process rather than finding a way to be making good decisions.

Again, we make these comments not in the spirit of saying "you need to fix this problem" so much as highlighting a universal view of the Team that the Williams community could productively engage in serious self-reflection about its structures, what the efficacy is in various situations, and how they might evolve to put Williams in a better competitive position for the long run.

There is one other general concern the Team had that is worth noting in this introduction. Williams is quite isolated, which inevitably leads to pressures of insularity. As usual, this has both positive and negative features. While Williams makes the most of its isolated physical position, using it to build an extremely strong community that serves the College well in many ways, we felt it could do more to mitigate the negatives - namely, increased attention to what is happening elsewhere, increased benchmarking, increased exploring of strategically defined relationships.

To conclude, let me reaffirm our observations of the high degree of commitment, sense of ownership, and excellence of the Williams community and its work, and express our thanks to being invited to Williams and to have an opportunity to learn about Williams and hopefully make a small contribution to its ongoing excellence.

Standard One: Mission and Purposes

The Williams Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee developed an institutional mission statement over the course of the 2016-2017 academic year in anticipation of this accreditation review. The statement, included in the Self-Study under Standard 1, was approved by the Williams Board in June 2017, and remains posted on the web page of the college president. During our visit, trustees and other campus leaders commended steering committee members for their broad consultation across campus in the development of the mission statement.

Divided into two sections, the mission statement opens with a series of reflections on the campus's beauty and the strengths of Williams' students, faculty, and staff. Following two pages of such reflections, the college presents six "principles and values [that] shape our sense of mission." Those principles and values commence with a negative statement: "Our purpose is not to offer specialized or professional training." That negative sets up a positive assertion on behalf of a liberal arts education as expressed by a few broad objectives such as the development of students' strong writing, speaking, quantitative, analytical, and interpretive skills across a range of disciplines. The statement further describes in very general terms the important balance of breadth and depth from a Williams education; a curriculum that is global, diverse, and contemporary; and students who are undaunted in the face of complexity and who feel a sense of personal connection to their educations.

The mission statement is poetic in its description of the undeniable beauty of the Williams campus setting, and captures elements of the college's culture effectively. For example, the visiting team heard from students as well as faculty how fully they value the intimate scale of the campus and the close relationships that result, described by one student as a "tight community." The Team also recognized alignment in the vision for integrated academic and co-curricular experiences, with a particular emphasis on athletics. Consistent with the statement's emphasis on strong support for faculty research, Williams faculty expressed great enthusiasm about the resources provided to them, and especially the year of research leave provided at full pay in advance of the tenure review, followed by a generous leave policy for the post-tenure years. Though the mission statement speaks to the "teaching gene" that characterizes the institution's faculty, the self-study did not provide nor did the Team elicit much specificity about the college's approach to teaching, nor about expertise or resources the college provides in support of teaching. This is surprising in the context of the explosion of new pedagogical opportunities enabled by technology, and seems like a natural opportunity for further exploration for a deeply intentional teaching faculty such as the one at Williams. Also, given the wave of faculty retirements anticipated in the near future, and the replacement of established faculty with as many as a hundred newcomers, the establishment of a shared vocabulary about teaching, as well as support resources, assumes critical importance.

Throughout the Team's site visit, Williams faculty and students expressed awareness of the existence of a mission statement, but surprisingly little sense of deep knowledge about it nor ownership of its principles. Williams staff who attended an open meeting with the visiting team were explicit in their sense of disconnection from institutional mission. Indeed, though the

mission statement is quite lengthy, it errs in the direction of “florid” (to quote a senior leader) rather than substantive; nor is it strategic nor differentiated beyond the generic. For example, aside from a negative comparison to “specialized or professional training,” and the claim that the liberal arts approach is the bedrock of a Williams education, the statement does not assert an institutional view of the liberal arts. The Team probed this important point extensively and repeatedly. We observed that Williams faculty, staff, administrative leaders, and students expressed little consensus about what the liberal arts is and does, what it represents on their campus, how their approach intervenes in the national discussion of the liberal arts model, opportunities for developing a contemporary delivery of the liberal arts, and what leadership in this sector might comprise. Consistent with the highly decentralized model of governance at Williams, some faculty members asserted that each department and program develops and implements its own vision of the liberal arts—an assertion that sits uneasily alongside the claim to the combined power of depth and breadth, and of initiatives that cut across the disciplines and administrative divisions. More than one professor responded to the question about the liberal arts with the quip, “We know it when we see it.” A number of faculty pointed to a series of discussions hosted by Professor Lee Park, then the Associate Dean of Faculty, several years ago, about the meaning and purpose of the liberal arts. These open discussions are remembered as stimulating and constructive, but their impact is unclear, and they do not seem to have informed the new mission statement.

Williams students expressed clear appreciation for the campus community and educational experience, but very little understanding about the meaning and purpose of an education in the liberal arts model as delivered by Williams. In conversations with the visiting team, faculty leaders expressed a clear and consistent concern about the “double major phenomenon,” which faculty tie to students’ interest in credentialing and vocationalism. Though the mission statement disavows “specialized or professional training” as an outcome of a Williams education, the faculty also recognize that students are worried about their futures; indeed, they understand that this worry is driving a clear pattern of choice as students navigate the liberal arts curriculum. This represents a clear opportunity for Williams faculty to articulate meaningful, substantive continuity between the liberal arts experience and the world of work that awaits Williams students after graduation.

Given the prominence of Williams as a top-ranked liberal arts institution, the Team was struck by the absence of a sharp articulation of a forward-looking liberal arts mission distinctive to Williams, both in the institution’s mission statement and across dozens of conversations we conducted during our time on campus. Williams is clearly an incredibly effective educational institution. It provides a high-quality education to great students, meets the needs and goals of talented faculty, and deftly addresses challenges ranging from financial complexity to globalization to diversity. Against the backdrop of these great strengths, the Team strongly recommends that Williams commence thoughtful planning processes for the institution’s future, leading to a shared and positive understanding of its mission and goals, and the capacity to express that mission with clarity and confidence.

Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation

The accreditation team finds that Williams College's planning and evaluation efforts, while thoughtful and comprehensive, have largely been completed in a decentralized, segmented manner. After reviewing the self-study, participating in meetings with many campus constituencies, and assessing the supplementary documentation provided by the college, we have determined that there is an extensive amount of planning happening at Williams, particularly short-term planning, but it is lacking a coordinated approach.

Planning

The Williams College community, both faculty and staff members, concede the fact that decision-making is quite decentralized at the college. Community members refer to decisions made within departments or "sectors." The Team observed that this process is impacted by the fact that there is no strategic plan in place, and therefore no guiding vision and set of common institutional goals and priorities. While the shared governance system is strong, with faculty committees serving as the vehicle for much of the decision-making at the college, a lack of well-defined, shared values seemingly prevents a strategic, longer-term consideration of the college's mission and vision. The Team quickly became keenly aware that there is not a consistent definition of what a liberal arts education is, and how Williams distinctively offers that experience to students.

Nowhere is the decentralization of the planning process more evident than in facilities planning. Williams does not have a campus master plan, instead developing sector plans focused on functional or geographical areas of the campus. While the decision-making process described by administrators concerning how they prioritize building projects is thoughtful and reasoned, it is lacking a sense of cohesion. There is clearly a notable effort made to recognize those projects that are most necessary to the overall student experience and fiscal health of the institution (attention is paid to enhancement of the academic and residential experiences, overall safety concerns, capital preservation and sustainability efficiencies). However, there does not appear to be a clear sense regarding how each building project fits into a long-range plan for the college tied to its strategic goals.

The college has spent a good deal of time planning for a seismic shift in the faculty over the next five years. The college anticipates that more than 100 new faculty members will join its ranks, as many currently employed by the college will retire. This is a tremendous opportunity for the college, and having a solid strategic plan in place would assist Williams in more carefully identifying its needs around hiring and staffing in light of curricular priorities.

Based on the discussions we had with staff members, a strategic plan could also provide this critical contingent of the community with a set of goals and priorities against which their work could be measured and evaluated. Many staff members were quite unhappy with a perceived lack of communication from senior staff and faculty members, and drew connections between

the lack of community cohesiveness and the absence of unification around a common set of goals.

The Team recommends that the next president launch a strategic planning process and create a campus master plan. This will assist the full community in defining its priorities, allocating appropriate financial resources to support the college's goals, and centralizing the decision-making process.

Evaluation

Three years ago, the Office of Institutional Research increased from one to two full-time staff members. There is a general feeling on campus that this was a much-needed change, as IR's workload is significant. The college is trying to establish guidelines to better define what kind of requests are made of the IR office, as the work load has become exorbitant, particularly given the demands for the administration of surveys. The IR office has purchased a Qualtrics license, and has started to allow departments to design and administer their own surveys, which has helped alleviate some of the administrative burden on the staff. However, other needs continue to demand more time.

According to the Director of Institutional Research, use of data at the college in decision-making is sporadic. There is a high turnover of faculty members and senior staff members who serve on committees and some are more interested in data than others are, so the demand on the office to provide information can vary year to year. This inconsistency makes it difficult for the IR office to set an agenda that allows them to proactively plan and anticipate needs rather than simply being reactive.

The Director of Institutional Research also indicated that the IR office does not have direct responsibility for assessment; that work falls to the faculty committees, but there is some discussion around whether IR staff should be involved in that process. If that is the case, there will very likely be the need to add another full-time staff member to the IR office.

Williams relies heavily on the Director of IR to develop and maintain their data management systems. The college uses PeopleSoft, but does not have a reporting mechanism within the platform, so they have historically had difficulty accessing data. The Director of Institutional Research has written code to connect disaggregated data across multiple systems. She expressed concern that this system has put the college in a perilous position as if she ever leaves her role, there is no one who understands and can extract data as she can.

