Williams College
2017 Accreditation Self-Study

TO
THE NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

SEPTEMBER 2017
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Introduction

We first wish to extend our gratitude to the members of our visiting team, as well as the members of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, for the time and attention they will devote to reading this self-study and offering us the benefit of their advice.

Though complex and time consuming, there are many reasons why the accreditation process is important and valuable work for Williams to undertake. We’ll mention a few here. First, it is a chance for systematic institutional self-reflection—a time to look at the college in all its dimensions. We engage every year in multiple forms of self-examination and self-criticism, but we’re often focusing on particular issues or local areas of the college. The accreditation process is a special opportunity to examine the whole institution and reflect on how its many parts relate to that whole.

Second, the process provides the opportunity to present ourselves for the judgment of our peers in the higher education community and, through them, to demonstrate to the public at large that we are who we say we are, and we do what we say we do. We welcome that scrutiny. Indeed, over the years we have made the principal documents from our 2007 comprehensive evaluation and 2012 interim review publicly available on the college’s website; we will do so again this time.

Third, we see ourselves as writing a chapter in our long institutional history—taking a finely grained snapshot of our strengths and weaknesses at a given moment in time that will give those who come after us a perspective on our evolution as a college.

Our process began in 2015, when President Adam Falk appointed Professor of English Stephen Fix as director of the self-study and Associate Provost Chris Winters as assistant director. In the week-to-week management of the self-study process, they have worked closely with President Falk and with the Accreditation Coordinating Group, which also includes Assistant to the President Keli Gail, Associate Dean of the Faculty John Gerry, Director of Institutional Research Courtney Wade, and Chief Communications Officer Jim Reische. Their work has been expertly facilitated by logistical support from Diane Koper- niak and Amy Wood, executive assistants in the President’s Office, to whom we express our particular appreciation.

In 2016, to bring together many of the people with the expertise and experience that would be needed to write a good self-study, President Falk appointed the Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee (ASSSC). Its twenty-eight members, listed below, include the president’s senior staff, as well as other key administrators; the faculty chairs of standing college committees whose work is especially relevant to the accreditation standards; and four student leaders. This large group sometimes met collectively, especially for discussions of Standard One (Mission and Purposes). ASSSC members helped create a useful checklist of the changes that have occurred at Williams since our last self-study, and wrote initial drafts of our responses to the standards. In some cases, they took particular issues back to standing college committees for discussion. We have kept the community informed about our work through reports at faculty meetings, meetings with department and program chairs, and presentations to other groups on campus.

We have also sought guidance and input from beyond the campus. Members of the Accreditation Coordinating Group, as well as the dean of the faculty, have participated in meetings and workshops hosted by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and such other organizations as the New England Assessment Support Network.
President Falk visited NEASC headquarters for conversations with officials there about the self-study process. We invited colleagues from the Office of Institutional Research at Smith College to discuss their innovative, faculty-driven student assessment program at a half-day workshop attended by some 20 Williams administrators and faculty leaders. We also greatly benefitted from the advice of our visiting team chair, President Robert Zimmer, who met with many members of the Williams community during his two-day visit in June 2017.

There are several things we wish to note in advance about our “Responses to Standards for Accreditation”:

- We have tried to avoid repetition whenever possible, but some has been necessary and useful in the course of responding to topics crossing several different standards.

- In most cases, we have used the “description / appraisal / projection” rubrics suggested by NEASC to organize the various sections. In a few places, though, close adherence to those rubrics would have created unnecessary repetition, and it seemed more efficient and informative to blend them together. Nevertheless, all standards include commentary describing what we do, how we appraise what we do, and what we plan to do in the years ahead.

- We are supplying a large number of supporting documents both in this self-study and in visiting team’s workroom, but we are happy to provide others that the team would like to see either before or during its campus visit.

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We believe that Williams is sound in its structures and secure in its mission, but we are not complacent or self-satisfied. There is, if anything, a productive kind of restlessness in the Williams community—a recurrent desire to do more, do better, and, when appropriate, do differently. In the pages that follow, we will discuss the initiatives we have taken in the last decade, and those we will need to take in the next, to better fulfill and advance our mission. As we map our way forward, we welcome with gratitude the advice we will receive from our evaluators.
Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee / 2016–2017

Adam Falk  
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Stephen Fix  
Director of the Self-Study; Professor of English

Chris Winters  
Assistant Director of the Self Study; Associate Provost

Michelle Bal  
Class of 2017; Co-President of College Council

Caitlin Buckley  
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Denise Buell  
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Alison Case  
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David Edwards  
Chair, Committee on Educational Affairs; Professor of Anthropology

Stephen Freund  
Chair, Committee on Priorities and Resources; Professor of Computer Science

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John Gerry  
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Leticia Haynes  
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Kevin Hernandez  
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Protik Majumder  
Director of the Science Center; Professor of Physics

Rhon Manigault-Bryant  
Associate Dean of the Faculty; Associate Professor of Africana Studies

Megan Morey  
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Steven Nafziger  
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Courtney Wade  
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Abigail Wattley  
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Safa Zaki  
Chair, Faculty Steering Committee; Professor of Psychology
Institutional Overview

Founded in 1793, Williams College is the second-oldest institution of higher learning in Massachusetts. The college’s approximately 2,000 students are taught by a faculty noted for blending excellent teaching with active scholarly research.

This commitment is embedded deep in Williams culture and history, a fact often denoted by reference to the words of U.S. President James A. Garfield, Class of 1856, who reputedly said of his mentor, Mark Hopkins, Class of 1824 and Williams President 1836–72, that “The ideal college is Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other.”

This teaching legacy is particularly manifest in the college’s program of tutorials, courses in which a faculty member typically meets weekly with pairs of students, one of whom presents a paper or problem set and the other of whom critiques it. The educational experience is further enriched by a tightknit residential campus environment, which provides a host of opportunities for interaction with one another and with faculty outside the classroom.

Admission decisions on U.S. applicants are made regardless of a student’s ability to pay, and the college provides grants and other assistance to meet the demonstrated financial need of all who are admitted. The student body is by all measures among the most talented and diverse in the country. They come from virtually every state and more than 50 countries. In the Class of 2021, 41 percent are American students of color, 8 percent are international students, and about 20 percent are first-generation college students.

Since the formation in 1821 of what is the oldest society of alumni in the country, and possibly the world, Williams alumni have been known for their exceptional devotion to the college. The generosity of past alumni, which continues into the present, has provided Williams with considerable financial resources, which support, among other things, the maintenance of a student-faculty ratio of 7:1, the provision of first-rate educational facilities, and the ability to admit all domestic students regardless of their ability to pay while promising to meet 100% of every student’s demonstrated financial need.

This extraordinary community of learning draws inspiration from the natural beauty of its location beneath the shadow of the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts.

Williams also offers two graduate programs. One, managed with the nearby Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, offers a two-year master’s degree in the history of art. The second, located in the college’s Center for Development Economics, draws mid-level civil servants from economically developing countries for a one-year master of arts in policy economics.

In addition to its main campus, Williams owns a complex of buildings in Oxford, England—home to the Williams-Exeter Programme, which in conjunction with Exeter College each year immerses some two dozen Williams students in the academic and extracurricular life of the University of Oxford. Williams also operates Williams-Mystic, located in historic Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, where each semester some two dozen students from a variety of colleges engage in a highly interdisciplinary and experiential study of the science, literature, and history of the sea.

Taken together, these programs, people, and practices uniquely qualify Williams to fulfill its mission of providing the finest liberal arts education possible.

That mission is a work in progress. During the 2007 accreditation (NEASC Final Letter dated May 9, 2008) and the 2012 interim review, CIHE and the college identified three areas worthy of special attention. Williams took those challenges to heart and has invested considerable time and effort in making progress on the areas of emphasis. This work is detailed in the self-study narrative. Following are executive highlights from each area.
Diversity and Inclusion

The first of the three Areas of Special Emphasis in the 2007 NEASC report was: “Achieving [Williams’] goals for diversifying the faculty and student body and assuring the quality of the educational experience for all students.” Williams was already deeply invested in this effort and since that time we have taken a deeper and even more systemic approach. Elements of that effort are described in multiple Standards throughout the self-study. Here are just a few important examples:

Diversity in leadership roles: The commitment to diversity must be modeled at the highest levels. Of 22 current Williams trustees, ten (45 percent) are women and the other 12 (55 percent) are men. Six (27 percent) identify as people of color. Several are the first in their family to attend college. Trustees come from all regions of the United States and several grew up abroad, including in developing countries.

Diversity among faculty: Williams has made significant gains in diversifying our faculty since the last self-study and interim report. Full data can be found in the October 2016 report on diversifying the faculty produced by the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity (workroom). These efforts have evolved to include investment in recruitment, retention, and faculty development.

Recruiting: Efforts to attract a diverse faculty are benefiting from the wave of faculty retirements discussed in Standard Six: we anticipate about 100 searches over a decade, replacing approximately 40 percent of the faculty. To balance the expected exodus, we have begun to hire large cohorts of new assistant professors—an unusual opportunity to consider faculty diversity within a relatively short period of time.

Since the 2007 self-study we have also strengthened our minority fellowship program (the Bolin program); added to curricular offerings and made hires in relevant areas, including Latina/o Studies, Africana Studies, Women’s and Gender Studies, and American Studies; and appointed both a vice president and an associate dean for institutional diversity.

These and related efforts have enabled us to make considerable progress. Women now constitute 44 percent of all tenure-line faculty, up from 33 percent in 1994. The percentage is higher in the assistant (60 percent) and associate (46 percent) professor ranks, and we are working to achieve overall gender parity as these cohorts attain greater seniority. Williams has also made gains in faculty racial and ethnic diversity: faculty of color now make up 21 percent of all tenure-line faculty, up from 14 percent in 1996 and 19 percent in 2006.

The college has adopted several further strategies to extend our progress on diversity recruiting. For example, the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity now works closely with the Dean of the Faculty at every step of the faculty search process, from shaping the job description to advertising to interviewing to extending the offer. The OIDE also tracks applicant demographics at all stages so hiring units can be more reflective about their decisions.

In recent years, we have begun providing formal training for search committee representatives. Beginning in 2014–15, we engaged an external consulting firm that advises academic departments on work related to diversity, equity, and implicit bias, via four intensive workshops each year, each coinciding with a successive phase of the recruitment process.

We have also upgraded our Bolin program from a one-year to a two-year fellowship for new faculty. This change has been very successful in enabling fellows to complete their dissertations, gain teaching experience, and take advantage of professional development opportunities before going on the academic job market.
Inspired by the success of the Bolin program, our chief diversity officer co-authored the C3 (Creating Connections Consortium) grant, which was funded by the Mellon Foundation in 2013. C3 is a collaboration among four liberal arts colleges and four research universities, who share a dedication to achieving inclusion and full participation in the academy. A central feature of the grant is a postdoctoral fellowship that, like the Bolin program, provides underrepresented scholars with the opportunity to spend two years at a liberal arts college, in order to discover the rich professional careers that can be pursued on our campuses.

An important lesson learned from the C3 grant is the value of pre-search outreach. Based on the success of the C3 recruiting visits, and recognizing that this Mellon-funded program excluded many disciplines in which diversity remains a particular challenge, Williams and a broader group of colleges, known as the Liberal Arts Diversity Officers group (LADO), began in 2014–15 to expand the number of visits made to R1 institutions. These are typically half-day visits to meet with graduate students, especially at institutions with a strong record of training underrepresented doctoral students in the sciences, including Emory, Georgia Tech, Howard University, UCSD, UCD, and UCLA, along with the R1 institutions that are members of C3: UCB, Columbia, the University of Chicago, and the University of Michigan. The visits have been very well received, and we believe they will provide an important pipeline for prospective new faculty in the coming years.

Finally, we are also learning to recognize that faculty sometimes choose to leave Williams despite our best efforts, and that we can still learn a great deal by asking them why they decided to leave. Starting two years ago, Williams began offering formal exit interviews to all tenure-track faculty, full-time visitors who have been at the college for at least one full year, and fellows who announce plans to leave the college. These interviews are conducted either by the Dean of Faculty’s office or the Office for Institutional Diversity and Equity, according to the departing faculty member’s choice. All faculty leaving the college are also invited to complete an online exit survey. The information gathered from these efforts will help us better understand how we can further improve the faculty experience at Williams, and enhance our ability to retain the best faculty of all kinds.

Through national searches and opportunity appointments, we will continue to place a high priority on diversifying the faculty along the lines of gender, race, and other factors. We will especially aim to cultivate applicant pools that are as diverse as the U.S. graduate student population.

*Diversity in the student body:* Williams has made significant strides in student body diversity since 2008. These efforts are buoyed by our strong financial aid budget, which has increased by 87 percent since our last decennial review. Admission also acts affirmatively for applicants from low-income backgrounds in our selection process. These efforts, alongside our recruiting work with national partners like Questbridge, are yielding results: Some forty-one percent of the students in the Class of 2021 are American students of color, and approximately 20 percent are first-generation. Our work to recruit and aid a diverse and highly-qualified student body is described in detail in Standard Five.

Once on campus, this diverse student body is supported by a broad and well-orchestrated array of programs. The position of Vice President for Institutional Diversity and Equity was created in 2006 in response to a campuswide study on diversity, and oversees policies and practices around diversity, efforts to diversify the staff and faculty, and a variety of offices and committees, including the Diversity Action Research Team, which systematically analyzes data to assess our progress on issues of diversity and inclusion (see Standard 8).
Williams is paying special attention to the challenges of recruiting low-income high school students who may not be able to afford to visit campus to experience firsthand the educational opportunities that await them. We address this through programs like WoW (Windows on Williams), which provides all-expenses-paid, three-day campus visits to high-achieving high school students who couldn’t otherwise afford to visit Williams; and the Summer Science Program, in which admitted students from groups historically underrepresented in the sciences are competitively selected to take pre-enrollment summer classes in calculus, biology, chemistry, and writing and to work in labs alongside faculty. Participating students have reported a greater sense of belonging and well-being during their years at Williams, as well as closer relationships with faculty members.

Diversity on campus: Williams is committed to more than just bringing a diverse student body: we have a compelling interest in helping them succeed once here. Since the last self-study, we have expanded the range of related initiatives to include a two-and-a-half-day program for first-generation students and families in advance of general orientation. Participants are often matched with faculty advisers who were themselves first-generation students. We have also begun offering tailored programs to help first-generation sophomores and juniors select their majors and consider possible career paths. Additional programs in senior year assist those applying to graduate school (including with the costs of standardized tests) or applying for jobs (including help with travel expenses and interview attire). First-generation students are also provided myriad campus roles—many of them paid—to ensure high campus engagement and leadership opportunities. An associate dean, Rosanna Reyes, focuses much of her work on first-generation students.

Students from underrepresented groups may also apply to our competitive Davis Research Fellowships and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowships programs. Both provide two summers and four semesters of funding so that fellows can pursue research projects in place of summer and campus jobs. Among our alumni, 14 Davis Fellows and 26 Mellon Mays Fellows have completed doctorates, with most going on to tenure-track appointments. Nineteen Davis Fellows and 20 Mellon Mays Fellows are currently enrolled in doctoral programs.