One of the most pressing needs is to manage reporting in financial aid, a responsibility currently assumed by IR. The college has recently selected a firm to create a financial aid data warehouse. This appears to be an appropriate and necessary step to ensure consistent and accurate reporting without overreliance on one individual's skills. The visiting team encourages

the college to explore any further exposure they may have in the area of data management and assessment related to future staffing needs.

The college stated that one of its goals was to ensure the timely and consistent completion of staff evaluations. Based on interviews, it appears that somewhere between 50-60% of individuals are completing evaluations at this point. There is a perception that because the evaluation is not tied to merit increases, some employees feel less incentive to complete the process. A committee recently examined this concept and purposefully chose not to draw a direct connection between compensation and evaluations; however, we have been advised that Williams does ask managers to consider the outcome of the latest evaluation when recommending merit increases. Some individuals also expressed the need for multiple types of evaluations, as the version they use (seen as “cookie cutter” by some individuals) does not apply to all staff members. In actuality, there are two versions of the evaluation; one is intended for facilities, dining, and campus safety and security staff members—and other departments where appropriate—and is designed to be purely evaluative, while the other emphasizes short and long-term goal setting. Neither version of the evaluation is electronic; they are available to staff as a Word document. Higher participation rates might be achieved if a module or evaluation tool used were electronically accessible, and incorporated features that would be beneficial to the process, such as sending email reminders to staff and supervisors to complete the evaluation based on due date and submission status. The Team recommends that the college explore necessary steps to improve participation and usefulness of the evaluation to achieve their stated goal.

The faculty recently approved a change to the course evaluation process. Over the next two years, a new course evaluation will be implemented and moved online. Additionally, multiple methods of review will be required. Many departments were already allowing for multiple types of review (such as class visits for assistant professors), but it was not a consistent practice across all departments. This new process should give professors better access to qualitative and quantitative data they can use to improve and enhance their teaching and overall classroom experience.

Williams has a stated goal of reviewing each academic and administrative department once every ten years. This is a laudable goal, providing the college with valuable insights to shape programs and administrative structures to deliver relevant information and services that will best meet the needs of a constantly evolving population of students. However, The Team learned from our conversations on campus that this schedule has not been consistently maintained. The Team encourages Williams to preserve their intended timeline for review to continue to ensure the high quality of their educational experience.

Affordability is a significant issue on many campuses, and Williams has done their due diligence to ensure they are cognizant of how this challenge relates to their students. Williams has been a forerunner in providing tools and resources to students and their families to help them understand the true cost of their education at the college. Significant financial resources have been dedicated to ensuring that money is not the determining factor in a student’s decision to

attend Williams College. In particular, we discussed middle-income students who can fare least well in the financial aid process, often not qualifying for enough money (based on family income and federal formulas) to be financially feasible. While representatives from the admission and financial aid offices indicated that they have not seen a particularly negative response from this segment of the population, as families tend to want to do everything in their power to make attending Williams possible for their student, this particular population should be monitored in the coming years to ensure equitable representation in their student body. Williams is in the enviable position of being “need seeking” – actually looking for more talented, financially needy students to enroll. The visiting team applauds the efforts made to create a class that is rich in socioeconomic diversity, as the college uses its extensive financial resources to provide opportunities for students to receive a world-class education.

Standard Three: Organization and Governance

There are three main types of organizational issues the Report discusses, each of which The Team had an opportunity to review at some length. These were the Board of Trustees and its organization and role; the central Administration and its organization and role; and the faculty governance structure and its role. In addition, The Team discussed at length the relationship of these three areas and the efficacy of their interaction. In terms of individual responsibilities, we found these three areas to be organized sensibly and enable the College to function well.

Governing Board

The Board of Trustees is the legally constituted body ultimately responsible for Williams' quality and integrity. Its members are sufficiently independent to act in the institution's best interest. The Board understands its fiduciary, strategic, and resource support functions, and is organized through its committee structures to fulfill these responsibilities very well. There are sufficient processes in place to ensure that the Board maintains and enhances its own effectiveness, and its members maintain appropriate and productive channels of communication, both among themselves, and with the members of the Williams community. The Board appropriately delegates responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer and leadership team, and the Board Chair is playing a leading role in the current presidential search.

Internal Governance

The Administration is organized to fulfill its responsibilities with a leadership team tasked with clearly defined and delegated responsibilities, while embedding a collaborative mode of operating. The faculty governance structure is extensive, touching virtually all aspects of College functioning and reflecting a great sense of "ownership" of the College on the part of the faculty. The roles of provost, dean of the college, and dean of the faculty are all drawn from the Williams faculty, with the provost overseeing strategic planning and allocation of resources in order to advance the educational priorities of the college.

Students also have the opportunity to participate in matters of governance, either through collaboration with administrators and deans, and by serving as members of several standing committees. The current presidential search committee includes two student members.

Amidst this fundamental organizational success, we had two overarching concerns about governance and organization: the first about the institutional culture backdrop to how these areas functioned together to make efficacious decisions; the second about the nature of appointments to leadership positions among the faculty leadership lines.

With respect to cultural backdrop, an interesting example is provided by the shift several years ago to having a much more professional financial management team within the central

Administration. This team is now excellent and this move was clearly critical to the long term (and even short-term) success of the College. Until this shift, too much of the financial management was overseen by faculty; a situation that may have worked in the long ago past, but is no longer tenable given the evolving financial complexity of academic institutions. This is an example of excellent evolution, but it was not a simple and universally embraced transition. We offer it as an example not only of a problem that had been solved, but as one in which the degree of authority embedded in faculty governance is held tightly, likely too tightly, to allow a mutually trusting balanced distributed authority structure to function well. There are other examples indicated throughout the report, and summarized in the introduction. This is a manageable problem, but only if there is a recognition of it as an issue to be solved. Right now, there is a great deal of complacency with the current arrangements.

Our second concern was the nature of faculty leadership appointments. In virtually all cases, these appointments are made to current faculty with the assumption that no outside search was even desirable. We understand this to be an important part of the culture of faculty engagement and faculty governance at Williams, both reflecting and enhancing the valuable sense of ownership of the College by the faculty. Continuing a deep level of faculty engagement by making internal appointments is both valuable and reinforcing of important institutional values. On the other hand, there are real trade-offs to such a rigid approach of essentially never including outside candidates in a search. It can reinforce an insular viewpoint, and the complacency around such an insular approach resonates with the degree of complacency around the culture of distributed authority. There are many talented faculty at Williams who have assumed leadership positions and this is not directed at the capabilities of incumbents past or present. Rather, it is a suggestion of more opportunities for Williams in bringing in different perspectives or at least learning what one can from others by considering a more varied talent pool with different perspectives. In contrast, the central administration has made such appointments in the non-academic areas.

The Board's role on these questions may be of some utility. The Board can help enable the next president to advance Williams by working with the faculty and staff to rebalance the nature of distributed authority and decision-making within the governance and organization structure, and to open the campus to becoming less insular.

Standard Four: The Academic Program

One of the oldest and most distinguished institutions of higher education in the country, Williams College supports a Bachelor of Arts degree as well as two small graduate programs offering a Master of Arts in the history of art and in developmental economics. The college enrolls about 2000 students, with a relatively small number (<100) in graduate or non-degree programs. The faculty-student ratio of 7:1 reflects the highly relational approach that the college provides, a notable strength of a Williams education.

The Undergraduate Degree

The undergraduate degree consists of 32 courses, including a major, and four Winter Study courses that provide experiential and extra-disciplinary experiences, and are taken on a pass/fail basis. General education consists of a four-part distribution requirement: three courses in each of three divisions to ensure breadth; courses emphasizing skills in writing and quantitative reasoning; and a new Difference, Power and Equity (DPE) course beginning in 2018. It appears that Williams students are getting both the breadth and depth prescribed in the standards (4.13-4.14), and are acquiring the knowledge and skills associated with an excellent undergraduate education (4.15). Currently, the largest major at the college is Economics, and the social sciences division attracts the most majors (46% of students). Williams also offers concentrations in multidisciplinary areas ranging from public health to global studies and some romance languages. An ongoing challenge at the college is the uneven distribution of majors, and the degree to which resources should be determined by student demand in certain areas.

Review of the E-series forms and of the website indicates that all departments and programs have developed goals and objectives for their majors which are consistent with the newly revised mission statement and the student outcomes implicit therein (4.2-3). The units have also considered strategies for assessing student learning – these approaches are discipline-specific and highly customized, including presentations, capstones, senior projects, proficiency testing, and surveys. These unit-level aspirations combined with the general education requirements suggest that Williams students are getting a coherent, highly personalized education with considerable faculty-student interaction. One unique feature at Williams is the “tutorial,” students working in pairs with a faculty member to address specific topics or questions. Taken together, the various courses and experiences associated with a Williams liberal education seem to prepare students well for life after graduation.

Assuring Academic Quality

At the undergraduate level, Williams has a strong history of shared governance and a highly decentralized approach to the academic program, with considerable decision-making authority

vested at the department and program level. It was clear from conversations with the faculty that they are highly engaged with the curriculum, and take considerable interest in academic affairs. They also appear willing to do the hard work of overseeing the curriculum, from developing a mission statement and a narrative about a Williams education (see Standard 1), to the report on International Programs completed in 2013, and the 2017 review and revision of the diversity requirement.