The Athletics Department has evolved to become another important partner in campus diversity work. In 2016, only about 24 percent of Williams varsity athletes were domestic students of color, contrasted with about 40 percent of the student body as a whole. In order to understand and bridge that gap, the college revised its alumni survey in 2017 to ask recipients about their experiences in Williams athletics, why they persisted or not on their teams, and what barriers they faced during recruitment or while at Williams. We are also analyzing senior survey data to determine whether racial or ethnic differences affect how students perceive their athletic experiences. As described in Standard Five, Athletics is creating a new subcommittee of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee that will focus on issues of diversity and inclusion. And, starting in 2017, the Department has begun providing coaches with additional, designated recruiting resources that they can use to identify and recruit talented athletes from underrepresented groups.

Diversity in the curriculum: At the time of the 2007 self-study, the faculty was in the process of revising the part of the college’s distribution requirement focused on diversity. In our 2007 report, we described a pending change from the “Peoples and Cultures” requirement to a new Exploring Diversity Initiative (EDI), described in Standard Eight. The faculty conducted a review of EDI starting in 2013–14. The end result was a faculty decision in March 2017 to replace EDI with a Difference, Power, and Equity (DPE) course requirement,
which will encourage students to analyze the shaping of social differences, dynamics of unequal power, and processes of change. DPE courses will examine themes including, but not limited to, race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion. Every student will be required to complete at least one DPE course.

Similarly, at the time of our 2012 interim report, the college had just established a new Diversity Action Research Team (DART) and begun tracking student thriving metrics. We selected a set of measures that we believe are key indicators that represent important aspects of a Williams experience. We track aggregate groups by race/ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status. Many of the group disparities observed in these metrics have helped guide DART’s agenda in recent years and have prompted discussions and initiatives with academic departments and others on campus.

One of the imbalances observed in the thriving metrics is the disproportionate representation of particular groups in some majors. The STEM fields in particular tend to have fewer women and underrepresented students of color, though the tendency is uneven across disciplines. In order to understand what accounted for some of these differences and how they might be addressed, DART gathered data about representation and attrition across course sequences in STEM+ fields (see workroom), and then met with most of the units individually to discuss the data and ask a series of questions about how the units work to encourage diversity. DART also worked with the Dean of the Faculty’s office to add this set of diversity-related questions to the prompts units are given for their decennial self-studies. Discussions are currently underway about how to continue these conversations and how departments that are leaders in this area can be helped to share their best practices with other departments.

Diversity of staff: The college has also continued working to expand our candidate pools for staff positions, using specialized websites, listservs, and professional associations (e.g., the National Association of Asian American Professionals and The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education). We also publicize employment opportunities through our alumni of color networks. Williams recently began efforts to implement a new staff diversity recruiting and retention plan, including facilitated conversations about how to recruit diverse candidate pools and the potential influence of bias in applicant evaluations.

Assessment

The 2008 NEASC letter and 2012 interim report also stressed the importance of “continuing to implement a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning, with particular emphasis on assessment of major programs of study and concentrations.” Here, too, the steps Williams has taken are discussed in considerable detail in the self-study, especially in Standard Eight, so are briefly summarized here.

In the last 10 years, we have conducted 26 full reviews of academic units. Each department review involved an extensive self-study, a visit by an external team of distinguished teachers and scholars, and the team's written report. The process and results of these reviews are described in Standard Four. We now ask all units to articulate their learning goals and post them online (see form E1 part A). Units are also asked to describe how they know whether their stated goals are being met. Assessment of academic success is supported by a growing Institutional Research team that publishes for campus use a standard set of data on enrollment, majors, and student satisfaction, and provides customized research into other analytical questions.
In 2013–14, motivated by concerns about growth in double majoring and a sense that students may not be broadly exploring the liberal arts, the college undertook a systematic analysis of students’ curricular choices. At the time of our last self-study, 32 percent of our most recent graduating class had more than one major. That figure has now increased to 42 percent, making Williams a high-end outlier among our peers. On the basis of this and related findings, we have begun taking steps to improve our advising system, reimagine the online course catalog, initiate a broader conversation about the value of the liberal arts, and continue to consider the idea of minors at Williams. Starting in 2013–14, the faculty’s work on this issue gave rise to a campus-wide dialogue, entitled “Why Liberal Arts?” (see Standard Six), spearheaded by the associate dean of the faculty. This initiative, which we expect to continue, has brought faculty, staff, and students together to consider various aspects of what it means to be at a liberal arts institution, and what our common goals are and should be.

In Spring 2017, the Committee on Educational Affairs (CEA) sponsored a faculty seminar to develop new techniques for the teaching of writing. The seminar focused on the development of pedagogical techniques for first-year writing-intensive courses. The faculty who taught these courses met throughout the semester to learn from outside experts on writing pedagogy, and to discuss among themselves the pros and cons of the techniques they are using. In addition, the instructors of these courses set up a variety of events (lunches, speakers, colloquia, etc.) to which faculty not involved in the seminar were invited, the object being to generate a campus-wide, cross-disciplinary discussion of how best to teach writing at Williams. The program includes from six to eight courses and will continue for three years, with new participants brought into the seminar each year. The faculty involved in the Spring 2017 seminar produced a report based on their discussions, which contains recommendations on how to improve writing pedagogy and student writing (workroom). The CEA will bring this report to the faculty for discussion this year.

Over the past 10 years, we have also made a number of significant changes in our Quantitative Studies Program, including the change three years ago from a multiple-choice, paper-based assessment during first-year orientation to an online test called WQLRA (Williams Quantitative Literacy and Reasoning Assessment), which students now take prior to their arrival on campus. WQLRA includes a nationally normed assessment instrument that evaluates students quantitative skills. While WQLRA is not a placement test, the scores are used by the Williams quantitative and formal reasoning (QFR) faculty coordinator and the director of quantitative skills programs and peer support to identify students with deficiencies in math preparation, as well as those who may need additional advising before enrolling in quantitative courses.

Standard Eight also enumerates how each academic unit defines its desired learning outcomes, how they determine whether students are achieving these outcomes, and some of the changes that have been made as a result of these determinations. It includes examples from across our three academic divisions. Because Williams has small class sizes (half of our class sections last fall had 12 or fewer students) and relatively low teaching loads, many of these determinations, while rigorous, are qualitative rather than quantitative. However, the majority of Williams majors do include some form of intensive, mandatory capstone experience that builds on the knowledge and skills students developed in earlier courses.

Many of the other types of ongoing student assessment at Williams—including analyses of thriving metrics, completion rates, and alumni outcomes, among others—are discussed at length in Standard Eight.
Williams 2020

The third and final recommendation of the 2008 Final Letter involved “implementing the institutional plan developed through the ’2020 Project.”

As discussed in Standard Two, the college was moving ahead with the 2020 plan when the financial crisis hit in 2008… and everything changed. More than 40 percent of college spending was being covered by investments when the crisis hit during the fall. Standard Two explores in detail how the college adapted, worked through the crisis, and re-energized its planning momentum after 2008, without needing to resort to layoffs. Every aspect of Williams as an institution today—from our HR and Benefits policies to facilities and financial planning to faculty demographics—bears the imprint of that particular moment and the ways in which the college responded.

Led by the Human Resources Office, all units went through a series of exercises in which they articulated their mission and vision, thought creatively about how they might change their operations, and determined how they would adapt to having fewer office members, due either to early retirements or transfers of FTEs to gain efficiencies or better reflect priorities. Several ad hoc groups were formed to plan reorganizations that came to pass over the following months. These included changes in college communications, web operations, and the alignment of career counseling and alumni relations.

In Fall 2010, President Falk, still early in his tenure, held discussions of possible ways to realign senior administrators’ responsibilities. Particular attention was paid to Williams’ tradition of rotating faculty into the positions of dean of the faculty, provost, and dean of the college. The crisis presented an opportunity to recapture the original purpose of that practice: namely, empowering faculty to lead our efforts to think about, plan, and carry out Williams’ academic mission.

With this in mind, several leadership positions were significantly reconfigured:

- The provost’s role was returned to its original focus on setting spending priorities and overseeing the main functions that support the college’s academic enterprise, including admission, financial aid, libraries, information technology, the art museum, science center, and Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives.

- Meanwhile, a new position created in 2011, the vice president for finance and administration, assumed responsibility for budget operations, financial modeling, treasury, controller’s operations, and planned gift administration. This vice president also absorbed several responsibilities from the vice president for operations, including human resources, college counsel, safety and environmental compliance, risk management, real estate, conferences, auxiliary services, and the Williams College Children’s Center (our daycare facility).

- The position of vice president for operations was changed to vice president for campus life, retaining oversight of facilities and dining, as well as some areas moved from the dean’s office, including residential life, the chaplains, health and counseling, and campus safety and security.

- This in turn enabled the dean of the college to focus on all aspects of students’ academic experience, including oversight of the associate deans (including student disciplinary procedures), fellowships, advising, academic resources, writing programs, and registrar.
We are now six years into the reorganization, and the realignment is proving to be extremely effective, aided by the dynamics of a highly collaborative senior staff. The value of this collegiality is especially evident in the close working relationships between the provost and vice president for finance and administration, and between the dean of the college and vice president for campus life.

As described in Standards Two and Seven, the watershed moment of the 2008 crisis has turned out to be as much a beginning as an end. The prospects for the Williams 2020 plan as originally conceived were significantly compromised by the earthquake that struck the global economy. But instead of assuming a wait-and-see attitude, Williams took the crisis as an opportunity to examine and thoughtfully reorganize our administrative structures. We also revised our planning and projection practices, so that, once the crisis subsided, we could come out of the gates with a strong push to complete our new College Library, advance various sector plans and the new Science Center project, and pursue other priorities.

Williams today might not look the way we thought it would back in 2007. But the college in 2017 is a vibrant place of learning—thoughtful, rigorous, adaptive, and ambitious—and the future is bright indeed.
Standard One: Mission and Purposes

In the gentle light of the Berkshire hills, Williams pursues a bold ambition: to provide the finest possible liberal arts education. If the goal is immodest, it is also bracing: elevating the sights and standards of every member of the community, encouraging them to keep faith with the challenge inscribed on the college’s gates: “climb high, climb far.”

Williams is fortunate to have extraordinary resources, but its strength derives, above all else, from the quality of its people.

Williams students rank with the best in the country; the rigor and competitiveness of the college’s admission standards place Williams in the company of only a handful of other institutions. Over the past 30 years especially, Williams has both strengthened its academic profile and actively recruited a student body that is markedly more diverse in many dimensions, including race, national origin, and the educational and socio-economic background of its families.

The strength of the student body today is the product of the college’s resolve to search as widely as possible for students of high academic ability and great personal promise. Diversity is not an end in itself, but a principle flowing from the conviction that encountering differences is at the heart of the educational enterprise—differences, certainly, of ideas and beliefs, but also differences of perspectives rooted in the varied histories students bring with them.

As both an educational and social imperative, we are committed to welcoming talented students irrespective of their financial resources, and it is therefore a central institutional priority—unwaveringly supported by all parts of the college community—to maintain our policies of need-blind admission for domestic students and of fully meeting a student’s demonstrated need. And, recognizing that of those to whom much has been given, much may properly be required, we ask all our students to understand that an education at Williams should not be regarded as a privilege destined to create further privilege, but rather as a privilege that creates the opportunity and responsibility to serve society at large.

We seek to capitalize on our character as a residential college by placing great emphasis on the learning that takes place not only inside the classroom, but outside as well, where students can strengthen mind, body, and spirit by participating in athletic teams, artistic performances, political debates, religious and volunteer groups, and nearly 170 extracurricular organizations. We also urge students to see their college as a laboratory in citizenship. To an unusual degree, Williams gives students primary responsibility for creating and governing their own community, whether as Junior Advisors (or JAs, chosen by fellow students to live with and mentor first-year students) or as guardians of academic integrity through the student-led Honor Code.

Recruiting top talent from a wide variety of institutions, Williams asks its faculty to accept a distinctive—and unusually demanding—combination of challenges: to be exemplary teachers, productive scholars or artists, and active partners in running the institution. Well supported by the college through research funding and a generous sabbatical program, Williams faculty are leaders in their fields—recognized nationally, and often internationally, for the high quality and significance of their scholarly and creative work. They also embrace the chance to shape their college, serving in a civic spirit on an array of committees and as senior officers of an institution that has long prized shared governance and collaborative decision-making.
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.

But the classroom and curriculum are only the entry points. Professors at Williams want to know not only what their students think, but how they think and who they are. They want to know students in all their dimensions—to learn their histories and hopes, to advise them on matters personal as well as academic, to see them as complex individuals who deserve attention and respect.

Faculty and students together, learning with and from each other in a community whose intimacy of scale fosters close personal and intellectual relationships; where concern for the needs and ideas of other people is not only an educational but an ethical imperative; where the values of engagement and decency fundamentally shape the educational process: These are the ideals to which Williams faculty and students aspire.

They have strong partners. Williams is blessed with an enormously talented administrative and support staff; they keenly understand the college’s mission and devote their energies to advancing it. Williams alumni are fiercely and intelligently loyal, contributing generously of their time, experience, and resources. Far from insisting that the college remain as it was in their time, alumni encourage Williams to reinvent itself for each new generation. Williams trustees (all of whom are currently alumni) provide discerning strategic direction and careful stewardship of the college’s assets. While the board is fully engaged, it keeps its focus on large policy issues and long-term decisions.

We are fortunate, too, in our location. Surrounded by communities that enthusiastically support and participate in its educational project, Williams is at home in a town rich with cultural resources. The college strives to be a responsible citizen and employer, and contributes both expertise and resources to numerous local initiatives. The natural beauty of the Berkshires makes us especially conscious of the urgent need to address—through our teaching and research, and through the daily operations of the college—the environmental problems that threaten an increasingly fragile planet.

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That is who we are, and this is what we aim to do: to develop in students both the wisdom and skills they will need to become responsible contributors to whatever communities they join and the richly textured inner lives that will make them rigorously self-reflective, ethically alert, and imaginatively alive. Public and private purposes, as it were, harmoniously nurturing each other. Toward these ends, certain principles and values shape our sense of mission:

- Our purpose is not to offer specialized or professional training, but to develop in our students strong writing, speaking, and quantitative abilities, as well as analytical and interpretive talents, tested in relation to a wide range of issues and disciplines. We embrace the liberal arts claim that a broadly educated person will be more capable of adapting to the particular needs of the professions and of public life than a person narrowly trained in singular subjects.

- Our curricular requirements aim to negotiate the crucial balance between breadth and depth. We combine an appropriately liberal distribution of each student’s course choices across the curriculum with some measure of control over the methods and subject matter of at least one field. While fully recognizing the important value of disciplinary approaches and the departmental structures that support them, we have welcomed and participated in the academy’s growing emphasis on interdisciplinary learning as a way of understanding the interconnectedness of ideas and as a bulwark against the fragmentation of knowledge.

- Through the increasingly global reach of our curriculum, as well as the diversity of our campus community, we seek to develop in students the capacity to see beyond the limits of their own experience. So many of the world’s problems—from racism to sectarian and nationalistic violence to everyday forms of disrespect—stem from a failure to imagine our way into the lives of other people, a failure to understand the beliefs and contingencies that shape their lives, a failure to hear the stories that other people are trying to tell us. A liberal education alone cannot solve the world’s problems, but it can help to open minds and deepen human empathy.

- Our curriculum is as varied, up to date, and forward-thinking as the contemporary world requires, but we also want to strengthen our students’ curiosity about and respect for the past: for the story of how people before us have responded to challenges different from but analogous to our own, for the story of where human beings have been, what we have achieved, and how we have failed. We want to resist the tendency to see our historical moment as so much more complex and dangerous than those experienced by earlier generations that we fail to think of the past as something that calls to us with an urgent, or admonitory, or even sympathetic voice.

- We want, too, to lean against the growing culture of simplification, where intricate issues are boiled down into fiercely held “positions,” where counterarguments are seen as irritating distractions from clarity, where “points” have more power and visibility than the thinking that produced them. We want instead to inspire in our students the confidence to be undaunted by complexity and to embrace it in ways that will prove valuable to them and to society at large.

- We aim to encourage students to develop a personal stance toward learning and knowledge, and to make judgments that put their beliefs and values on the line. We want them to have the courage of their convictions, but at the same time, to seek out criticism of their own ideas and to appreciate the virtues of personal and intellectual humility.
These values and ambitions will serve as beacons into a future when the college will continue to encounter and continue to welcome changes in our demographics, our curriculum, and our approaches to what and how we learn. To remain a vibrant institution that both reflects and leads the society of which it is a part, Williams must always adapt and grow, and be prepared—as we tell our students they too must be prepared—to respond in an agile, nuanced way to needs and challenges we cannot yet anticipate.

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In summarizing this college’s mission, we can turn to the eloquent words spoken by Williams President John Sawyer ’39 in his induction address in 1961:

The most versatile, the most durable, in an ultimate sense the most practical knowledge and intellectual resources which [students] can now be offered are those impractical arts and sciences around which a liberal education has long centered: the capacity to see and feel, to grasp, respond, and act over a widening arc of experience; the disposition and ability to think, to question, to use knowledge to order an ever-extending range of reality; the elasticity to grow, to perceive more widely and more deeply, and perhaps to create; the understanding to decide where to stand and the will and tenacity to do so; the wit and wisdom, the humanity and humor to try to see oneself, one’s society, and one’s world with open eyes, to live a life usefully, to help things in which one believes on their way. This is not the whole of a liberal arts education, but as I understand it, this range of goals is close to its core.

So it was more than a half-century ago, and so it remains today.

[The statement above is the product of discussions during the 2016-17 academic year in the Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee, whose 28 members include faculty, students, and administrators, and in the Williams College Board of Trustees. The board approved this statement in June 2017.]
Standard Two:
Planning and Evaluation

Planning is an iterative process. It starts with making an honest assessment of one’s current condition, imagining a desired future state, planning how to get there, performing some intervention, observing and evaluating the result of that intervention, and then looping back to the beginning. Importantly, good planning is continually reassessed in light of ever-changing conditions.

This observation seems particularly relevant to the past decade, when we were reminded of Mike Tyson’s statement, “Everyone has a plan till they get punched in the mouth.” In 2008, Williams, like other colleges, was figuratively punched in the mouth by the economic downturn. It threw many well-laid plans into disarray, requiring the reprioritization and sometimes scrapping of many plans and the birth of new ones.

Besides being an iterative process, institutional planning is also a collaborative process. It is not owned by any one office or department at Williams. At the highest level, the president and trustees guide the college. Other groups that traditionally engage in planning include the provost, other senior staff, and especially the 22 standing faculty committees (Standard 3 provides additional details).

Standing committees are chaired by faculty members. When it is appropriate, professional staff with relevant area expertise also sit on standing committees. In most but not all cases, students round out the membership. In special cases, external evaluators are brought in to provide third-party perspectives to standing committees.

Planning isn’t limited to committees and formal groups. It is, for example, an explicit part of every staff member’s annual self-evaluation (template available in workroom). Every year, employees are asked to identify future goals that are “specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound” (SMART) and to plan for how they will accomplish those goals in the coming year. Employees are also asked to list “what training, resources, support, or assistance [they] need to be successful” in achieving those goals. This is to ensure that managers can adequately support employees’ efforts to achieve their goals. Each employee is then evaluated the following year on their progress toward achieving their planned goals set the prior year.

Planning

Description

Soon after submitting our 2007 accreditation self-study, we embarked on a planning exercise called Williams 2020. The NEASC visiting team, while not evaluating the Williams 2020 project itself since it had literally just begun, called the approach “imaginative, timely, and inclusive.”

We had just experienced five straight years of endowment growth. The endowment was up 130 percent in real terms from a decade before, despite the 2001 dot-com correction. College resources and ambitions were at a peak, and it seemed like a good time to plan for what looked like a future full of possibilities.
The Williams 2020 process involved a task force of 31 faculty, staff, alumni, and trustees. It lasted nine months and focused on two tasks: first, to identify and explore the external factors that were likely to influence Williams between 2007 and 2020; and second, to imagine the nature and scale of possible responses. The idea was to examine a wide range of phenomena, from the changing demographics of our student body to changing technology, and ask, “What effect might this have on Williams?” Though recognizing that we could not predict the future, we knew we should prepare for it.

The president assigned members of the task force to working groups, each chaired by a faculty member, to explore six different themes:

1. Globalization: bringing the world to Williams and Williams to the world
2. Faculty: maintaining the quality of our faculty
3. Technology and Environment: meeting technological and environmental challenges
4. Demographics: who will be the Williams students of 2020?
5. Sociological: what will the campus feel like in 2020?

Each group worked for several months, and then shared the results of its research with the full task force at a weekend retreat in Fall 2007. In Winter 2008, all members of the task force submitted written feedback on the ideas presented by the six working groups. The president and senior staff began preparing recommendations to take to the trustees.

And then Lehman Brothers collapsed …
Appraisal

We changed our plans and made new ones. We did not abandon the best ideas and values that emerged from the 2020 process. Indeed, as later parts of this self-study will show, we continued to pursue an ambitious agenda through initiatives related to faculty excellence and diversity, the quality of the student experience, the college’s role in the local community, globalization, technology, environmental stewardship, and other areas. But the economic turmoil made it necessary to set priorities more carefully than ever and to make some hard decisions.

One immediate form of belt-tightening response was to delay several building projects then on the verge of breaking ground. The most noteworthy of these was our choice to delay construction of the new library. That project had been in planning since 2003 and was virtually shovel ready, but we made the difficult decision to put it on hold. That meant that the old library remained standing five years longer than planned—undemolished, wedged tightly between two new faculty office buildings in a spot that was slated to become a grassy quad.

Today, the old library is gone and the new quad is green. Nearby, “new Sawyer” is complete, its Fall 2014 opening celebrated by a yearlong program centered around the theme of books, libraries, and information. Called The Book Unbound, it focused on exploring the diverse ways in which people preserve and convey ideas, creative works, data, and other forms of information.

Students have flocked to the new Sawyer in unprecedented numbers. The new building boasts a 60 percent increase in annual gate count (foot traffic) over the old library. It has become the academic hub of campus and a preferred study location for students at all hours of the day and night. The library was recently honored by receiving the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the American Library Association (ALA) Building Award for its integration with historic Stetson Hall and its completion of a new campus quadrangle. They described Sawyer as the new “town commons” for the college. (See Standard 7 for additional information about Williams libraries.)
Besides delaying new capital construction, we took steps to defer—at least for a while—spending on some capital renewal. In the worst years of the downturn, we spent less on renewal in order to protect spending in areas such as student services and compensation. We could afford to do this because we knew that our buildings and grounds were very well maintained heading into the downturn. The result was that we cut about $2 million in budget and maintained that lower level for four years during the downturn. The 2007 capital renewal budget was $10.4 million. In each of the next four years, capital renewal was below $8 million.

How did we do it? For one, we changed the way we plan for renovations of student residence halls. In the five years prior to the downturn (2003-2007), we invested between $1 million and $5 million in residence hall renovations per year. Some of those projects were done as “summer slammers,” meaning that all the work was completed in the 13 weeks between commencement and the start of classes. That approach was less disruptive to our students and residential program, but was also extremely expensive.

We have not attempted a summer slammer since 2007. Instead, we have crafted a more deliberate plan. We embarked on a project to map out the schedule of renovation needs of all 36 of our student residence halls, slotting construction into future years in a staggered, financially sustainable way. We now have a timeline out to the year 2030, resembling a Gantt chart, mapping the likely renovation schedule (workroom). A result of this process is that we realized that we could not renovate a few of the most worn-out residences without closing them for an entire school year. For example, Garfield House requires so much work that we will either have to close it for a year or demolish it and build a replacement. In either case, we would be without 60 beds for a year—and we don’t want to lose that capacity.

This led us to the conclusion that, as a first step, we should build a new student residence to provide the swing space necessary to be able to completely close another one during future renovations. This building project became one of the goals of our current capital campaign, and we were fortunate that a donor shared our vision for a new residence right in the heart of the campus. This residence—the first built at Williams in 40 years—opened in 2016 and now provides us the flexibility to embark on our long-range renovation schedule.

To control the pace and magnitude of capital budget requests, we have instituted an annual planning process to reprioritize all capital projects in the pipeline in light of newly identified needs. This involves an annual negotiation between the provost, the vice president for finance and administration, and the director of design and construction. The result is that some worthy projects may take years to happen, despite having stood in line for several years already. This is explicitly not a first-come, first-served process. While sometimes disappointing to project advocates, the result is a more institutionally sound allocation of resources, since the projects that get priority tend to be:

- 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
Another change to our building-planning process has been the inclusion of sustainability as an underlying goal in new projects. As part of that commitment, the director of our Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives now sits on every building committee, assuring a strong voice at the table when decisions are made about the tradeoffs between cost and sustainability. Sustainability goals are incorporated into the earliest design phase of our building projects. (Additional information about sustainability appears in Standard 7.)

Unlike many of our peers, Williams has explicitly chosen not to create a campus master plan. Instead, we conduct an ongoing series of capital planning exercises focused on specific functions or geographical sectors of the campus. We invite architects and consultants to assist with this process. These “sector plans” are presented to the Operations and Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees for review.

Examples of sector plans (all available in the workroom) that have guided capital construction on campus over the past 10 years include:

- **Residential Sector Plan:** A comprehensive review of all the upper-class residence halls that produced a 20-year renovation schedule (see above and Standard 5 for details).

- **Science Center Plan:** An analysis of all buildings housing science departments, leading to the construction, now underway, of a new 178,000-square-foot addition to the existing Unified Science Center, with LEED Gold Design and Construction, along with renovation of the Morley and Thompson laboratory buildings.

- **Southwest Sector Plan:** A process that investigated facilities, generally, in the southwest corner of the campus. The Weston Hall renovation, the move of Admission and Financial Aid to new facilities, and the locating of the new residence hall on Stetson Court were three of the outcomes of this study.

- **Spring Street Development Plan:** A plan to increase vibrancy in downtown Williamstown. Projects have included extensive renovations to a college-owned pub and restaurant (The Log), a new 10,000-square-foot building to house the Williams Bookstore and a café, planning for a new Williams Inn at the base of Spring Street, and massive public drainage infrastructure improvements.

- **Art Facilities Plan:** In light of space constraints and deteriorating physical conditions in Lawrence Hall (a historically significant building housing the college’s art museum and a large portion of the Art Department), we are evaluating options ranging from renovation of Lawrence to building a new facility in another location.

Typically, these plans result in recommendations for capital projects in the form of major renovations to existing buildings or new construction. For projects that are approved by the board’s Operations and Planning Committee, we establish a building committee made up of faculty, staff and, when appropriate, students. The committee also includes representatives from Facilities Operations, Design and Construction, and the Zilkha Center. This group works with the architect to develop a detailed program for the project and evaluates whether proposed designs meet the needs of the occupants and sustainability goals.

In addition to the building committees for individual projects, we have created a Design Review Committee that reviews and comments on the exterior design of all capital projects on campus. That committee includes three faculty members, a senior staff member, and staff from Design and Construction.
**Planning for faculty retirements**

During the downturn, we also instituted an early retirement program for tenured faculty. We noticed, like many colleges, that our faculty were delaying retirement more than ever before. By 2012, the average age of full professors had increased to 58, up from 53 in 2006. This increase was partly the result of a demographic bulge, but more likely the result of individuals delaying retirement for financial or other reasons.

Of course, this creates an unusually senior faculty, as well as an unusually expensive one. Reduced turnover also reduces the opportunity to innovate within the curriculum. So, in response, we created a financial incentive for faculty to retire. This plan is meant both to invigorate the curriculum and to create ongoing cost savings in the form of lower overall faculty compensation expenses. Our plan offers a one-time, lump-sum payment for immediate retirement or a phased option that allows for part-time teaching over three years at premium pay. Fourteen professors have signed early retirement contracts, about half choosing the lump-sum option and half choosing the phased option. We have developed a model to project the plan’s payback period. Right now, we are still in the red, having paid more in incentives than we’ve saved in compensation expenses. The nature of the payments is one-time, however, and the nature of the savings is cumulative, so we always expected the payback period to be several years out. To be cost effective, the plan must move faculty toward retiring at an earlier average age. It is too early to tell if the plan is working, and we will continue to monitor its effects.

**Risk management**

A decade ago, the college’s risk-management program consisted of its insurance policies, the staff in Environmental Safety and Compliance, and a collection of campus safety committees involving legal compliance, employee safety, and specific areas of the Science Center. Over the last five years, Williams has built up a far more robust risk-management and compliance infrastructure to monitor, assess, and mitigate risks collegewide. This program is directed by the associate vice president of finance and administration, advised by a campuswide committee with representatives from major administrative offices and from the faculty.

In its monthly meetings, the committee has addressed many issues in recent years, including the viability of the college’s business model, emergency preparedness, information security, athlete concussions, our insurance program, college vehicle policies, and drone use, among others.

The Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees receives updates on risk topics at every meeting, and the full board has heard presentations on risk topics. Senior college officers routinely work on related efforts, and all senior management and department heads now participate in an annual emergency management training program and tabletop exercise (see Standard 5 for details). We recently expanded this effort to include a separate tabletop on information security. Most importantly, departments across campus are starting to incorporate risk awareness and management as priorities in daily work.
Financial planning

Other responses to the downturn included freezing salaries for a year and reducing staff through attrition. We also reduced managers’ budgets by almost 26 percent in real terms between 2008 and 2012. It is an understatement to say this was a painful period for our program managers: we asked them to cut their budgets while preserving the core of their programs. Only now are their budgets approaching predownturn levels in real terms.

Senior staff members present and defend annual budget requests for their areas before the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR). CPR, composed of faculty, staff, and elected student leaders, serves in an advisory capacity to the president, making recommendations concerning the college’s annual funding priorities.

To better communicate the financial condition of the college to decision-makers, the provost developed a “Financial Fundamentals” presentation that is given to CPR and to the Board of Trustees every fall. In recent years, it has also been presented to a faculty forum called for the purpose. The presentation contains financial projections for the next five years and ties directly to the financial plan (workroom).