Further, as the result of the work of a task force in 2013-14, the college has made some structural changes to ensure the quality of the education it provides (4.5). The former Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) found itself burdened with the more routine work of academic affairs, and did not have adequate time to do curricular planning or priority setting. The CEP was therefore reconfigured to create two new committees: the Committee on Educational Affairs (CEA) and the Curricular Planning Committee (CPC). The CEA is a faculty, student and staff committee that is responsible for annual review of the curriculum, the catalog, and academic policies. The projections in Standard 4 identify the CEA as responsible for tracking the efficacy of the new diversity requirement. As the group responsible for curricular areas, the CEA may also want to consider strategies for assessing the effectiveness of the components of the general education curriculum going forward. Additional observations about assessment and educational effectiveness are included in Standard 8.

The CPC consists of six elected faculty members and the president, dean of the faculty and provost. This group is responsible for fostering conversations about curricular direction and planning, as well as making recommendations to the Committee on Appointments and Promotions (CAP) about staffing requests and resource allocation. The CPC initially did some much-needed data collection, including auditing majors and course selection, and summarized their findings in a 2014 report. Key issues identified for attention in the report were advising, an online catalog, the need for broader conversations about the value of the liberal arts, and minors. Some headway has been made in these areas, with liberal arts conversations occurring over the last few years under the leadership of Associate Dean (now DOF) Lee Park. According to the faculty and key administrators, the CPC is now ready to engage in more detailed planning (4.7). The creation of these two committees with revised charges is a significant and important step for Williams as it plans for a wave of retirements and for future curricular growth. Having a college committee that can capitalize on the strengths of a shared model of governance while also working efficiently and effectively will be critical as Williams responds to the external pressures affecting liberal arts institutions.

Two curricular areas are particularly distinctive at Williams and could benefit from a clear articulation of their purpose. Tutorials are labor-intensive and highly valued experiences, in which students work in pairs with a faculty member. Students describe developing capacities in argumentation, critical thinking, and effective use of evidence in these courses, as well as learning to communicate and work effectively with peers and faculty. Along the same lines, Winter Study experiences offer unique learning experiences, as well as a flexible curricular space for extra-disciplinary, experimental or applied work. Despite the apparent importance of these two types of learning experiences, it was not clear to us how they relate to general

education or to a Williams degree. Some students had clearly integrated these experiences with their major area of study, career interests, or co-curricular activities, while others considered them to be separate and distinct learning opportunities.

Despite many academic strengths, there does not seem to be a singular and compelling narrative about the aims of the undergraduate education at Williams. In our meetings, some of the faculty argued against institutional goals related to liberal learning, noting that outcomes were variable by department or program, and should be determined at the unit level. Others offered that the newly revised mission statement provided the guideposts for the Williams approach, and almost all pointed to the iconic image of Mark Hopkins and a student on a log, underscoring the importance of deep engagement with learning at the college. It is clear that the faculty have a strong sense of what they are about, but students are less clear, and the specific goals of a Williams education may not be as discernible outside the institution. A strategy for clarifying the distinctive qualities of the liberal arts at Williams and then deliberately connecting them to the curriculum would strengthen the coherence and legibility of the experience (4.5).

The decentralized approach to a Williams education may also be related to the absence of an institutional strategic plan. The institution tends to organize its activities within sectors, and the academic program is no exception. The absence of an academic roadmap, strategic priorities, or clearly stated institutional learning goals, while effective to date, will continue to present challenges as the college attempts to both plan and assess its academic program in the next decade.

The faculty do make incremental curricular decisions as needed. For example, since the last review, the college added dance in 2009-10 and introduced public health in 2013-14. In addition, three new majors have been approved: Arabic Studies, Environmental Studies, and Statistics. Some of these additions have involved new FTEs, and others are being supported out of existing resources. There have also been consolidations, name changes, and sunseting—all legislated by the faculty. Most notably, having observed some potential overlap and synergies, the CEA has decided to explore some specific multidisciplinary areas in the next year, including performance studies and science and technology. This more centralized approach to curricular review will benefit the college in the long run by avoiding redundancy and curricular duplication. Similarly, the self-study notes that the CEA will review reconfigurations that represent “substantial changes” to curriculum, allowing all faculty to be aware of curricular revisions across the college. Overall, it seems the work of the CEA and the CPC is unfolding as planned. Assessing the effectiveness of both of these new committees as they execute their new respective charges will be important going forward.

The college engages in decennial reviews of its departments and programs, which include a self-study and a campus visit by a team of external reviewers. The reviews provided in the workroom vary considerably, but appear to be thorough, sometimes include alumni surveys or other types of academic assessment, and often culminate in specific recommendations. These reviews are a critical opportunity for departments and programs to evaluate their performance

against external markers, and in consultation with the CAP and the CPC, to engage in substantive planning for the future. Reviews can also help illuminate student learning in the major by incorporating indirect and direct assessment strategies. Currently, the reviews are somewhat behind schedule, with seven units overdue for evaluation. In addition, the interdisciplinary programs have only had internal reviews, and will require external evaluations in the near future. The college may have to accelerate the schedule over the next few years to ensure that each unit undergoes evaluation in a timely fashion. These department and program reviews are particularly important in light of rapidly changing fields and the need to engage in strategic curricular planning related to pending retirements.

General Education

The general education requirements provide breadth and depth, and are designed to prepare students for “the world in which they will live” (Standard 4.16). The requirements ensure writing proficiency, exposure to multiple modes of inquiry with divisional requirements, and quantitative training. Students are encouraged to complete at least one writing requirement early in their career. In addition, there is a single required course on Difference, Power and Equity (DPE), a requirement that was recently revised after a thorough report exploring the success of the Exploring Diversity Initiative (EDI) requirement, which was viewed as “too focused on ‘otherness’ and therefore as alienating to many students.” The college should be commended for undertaking the evaluation of the previous requirement, and making the needed improvements. The new courses designated as DPE possible will expose students to “social differences, dynamics of unequal power, and processes of change.” As of fall, 2018 a single course in this area will be required of all students. The requirement is consistent with the college’s commitment to increasingly diversify the campus, but the specific goals of the requirement are not presented in the materials or on the website. The revised mission includes the statement, “we seek to develop in students the capacity to see beyond the limits of their own experience.” Presumably, the new requirement speaks to this particular outcome, but a clear articulation of the objectives of the DPE requirement will be useful for evaluating the success of this particular revision over time.

The need for objectives for the DPE requirement is symptomatic of a more general concern related to academic assessment. To date, Williams has not systematically evaluated outcomes for general education requirements, although it has made progress in identifying a measure of quantitative reasoning, and has convened groups to talk about the skills and competencies associated with the various requirements. The college has also used indirect assessment, like senior surveys, to explore curricular areas. Assessment issues will be addressed in Standard 8, but Standard 4 requires that an institution “provides criteria for...evaluation, including the assessment of what students learn” (4.16). Clear, measurable outcomes for the general education requirements that map onto the mission-derived ends would lay the groundwork for a more coherent narrative about the curriculum and what it is designed to accomplish. Although not every outcome associated with liberal education is conducive to measurement,

skills like writing or quantitative proficiency have been successfully tracked at many similar institutions.

The Major or Concentration

Departments, programs and concentrations at Williams appear to be highly autonomous in determining their curricula and structures, are described as “self-governing,” and are organized around majors. Based on the college catalog, the 36 majors appear to have the sequenced coursework and prerequisites that ensure a developmental approach to specialization in the field, and all have goals and objectives (4.19). In contrast, majors in programs are governed by advisory committees consisting of faculty with a portion of their FTE in the program as well as faculty from other units. Most majors consist of nine courses, allowing ample opportunity for students to explore other disciplinary areas.

Concerns in this area are the issue of an increasing number of double majors (currently at 42%), which some faculty find troubling, and the student emphasis on credentialing. The question of double majoring appears to be complex, with certain units in the humanities supporting multiple majors, and the heavily subscribed majors in the social sciences expressing concern. The uneven distribution of majors across divisions is also an ongoing issue.

Graduate Programs

Williams has two small graduate programs, one in Developmental Economics, and one in the History of Art. The enrollment in both programs appears to be steady over time. The Center for Development Economics (CDE) has clear objectives posted on the website and linked in the E forms, and the content of the program and the teaching faculty appear to be appropriate for graduate-level training in economics (4.20). Students come from NGOs or public service in middle and low-income countries such as Afghanistan, Madagascar, and Bolivia. Students begin the 10-month program with a boot camp in quantitative areas, and complete a combination of required courses and electives, with a strong emphasis on writing skills. As the accreditation self-study notes, this program is independent of the undergraduate major in Economics, but enriches the experience of students in both areas. The program is considering new areas such as climate change, refugee movements, and gender for their curriculum. The CDE was reviewed in 2017, and changes have been made in the program as a result of the self-study and the external committee’s recommendations. Recruitment processes (including attention to language skills) graduation rates, and student outcomes suggest that the program is meeting the expectations of the college (4.23).

Similarly, the M.A. program in the History of Art enrolls a dozen new students a year, and has goals described on the website. The program allows students to capitalize on the extraordinary local collections and museum opportunities, as well as to gain exposure to international

collections. “Grad Art” students are required to take 12 courses and have a variety of applied experiences, from curatorial work to international travel. The program requires breadth of study geographically and chronologically, a method course, proficiency in two languages and a qualifying paper (4.20). The program was last reviewed in 2008, and is therefore due for review in the near future. Outcomes for students are consistent with the goals of the program, and are typically either museum employment or Ph.D. programs in art history. Currently, Standard 4 projections suggest that the program is working on the development of summer research and internship opportunities, financial aid, and diversity in the applicant pool.

At this point, neither graduate program appears to be assessing learning outcomes in systematic ways. The employment and graduate student outcomes for the History of Art program suggest that the program is successful, but both programs could benefit from collecting more information about student achievement and outcomes (see 4.24).