In the past decade, we have refined our financial planning process. We have made the financial plan sensitive to many more assumptions. The most important assumption is related to endowment performance. Recognizing our reliance on our endowment (it provides nearly half of every dollar we spend), we devoted considerable time to developing a “stress test” model for our financial plan. The test simulates what could happen over one or several back-to-back years of flat or declining market conditions. It models not only lower earnings from endowment, but also the things that would probably correlate with that, such as a drop in gift revenue and an increase in financial aid. We use the model to test what effect turning various “dials”—e.g., reducing managers’ budgets, capital renewal, and compensation—might have on our financial condition. One typical simulation we run is a “do-over” of the 2008 downturn. We can enter into the model a repeat of the conditions that we actually know to have occurred, and then see what we’d have to do to climb out of an equivalent downturn if it happened again today. The financial plan is reviewed by the Board of Trustees quarterly.
Projection

The 10-year period since our last self-study has been a roller coaster ride, starting at peak endowment, riding through the recession of 2008, and now climbing the economic recovery. It is hard to predict the future, but history demonstrates that with good planning and the flexibility to adapt to changing conditions, Williams can weather such a storm. Looking forward to the next decade, we project the following:

- Using our long-range financial plan, we will keep the availment rate of the endowment within the target range of 4.5 percent-5.5 percent. We will trend down toward the bottom half of that range by the next half of the decade.

- We will successfully conclude the Teach It Forward Campaign, meeting not only the financial goals but also the goal for high levels of alumni participation, volunteerism, and online engagement. See Standard 7 for details.

- In the area of capital renewal, we will continue to work on renovations at the pace dictated by our residential sector plan. As residence halls are upgraded, they will fall to the bottom of the list, but will remain in the 30-year planning cycle.

- We will continue to make progress toward our sustainability goals. See Standard 7 for additional information.

- Faculty retirements will peak. We will take advantage of this opportunity to reshape the faculty both demographically and departmentally. We will evaluate the faculty early retirement program’s cost effectiveness in accelerating retirements.

- We will improve the transparency of decision-making through better communication with campus constituents. We will use the successful model of recent faculty open fora on topics such as staffing and financial aid. We will also continue the popular “How Williams Works” faculty seminar series (see Standard 9).
Evaluation

Description

Good planning and good evaluation are informed by data. Much of the data we use to support institutional planning and evaluation is collected by our colleagues in Institutional Research (IR). After decades as a one-person office, IR recently doubled in size to two FTE with the addition of an assistant director. IR is the official source for data on campus and supports short- and long-term planning as well as evaluation efforts. IR coordinates internal and external research, including consulting on survey design and methodology. IR has been working with the Office for Information Technology (OIT) to develop an institutional data and reporting infrastructure to bring together data from several important centers, such as admission, financial aid, the registrar, and the Dean’s Office. This will streamline data access and reporting. The analytical output of IR is sometimes longitudinal in nature—reporting on what has or hasn’t worked at Williams over time, and is sometimes comparative, providing an external perspective on what has or hasn’t worked at peer colleges. Examples of both are used throughout this self-study.

Evaluating the curriculum

As Standard 4 will explain in detail, an especially active area of evaluation is the curriculum. At any given time, at least one aspect of the curriculum is under the microscope. Most of the day-to-day and year-to-year curricular changes are driven by individual professors innovating within their courses (see examples of course syllabi in the workroom). Each year, at least a few departments and programs resolve to make bigger changes. For example, a unit might adjust course prerequisites, change the requirements for their major, or alter the major’s course sequence. These types of changes are reviewed annually by the Committee on Educational Affairs and are presented at faculty meetings for approval.

Several aspects of the curriculum have received special scrutiny in the past decade. These are discussed in greater detail in Standard 4, so we’ll simply list here a few examples of our recent work:

- We undertook a full review of the Exploring Diversity Initiative.

- Recognizing the enormous workload of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), we split its duties into two committees: the Committee on Educational Affairs (CEA) and the Curricular Planning Committee (CPC).

- In the last 10 years, we have conducted 26 full reviews of academic units.

In our 2007 self-study, we described one of our off-campus programs: Williams-in-New York (WNY), established in 2005. In 2008, the CEP and an ad hoc committee undertook a detailed assessment of WNY. The college closed the program in 2009 (see Standard 4 for additional details).

Williams operates two other off-campus programs: the Williams-Exeter Programme at Oxford (WEPO) and the Williams-Mystic Maritime Studies Program. Mystic is due to be evaluated three years from now. These programs are described in Standards 4 and 9.
**Staff performance evaluations**

Within the past few years, we have implemented a competency-based performance evaluation program that provides for annual evaluations of all employees. It includes three elements: (1) reviewing the past year and evaluating goals, (2) setting goals for the coming year, and (3) establishing long-term goals for the employees’ professional development. Departments can choose from among three schedules for completing the process. This provides more flexibility for departments to assess performance when it makes the most sense to do so. We strive to make the process as convenient as possible to maximize compliance. All individual assessments are reviewed by department heads and also that department’s senior staff person (provost, dean, VP, etc.).

**Evaluation of the classroom experience**

Williams has a long history of conducting quantitative and qualitative course evaluations. The Student Course Survey (SCS) is a one-page, 23-question, machine-readable evaluative survey that students complete at the end of each of their courses. It is accompanied by a blank “blue sheet” for open-ended comments. Copies of the SCS instrument and the blue sheet are available in the workroom. Williams has required administration of the SCS in every course since 1988. Faculty have typically administered it during the last few classes of the term, and results are returned to them after they submit final grades to the registrar. The process is a visible sign of a culture that seeks input from current students to help faculty hone their teaching skills and to improve the classroom experience for future students. Over the past two years, an ad hoc faculty committee looked closely at our ways of evaluating teaching, broadly speaking. Its members gathered extensive input through conversations with individual faculty, meetings with departments and programs, and discussions at faculty meetings. Among its various recommendations, the committee proposed major changes in the content of the survey instrument used for evaluating courses and also proposed that the survey—traditionally administered in the classroom using paper forms—be administered instead online. These proposed changes were approved in a faculty vote in Spring 2017. In the next two years, we will pilot and then implement this new system.

**Collaborative evaluation projects through COFHE and others**

Williams is fortunate to belong to the Consortium on the Economics of Higher Education (COFHE), a group of peer colleges and universities that share information and collaborate on research projects. We regularly participate in the COFHE suite of surveys, which includes an incoming student survey, an enrolled student survey, a senior (exit) survey, an alumni survey, and a parent survey. We also occasionally participate in other normed surveys, such as the HERI Faculty Survey and the ACHA/NCHA collegiate health survey. In 2015, Williams conducted its first campus-climate survey, looking at attitudes around and incidence of sexual assault. Participating regularly in these surveys provides us with a vast amount of data that helps in current and future evaluation efforts. Indeed, the data from these surveys often allows us to evaluate, post hoc, things that we had not even thought about. Throughout this self-study, there are references to data gleaned from these surveys.
Appraisal

A look at affordability

An urgent question in higher education these days is whether or not college is affordable. This question has been the subject of a great deal of analytical work by Institutional Research and has been the central theme of several trustee meetings. We have developed an affordability dashboard for senior staff and trustees; it presents data (longitudinal and comparative) to evaluate our affordability. Williams is need blind and fully meets the demonstrated need of students; we want money never to be the deciding factor in whether an admitted student decides to matriculate. Yet we know that paying for college is rarely easy for students and their families, and we need to know how families pay for college and how they feel about our affordability.

Loans are a particularly important topic right now, so we took a deep look at our loan policy. With our modest loan expectations, Williams actually has a lower per-borrower average debt than six officially “no-loan” peer colleges. This is consistent with the hypothesis that sometimes a modest packaged loan actually serves to anchor families’ borrowing behavior at amounts less than their maximum eligible limits (which would be a tempting amount to borrow lacking any signal about what the college thinks is necessary).

A look at staffing

Another hot topic in higher education right now is the specter of administrative bloat. Indeed, the ideas of affordability and administrative bloat are often connected, with the lack of the first being blamed, in part, on too much of the second. We want this debate to be informed by data at Williams, so we have been transparent about the level and rate of growth in college staffing. Last fall, the provost’s office prepared an exhaustive report on trends in both faculty and nonfaculty staff since 2003 (workroom). In that time, academic faculty FTE grew by 20 percent, while all other staff increased 14 percent. The full report breaks down faculty and staff in much finer detail and is publicly available on the provost’s website. It was the subject of a faculty forum led by the provost in Spring 2017.

The report also compares Williams to its peers, asking, “Does Williams have more or fewer staff than comparable colleges?” To answer that, we first need to ask, “What makes a college comparable?” If we assume that a college’s staff has three purposes—to take care of its students, its faculty, and its buildings—then any given college’s staff size can be expressed as some function of those three things. In other words, if we know a given college’s enrollment, faculty count, and physical footprint, we can, with some degree of accuracy, predict the staff FTE of the college. If we perform this analysis, it suggests that Williams has almost exactly the size staff one would expect, given the number of students and faculty and the size of our campus.
According to this model, some peers operate with fewer staff than would be predicted, while others operate with more staff than would be predicted. For example, the analysis suggests that Trinity College operates with ~150 fewer staff than one would predict for a school of its scale. Meanwhile, Middlebury employs about 150 more staff than one would predict.

This is, admittedly, a simple analysis. There are dozens of unobserved variables that affect staff size, such as, for example, whether or not an institution insources various operations. Middlebury operates a ski area and has a number of remote language centers, which partially explains its relatively high staff count. Meanwhile, the three colleges that look most efficient (Trinity, Wesleyan, and Carleton) all outsource their dining operations, which gives them the appearance of relative efficiency.

Another good example is campus child care. Williams operates a day care with approximately 22 FTE. Only one of the colleges to the more-efficient (left-hand) side of Williams in the chart above also insources a day care. If we really wanted to get an apples-to-apples comparison of staff levels with Amherst and Swarthmore (for example), we’d need to deduct about 22 FTE of day care staff that Williams employs but that our peers without insourced day care do not.
Projection

We hope the information that we’ve provided in this standard demonstrates that Williams has well-established planning and evaluation practices. In the decade ahead, we expect to continue to strengthen our culture of assessment at every level of the institution. We also project the following:

- The college will continue its program of academic department and administrative unit evaluations using external evaluators, aiming for 10-year cycles.
- Academic units will continue to define and refine learning goals and outcomes assessments.
- We will conduct a review of Williams-Mystic, our off-campus Maritime Studies program.
- We will continue to implement diverse forms of assessment across all departments, tailored to the students those departments touch. We will promote multiple methods of evaluating the classroom experience.
- We will implement the new SCS course evaluation system in Fall 2019, following a series of pilot tests overseen by a faculty committee.
- We will strive to make staff performance evaluations timely and comprehensive.
Standard Three: 
Organization and Governance

Williams’ organization and governance follow a fairly conventional scheme, with decision-making responsibilities shared and carefully balanced between the Board of Trustees, the president, administrators, faculty, staff, and—within certain spheres—students. Our governance arrangements and practices are designed to support and advance the college’s mission.

Description

Williams’ College Laws (workroom) charge the school’s president and trustees with responsibility for governance and direction of the college. The president is a member of the Board of Trustees and our chief executive officer, with general oversight and direction of administration, instruction, and discipline, and is also presiding officer of the faculty.

Williams’ board currently comprises 22 trustees, including the president. Five members were directly elected by our alumni. All current trustees are graduates of the college. Ten (45 percent) are women and the other 12 (55 percent) are men. Six (27 percent) identify as people of color. They come from all regions of the United States, and several grew up in other areas of the developed or developing world.

The board’s Executive Committee manages the process of selecting new members through an extensive process of candidate identification, assessment, cultivation, and election, which is monitored to ensure diversity, balance, and breadth of expertise. Members serve an initial term of five years and can be reappointed at the board’s discretion for a second term of up to seven years, for a total of 12 years maximum of service. Of the 21 current members, excluding the president, 15 are in their first term and six are in their second.

The college benefits from the board’s experience and accomplishments in a wide variety of professions and fields, from business and finance to academia, law, entertainment, marketing, environmental issues, and the arts. Full information about the members, including biographies for many of them, can be found on our Board of Trustees website (and in the workroom).

The board meets four times a year, with additional committee discussions and special-project work as needed between meetings. Senior administrators are present at both committee and full board meetings. Faculty, staff, and students are called upon to join board deliberations when appropriate and may also be invited to make presentations on issues of particular interest. The board also interacts with faculty, students, and staff at an annual cycle of informal mixers and dinners.

The president presents annual goals to the board at the start of each academic year and discusses progress toward them at the June meeting. The president’s performance is reviewed by the board’s Executive Committee each summer. The Executive Committee also meets annually with the Faculty Steering Committee to discuss matters of faculty interest, including the president’s service.

The board approves the college’s major initiatives, including any spending or fundraising commitments needed to achieve defined goals. Such approvals typically begin with review and recommendation of the proposals to the board by the relevant committees and
may also incorporate discussions with faculty and staff when that is possible within the limits of confidentiality and other legal requirements.

At every meeting, the board receives a standard set of high-level briefings on critical aspects of the operation: the treasurer reports on fiscal health, the chief investment officer discusses the endowment, and the vice president for college relations summarizes fundraising performance.

Financial operations and performance are further monitored by a coordinated set of committees:

- The Budget and Financial Planning Committee reviews the operating budget and budget planning, and monitors activity at a broad, strategic level.
- The Investment Committee approves investment strategy and reviews performance.
- The Audit Committee reviews tax reports and holds an executive session with the board’s independent auditing firm (currently PwC—see Standard 7 for details). This committee also reviews regulatory, compliance, internal controls, and the college’s enterprise risk management (ERM) efforts. The full board receives a report on ERM every year.

All of these efforts are informed by regular reports from the provost, the chief investment officer, and treasurer, as well as input from faculty, students, and staff serving on the Committee on Priorities and Resources and the Advisory Committee on Shareholder Responsibility. More information about the work of these committees is available in the workroom.

Through the college’s conflict of interest statement (workroom), every trustee is required annually to disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest regarding his or her Williams duties. The secretary to the board distributes a summary of all disclosures to the chairs of the Executive, Governance, Investment, and Audit committees, the president, the chief investment officer, the vice president for finance and administration and treasurer, and the college’s legal counsel. Completion of the statement acts as an annual reminder to trustees that they are expected to recuse themselves from board discussions or votes on which their interests might conflict. Especially in the case of the investment committee, the practice of appropriate recusal is rigorously respected.

The board’s work is staffed by a team of senior college administrators, including the assistant to the president, who serves as secretary of the college and secretary to the board. The president is supported by a team of senior administrators and academic leaders, known collectively at Williams as the senior staff. All senior staff members are formally designated as officers of the institution.

Three senior staff posts are reserved for Williams faculty members: the dean of the college, the provost, and the dean of the faculty (the college’s chief academic officer). Williams is known among its peers for its unusual practice of choosing provosts and deans exclusively from within the ranks of current faculty. This provides rising faculty leaders with valuable experience and professional development opportunities. It also promotes better faculty understanding of the school’s inner workings, since those leaders—typically after three to six years of administrative service—usually return to their academic units, becoming credible sources of insight for their colleagues into how the college runs.