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit

The college’s policies on awarding credit appear to be sound and consistent with commission policy, and the array of courses offered is aligned with the published catalog (4.31). Williams has revised their credit hour designation to 3.75 credit hours per course to accommodate their 13-week semester. Courses vary in seat time, with a minimum of 3 hours per course, but the expectation is 10 hours of engagement outside the course each week, and the total is consistent with the credit hour designation. The 2017 memo from the CEA on credit designations provides clear justification of this approach. Students complete 32 courses plus their winter study requirements, accruing more than the 120 hours required for the baccalaureate degree (4.29). More than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the credits must be completed at the institution, consistent with the accreditation rules (4.36), and the faculty oversee the award of credit and grading in consultation with the registrar and the CEP/CEA. Transfer credits or credits earned abroad are aligned with the criteria for awarding credit generally (4.37-4.38), and graduation requirements are clearly posted on the college’s website (4.43). Processes for awarding credit for the courses offered off campus, for example at the Williams-Exeter program at Oxford, are similar to those for on campus courses (4.46). The college does not offer distance or correspondence education, and does not award credit for competency-based learning at this time (4.47).

Standard Five: Students

Admissions

Williams College continues its long history of strong admissions results, achieving a target first-year class enrollment in the mid-500s and overall enrollment of just over 2000 students. The focus of the college since the last decennial review has been on access and increasing the number of high-achieving low-income (HALI) students. The College has made significant progress by increasing financial aid resources, expanding admissions pathways through program partnerships, and developing new support structures on campus. These strategies have enabled Williams to enroll increasingly diverse first-year classes—for example, the self-study notes that the Class of 2021 is 41 percent domestic students of Color, eight percent international students, and 20 percent first-generation college students.

In order to reach their enrollment goals, Williams has developed policies and practices to realize their targets. The Team was impressed with the way that Williams has mobilized its efforts to achieve these goals. Most notably, Williams increased its financial aid budget by 87 percent, engaged the use of student search with a focus on HALI students, waived application fees, and partnered with programs such as Questbridge, College Green Light, American Talent Initiative, Service to School/Vetlink, and several other similar programs. In addition, Williams launched an ambitious program called Windows on Williams (WOW) that has been very successful and will be further expanded. The all-expense paid three-day trip for roughly 200 students provides prospective students the opportunity to experience Williams in a way that enables the College to introduce their approach to education to a population of students who may not initially be interested in attending a small liberal arts college in a rural setting. Several of Williams' peer institutions offer similar programs; therefore, it will be important for Williams to continue to identify ways to differentiate itself. Last year, eight percent of the class was comprised of WOW students

In the self-study, Williams describes the careful management of financial aid, which enables students to attend Williams with minimal loans (per capita student loan debt for the class of 2017 was \$5,716). This is facilitated by the fact that Williams offers students on financial aid required books at no charge, and an increased amount of resources for ancillary expenses. As a continuing part of their work to make Williams affordable, it will be important for Williams to pay particular attention to affordability for middle-income families in order to ensure that there is socioeconomic diversity in the student population.

Williams maintains a competitive admissions process that enables them to select a diverse, talented group of students. The staff is trained to understand family and school contexts so that students are not at a competitive disadvantage due to not having access to certain programs. The admission office regularly works with institutional research to analyze the factors they use to predict academic success at Williams and periodically review their methodology and outcomes with the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid.

Williams also runs two competitive graduate programs, a Master's of Art in the History of Art (Grad Art) and a master's program at the Center for Development Economics (CDE). Both of these programs have seen a rise in financial aid and they have attracted a more diverse pool of applicants. These programs have their own unique approaches to admissions and selection to enhance the outreach to potential applicants and they offer a rich array of support that helps ensure students' success at Williams.

As Williams looks to the future, they are focused on continuing to build on their admission success and, in particular, on the refining of the admission process and awarding of financial aid. To lead this effort, in 2017 they appointed the College's first dean of admission and financial aid in order to provide senior level leadership to the work of these two offices.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences

At Williams during the past ten years, student services developed with increases in staffing and a new organizational structure. Growth in staffing has been particularly focused in health, counseling, the Davis Center (formerly the multicultural center), academic resources, and career counseling. Three senior-level leaders work together to coordinate efforts related to students' experience on campus—Dean of the College, Vice President for Institutional Diversity and Equity, and Vice President of Campus Life. The Team found that this structure is an asset to the College because of the way that division leaders and their staff groups are able to collaborate to support an increasingly diverse student body.

Williams offers all the student services and programs one would expect at a small residential liberal arts college, including a very competitive intercollegiate athletics program, residential life program, health and counseling, academic resources, and orientation program. Many of the areas in student services have undergone significant planning and development processes in recent years. Combined with Williams' commitment to financial aid, described earlier, the College has invested heavily in students' out of classroom experience to support students and ensure that students have access to a wide array of academic and co-curricular experiences at the College.

During this past ten-year-period Williams has made a commitment to a systematic renewal of its residence halls. Given the many competing priorities for capital expenditure, The Team was pleased to see that Williams developed a 20-year residence hall renovation plan that included the construction of a new residence hall to serve as swing space. This thoughtful and strategic approach to the housing renovation cycle enables Williams to execute their plans to raise funds for the renovations and continually improve student housing.

Concerning the residential program that supports students, it is worth noting that Williams is paying particular attention to the specific developmental and educational needs of their students. The College has a long history of a vibrant first-year living program through the "entry" experience which is led by the Junior Advisor (JA) – a coveted role on campus and a

critically important student leader who supports first-year students' transition to the College. JAs go through extensive training and are introduced to a support network that they can rely on when necessary. However, as the College considers strategies related to student wellbeing, it will be important to continually evaluate the ways with which JAs refer students to professional staff when challenges students experience go beyond what JAs can manage on their own.

For upperclass students, during the past ten-year period the College has been developing new approaches that support the diversity of interests and needs that upperclass students have related to housing. Beginning with the upperclass planning process and continuing today, there are regular meetings that are focused on providing feedback and discussing new opportunities to enhance the upperclass residential experience. The Team was encouraged to hear about the ways that Williams continues to think purposefully and creatively about the upperclass experience.

Williams is in the early efforts to develop an innovative holistic approach to student wellbeing. A year-long study led to an integrative approach to health and counseling by having co-directors for administrative, medical, and psychological services. Williams, in recent years, also doubled its counseling staff and now has what they describe as one of the lowest total student to clinician ratios in the country. The Team was impressed with the way that Williams is seeking to support students through both proactive and reactive strategies to address physical and mental health. Teaching students strategies for self-care and community care will enable the College to best support students during their four years and prepare them for life after College. It is clear from the president, trustees, and staff that student wellbeing is a priority that is regularly discussed at Williams, but the staff articulated a desire to have broader discussions with faculty to develop strategies for an institution-wide approach to student wellbeing.

The Team found that a particularly robust set of enhancements in student services is centered around supporting the increasingly diverse student body at Williams. A central hub of activity in this area is the Davis Center, which offers a broad array of programming, engagement opportunities, and leadership development programs focused on issues of identity, history, and culture. In the self-study Williams describes how the center plays a significant role in shaping the intellectual, creative, and social life on campus. It is particularly noteworthy that the Davis Center staff includes two rotating faculty members that collaborate with the staff to expand support for students, particularly as it relates to student academic life. Williams also has a dedicated dean for international students with specialized training and expertise to support this population of students, their clubs and organizations, while also partnering with other offices (e.g. counseling) in order to best support students in their transition to Williams. The College has also expanded student support through religious and spiritual life—they now have four full-time chaplains (recently added a Muslim chaplain) and conducted a comprehensive study that identified space and programming improvements needed in this area. Williams is not only focused on supporting its increasingly diverse student body, but also their parents. They have expanded outreach to parents given that they have a growing number of families who are unfamiliar with Williams and higher education.

An area where Williams is beginning to offer renewed focus is the Career Center. During the Team's campus visit, senior students described a center that has historically focused in a narrow set of fields for internships and jobs and a center that students largely connect with later in their years at Williams. The Center has a new director and this director is beginning a transformational process that seeks to make the Career Center more open to a diversity of fields and one that students connect with during all four years at the College.

Williams continues to focus on developing new strategies for pre-major advising and, following assessment of their approach, has implemented changes to try to address student dissatisfaction. Among the changes, Williams improved the advisor-student matching process, enhanced advisor preparation, and moved the first contact between advisors and students from August to June. Despite these initiatives, students continue to report that pre-major advising does not meet their expectations. It is important to the Williams community that all faculty be involved in pre-major advising—this approach to advising ensures broad faculty engagement yet it also makes it difficult to offer consistency in the depth of engagement and in articulating a shared perspective on the liberal arts at Williams.

Williams administrators reported a wide range of variation in faculty members' interest and ability to serve as a mentor, which is what many students are hoping for in their early years at Williams. On this same topic, staff who used to serve as formal advisors, when that opportunity was offered, lament the fact that they can no longer be a part of students' education in this way. The Team found that Williams offers a wide array of support through a deeply dedicated faculty and staff who connect with students in a wide array of ways given the close-knit community on the campus. It may be timely for Williams to consider how other Colleges are approaching advising and how these methods may be incorporated into the Williams approach to improve students' support system in the first two years at the College.

The College provides easy access, via a public website, to policies, procedures, and ethical standards that guide student academic and non-academic engagement on campus. The honor system is a pivotal component of the student academic experience on campus and the honor and discipline committee, with the support of the Dean of the College, is a highly respected and engaged group that hears academic cases and serves in an appellate role for code of conduct cases. The code of conduct sets expectations for out of the classroom and these policies were reviewed this past fall with some changes made in consultation with faculty, staff, and students. The policies are emailed to students each year and when substantive changes are made.

The main webpage that presents the College policies is comprehensive in that it includes information on a wide variety of expectations for students and informs students on how the College manages many of its processes (e.g. student conduct, document retention, student privacy). While the website is informative given the volume of information available, it is not organized in a manner that enables students to grasp the larger context of institutional values and expectations upon which the policies and expectations are based. The policies are listed alphabetically and link to a variety of inconsistently styled web pages.

Williams may want to consider grounding these policies and procedures in its educational mission and frame its community standards in a manner that is uniquely Williams that will highlight its values as a community. The Team recommends reviewing other college and university student handbooks to consider how a revision of how Williams' material is framed and organized may improve the readability of the material and enhance the community's understanding of how an extensive set of policies connect to a core set of values that define the Williams experience. This type of unifying approach to the student handbook can enhance students' transition to the College and support the community during difficult periods where the administration needs to rely on the student handbook to address individual or community concerns.

Standard Six: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

Faculty and Academic Staff

As of the fall of 2017, Williams College has a faculty totaling 337 FTE, with 252 individual faculty members in tenured or tenure-track positions, 53 in visiting positions, and 32 in non-tenure track but non-visiting positions such as lecturers and instructors. By proportion, these three categories of faculty represent respectively 75, 15, and 10 percent of the FTE sum. Williams' faculty grew by 31 FTE—or about nine percent of the present total—from 2006 to 2016. However, during this same period, the number of tenure-track faculty at Williams has grown only by an extremely miniscule two FTE (less than one percent), as part of a strategy of countering of considerable growth of the prior decade from 1996 to 2006, when the tenure-line faculty ranks had expanded by more than 50 FTE.

In keeping with its longstanding goal of admitting and retaining as diverse as possible a student body, Williams has in recent years come to regard the diversification of its faculty as a paramount objective. Apart from the vigilance devoted to maintaining salaries and benefits at levels—currently above the 95th percentile for all baccalaureate institutions—designed to attract the most talented applicants, diversity is now an important consideration in all faculty recruitment and hiring. With the offices of the Dean of the Faculty (DOF) and Institutional Diversity and Equity (OIDE) setting the parameters, very nearly every hire at Williams results from a national search, in which the institutional investment in sustaining a nondiscriminatory environment is underscored. Moreover, pursuant to recommendations from its last accreditation visit, Williams now makes all hiring offers contingent upon the selected candidate's successful completion of a background check that not only verifies educational credentials and previous employment history but also the absence of any criminal record as well as sexual offender status.

The self-study reveals that the most pressing among the challenges that the Williams faculty faces by far is the depletion of its most senior ranks through retirement. Currently of its 252 tenure-line faculty, 159 (63 percent) are full professors and 38 (15 percent) are associate professors. Thus, as those who are more senior retire progressively in greater numbers and are replaced increasingly by those at the junior ranks, all expect that the tenured to tenure-eligible ratio among the Williams faculty will quickly reverse. Consequently, Williams has commenced an aggressive initiative for the hiring of tenure-eligible assistant professors, recruiting 15 of this cohort in 2016 and planning to add 20 or more in 2017. Moreover, Williams expects to hire approximately 100 new faculty members within the next seven to eight years. Anticipated is that the ratio of tenured to non-tenured faculty will then revert to that of 2006—66:34 instead of the present 78:22—within three to four years. Ideally, this will be accomplished with the overall size of the tenure-line faculty remaining essentially the same.

Whereas the numbers of tenure-line faculty members remained effectively fixed over the period from 2006 to 2016, by contrast, the FTE counts of the non-tenure track and visiting faculty at Williams grew considerably, with non-tenure track faculty having increased by 14 FTE

(78 percent) and visitors by 16 FTE (43 percent). Three reasons are given for the growth of these two remaining categories of faculty. Assuredly most important among these reasons, because of its intimate connection with the ambitious recruitment of tenure-track assistant professors, is the increased hiring of academic spouses and partners, typically as visitors at the outset with the prospect of conversion via promotion to non-visiting status. Given its rural location, such appointments have understandably proven to be an indispensable recruitment and retention tool at Williams.

Faculty members at Williams generally express satisfaction with the college's direction and the trajectory of its success. However, faculty members apprised the visiting team of a number of concerns, some of which are directly connected to the curriculum and others tied to instructional resources. Oftentimes, however, the concerns arising in these two spheres are intimately related and mutually influential upon each other. Although the faculty has subjected these concerns to much scrutiny and discussion, thus far, any formal and comprehensive solutions have been elusive.

One example of curricular concern at Williams that the faculty repeatedly made known to the visiting team is an almost universal apprehensiveness about the increasing number of students seeking to "over-credentialize" themselves through the pursuit of double and other types of combined majors. With it being a national phenomenon, faculty members realize and appreciate that much of this trend stems from the perceived belief on the part of students that such majors will make them more marketable. Yet, with the average major already consisting of nine courses, faculty members also question the extent to which having students complete effectively half their courses of study at Williams in essentially only two disciplines is genuinely in the spirit of the liberal arts, even inasmuch as it is variously understood throughout the community. However, the practical effect of this trend is that it creates disproportionately uneven pressures across the faculty for both instruction and advising.

Another example of how a trend in curriculum threatens to impact teaching resources adversely is the increasing subscription by students of the departments of Economics, Computer Science, and Statistics, each of which has witnessed a marked upsurge in majors. To date, with regard to the planned increase in faculty hires, much as in the past, the relatively new Curricular Planning Committee (CPC) and the longstanding Committee on Appointments and Promotion (CAP) are seen as continuing to subscribe to the principle of curricular as opposed to strict enrollment equity in the allocation of faculty positions. Nevertheless, owing to continuing enrollment pressures, there is the undercurrent suspicion that Economics, Computer Science, and Statistics in particular stand to be eventually favored over other ones in the allocation of future positions.

Given its potential to influence the longstanding convention of faculty-shared governance at Williams either positively or negatively, there is also much understandable interest in, if not outright concern about, the ongoing presidential search. Faculty members at Williams take collective pride in a governance paradigm that they describe as one in which change generates "from the bottom up" and they express discomfort with any form that they construe as "top

down.” The search itself is only in the initial stages but faculty members convey their strong preference for a new president who cherishes working with the faculty to reach institutional goals held in common.

Teaching and Learning

The faculty members of Williams College are unquestionably dedicated steadfastly to the teaching and learning of their students. The signature curricular fixture for which Williams is known is most certainly its tutorial, which was an innovation instituted in 1988 as a modified borrowing from that same practice as conducted at Oxford and Cambridge universities. Departing from the convention of one tutor meeting with one individual student, at Williams, tutorials typically involve semester-long courses taught by a single instructor with up to ten students who are then immediately paired and thereafter engage each other weekly for one hour in critical debate based on pre-submitted written work under the moderating presence and guidance of the instructor. Students may take a tutorial at any point in their careers at Williams but they are limited to a maximum of five total, with two-thirds of all Williams graduates either taking a tutorial or completing a thesis. Tutorial participation has in fact doubled since the early 1990s, growing from about 30 percent then to 60 percent now.

Faculty members at Williams are also much invested in student advising. Entering students are assigned to faculty advisors on the basis of prospective major as well as extracurricular interest. Normally there are only three to four advisees per faculty member. Such modest advising load numbers per faculty member prior to the declaration of majors by students are reflective of Williams on the whole, where the student-faculty ratio is a highly favorable 7:1.

New faculty, for their part, upon arrival on campus, become participants in the unique First Three program provided by Williams, wherein they are introduced to the community through the establishment of mentoring relationships that are designed not only to ensure their comfort and competence as instructors but also to foster their professional and scholarly development. Over their first three years, junior members are integrated into the Williams faculty at large through such social functions as regularized dinners and seminars on topics such as “Teaching Tutorials.”

Tenure-track faculty members can normally expect a pre-tenure review leave in the fourth year of continuous teaching and, upon successful promotion to tenure, one semester of leave for every six semesters of teaching. Faculty members enjoy a professional development travel allotment of \$3,000 or the equivalent (for faculty in Division III: Sciences and Mathematics) annually. Associate professors are reviewed for promotion to full professor internally and without the solicitation of external reviewers. Williams faculty members have begun to engage the question of how new forms of scholarly production are to be assessed within the contexts of faculty reviews and expect that conversation to be ongoing.

Much of the official language (such as in the Williams Faculty Handbook) pertaining to academic freedom and the faculty at Williams is understandably associated with the protocols for reappointment, tenure, and promotion, and particularly with the denial thereof. Nevertheless, well worth noting is that the collective stance of the Williams faculty regarding academic freedom is premised on the tacit assumption that it is a foundational and irremovable intellectual value. In that spirit, Williams regularly invites to campus academic scholars, public intellectuals, government policy-makers representing the complete spectrum of ideas and positions. In essences, especially in light of the present national debate that too often pits the principles of freedom of expression against those of diversity and inclusion, its faculty has contributed as substantively as any other portion of its community to making Williams a place where both sets of values are welcome and can constructively flourish.

In sum, the faculty members of Williams College are effective and dedicated teacher-scholars, administering to the institution in ways that are wholly consistent with its mission. The institution is also steadily, if incrementally, advancing toward embracing an increasing number of metrics in assessing faculty and especially teaching effectiveness that are more objective than in the past. There is a sobering recognition that an immense amount of work remains to be done at Williams but there is also a vigorous dialogue underway within the institution concerning its academic priorities as well as the best ways in the present and future to forge conformance, congruity, and alignment between its mission and its practices.