The nonfaculty members of senior staff are the vice president for college relations, the vice president for campus life, the chief investment officer, the vice president for institutional
diversity and equity, the chief communications officer, the assistant to the president and secretary of the board, and the vice president for finance and administration and treasurer.

Based on its consultations with other groups in the governance and organizational structure, senior staff, at their weekly meetings, make decisions about college operations and set matters of short- and long-term policy. For example, the dean of the college, vice president for campus life, and vice president for institutional diversity and equity routinely meet with student leaders; the dean of the faculty and the provost regularly engage with faculty regarding academic matters; and the vice president for finance and administration and treasurer connects with staff on issues of concern to them.

The president and senior staff work closely with the entire faculty in the governance of the college. Reflecting a long-established tradition that has served the college well, this collaborative approach to governance is expressed institutionally in several ways.

First, as noted above, three members of senior staff are drawn from the faculty. Standing committees are a second expression of our collaborative governance philosophy. Among the most important are:

- The Faculty Steering Committee (FSC). Its six elected faculty are charged with facilitating the faculty’s effective participation in the conduct of college business and directing to the relevant committees issues of particular concern to the faculty. The FSC consults annually with the president on appointments to the various standing committees.

- The Committee on Appointments and Promotions (CAP), made up of the president, dean of the faculty, provost, and three elected faculty, advises on appointment and advancement of faculty, allocation of positions to departments and programs, granting of leaves, and new curricular initiatives that have staffing implications.

- The Committee on Educational Affairs (CEA), comprising the president, dean of the faculty, and provost, along with elected faculty and students, recommends educational policy to the faculty and maintains collegewide oversight of the curriculum.

- The Curricular Planning Committee (CPC), which includes the president, provost, dean of the faculty, and elected faculty, analyzes the college’s curriculum, investigates changes over time, and explores questions about its future.

- The Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR), made up of faculty, various senior staff, and students, reviews allocation of the college’s fiscal and tangible resources during the annual budget cycle and advises on long-range financial planning.

- The Committee on Undergraduate Life (CUL), composed of faculty, the dean of the college, and students, oversees policy on all nonacademic aspects of student life.

As many demands as this highly consultative approach places on faculty and staff, Williams has found it effective in providing venues for collaboration and the sharing of views among faculty, students, and administrators. It guarantees the faculty extensive input into the formulation and implementation of college policies, and enhances management and oversight of campus affairs.

Monthly faculty meetings provide a third means to ensure the faculty’s important role in governance. Standing committees present proposals requiring faculty action for discussion and vote. Meetings also allow time for discussing issues not requiring a vote.
No major changes in the curriculum or academic regulations can be adopted without faculty approval.

Williams’ staff, too, are deeply committed to the college’s mission. Of the 851 administrative and support staff members on staff as of June 30, 2017, 203 have over 20 years of service—an exceptional level of loyalty that we cultivate through ongoing investment and human resources innovation (see also Standard 7). The employee turnover rate in this group is relatively low, at just 4.2 percent over the past three years. We also note that, since adopting an affirmative action program in 1972, Williams has made concerted efforts to increase the number of women and people of color among administrative and support staff.

Three formal committees facilitate staff input on college affairs:

- The President’s Administrative Group (PAG), made up of the president, senior staff, and 55 director-level administrators, meets bimonthly to discuss topics of interest and learn more about college operations.

- The Staff Advisory Council, which includes both hourly and salaried staff nominated through a campuswide process, meets with the director of human resources to discuss issues related to employment at the college, provide feedback on institutional policies and practices, and inform leadership’s thinking about work and life topics.

- A relatively new group, formed since our last self-study, is the Williams Staff Committee. This elected committee of hourly and salaried staff works to increase the visibility of staff on campus and to advance their role in the life of the college. Recent meeting topics included discussion of a donation bank for sick time, the college’s health plans, and our staff climate survey, which has now been administered twice (2013-14 and 2016-17—reports from these surveys are publicly available on our website and in the workroom).

- In addition to these formal bodies, all staff are invited twice annually to meetings hosted by the president and senior staff. Questions can be submitted in advance (including anonymously), and the meetings cover topics ranging from benefits to building projects to campus climate. Human Resources staff also host regular lunches for all employees and monthly breakfasts with department heads. These gatherings provide a venue to share experiences, expand cross-campus communication, and assess the general level of employee satisfaction.

Students, too, have a significant voice in college affairs. The College Council—the elected student representative body—discusses a variety of campus issues and allocates an annual budget of $460,000 in activities funds to support registered student organizations and other student initiatives. A new Student Leadership group, comprising leaders of many major student organizations, meets regularly with the various deans and vice presidents to provide input on important campus issues. Many campus committees include student representatives who have an equal vote in decisions on everything from facilities to health and wellness. Since 1925, Williams has also been distinguished by its program of Junior Advisors (JAs)—carefully chosen third-year students who live with first-year students in their “entries” and help them acclimate to college life. With no faculty or salaried staff living in any of our residence halls, JAs assume significant responsibility for the well-being of new students and are an important voice for student needs.
Appraisal

The board practices self-evaluation with an eye toward continuously improving governance. This work is led by the governance arm of the Committee on Nominations, Governance and Degrees, which reports to the board’s Executive Committee. Since 2007, the board has adopted the following changes to the College Laws:

- changed the presiding officer of the board from the president to the board chair;
- reduced the number of “classes” of trustees from three to two;
- shortened the length of trustee terms of service from a maximum of 15 years to a maximum of 12 years;
- changed practices regarding the participation of trustees emeriti in board meetings;
- redefined the category of college officers to include all senior staff;
- amended the names and functions of some standing committees.

Each of these changes is documented as an amendment to the College Laws. The governance arm of the committee also recommends changes to board-meeting operations through the analysis of quarterly meeting evaluations and an annual survey. The board has also benefitted from the advice of a governance consultant over the years and intends to continue inviting the advice of such experts if the need arises. Each trustee is enrolled in the Association of Governing Boards and receives AGB’s magazine. This culture of ongoing learning, self-reflection, and careful, considered improvement enhances the board’s work as a group and underscores our belief in good governance as a journey, not a destination.

Over the last decade, the board has devoted an increased amount of its time on campus to interacting with faculty, staff, and students. Most board meetings include dinners with faculty from various disciplines. For years, the board has also met with students informally over dinners and welcomed student participation in both Student Experience Committee meetings and full-board discussions. Staff and faculty are also frequently invited to contribute data and expertise in committee meetings. In 2016, the board expanded its engagement with students to include open Q&A forums, receptions, and an annual dinner with members of the College Council.

The creation of the college’s Records Management Policy in 2016 is a concise example of the board’s collaborative work with campus. That policy, which ensures our compliance with various legal and financial requirements, including the annual Form 990, was produced through a collaborative process involving the Board of Trustees, the vice president for finance and administration and treasurer, and numerous staff, including college counsel and the records manager/digital resources archivist. Another example is the board’s 2015 climate change initiative (see Standard 7), which was rooted in research and advice from two standing committees: the Advisory Committee on Shareholder Responsibility and the Campus Environmental Advisory Committee.

We periodically review the effectiveness of our organizational and governance structure, and make adjustments when we believe they will enhance the college’s mission. Two such major changes were made in 2010, when the college created the position of vice president for finance and administration and treasurer and the position of vice president for campus life, while also realigning some of the duties of the provost and the dean of the college. The primary objectives of the changes were to encourage strong faculty leadership and governance; enable faculty to set institutional priorities; preserve the number of faculty...
in senior roles and ensure that each of these positions are open to faculty from all disciplines; design senior faculty positions that is attractive and manageable in scope; minimize growth in senior administration; value the need for professional and technical knowledge in certain areas; and limit the cost of rotating leadership.

Realigning many of the student support services (e.g., Health Services, Campus Safety and Security, Chaplains, and Student Life) under the vice president for operations (and retitling the position to vice president for campus life) allowed the dean of the college to focus more on such areas as academic advising and academic support services. Similarly, moving the responsibility for treasury, finance, audit, reporting, debt management and budget operations to a new position—vice president for finance and administration—gave the provost more time to oversee budget priorities and strategic planning, and to marshal academic resources for new and existing programs. The provost retained oversight of core academic support areas: Libraries, the Williams College Museum of Art, the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives, and Information Technology, along with student recruitment, admission, and financial aid. The vice president for finance and administration assumed responsibility for allied functions such as Human Resources, Real Estate, Legal Affairs, and Facilities, which were previously managed by the vice president for operations.

It is critical that faculty serving in senior staff roles be focused on advancing the college’s top academic priorities, thinking strategically, and leading within the faculty governance structure rather than be distracted by administrative responsibilities requiring technical knowledge and skills. The realignment of responsibilities recaptured their original purpose—to think, plan, and see carried out our core academic mission and to encourage faculty across all disciplines to consider such service to the college.

Our rural location makes recruiting staff a particular challenge for Williams. Recent efforts to expand our candidate pools have included postings of our positions in a variety of places, from websites to list-servers to professional associations (e.g., the National Association of Asian American Professionals, The Black Collegian, The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, LatinosinHigherEd.com, Diverse: Issues in Higher Education, INSIGHT Into Diversity, Asians in Higher Education). In addition, we continue to use our alumni of color networks to share news about employment opportunities.

Williams continues to practice the fiscal prudence assumed during the last financial downturn. The vice president for finance and administration and treasurer, the provost, and the director of human resources review every staff vacancy. Managers have learned that replacement searches do not automatically follow retirements or departures, and the vetting process provides the college a chance to recommit to a particular staff position or, if appropriate, restructure responsibilities within a unit.

Since our last self-study, we’ve greatly expanded our staff development program. Under the direction of our training and development manager (a new position in the past 10 years), our offerings have greatly expanded. Workshops on communications, diversity and inclusion, management, productivity, and wellness—to name a few—are offered to all faculty and staff. We are also in our fifth year of offering a management development program designed to enhance and expand the skills of midlevel managers. Close to 70 staff have participated in this weeklong program focusing on team building, strategic planning, stakeholder management, and DiSC profile assessment. In addition, Human Resources staff members offer a training course in the fundamentals of supervision for staff at all different levels of the organization; 50 supervisors have participated thus far.
Projection

Looking forward to the next decade, we project the following:

- The Board of Trustees will continue to diversify its membership, enhance the efficiency of its operations, and engage with faculty, staff, and students.

- The institution will continue to refine its organizational structure to enhance collaboration, efficiency, and productivity.

- Diversifying and training staff will remain a priority. The college expects to soon implement a staff diversity recruiting and retention plan; it will include such forms of support as facilitating conversations about recruiting diverse pools and providing education about the potential impact of bias in evaluating job candidates.

- We also hope to soon adopt a revised nondiscrimination policy that highlights the college’s bias incident reporting protocol.
Standard Four: 
The Academic Program

The academic program at Williams adheres to the familiar liberal arts template. We offer a four-year course of study leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree. We also have two small graduate programs, one in the history of art leading to a Master of Arts degree, and the other in development economics leading to a master's in policy economics. Our Fall 2016 enrollment included 2,058 degree-seeking undergraduates, 57 master’s students, and 35 part-time nondegree students. Using IPEDS methodology, our faculty FTE was 321, yielding a student-to-faculty ratio of 7 to 1.

The Undergraduate Degree

The structure and schedule of the baccalaureate degree at Williams is detailed in the annual Courses of Instruction and on the registrar’s website. The year is divided into fall and spring semesters, both 13 weeks long, and a four-week Winter Study period in January. Generally, students must complete the degree within eight semesters and must be in residence at Williams for at least six of those semesters (transfer students must be in residence for a minimum of four semesters).

Since the late 1960s, 32 semester courses, four Winter Study courses, and four units of physical education have been required for the degree. Our course system considers all full-semester courses to have equal weight: 3.75 credit hours. Thus the minimum requirement for the B.A. is 120 semester credits. Full-semester courses meet for a minimum of three hours each week, with the expectation that at least an additional 10 hours of academic engagement be spent on class, lab, discussion, studio, film viewing, reading, research, writing, and/or other forms of intellectual and creative work related to the class. A February 2017 memo from the Committee on Educational Affairs (CEA) to the faculty fully explains the translation of course units into credit hours (workroom).

Created in 1968, the Winter Study program broadens the scope of our curriculum. It encourages students to explore topics both within and outside the standard disciplines, provides opportunities for domestic and international travel, and allows students to participate in research and fieldwork that will enrich their education and may lead to careers. Winter Study is meant to be significantly different from the fall and spring semesters in content, pace, and pedagogy, and the courses are graded on a pass/fail basis to encourage exploration and experimentation—for students and faculty alike. Given the wide variety of Winter Study formats, we do not assign credit hours to those courses.

Likewise, physical education courses are not counted toward the 120-credit minimum. The PE requirement simply comprises a swim test and four quarters of guided physical activity, to be completed by the end of the sophomore year. Participation in intercollegiate, junior varsity, or club sports may also be counted toward this requirement.

To ensure academic integrity, the college has a long-standing honor system. It includes a statement of academic honesty that all students must sign. As a code of conduct, it invests students with responsibility for their own honesty and for reporting suspected violations to the Honor and Discipline Committee, made up of eight students, eight faculty members, and the dean of the college.
**General education**

A four-part academic distribution requirement ensures intellectual breadth among the 32 semesterlong courses every student must complete. The first part is the divisional requirement, which mandates that students pass three courses in each of the three academic divisions: languages and the arts (Division I), social studies (Division II), and science and mathematics (Division III). The second and third parts ensure the development of two core competencies: writing and quantitative skills. Students must complete two courses designated as writing-intensive (W) and one course that focuses on quantitative/formal reasoning (QFR). Neither of these skills requirements is rooted in a single discipline or even in a single division. The W requirement is dedicated to the critical and practical development of student writing proficiency across all fields of study, especially within Divisions I and II. QFR courses are found mostly in Division III, but also in other fields (e.g., economics, psychology, and philosophy) in which students need to use numbers comfortably, analyze data, and utilize formal methods to reach conclusions. (More information about the writing and quantitative skills requirements appears in Standard 8.)

The fourth part of the distribution requirement focuses on diversity, and this is the only part of the general education program that has changed significantly since our last self-study for accreditation. It changed once in 2008-09 and will soon change again. In our 2007 report, we described the first change, then imminent, from what was known as the Peoples and Cultures requirement (P&C, established in 1989) to the newly configured Exploring Diversity Initiative (EDI). Among other issues, P&C had come to be viewed as too focused on “otherness” and therefore as alienating to many students. So EDI was launched in 2008-09, requiring every student to take at least one course with the topic of diversity as a central and explicit theme. Cultural diversity continued as a potential area of investigation, but EDI acknowledged other kinds of diversity as well, including economic, political, and religious.

Upon the adoption of EDI, the faculty agreed to conduct a thorough review of its effectiveness after five years. That review began in 2013-14, and in each subsequent year, more data were gathered and presented for faculty discussion. This process of evaluation is also described in Standard 8. The end result is that the faculty voted in March 2017 to update and replace EDI with a Difference, Power, and Equity (DPE) course requirement. Slated for implementation in Fall 2018, DPE courses will provide students with the opportunity to analyze the shaping of social differences, dynamics of unequal power, and processes of change. Employing a variety of pedagogical approaches and theoretical perspectives, DPE courses will examine themes including, but not limited to, race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion. Every student will be required to complete at least one DPE course.