Standard Seven: Institutional Resources

Williams College has a history of strong financial performance with overall assets of over \$3.5 billion. During the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017, Williams' net assets increased by \$303 million (12%) from \$2.533 billion to \$2.836 billion in large part to strong endowment performance and fundraising. Williams' endowment per student is \$1.2 million, one of the largest among small liberal arts colleges, providing significant resources for its academic and student programs.

Human Resources

In 2017, Williams had approximately 850 staff with a ratio of 2.5 staff to each faculty member. This ratio has persisted over the past 10 years even with the hiring of 88 FTE staff, primarily in student services and instructional support functions. Over this time period, staff size has grown (14%) but not as fast as of faculty (20%). Based on its analysis of the number of faculty, students, and facilities square footage, Williams has an adequate number of staff to provide programmatic support and services.

Williams recently instituted a performance evaluation process that stresses goal setting, goal achievement, and professional development. At the open forum, staff expressed concerns that the evaluation process was not well-defined or understood and implemented inconsistently as not all staff were evaluated. Also, the lack of overall college-wide goals made goal-setting difficult.

There are two staff handbooks (administrative and support) that outline current Williams employment policies and practices. There are also two staff committees, the Staff Advisory Council and the Williams Staff Committee, that deal with issues directly related to staff as well as institutional policies and practices. Staff felt frustrated that the ideas and concerns generated by these committees were not taken seriously by the administration and faculty, and they had no input or communication on major college issues. In addition, concerns related to conflict resolution and professional development funding were expressed. Human Resources should consider surveying staff to obtain a more comprehensive assessment of issues.

Financial Resources

Williams' endowment market value of \$2.4 billion as of June 30, 2017, has more than doubled from \$1.0 billion in 2005, with a 10-year annualized performance of 7.3% outperforming its policy portfolio benchmark by over 2% over this time period. The endowment is managed by an experienced Investment Committee and three advisory committees. Beginning in 2006, the Investment Committee is assisted by a separate Chief Investment Officer (CIO). The CIO provides reports to the Board of Trustees at each of its meetings.

Financial responsibility at Williams is in the hands of the Provost, the Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA), and the Chief Investment Officer. The VPFA is the chief financial officer, and his primary responsibility is to the organization. The financial team is well qualified. Key financial assumptions and projections are reviewed with the Budget and Financial Planning Committee (B&FP) of the Board with approval of the next year's budget by the full Board in April. The Board committee having oversight of financial functions, including approval of the College's budgets, appears to function with an appropriate segregation of duties including a formal policy on ethics and conflict of interest.

Review of the College's audited financial statements as of, and for the year ended, June 30, 2017, indicated the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles standards. The audit was performed by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC. At the time of this review, management letters had not been issued by the College's auditors. The Audit Committee takes appropriate action in its review and acceptance of the financial statements.

Expenses are tied to Williams' educational mission. Based on the 2017 audited financial statements, 68% of the expenditures were related to instruction, academic support, and student services; the remainder was spent on administration, alumni and development, and auxiliary enterprises.

The Board of Trustees has established a spending rate of 5.0% of the endowment's market value averaged over the past twelve quarters. Endowment spending represents almost half of Williams' total revenue, making it central to its economic resources but also the largest financial risk to its budget model. Given this relationship to the budget, endowment spending is the lever for Williams' financial sustainability. Endowment liquidity is provided through cash, fixed income, and equity index funds that can be called upon in a day's notice. Williams also has \$80 million in lines of credits that can be used for liquidity purposes for the endowment or operations.

Williams' admission process is need-seeking and meets 100% of demonstrated financial need with a focus on diversifying its student body. As a result of its enrollment success, it has a relatively high overall undergraduate discount rate that reached 48% in 2014 but is currently lower, 40-45% range. This level of financial aid support is supported by a large endowment and fundraising. Financial aid policies are review by the Board's B&FP Committee.

Fundraising remains strong. The Teach It Forward comprehensive campaign has twin goals of \$650 million in gifts and 75% participation concluding June 2019. Through July 2017, Williams raised \$560 million (86% of its goal) and had 72% (96% of its goal) alumni participation, putting it on track to exceed its goals by campaign end. Campaign priorities include annual and parents' funds, financial aid, faculty, science, and the student experience. Fundraising supports both the operating and capital budgets. For example, gifts will fund almost 50% of the over \$200 million new science center project. Annual alumni participation is around 50%, a decrease tracking a nationwide trend but still above nationwide norms.

Williams stress tests the annual budget with lower endowment returns in its five-year planning model. The College has multi-year operating budgets over a 5-year horizon, based on projected revenue and expense increases with a focus on endowment spending within the spending policy guidelines. As part of this strategy, it also stress tests the major revenue assumptions, identifying possible actions to offset lost revenue or additional expenses. This allows the College to analyze its financial condition and take action as necessary. These models show that Williams can maintain its program and services through an economic downturn through expense reductions or increases in endowment draw. This planning model provides context for current budget decisions on future resources and detecting structural budget deficits.

The budget process is incremental, based on existing budgets and rolling forecasts, plus any incremental funding. All requests for new money are assessed by the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) that consists of faculty (including chair), key senior staff, and students, and is advisory to the President. The Provost and VPFA communicate appropriate financial information to the Board of Trustees and the Williams community through its “Financial Fundamentals” presentation that also serves as a key performance indicator dashboard. Ongoing status of the budget is reviewed by the Provost and VPFA, and updates are presented at each Board meeting.

Information, Physical, and Technological Resources

Williams has three libraries and an off-campus library shelving facility (LSF). Since the 5-year review, Williams has made significant capital improvements in adapting its library and technology environment to meet the evolving needs of its students and faculty, implementing new modes of service delivery, and adapting to a fast-moving information environment. Most notable among those changes is the significant new main library completed in 2014 at a cost of \$86 million, Sawyer Library, resulting a new academic hub and “town commons” for the campus along with the creation of studio and maker-spaces. The LSF created capacity in the Sawyer Library to allow a proper mix of collaboration and scholarship space as well as housing collections. The Chapin Library is housed within the Sawyer Library and its focus is archives and rare-book collections. The Schow Science Library has been renovated twice since 2001 to expand seating and add two large classrooms.

Long-term planning and appropriate resource allocation to support Williams’ access to library materials is central for its instructional and research missions. In 2017, the College spent \$3.2 million (all funds) on acquisitions, physical and digital. Consortia relationships also allow Williams to maintain an appropriate mix of print and digital materials to fulfill its mission.

Williams has made progress in creating in-roads, either through relationships with faculty or directly with students, to support information literacy. It has hired a librarian to focus on information literacy outreach and this will continue to be a priority in the future.

A new Director of Libraries started August 2017 upon the retirement of the prior director. One of his goals is to develop a more formal long-term planning process to meet the changing needs of faculty, students, academic programs, and departments. This planning is important as libraries shift focus away from collections to scholarship and collaboration as well as meeting the needs of diverse groups of faculty and students.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) is headed by a Chief Information Officer who is also the Chief Information Security Officer. Planning is both short-term tactical based on specific needs of users and long-term related to technological infrastructure. It has policies and procedures posted on the OIT pages to ensure the reliability of its systems, the integrity and security of data, and the privacy of individuals. Williams has had no reported data breach incidents. Williams is part of a consortium with three peer liberal arts colleges that has hired an information security firm to advise on security practices and policies. It also has a disaster and recovery plan that is reviewed annually by its auditors.

Williams' technical infrastructure and network are comprehensive. Williams has a 2.0 GB Internet connection, critical given its reliance on virtual and cloud computing with the implementation of Canvas (learning management system) in 2015 and the core Google Suite for Education in 2014. Approximately 70% of faculty and 99% of students use the learning management system. The wireless network has over 900 access points campus-wide and there is a plan to upgrade it over the next three years.

General support for use of library resources and technology is provided both through the library and through academic technology. Feedback from students is positive on the availability and quality of this support. A program now going into its third year is a partnership between the Library and OIT where a librarian and information technologist jointly visit individual faculty members to learn how best to support their scholarship. This program has potential to more accurately identify faculty requests as well as enhance the partnership between the Library and OIT.

Williams has 2.7 million square feet of structures, 450 acres of grounds and 2,600 acres of forest. Facilities Operations takes care of grounds and existing buildings, while Design and Construction oversees new construction. Williams explicitly does not have a master plan (see Standard 2 on Assessment and Evaluation). A great deal of renovation and new construction is underway as catch-up from deferrals due to the recent economic downturn. The largest project is the science center project to be completed in 2020 at an estimated cost of \$204 million.

Physical resource planning at Williams is integrated with financial planning through the five-year financial planning model. The Board approves the annual renewal budget as part of the annual budget process and all capital projects (typically more than \$2 million). The VPFA has authority of real estate transactions up to \$500,000. Over that amount, Board approval is required.

Capital planning is based on geographical or functions resulting in "sector plans" and are reviewed by the Operations and Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees. Examples

include residential (also see Standard 5 Students), science, Spring Street, etc. Priorities identified by Williams for capital allocations include:

- Integral to the academic mission of serving students and faculty
- Safety related, i.e., avoidance of liability and risk
- Capital preservation related, i.e., avoidance of unnecessary future costs
- ROI projects, e.g., returning investment in energy efficiency

Capital planning also focuses on sustainability with representatives from the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives included on building committees. In 2015, the administration and Board announced a \$50 million (over 5 years) initiative related to climate change and carbon reduction/neutrality by 2020. To date, the program has supported the addition of two new faculty positions related to climate change scholarship, a geo-thermal system for a residence hall, a local solar project, and other smaller energy efficiency initiatives on campus.

The 2018 budget includes \$15 million for capital renewal. All campus and building infrastructure are evaluated by Facilities Operations, CPR, the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives, the Provost, and the VPFA.

Williams leverages its sizable endowment as capacity for future borrowing. As of June 30, 2017, the financial statements show \$417 million (17% of its endowment market value) of outstanding long-term indebtedness. The \$417 million in outstanding bonds compares to \$305 million in 2016. Roughly 65% of the debt is fixed rate. Williams has interest rate swaps in place for \$48 million (32%) of its variable rate debt; the swap agreement effectively fixes the interest rate on this portion at 3.457%. Bond financings must be approved by the B&FP. Williams has a debt policy and plans to keep its annual debt service at 10% of its total revenue which it is currently slightly above.

Standard Eight: Educational Effectiveness

Assessment of student learning at Williams is based in the academic departments and programs, reflecting their philosophy that assessment is discipline-based. While faculty committees, and to a lesser extent the institutional leadership, play a guiding role, almost all assessment occurs at the individual, course, and program level with support from the Institutional Research Office.

Goals and Leadership

Williams College operates in a decentralized manner, and their system of assessment of student learning is no different. The institution provides public statements about what students are expected to gain from their education mainly through posting curricular goals on departmental websites. At the institutional level, Williams' admission website states:

At Williams you'll follow your passions and discover new ones along the way. You'll be challenged to think, learn and do research in new and different ways. You'll be part of an incredibly close-knit, diverse community. You'll get to know your professors—really. You'll be prepared for your first job—and your last one.

The College's mission statement includes the following about the educational experience:

But it is the teaching gene that especially defines Williams professors. They devote sustained attention every year to assessing the quality and freshness of the curriculum, and to crafting pedagogical approaches that help nurture in their students a passionate pleasure in the life of the mind. Faculty members invite students to become partners in the process of intellectual discovery. That partnership becomes visible in every classroom, where students are expected to contribute rather than consume; in the challenging setting of Williams tutorials, where students take the lead in explaining what is interesting and consequential about that week's assignment; and in the College's ambitious programs to engage students directly in faculty research.

At Williams, faculty are fully engaged in the assessment of student learning at the individual and department level. A review of the completed E-Series Form shows a multitude of methodologies, including capstones and surveys of seniors and alums. These are in addition to the course grades and feedback, which are the foundation of any assessment program. Academic and institutional leadership support assessment but are somewhat limited in what they can accomplish at the college-wide or general education level since assessment is entrenched at the department level. A committee made up of faculty to advise on institution-

wide assessment would help the academic leadership pursue more rigorous—and direct—measures of assessment in the general education program.

Methodology

Williams uses a variety of methodologies—both quantitative and qualitative—at both the department and program level. The Institutional Research office (IR office) is highly regarded for supporting assessment and evaluation activity with quality quantitative data analysis in a highly responsive manner. Many groups we met with referred to IR data sets such as the “thriving” dashboard, which the Diversity Action Research Team (DART) group uses to monitor the institution’s success in serving all students, including people of color and those from other underrepresented populations, to ensure equitable access to institutional resources—including STEM courses. The newly formed Curricular Planning Committee (CPC) also relies heavily on IR for data to inform their work. There is concern, however, with the increased activity of the CPC and other committees that the IR office’s capacity to take on more requests is becoming limited and the committees should not be taking it upon themselves to do large amounts of data creation and analyses. Williams should consider adding additional staff to the IR office in order to meet the expanding need for data.

We also found that direct assessment of general education goals (writing, quantitative, distribution requirements) is accomplished mainly through activities at the department level. Capstone courses are utilized by about half of the departments, and they are very much tied to the discipline. Virtually all of the capstones, however, incorporate evaluation of writing, speaking, and critical thinking. The tutorial program—especially the upper-level courses—provide an opportunity for the faculty to assess, on a personal level, the accomplishments of the students concerning those same skills. The College has also made good-faith efforts to improve the writing and quantitative programs through program reviews. Williams, however, needs to take a holistic view on assessment of general education outcomes since department efforts are disparate, and in many cases, incomplete. An advisory or coordinating committee to help academic leaders envision and carry out cross-curricular assessment projects would be useful and help engage the faculty on this issue.

The most significant form of benchmarking—external department reviews—are scheduled for each department every ten years. In the past ten years, 26 departments have been reviewed, leaving seven behind schedule. The department reviews are an important factor in making allocation decisions at Williams, so with faculty turnover churning at a high rate, it behooves the College to accelerate up the pace of these reviews to make sure all departments are on equal footing when making allocation requests.

External benchmark data are utilized institutionally to a certain extent, especially through COFHE results, but greater use would help the College contextualize their internal data and help avoid complacency in their decision-making.

Graduate Success and Use of Results

Williams monitors recent graduate success through the periodic administration of an alumni survey, utilizing the National Student Clearinghouse, and utilizing information collected by College Relations.

The CPC, CEA, DART, and other college committees identified the use of the results of primarily indirect measures (surveys, student transcript data) in improving the curriculum. For example, the new Difference, Power, Equity (DPE) requirement was formulated by a working group that utilized an extensive amount of “thriving” and survey data from the institutional research office. There are many other examples, including analyses of retention rates and the proliferation of double majors.

Assessing the Assessment and Closing the Loop

The IR office provides a great deal of data analysis to decision-makers and faculty committees on campus, all of which is valid and highly useful. Others working on committees use qualitative measures such as interviews and text analysis. Research on student-centered initiatives, such as residential life changes, tended to be qualitative in nature.

Institutional assessment has informed the planning that has taken place at Williams, and informs departmental curricular needs when it comes to allocating faculty positions. The new structure for faculty planning, the CPC, is data-intensive and uses departmental assessment results as well as institutional data from IR. With the CPC in place, the data being used for academic planning is being presented more to the faculty as a whole and has thus become more accessible.

E Form Supplement:

Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators – At the Institutional Level

Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree?

All students are required to complete 32 regular semester courses and 4 Winter Study courses. In addition, students must demonstrate depth of knowledge in a field of study, proficiency in both quantitative reasoning and writing, and an understanding of difference, power, and equity:

- The requirements of a major, to achieve depth of knowledge in a field of study:
 - A student ordinarily must complete at least nine semester courses in their major field. A major may also require an additional course and/or one Winter Study Project during the junior or senior year. In interdepartmental majors, such as Political Economy, a larger number of courses may be required.
 - A prescribed sequence of courses, supplemented by parallel courses, and including a major seminar/capstone, is required in some major fields. Other majors ask the student to plan a sequence of elective courses, including advanced work building on elementary courses in the field, and ending in a one- or two- semester faculty-organized capstone course or project in the senior year. Courses in many major programs require prerequisite courses in related areas. Proficiency at each level is required to advance to the next.
 - Department or program advisors meet regularly and individually with students to monitor and assess their progress as majors.
 - Capstone courses or senior colloquium requirements in a number of the major programs require public presentation of skill or knowledge gained, including oral argumentation and defense of ideas, methods, theories, and/or creative output. The audience for these public presentations includes not just the instructor of record but also other department or program faculty plus the college community at large.
 - Other major programs build peer review and/or peer teaching into their curricula, either in the form of advanced required tutorials, sustained shared research, or lengthy writing projects accompanied by in-class presentations, and sometimes group projects, performances, or exhibitions.
 - Honors theses or projects are undertaken by about 25% of all Williams students, requiring substantial writing, laboratory or studio work, or senior

projects that are evaluated for honors by the department or program faculty as a whole.

- Three courses in each of the three academic divisions, to achieve breadth of knowledge across the curriculum. Two in each division must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.
- One Quantitative/Formal Reasoning (QFR) course, to help students become adept at mathematical and abstract reasoning. First-year students are tested before the start of the fall semester to determine whether they need to be placed into Mathematics 100/101/102, which is to be taken before fulfilling the QFR requirement. The hallmarks of a QFR course are the representation of facts in a language of mathematical symbols and the use of formal rules to obtain a determinate answer. Primary evaluation in these courses is based on multistep mathematical, statistical, or logical inference (as opposed to descriptive answers). The QFR requirement must be fulfilled prior to the senior year.
- Two writing-intensive (W) courses, to improve writing proficiency across disciplines. All students are required to complete one W course by the end of sophomore year and one by the end of the junior year. These courses include guidance on style, argumentation, and other significant aspects of writing, as well as evaluation and criticism of their writing throughout the semester. Pedagogical approaches include: brief assignments spaced over the semester; sequenced assignments leading to a longer final paper; multiple drafts; conferences; peer review; writing portfolios; or class discussions designed to improve writing skills. Writing-intensive courses also require a minimum of 20 pages of writing and have a maximum enrollment of 19 to ensure close faculty attention to writing assessment.
- One Difference, Power, and Equity (DPE) course, to help students analyze the shaping of social differences, dynamics of unequal power, and processes of change. Like W and QFR courses, DPE courses are skill-building courses, leading to the development of critical faculties that will prepare students to serve society at large. The pedagogical approaches employed vary significantly by discipline and content, but share the key aims of enabling students to 1) understand how power comes to be distributed unequally across difference, and 2) draw informed, responsible judgments about when and how to intervene to change such inequalities. Thus, students are assessed on their ability to engage in difficult, but carefully framed conversations about how difference works and has worked, how identities and power relationships have been grounded in lived experience, and how one might both critically and productively approach questions of difference, power, and equity.

Standard Nine: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

Integrity.

Following a careful review of the Williams College Self-study and additional materials, as well as detailed conversations during our two-day visit to campus, it was clear to the visiting committee that from the perspective of administrative operations, Williams is an impressively well-run institution. College leadership has established clear policies and practices on behalf of compliance-related reporting as well as mission-related communications and transparency. Williams leaders have also been creative in their introduction of “financial fundamentals” and related informational opportunities to the community at large. This represents a commitment to transparency less as a chore than as a meaningful, lively form of community engagement.