**Majors and concentrations**

The curriculum at Williams is offered primarily by two kinds of academic units, departments and programs. Led by faculty chairs, these units are distinguished by mode of governance. Departments are self-governing, although faculty affiliates from other units participate fully in curricular matters. Programs are governed by advisory committees consisting of faculty with FTE in the program as well as faculty appointed in other units (some programs do not have dedicated faculty appointments, but many do). With only one exception (Dance), departments organize their curriculum around a major, whereas programs may offer either a major or a concentration. Learning goals for all of the academic departments and programs have been developed since our last self-study for accreditation and are posted on the college website.
All students must select a major. There are currently 36 choices available; the requirements for each are outlined in Courses of Instruction, which is updated and published annually. All majors require nine to 13 courses, and all academic units provide an advising program to help students chart a plan of study reflecting individual interests as well as disciplined, cumulative patterns of inquiry. Students must select a major by the time they become juniors, and many of them (42 percent in the Class of 2017) decide to major in two fields (up from just 16 percent in 1986). Students may also petition for a self-designed “contract major” in an interdisciplinary subject.

The list of majors offered is shown below in the order of average number of majors awarded per year from 2014 through 2017.

![Average Majors Awarded per Year](image)

Overall, the percentage of total majors per division over the last four years is 23 percent in Division I, 46 percent in Division II, and 31 percent in Division III.

Williams does not offer minors, but students may pursue concentrations offered by the nondepartmental programs or certificates in some foreign languages. Concentrations are explicitly interdepartmental or interdisciplinary. There are 13 concentrations offered, and all require at least five courses (some much more), including an introductory core course and a senior capstone. Language certificates typically require seven to eight courses and confirm a particular degree of proficiency, cultural literacy, and experience with the language, but short of the requirements for a major in that language. The graph below shows the average number of concentrations and certificates awarded in each unit from 2014 through 2017:

![Average Certificates and Concentrations Awarded per Year](image)
Study away

Williams runs two off-campus programs under the college’s name: the Williams-Exeter Programme at Oxford University and the Williams-Mystic Maritime Studies Program in Mystic, Connecticut. Of course, Williams students can also enroll in study-away programs hosted by other institutions. In recent years, 43 percent to 50 percent of graduating seniors have elected to study away for one or two semesters (typically during junior year). About half of them study in England, Spain, France, Italy, or the U.S.; the others spread themselves around the globe. In 2015-16, our students studied in a total of 40 different countries. The top five majors of students studying away are economics, foreign languages, political science, English, and psychology, accounting for nearly 70 percent of all those who study away. This list has been fairly stable over the past decade. Division III majors, especially chemistry and biology, are perennially underrepresented given their prescribed course sequences.

Degree credit for study away is accepted only from collegiate-level programs approved by the Committee on Academic Standing (CAS). Credit is not accepted from business or other preprofessional programs, or from open-campus, correspondence, distance-education, competency-based, or noncollegiate programs.

The Williams-Exeter Programme at Oxford (WEPO), established in 1985, enrolls 26 juniors each year. They live in a Williams-owned residential complex and enroll in Oxford tutorials as visiting students at Exeter College. A Williams faculty member serves as the director of the program—a two-year rotating post. WEPO has remained unchanged over the past decade, and there are no significant changes anticipated in the short or long term.

The Williams-Mystic Maritime Studies Program (W-M) was established in 1977. Unlike WEPO, which is limited to Williams students, W-M is open to students from all accredited colleges and universities. W-M offers an interdisciplinary curriculum focused on the sea, but it is not a semester at sea. The program uses the Mystic Seaport museum as its campus. Approximately 20 students enroll each semester, including, on average, about five from Williams. They take four courses in ocean science, literature of the sea, maritime history, and marine policy. Primary research is an important part of every course, and the students, faculty, and staff travel together on several multiday field seminars, including a short voyage and two coastal trips. As the result of a self-study in 2014-15, the administrative structure of W-M has been reorganized (see the Williams-Mystic Agreement in the workroom). And the curriculum, formerly described as “maritime studies,” is now shifting its emphasis toward environmental studies and focusing on such topics as coastal and ocean sustainability, and global climate change.

The Graduate Programs

Williams offers two master's degrees. We describe them here, focusing on their learning objectives, curricula, and outcomes. Standard Five contains additional information about the graduate students and the requirements for admission to each program.

The Center for Development Economics (CDE)

A full assessment of the one-year residential graduate program offered at the CDE is available in a self-study prepared for external review in Spring 2017 (workroom). The program was created in 1960 with the goal of providing economists from the public sector in low- and middle-income countries with analytical and empirical skills that would enhance their contributions to the formulation of appropriate economic policies in their home countries. That
mission remains unchanged. It is not a Ph.D. preparation program. The typical CDE Fellow is in his or her late 20s or early 30s and is on leave from a government agency or NGO. We aim to enroll 30 students each year, from countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Myanmar, Madagascar, Yemen, Burundi, Bolivia, Turkmenistan, Mongolia, and Fiji (to name just a few). The faculty are one and the same with the undergraduate economics faculty, plus a few distinguished visitors each year from places such as the U.S. Treasury Department and the World Bank.

Since the early 2000s, the CDE master’s degree has been essentially a 10-month program, with students arriving in early August for a “boot camp” in statistics and microeconomics, combined with orientation activities, to better prepare them for the fall semester. This is followed by eight semester courses in the fall and spring, and one during Winter Study. The fall curriculum consists mostly of required courses, covering macroeconomics, economic growth, public economics, and econometrics. During Winter Study and the spring semester, students choose from a variety of electives, including writing-intensive courses and tutorials on issues that are the focus of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, or on topics such as financial crises and development successes. These tutorials provide students with valuable experience in writing short, policy-oriented papers and defending their arguments verbally. Indeed, CDE classes place strong emphasis on such skills, with extensive discussion and interaction between students and faculty. The curriculum also emphasizes practical topics such as tax policy, program and project evaluation, and trade.

It is important to note that the CDE curriculum is distinct from the undergraduate economics curriculum. All CDE courses are offered at the 500 level. Nevertheless, undergraduates and CDE Fellows do mix, in class and out. Undergraduates are allowed to enroll in some CDE courses, which they do in ever-increasing numbers (now over 100 per year, up from about 40 per year a decade ago). Likewise, CDE Fellows may take electives from the undergraduate curriculum. Undergraduates and CDE Fellows also interact socially, in the dining halls, at language tables, and at many special events held on campus.

While the CDE curriculum has not changed dramatically over the past 10 years, it has evolved. An additional and somewhat more advanced section of econometrics was added in the mid-2000s and became especially important as the math and statistics background of the class improved. A macro option for students not planning to pursue macro-oriented careers was also added recently. As shown in the 2017 self-study, the faculty are working actively to make the program responsive not just to the backgrounds and experience of the students, but to emerging issues that affect the developing world, such as climate change, refugee movements, and gender issues.

CDE has implemented several other changes in recent years. First, starting in 2010, the class size increased by five students per year in order to further enhance the diversity of each cohort with respect both to geography and economic specialty. Second, the admissions process has become more selective to ensure that students are adequately prepared for the rigorous curriculum (see Standard 5). Third, we have focused recruitment efforts on lower-income countries, shifting away from places such as Latin America, China, and India, where there is a greater supply of economists with Ph.D.s, to countries in Central Asia, Africa, or Southeast Asia, where officials working on micro policy topics are most likely to have an impact when they return home. Finally, CDE now hosts an annual conference on a development-related issue. The 2016 conference was on global poverty, and the 2017 conference was on climate change and development policy.

Since its inception, the CDE has awarded over 1,300 master’s degrees to fellows from over 110 countries around the world. The graduation rate exceeds 98 percent, and over 90
percent of the alumni are back home, most still employed in the public sector. Many rise to senior positions soon after they graduate. They have become heads or deputy heads of central-bank departments or supervisory or tax administration agencies, or senior advisers to key policymakers. A number of them work at the World Bank, IMF, or other international agencies. Notably, some have risen to the position of central bank governor, finance minister, permanent secretary, and even prime minister. Student satisfaction is high, and the supervisors of alumni who have returned to their jobs are also satisfied. Perhaps most telling is that external agencies have been so generous in providing financial aid for CDE Fellows over the years. In recent years, for example, the World Bank has provided more fellowships to the CDE than to any other English-language program in the world.

Looking ahead, the CDE will need to remain adaptable, responding to global events and needs in developing countries. While we hope that many countries will grow and develop their way out of the CDE client pool, new challenges are always emerging (climate change being perhaps the most prominent), and the CDE is a resource to continue to contribute to achieving a world without poverty.

**The Graduate Program in the History of Art (Grad Art)**

This is a two-year residential master’s program, founded in 1972. Total enrollment is about 25 students, with a dozen or so new matriculants each year. Its physical center of operation is the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, adjacent to the main Williams campus. Other collaborating institutions include the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, MASS MoCA in North Adams, and the Williams College Museum of Art. The director is a Williams faculty member, and members of the undergraduate Art Department take turns teaching a couple of graduate courses each year. Otherwise, Grad Art has its own instructional staff; most also hold curatorial or research appointments at The Clark. Details about the program’s faculty, curriculum, and events are published in an annual newsletter. The last self-study and external review to focus exclusively on Grad Art was in 2008. More recently, in 2015, the program was reviewed within the context of the undergraduate Art Department’s self-study and external review (workroom).

Grad Art’s mission is to provide its graduates with exemplary preparation for careers in the academy, museums, and associated fields in the history of art broadly conceived. Discussion, debate, and accessibility constitute core values of the academic program. Hands-on experience with object study, curation, and conservation is also emphasized. The curriculum offers courses in all areas of the history of art, as well as required training in expository writing and public presentation. All students must take a course on the methods of art history and criticism, as well as classes crossing a range of geographic areas and chronological fields. The first-year curriculum includes a three-week international trip (e.g., England, France, Italy, China) to visit museums and to see works of art and architecture in their original context. Students must also demonstrate reading proficiency in two languages other than English. Finally, as a second-year capstone event, they write, rehearse, and defend a qualifying paper, which is then shortened for presentation at the Graduate Symposium on commencement weekend.

The border between the undergraduate art program and the Grad Art program is porous. There is a distinct set of graduate courses offered at the 500 level, but the graduate students can and do enroll in some undergraduate courses, and vice versa. Moreover, some graduate students serve as teaching assistants for art history courses at the college (typically the two-semester introductory survey). Others become faculty research assistants, or they take paid internships at one of the museums or in the Chapin Library of rare books.
After graduating, Grad Art students typically either proceed to doctoral study or join the staff of an art museum, generally as an assistant curator, a curatorial intern, or in a similar capacity. Many from the latter group ultimately proceed to doctoral study after gaining one to three years of museum experience. Others, who aspire to work in museum administration, auction houses, galleries, or nonprofit art organizations often find that they do not need to pursue a doctorate. Among the five-year cohort of graduates prior to the program’s last self-study, 47 percent were enrolled in art history Ph.D. programs and 4 percent in other professional studies, while 41 percent were employed in museum or academic positions. A small number of others had gone to work in artist studios, galleries, or nonprofits.

Academic Policy and Planning

Review process at the institutional level
The college’s system of academic governance has recently changed. Until 2015–16, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) was responsible for making recommendations to the faculty concerning all changes to the academic program, including collegewide degree requirements, major and concentration requirements, the addition and deletion of individual courses, and even substantial changes to course descriptions. The importance of the CEP’s role in shaping and assessing the curriculum cannot be overstated. Over the past 20 years, the CEP led the curricular and policy reviews, which resulted in, among other things, the adoption of the W, QFR, EDI/DPE requirements, the expansion of the tutorial program, and the establishment of many new programs, majors, and concentrations. The CEP had a big job, and in recent years, the need to focus on current and short-term issues often crowded out its ability to consider strategic questions.

Recognizing the need to devote more significant attention to long-term planning, President Adam Falk appointed a task force in 2013–14 to consider alternative models of curricular governance. For 18 months, it met with multiple faculty constituencies to consider how best to assess and maintain the curriculum on an annual basis while also ensuring its timeliness and relevance for the future. These discussions eventually led the faculty to vote to create two new committees to replace the CEP: the Committee on Educational Affairs (CEA) and the Curricular Planning Committee (CPC).

The CEA, continuing where the CEP left off, evaluates and implements the curriculum each year. Its seven faculty, five staff, and six students review the annual catalog of courses and consider proposed changes before bringing them to the faculty for approval (see the section on curricular changes below). They also continue to conduct policy discussions on such important topics as online pedagogy, grade inflation, reduced course loads, enrollment caps, course deficiencies, and classroom behavior. A good example of this kind of work dates to 2015, when the CEP crafted a new pass/fail policy, making it possible for students to take up to three courses on a pass/fail basis during their four years at Williams. This policy replaced the experimental “Gaudino Option” described in our 2012 interim report. In recent years, the CEA has also addressed such critical issues as the design of the online course catalog and trends in double majoring (see Standard 8).

The CPC’s mandate is to focus on long-term planning. It is composed of six elected faculty members and three senior administrators: the president, the dean of the faculty, and
the provost. The committee investigates changes in the curriculum over time and explores questions about its future. It also coordinates conversations among academic units as they make curricular plans and staffing requests. Ultimately, in light of its analysis and faculty input, the CPC makes recommendations to the Committee on Appointments and Promotions (CAP) on the allocation of faculty positions to departments and programs.

The CPC in particular represents an important step for the college: to have an elected group of faculty work with senior academic administrators to produce a diachronic analysis of the curriculum, presented for discussion of the full faculty, and then used to inform tenure-line staffing decisions. Connecting curricular planning to staffing is especially important given that the college is experiencing a wave of faculty retirements (see Standards 2 and 6), and hiring decisions made at this time will affect the shape of the curriculum for decades to come. The CPC’s first report was released in February 2017 (workroom). Its 97 pages provide a deep analysis of the curriculum, changes over the last two decades, and challenges for the future. That report should be considered as an extended companion piece to this chapter.

Department and program reviews

All academic units at Williams are on a 10-year review cycle. The purpose of a review is to provide a department or program, the CPC, and the CAP with an overview of the academic unit’s articulation of its various educational objectives for majors, nonmajors, and the college as a whole; its assessment of its effectiveness in meeting these objectives over the previous decade; and its vision for the future. The review also serves to present the range, balance, and strength of the curriculum offered by the unit with respect to the current state of the discipline. The review thus aims to address the academic unit as a whole rather than be an assessment of individuals.

From start to finish, the review process takes about a year. Its major elements include a self-study, a two- to three-day site visit by a team of external scholars and teachers, and meetings for the department/program faculty with the CAP and the CPC to discuss the self-study and the external reviewers’ recommendations. Since 2006-07, we have conducted a total of 26 academic reviews, plus a full review of the Department of Physical Education. All of these self-studies and the reports from external reviewers are available in the workroom.