Across the academic and operational enterprises, Williams does a commendable job of documenting not only policies but the reasoning behind those policies. Both formally and informally, stakeholders across the college have built a culture in which academic freedom and open discourse are clear values. The president and academic leaders have been direct in their navigation of complexities of speech rights, particularly involving controversial speakers. The visiting team was particularly impressed with the thoughtful approach Williams has taken to building diverse and inclusive communities among faculty and students, in initiatives ranging from undergraduate recruitment and retention, including practices that seek out high-need candidates, to faculty recruitment and development. Given the college’s geographical setting, building for diversity must be undertaken intentionally, and Williams leaders have put strong programming in place to ensure that their community can realize the full benefits of diversity and inclusivity so critical to an educational environment.

Williams has robust and very well-established mechanisms for shared governance, a fact demonstrated in the college’s written materials and validated in numerous conversations with Williams faculty, administrative leaders, and Trustees. The college is rigorous, perhaps to a fault, in its detailed, thorough review of all curricular matters as well as academic policies and practices. Campus stakeholders ranging from faculty to Trustees understand the administrative practices that govern such reviews, and several underscored as useful the splitting of curricular planning from one committee into two, to enable support of both day-to-day and long-range curricular planning. Even as the Team commended this level of rigor, we probed the extraordinarily time-intensive nature of committee work at the college for faculty, as well as the slow pace of change that this method of governance necessitates. The Team strongly recommends that Williams faculty and administrative leaders undertake a careful, ongoing dialogue about how best to balance the tensions between centralized and distributed decision-making, and also how to sustain trust across stakeholder groups.

Williams College holds all appropriate charters for its operations, and meets all necessary reporting requirements associated with its legal standing. Williams operates in Massachusetts under the Statutory Charter of 1793, and satisfies state reporting requirements through annual

reports and filings through the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. On behalf of the Williams-Mystic Program in Connecticut, the College is registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State, the Connecticut Department of Revenue, and the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection. The Williams-Exeter Program is a credit-granting study-abroad program at the University of Oxford, UK. The College operates this program through a UK subsidiary nonprofit corporation, the Williams College Oxford Programme. The Program is also registered through the UK Charitable Commission, and Williams operates a second subsidiary in the UK to facilitate fundraising there. Judging from the self-study as well as discussions with academic leadership, Williams College is fully compliant with all standards set by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. As described in the self-study, the Williams administration seeks to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law. In this regard, the College demonstrates a commitment to compliance that is perhaps unusually thoughtful.

Transparency.

As mentioned earlier, Williams College leaders are meticulous in their transparent communications with faculty on all matters of shared governance. Evidence for this abounds in the well-understood and very detailed network of committees and practices that exist on the campus. Williams College undergraduate students expressed discontent with the College's Career Services office, which the self-study noted as an area targeted for improvement, with help from the offices of admissions and communications; students otherwise seemed reasonably knowledgeable and conversant with College policies and practices. Students point to the "entry" program for first-year students, and the vesting of expertise in Junior Advisors, as supportive of reliable information. Students also commend their faculty mentors as helpful conduits of policy and information.

Staff members at Williams do not bask in the glow of inclusive communications to the same degree enjoyed by faculty and students. Though the Self-study notes improvement in staff members' understanding of the expectations of their roles (as demonstrated in a 2017 campus climate survey), the open meeting the visiting team held for staff members offered insight into many opportunities to improve communications with this key stakeholder group. Staff members reported feeling like lesser citizens on the campus, with a distant connection to mission. Administrative leaders report that they have been taking steps toward remedying this situation, including planning for the extension of diversity and development initiatives to staff communities, as well as holding open programs for all community members on important topics such as "financial fundamentals." Staff are critical contributors to any institution's educational mission, and are often, for example, present in the lives of students in a much more direct way than faculty—in dining halls and dorms, on evenings and weekends. The Team recommends that Williams faculty and administrative leaders address the question of staff engagement more directly, elevating this question as a core component of the educational mission of the institution. The 2016 "Report on Staffing" produced by the Provost's Office is a strong first step toward understanding the role of staff on campus, an initiative that could easily

build to greater engagement and sustainable ways of demonstrating value. Administrative leaders in consultation with staff should establish strategies for staff engagement and targets, perhaps in anticipation of a future climate survey.

The Williams College website is reasonably maintained and up to date, with clear links connecting topic areas to individuals accountable for further information. The College has clearly posted key compliance documents, ranging from financial disclosures to honor code and integrity policies, in easy-to-find locations. In addition to the College's communication through social media channels, President Falk has used Williams Magazine as a vehicle to address sensitive or contentious topics. The Team noted with interest the fact that a Communications Advisory Group is considering a campus communications audit to clarify community preferences about intra-campus communications.

As the visiting team has expressed throughout in this report, we found that Williams could do much more to express a crisp, coherent, confident message about the "liberal arts" model at the bedrock of the College's identity. Lack of cohesion on this critical topic was evident across all stakeholder groups, and frequently devolved into the statement that "we know it when we see it." It is the Team's conclusion that this goes to the standard of transparency, as there should be a through line from the admissions portal to the Career Services mission and beyond. We encourage the leadership of Williams to support their commitment to transparency through the investment in a serious discussion about mission and outcomes.

Administrative leaders at Williams have invested a great deal of creative thought in clear, transparent communications with many stakeholders on their campus. This extends even to an innovative set of short videos made widely available to illustrate "how Williams works." The Williams College web site is populated with clear information on matters including costs, support resources, grievance policies, employment opportunities, and governance procedures. The Faculty Steering Committee underscored to the visiting team its role as a resource to assist individual faculty who are uncertain where to take pressing questions. Again, it was clear to the Team that Williams is a very well-run institution, particularly from a financial and operational perspective; the institution's governance model is robust but sufficiently cumbersome that it should be studied for balance and effectiveness. Like other colleges and universities, Williams has challenges in the world of today's communications. Social media, for example, has implications for the pace, tone, and veracity of information circulating about an institution. In the context of the institution's ongoing Presidential search, the Self-study expresses awareness of the importance of timely communications with the Williams community writ large, on and off campus, at key points in the search and during the transition period. Williams is a truly remarkable institution, and with a sharpened and crisp articulation of mission and purpose, has an opportunity to broaden its impact in higher education nationwide.

Public disclosure.

The Self-study notes that the Williams College Admissions website is heavily trafficked. That site is commendable for its clarity and ease of navigation, and particularly for its transparency around cost of attendance and financial aid available; this is a critical companion piece to the express commitment to socioeconomic diversity the College has expressed.

Under the leadership of a busy but strong Institutional Research office, Williams publishes all required disclosures in all appropriate formats. Again, the institutional website is well maintained, clear, and easy to navigate. The Team has just one concern in the standard on public disclosure: in standard 9.24, we're asked to evaluate the institution's statements about its goals for students' education and the success in achieving those goals. Williams is very clearly a superb educational institution. That said, a certain murkiness about the goals and outcomes of the liberal arts experience, Williams style, persisted throughout the visit. Williams College is well run to a fault, and gives no pause broadly speaking in the areas of Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure. The College does, however, face an opportunity to claim its identity with clarity and specificity, and to align that identity with educational goals and their outcomes.

Affirmation of Compliance

To document the institution's compliance with Federal regulations relating to Title IV, the Team reviewed Williams College's Affirmation of Compliance form, signed by the CEO.

As detailed in this report, Williams College's policies on the transfer of credit are aligned with the institution's criteria for awarding credit generally, and this policy, along with graduation requirements are clearly posted on the Williams College website.

The evaluation team's visit was announced on the Williams website, detailing the process, providing access to the self-study document, and inviting public comment. The visit was also announced in *The Williams Record* on September 20, 2017.

Grievance policies and procedures are clearly outlined on the Williams College website, and in publications such as the *Williams College Faculty Handbook*, the *Williams College Student Handbook*, and the Williams College Employee Handbook, which are all available online.

As noted in Standard 4, the Team's review of Williams' course schedules and curricula found the assignment of credit to be reflective of the College's policy and consistent with the Commission's standards.

Institutional Summary

As stated in the introduction to this report, Williams College is an outstanding institution with a faculty and administration that is deeply devoted to the College, the education it offers, and its students.

Specific recommendations, along with a discussion of the institution's strengths, and areas where there is potential for improvement are noted in the introduction section of this report, and throughout the document under each standard.

Key Strengths

- The outgoing president and his team have shown a deep commitment to excellence.
- The financial management, along with the related capital planning of the College is excellent in thought, strategy, design, and execution.
- The institution has enacted intense and thoughtful diversity and inclusion efforts, which have shown dramatic positive results. Initiatives are also in place to increase diversity among the faculty and staff.
- The students are excellent, the application pool strong, and the College highly selective.

Key Areas for Potential Improvement

- Developing a shared and positive understanding of Williams' mission and goals, and articulating an institutional vision of the liberal arts would build upon Williams' existing strengths, and enable it to meet the challenges associated with an inevitably evolving liberal arts education.
- The established culture of distributed authority at Williams has some extremely positive and beneficial aspects, but also exhibits excessive resistance to the exercise of appropriate central authority as well as an underlying lack of trust in faculty members in administrative positions. This may at times impact Williams' ability to make meaningful and critical decisions for the benefit of the institution's competitive position.
- Engaging in planning at the institutional level, rather than the segmented approach that currently takes place would provide opportunities for the Williams community to productively engage in serious self-reflection about its structures and efficacy, and develop strategies to improve Williams' competitive position in the longer term.
- While Williams' physical isolation has shaped an extremely close and engaged community, paying closer attention to developments at other colleges, and increased benchmarking and exploring of strategically defined relationships would be of benefit to the institution's longer-term planning, development, and performance.