Despite this busy schedule, we have not kept up with the decennial cycle in every case. The following units are overdue for review: Asian Studies, Psychology, Political Economy, Environmental Studies, Astronomy, Biology, and Chemistry. Most of these have been scheduled for the next couple of years. We will also soon begin the first round of external reviews for most of the interdisciplinary programs; all have been reviewed within the last decade, but only through an abbreviated internal process. We believe that those programs with their own faculty and those with the largest enrollments, at least, should be reviewed in the same way as the departments, so as to benefit from an external perspective.
Curricular Changes

There have been a number of changes in the curriculum since our 2007 accreditation review. We already mentioned one of the big ones: the change in the diversity requirement—from EDI to DPE—which will go into full effect in 2018. There have also been several notable additions, a few reconfigurations, and some subtractions. Some of these were mentioned in our 2012 interim report; others are new.

Additions

We have two new academic units. First, Dance, which was introduced at the college in the 1970s as a program within athletics, became an academic department in 2009-10. Instruction in dance was previously offered only for PE credit or in the context of extracurricular ensembles. The department is still relatively small (2.5 faculty FTE) and therefore does not yet offer a major or a concentration. But students can now enroll in semesterlong dance courses for regular academic credit. We hired a full-time tenure-track faculty member in 2015-16 to offer courses in dance history and theory, but as that person stayed for only one year, we will search again for an assistant professor of dance in 2017-18. In the meantime, the department is working to design a concentration and bolster its offerings by cross-listing courses from other units, including Art, Theatre, Music, Africana Studies, American Studies, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Second, Public Health was created as a program offering an interdisciplinary concentration in 2013-14. Although no dedicated faculty positions have been allocated to Public Health, at least eight tenure-line assistant professors hired within the last 10 years offer courses for the program, in addition to many long-serving faculty members who also contribute. The Public Health concentration now accepts cross-listed courses from 11 academic units across all divisions at the college.

We also have three new majors. In Division I, we added Arabic Studies in 2010-11. Until 2005, Arabic was offered only as a “critical language” (i.e., via self-instruction with a nonfaculty tutor). But with student demand growing dramatically at that point, we hired two assistant professors to offer language and literature courses. They were soon joined by faculty members from Religion, Romance Languages, Anthropology, History, and Comparative Literature to propose the major. Several more departments, including Art and Political Science, have also taken to cross-listing courses with Arabic Studies, such that it is now a fully interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to the Arab, Islamic, and Middle Eastern arenas. Arabic Studies has recently averaged about 105 enrollments and eight senior majors per year. In 2017-18, we will be searching for a third assistant professor.

In Division II, we added environmental studies as a major. In 2010, we launched majors in both environmental science and environmental policy, but then merged them into a single interdisciplinary major in 2016. Under the original configuration, ENVI majors chose from six different tracks, each with its own prescribed set of requirements. The single major is both simpler and more flexible. Students now tailor individualized curricular plans centered on a subdiscipline or theme in consultation with a faculty adviser. There have been about 10 graduating ENVI majors each year. Along with the new major, the college has focused a lot of attention on environmental studies. We hired two new assistant professors in 2010, both in ENVI, and a third has been hired to begin in 2017. In addition, a new assistant professor of environmental chemistry begins in 2017, and a search will be conducted in 2017-18 for a geoscientist focused on climate change. We also built the new Class of 1966 Environmental Center, adhering to the extremely rigorous Living Building Challenge standards (net zero
energy, net zero water, food production, etc.). It opened in 2015. We have also dedicated generous funding for courses that focus on sustainability (e.g., sending students to study sustainable agriculture in California). Most recently, a year of collegewide programming during the 2016-17 academic year focused on positive change.

In Division III, we added statistics as a new major track within the Department of Mathematics and Statistics in 2014-15. We believe that we are one of the first liberal arts colleges to do this. The number of majors is growing rapidly (28 in the Class of 2017), and because so many other fields in the sciences and social sciences are using statistical methods, course enrollments are booming. Three of our five statistics professors have been hired within the last five years to help meet the demand, and we anticipate hiring one more faculty member to start in 2018. Statistics is inherently cross-disciplinary and will be needed across all disciplines to extract meaning from new sources of data.

Reconfigurations
The countless small changes to the curriculum made over the past decade are catalogued in the agendas of the March faculty meeting from each year. That’s when the CEA presents substantial changes that must be approved by the faculty. In 2017, for example, seven departments and programs proposed changes to their major, concentration, or honors requirements. These were content-specific adjustments to different fields of study, not collegewide structural changes. But such small changes add up over time to effect a dynamic curriculum. This process ensures not just that all faculty are aware of curricular trends, but that equity of rigor is maintained among all fields and that all changes have a clear rationale. Several of the notable reconfigurations over the past decade include the following:

- The two majors formerly comprising the Comparative Literature program were combined into a single major, given that their requirements had come to overlap by about 75 percent. One of those two majors, literary studies, became a track within the other, comparative literature.

- The stand-alone Maritime Studies concentration—largely based on a semester at Williams-Mystic, where sustainability is a curricular theme—was moved under the umbrella of the Environmental Studies program.

- The International Studies program changed its name to Global Studies in order to contextualize its focus not just as the “world beyond the United States” but as a world encompassing all geopolitical entities including the United States. At the same time, we established a new endowment with generous alumni support—the Global Ventures Fund—in order to expand international opportunities across the curriculum.

- The Legal Studies program changed its name to Justice and Law in order to emphasize its curricular focus on the history and theories of justice and law, rather than as a program for vocational preparation.

- The Women’s and Gender Studies program changed its name to Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, to recognize the legitimacy of sexuality and queer studies and to respond to student demand for courses in those fields.
Subtractions

In contrast to the new and reconfigured curricular offerings mentioned above, there are also a few that have been eliminated.

As we mentioned in Standard 2, the Williams-in-New York Program was discontinued. It ran for a total of seven semesters between Fall 2005 and Spring 2009, offering city-focused courses for eight Williams students under the direction of a Williams faculty director. The program also featured experiential education through fieldwork placements matching each student’s academic area of interest. As we explained in our 2012 interim report, the reasons for discontinuing this program included difficulty integrating fieldwork with coursework, a lack of curricular coherence, the inconsistent quality of adjunct instructors and fieldwork placements, low student demand, and significant expense.

The First-year Residential Seminar (FRS) program was eliminated in 2012. FRS had been a stable feature of the curriculum since 1988, wherein first-year students living in the same residential entry would take a course together in the fall semester. It was designed to foster interconnections between students’ residential and academic lives. It was an intermittent success. The faculty endorsed the idea in principle, but very few of them volunteered their courses as FRS offerings. For a number of years, it was taught by just one or two dedicated instructors. Another reason to close the program was that it conflicted with the educational value of making each first-year residential unit reflect the composition of the incoming class as a whole. The self-selection of FRS students worked against this goal.

Finally, the Williams in Africa initiative, launched in 2006-07, has been put on hiatus for the indefinite future. Its vision was to create a set of curricular and extracurricular opportunities to encourage students to engage meaningfully with the African continent. To that end, we piloted a study-away program in collaboration with the University of Cape Town and the Economic Policy Research Institute, where students worked closely with South African parliamentarians. The initiative also supported Winter Study travel courses in Uganda, Liberia, and South Africa, summer fieldwork projects, and a postgraduate fellowship. The Winter Study courses, summer fieldwork, and faculty research will all continue, but the study-away program has not grown sufficiently to formalize it as a Williams-branded program. Students wishing to study away in Africa will still be able to do so through programs hosted by other institutions.

Summary

Although it is important to track the creation and dissolution of departments, programs, majors, and concentrations, it is only by looking more closely at the kinds of curricular areas offered by our faculty that we can best see the changes in what we are offering to our students. We have already seen above how hiring has augmented the curriculum in public health, Arabic, environmental studies, and statistics. Over the last 10 years, there have also been new faculty lines (often offset by departures elsewhere) allocated to existing fields. Africana Studies, American Studies, Classics, Computer Science, Latina/o Studies, Religion, Leadership Studies, Math, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies have all hired with particular curricular goals in mind.

As a result, we now have increased expertise and enriched curricular offerings in the following areas: the environment, performance studies, South Asia, Africa, Latin America, Islam, media studies/social media/film, sexuality studies, and science and technology studies.
We have allowed for diminished coverage in other curricular areas when a departing faculty member has not been replaced, either because the department or program wished to focus on a different area or the CAP decided to redirect the line. These include history of science, linguistics, medieval English, early-American literature, early-American history, Afro-Caribbean studies, modern European art history, and Latin American performance. We may, of course, still decide to hire in those fields in coming years. In at least two areas, we are seeking to restore or expand coverage through tenure-track searches underway in 2017-18: Native American studies (two searches) and Russian history (one search).

We have also noted an important trend: increased interconnectivity. As the CPC demonstrated in its 2017 report, departments and programs, and the three divisions, are far more dependent on each other now than they were a decade ago. The connections are evident in the rise of cross-listings, showing that most of the majors and concentrations are accepting more courses from other disciplines. Thus the distinction between departments (ostensibly organized around a single discipline) and programs (interdisciplinary by definition) is becoming blurrier. And in some cases, we’ve hired faculty members directly into programs—e.g., Africana Studies, Latina/o Studies, Environmental Studies, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies—which further contributes to the blurring.

Projection

The traditional liberal arts curriculum endures at Williams. But as we hope this report demonstrates, our academic program is regularly under review, and at any particular moment, there are a number of emerging fields, pilot projects, and proposals for new or revised programs and policies. As noted in our mission statement, we welcome changes in our curriculum and in our approaches to what and how we learn. We have therefore established mechanisms, such as the CEA and CPC, to enable faculty, staff, and students to research, discuss, and prioritize our paths forward. Below are the projects we will be working on in the near future.

- The CEA will implement and track the efficacy of the DPE requirement to ensure that students are developing their own critical perspectives about evolving social questions.
- The CEA will also continue with several disparate projects, including an introductory writing program, an examination of policies and practices across units regarding class size and enrollment caps, and the creation of a new, improved online course catalog to facilitate course browsing and selection.
- The CPC will continue asking questions about the distinctions and relationships between academic departments and programs, about the emergence of new fields at the boundaries of traditional disciplines, about points of connectivity and synergy within the curriculum, and about specific dimensions of the relationship between the major and the nonmajor curriculum.
- The CPC will also examine more closely the distinctions and relationships between Divisions I and II, especially given that an increasing number of faculty combine the humanities and the social sciences in their training and methodology.
- The CEA, CPC, and CAP, together with the faculty at large, will consider further development of curricular areas such as sustainability, science and technology studies, Asian American studies, film and media studies, linguistics, and other extant or emerging fields.
The CDE master’s program will continue to explore new geographic areas for recruitment, such as Cuba, and to focus on emerging issues that impact the developing world, such as climate change, refugee movements, and gender issues. It will also try to help upgrade the language skills of students in the five months before they matriculate.

The Grad Art program intends to further broaden its curriculum and to expand and regularize its contemporary curatorial workshop. It also hopes to increase opportunities for summer research and curatorial internships, to provide additional opportunities and mentoring for new graduates through its alumni network, to increase the level of student financial aid, and to increase the diversity of the applicant pool.

Starting in 2017-18, a new part-time Winter Study coordinator will work to organize and invigorate the many aspects of the Winter Study program, including international and domestic travel courses, community engagement, and innovative use of technology. One key goal of this position is to bring more intellectual coherence to the program.

The Center for Foreign Languages, Literature and Culture will pilot Portuguese language instruction via an online partnership with Vassar College. This is part of the college’s broader effort to examine the pros and cons of online pedagogy through our participation in the Liberal Arts Consortium for Online Learning.

The dean of the faculty will work with the academic unit chairs to ensure timely scheduling of decennial department and program reviews, especially for the interdisciplinary programs.

The librarians will work to outline what information literacy skills Williams graduates should possess in order to inform the library instruction program’s learning outcomes.

The faculty will launch a revised student course evaluation survey in Spring 2018 to improve the quality and usefulness of information yielded from this method of evaluation. The new survey form, to be fielded online, is designed to provide more feedback to help instructors improve their teaching and to offer qualitative explanation of numerical responses.
Standard Five: Students

Admission

Undergraduates

Description: Admission to Williams is highly selective. Although nearly all applicants have remarkable credentials, we can admit fewer than one in five. Over the last several decades, we have altered our policies and practices in order to increase the diversity of our student body across multiple dimensions, including racial, ethnic, economic, religious, geographic, sexual orientation, and gender identity dimensions. In the Class of 2021, 41 percent are American students of color, 8 percent are international students, and about 20 percent are first-generation college students. Our efforts to build a student community that reflects a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives are well supported by a strong financial aid budget, which has increased by 87 percent in the last decade.

Williams is intentionally need seeking. Admission works closely with Financial Aid to identify which applicants come from low-income backgrounds and acts affirmatively for them in our selection process. Application readers take into account multiple forms of achievement and the various ways in which applicants might contribute to the college. Standardized test scores are considered in context, and applicants’ jobs and responsibilities at home are considered as impressive as traditional extracurricular activities. Interviews and demonstrations of interest are not considered.

Applicants who possess qualities, backgrounds, and identities that are meaningful to the kind of community Williams strives to create are tagged with “attributes” during the evaluation process. We pay special attention to such attributes as first generation, low income, community engagement and activism, intellectual vitality, impact in the arts, and impact in athletics. For example, first-generation and low-income applicants are carefully reviewed by at least two readers, who are trained to devote significant time to understanding applicants’ family contexts and the schools from which they come. Our philosophy is to look for “reasons to include” rather than to penalize applicants who haven’t had opportunities to take advanced courses or pursue academic enrichment programs.

Our financial aid packages—consisting of generous grants and minimal loans—aim to ensure access for all individuals. Packaged loans are capped at $4,000 per year, and 35 percent of aided students from the lowest-income families have packages that include no loans at all. About 15 percent of aided students pay nothing to attend Williams. Assembling the most talented and diverse student body possible requires our continued commitments to need-based aid and to meeting 100 percent of demonstrated need.

Admission policies are clearly explained in printed text and especially online, where prospective applicants can find both general information and answers to questions about their specific circumstances (e.g., information that would be especially useful to transfer and international applicants, undocumented and DACA students, and U.S. military veterans). The website emphasizes that Williams fully meets the demonstrated need of all who qualify for aid.
Williams has had a financial aid calculator on its Admission and Financial Aid websites for over a decade, well in advance of the 2011 congressional mandate. In fact, we now provide two calculators. The Net Price Calculator, hosted by the College Board, is the more comprehensive one; it takes about 20 minutes to complete. MyIntuition, with only eight questions, takes about two minutes. Each provides families with a user-friendly tool to estimate the net cost of a Williams education, helping them to see how affordable it can be.

We review aid applications using a well-established need analysis based on the College Board’s standard Institutional Methodology and adapted to the principles of the 568 Presidents’ Group (a set of colleges and universities practicing need-blind admission). Special circumstances are assessed case by case, and families are encouraged to communicate any concerns directly to the Financial Aid Office during the application or award appeal process.

**Appraisal:** The Admission Office works closely with Institutional Research to ensure that the measures used to predict academic success are reliable and periodically reviews its methodology and outcomes with its oversight group (the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, chaired by the provost).

As a result of the work described above, today’s student body is more diverse and dynamic than ever before. We note, in particular, that as a result of our emphasis on increasing the number of high-achieving low-income (HALI) students, as well as first-generation students, 30 percent of students in the last two enrolled classes have come from the bottom three income quintiles nationally, and about 17 percent of current students come from families where neither parent graduated from a four-year college.

Among the recruitment strategies that we’ve found most fruitful is our use of Student Search, a vehicle for identifying HALI students. HALI students identified through Student Search who are strong candidates for admission to Williams are sent targeted emails about application fee waivers and invited to apply to Windows on Williams (WOW). Each spring, some 60,000 high school juniors are invited to apply to WOW, a three-day, all-expenses-paid program run on campus each fall. About 1,700 apply, 250 are selected, and 200 choose to participate. They live and eat with Williams students, visit classes, meet with faculty, and participate in workshops focused not just on Williams, but on the admission and financial aid process at selective schools. Eighty-five percent of WOW participants decide to apply to Williams, with good results: Last year, 90 percent of the WOW participants who applied were admitted, and they ultimately constituted 8 percent of the Class of 2021.

We have also found other strategic partnerships helpful in efforts to diversify the student body. These include: (1) QuestBridge: Our close work with them since 2004 has helped us enroll over 600 HALI students. (2) College Greenlight: We first partnered with them in 2015, connecting us with their 290,000 student users and over 10,000 guidance counselors. Greenlight-affiliated students now represent 11 percent of both our applicants and enrolled students. (3) American Talent Initiative: Launched in 2016, ATI aims by 2025 to enroll and graduate an additional 50,000 low-income students at the 270 institutions that consistently graduate at least 70 percent of their students. (4) Service to School/Vetlink: In 2015, Williams joined four other schools as inaugural partners with Vetlink, a nonprofit that aims to connect active military personnel and veterans with selective colleges. In 2017-18, we will have five veterans in our student body. (5) Other notable strategic partnerships include A Better Chance, Chicago Scholars, College Horizons, the National Partnership for Educational Access, Say Yes to Education, Strive for College, and the Young Women’s Leadership College Bound Initiative.
We have also seen good results in financial outcomes. The per-capita student loan debt of the Class of 2007 was $4,377. This figure was $5,716 for the Class of 2017, a small increase over the course of a decade and well below the national average.

Projection: In 2017, Williams appointed its first dean of admission and financial aid to provide senior-level leadership to and strategic integration of these two offices. That appointment grew in part out of our desire to intensify our efforts to recruit HALI students. (The number of students from the bottom two quintiles was 17 percent of all students last year and 15 percent of all students 10 years before that.)

In recent years, we’ve paid close attention to how the ancillary costs of attending Williams affect financial aid students. For example, in 2010, after a study showed that many of them had to be selective in purchasing required course books, we began the practice of providing all required books free of charge to all financial aid students. In 2012-13, we raised the personal expense allowance by 25 percent to better reflect costs of such items as phones, laundry, and extracurricular activities. In 2017-18, we’ll be examining whether marginal costs are deterring aided students from enrolling in certain Winter Study courses. We’ll also be implementing and assessing new dining plans that are meant to ensure that aided students have full access to appropriate food options in our dining halls.

Graduate students

Williams has two small master’s programs; their purposes and curricula are described in detail in Standard 4.

The Graduate Program in the History of Art (Grad Art) has traditionally attracted a diverse pool of applicants, but in recent years, it has taken additional steps to recruit students from underrepresented groups. Significantly enhanced financial aid has been especially helpful in this regard and is one of the priorities in the college's current capital campaign.

Grad Art offers professional training in a series of linked fields (e.g., art history, museum studies, curatorial studies). Many applicants already have some experience in these fields, but the program welcomes applicants from all academic backgrounds and levels of prior experience. The application portal includes information on admission timelines and requirements, program regulations and policies, and contact information for program staff.

Once students are admitted, the program provides them with multiple resources (e.g., classes in methodology, foreign languages, conservation) designed to give them the skills appropriate to the degree. Students receive individualized advising at every stage of their progress through the curriculum. Grad Art also provides an extensive program of cocurricular activities related to the study of art through collaborations with The Clark Art Institute, the Williams College Museum of Art, and MASS MoCA. All three museums offer internship opportunities for Grad Art students.

Because of the unusual nature of the master’s program at the Center for Development Economics, CDE is highly proactive in its recruitment and admission process. Many potential applicants are unfamiliar with American higher education and may not otherwise know about the opportunities CDE’s program presents. CDE therefore devotes considerable energy each year to identifying potential candidates, including reaching out to some 400 officials in developing countries; contacting selected country offices of the IMF and World Bank, educational advisers at U.S. embassies in target countries, and Fulbright placement staff in New York and Washington; inviting CDE alumni to refer potential candidates; and annual country visits by the CDE director. Such work is supported by CDE’s website, which provides detailed information about the program.
This is a labor-intensive process, and so too is the process used to evaluate applicants. CDE uses multiple means, including testing and telephone interviews, to determine if candidates have adequate mathematical and English-language skills to succeed in the program, and whether they would be committed to returning to their home countries to contribute to policy analysis there.

A more detailed account of CDE’s admission process appears in its 2017 self-study, especially pages 4-8 and 15-17 (workroom).

Graduate students are welcome to use all of the support services (e.g., the Writing Workshop, Psychological Counseling Services, and others described below) that the college provides to undergraduates.

Admission to both graduate programs continues to be highly competitive. For the classes entering in Fall 2017, the admit rate for Grad Art was 15 percent, and it was 7 percent for CDE.

**Academic Resources, Student Services, and Residential Life**

At Williams, our programs for students benefit from significant senior administrative oversight and a growing level of investment in highly qualified staff, programs, and facilities. Our goal is to ensure that every student can take advantage of all opportunities to live, learn, and thrive at Williams, both inside and outside the classroom.

**Administrative structure and responsibilities**

Working in close collaboration, three senior administrators oversee most all aspects of student services (detailed information about their responsibilities is available on each of their websites):

- The dean of the college is a faculty member who typically serves for one or more three-year terms. Members of the dean’s staff work with students on all aspects of their lives at Williams, academic and social. The areas that the dean oversees include academic resources, writing programs, and quantitative skills programs; disability support services; fellowships; first-generation student services; first-year student programs and the Junior Advisor program; services for international students; the Office of International Education and study-away programs; parent and family programs; the Registrar’s Office; student discipline; sexual assault and prevention initiatives; and student leaves, transfers, and readmission.

- The position of vice president for campus life was created in 2010 when President Falk, working with the dean of the college and others, determined that the scale and complexity of the dean’s responsibilities had grown so significantly over the years that the college would benefit from expanded, collaborative senior administrative oversight. Some of the departments that formerly reported to the dean now report to the vice president for campus life, who oversees Campus Safety and Security, the Chaplains’ Office, the Center for Learning in Action (described below), Dining Services, Student Health Services, and the Office of Student Life.

- The position of vice president for institutional diversity and equity was created in 2006 in response to a campuswide study on diversity. The vice president for institutional
diversity and equity serves as the college’s affirmative action officer. She oversees non-discrimination policies and practices, including Title IX; efforts to diversify the staff and faculty; the Davis Center (described below); the Office of Special Academic Programs; the Committee on Diversity and Community, whose faculty, students, and staff members are charged with assessing the health of the college community with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and the Diversity Action Research Team, which systematically analyzes data to assess the community’s progress on issues of diversity and inclusion (additional information about DART’s work is in Standard 8); the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee; and Claiming Williams (an annual event on the first Thursday of spring term, when classes are suspended to make room for events and discussions designed to build an inclusive, respectful community).

Academic advising

First-year students are assigned a faculty adviser; they generally keep that adviser for sophomore year, but can switch if they prefer a different adviser. Juniors and seniors select advisers from their major departments.

For a long time, students at Williams—as at many colleges—have expressed dissatisfaction with the advising system. In an effort to improve, Williams has made multiple changes—particularly in first-year/sophomore advising—since our last self-study.

1. Starting with the class that entered in Fall 2009, we now better match incoming students with advisers who share their academic interests. In Spring 2010, Institutional Research surveyed faculty and students about this change and compared results to earlier surveys about advising (workroom). More students agreed with the statement that “my adviser has similar academic or extracurricular interests” as mine, reported an increase in a variety of other positive qualities they attribute to advisers, and indicated that they had more frequent contact with advisers. Puzzlingly, though, there was an overall decrease in satisfaction with advising. The survey also showed that, while students expressed strong interest in discussing career options, advisers indicated that they spent little time on that (perhaps feeling it was too early to focus on that topic with younger students).

2. In 2010, we decided that all academic advisers should be faculty members or academic deans. Until then, some other administrators and coaches also served as advisers. Many were excellent at the work, but we thought it best that advisers be people whose duties put them in regular touch with our curriculum and academic regulations.

3. First-year students preregister for fall-term courses in early to midsummer. Until 2012, they did not know until late August who their faculty advisers would be, and their first meeting with their advisers took place a day or two before classes began. Now, students and advisers are informed of matches in early June, and they are encouraged—whenever feasible—to communicate by phone or email during the summer. We thought the change would be especially helpful to first-generation students and others who might not have friends or family who could help guide their curricular decisions. When surveyed about this change in both 2013 and 2014, most students and advisers thought that the early contact was helpful in choosing courses and in establishing good advising relationships. But a later survey showed—again, puzzlingly—that the first group of seniors who experienced the early advising pro-
cess (Class of 2016) reported no measurable increase in satisfaction with first-year advising than had seniors who graduated prior to the change (Class of 2014).

4. We recently changed the way we assess the quantitative skills of incoming students, adopting a new instrument (based on national research) that provides more and better information to advisers and placement officers. We also started having either a math professor or the director of quantitative skills meet individually with students who wish to pursue math or the sciences but who have weaker quantitative skills. Additional information is included in Standard 8.

5. Several years ago, the offices of the dean of the college and dean of the faculty undertook new initiatives to better educate faculty about their roles as advisers. A more expansive central repository of resources for advising first-year students was created on the dean of the faculty’s website. We also began offering optional workshops for faculty on academic advising. The multiple sessions focus on such topics as how to discuss the purposes of a liberal arts education, how to build effective advising and mentoring relationships, how to help students relate academic interests to potential careers, and how best to work with first-generation students. Surveys of participants have indicated a high level of satisfaction with the workshops.

We are always looking for new ways to improve our advising system and would welcome suggestions from the visiting team about initiatives that have worked well at their home institutions.

**Academic support programs**

Williams has multiple programs that support students in their academic work. These include:

1. The Peer Tutoring Program, which is overseen by the director of quantitative skills programs and peer support. The director trains tutors who can help other students better understand course material. Students may request that a tutor be assigned to them individually or may use drop-in tutoring in courses where that is available. If a student needs help in a course where no tutor is already available, the director works with the student and instructor to identify a tutor or find another way to help. In Fall 2016, peer tutors provided 1,700 sessions in 53 different courses.

2. The Quantitative Skills Program, developed in 2015, aims to improve pedagogy and programming related to quantitative reasoning. This program works with students and faculty (usually in STEM+ fields) to develop better support systems and resources for all students, but particularly for those from underrepresented groups, first-generation or low-income students, and others who, in some cases, might not have had strong quantitative training at the secondary level.

3. The Office of Writing Programs runs the Writing Workshop, which is staffed by carefully trained peer tutors (over 40 each term) who can provide help to other students at any stage of the writing process. The workshop offers about 150 hourlong sessions each week; users may drop in or sign up online for a specific time. Students who need more intensive help with writing skills may be assigned a particular tutor who will work closely with them for extended periods. The Office of Writing Programs also can assign and train writing tutors dedicated to particular courses. The quality and impact of these programs are carefully assessed each year through systematic surveys of the students who have used them.
Diversity and student thriving initiatives

In addition to the Bolin Fellowships (described in Standard 6), Williams has several programs meant to encourage members of underrepresented groups to consider careers in academia. One is the Allison Davis Research Fellowship. (Davis, Williams Class of 1924, was a distinguished anthropologist at the University of Chicago and the first African-American tenured at a predominantly white university.) Another is the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, offered since 1989 with continuous support from the Mellon Foundation. Both fellowships provide similar kinds of support: two summers and four semesters of funding so that fellows (five juniors and five seniors for each fellowship) can pursue research projects in place of summer and campus jobs. Fellows work closely with faculty mentors, participate in a six-week summer research colloquium, and learn about graduate school opportunities and how to pursue them.

The results have been heartening. Among our alumni, 14 Davis fellows and 26 Mellon Mays fellows have completed doctorates, with most going on to tenure-track appointments. Nineteen Davis fellows and 20 Mellon Mays fellows are currently enrolled in doctoral programs.

For many years, Williams has offered two five-week summer programs for incoming students who are either first-generation or from underrepresented groups. The Summer Humanities and Social Sciences Program includes classes in those fields, writing and library workshops, study skills programs, robust advising, and various community-building activities. It also familiarizes students with the various support services that will help enhance their academic and residential lives at Williams. The program expanded in 2016 from 18 to 24 students. Participating students have reported a greater sense of belonging and well-being during their years at Williams, as well as closer relationships with faculty members.

A companion initiative, the Summer Science Program, has in recent years served about 24 students annually. It offers introductory classes in calculus, biology, chemistry, and writing, along with out-of-class programs similar to those described above. Participants later have the option of being placed in labs for their work-study jobs. Most participants have gone on to major in the sciences.

The Davis Center (formerly called The Multicultural Center) advances broad campus engagement with issues of identity, history, and culture that shape intellectual, creative, and social life. It collaborates with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and off-campus partners to promote dialogue and programming related to access, equity, and inclusion. It leads conversations on issues of diversity and equity, including those related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, class, first-generation status, and religion. It advises, mentors, and supports students from historically underrepresented groups, supports affinity groups and their programming, works with academic units to advance pedagogical and curricular initiatives that foster inclusion, and serves as a resource for all members of the community. Two rotating faculty members (typically one from a STEM+ field) serve as fellows of the Center and the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity, working alongside the center’s staff to help develop students, support their initiatives, and connect faculty to the center.

In recent years, an expanding number of initiatives have sought to help first-generation students thrive at Williams. They and their families are invited to a two-and-a-half-day program in advance of general orientation; they attend workshops and have the opportunity to connect with faculty, staff, and older first-generation students. They are often matched with faculty advisers who were themselves first-generation students. There are tailored programs to help first-generation sophomores and juniors select majors and consider possible career paths. Additional programs in senior year assist those who are applying to graduate school
(including with the costs of standardized tests), as well as those who are applying for jobs (including help with expenses related to travel and business attire for interviews). First-generation students are also provided myriad roles—many of them paid—to ensure high campus engagement and leadership opportunities. An associate dean focuses much of her work on first-generation students.

International students also have a dedicated dean who provides academic and personal advising, as well as help with immigration issues. This dean organizes a special orientation program for international students, as well as multiple workshops each year to help them adapt to such things as the grading system, honor code, and classroom style. During their first year, they are invited to join the International Community Connections Program; it matches them with families in the local community, providing opportunities for social and cultural exchange, and a locus of family life for students who may be a long way from home. The Williams International Club is a thriving student organization; its weekly dinners and other programs have helped make it a hub of multiculturalism on campus. Recently, we created the International Student Support Group, facilitated by Psychological Counseling Services; it provides international students a place to discuss the unique cultural challenges they may face, and valuable tools to help navigate life at Williams and in America.

With a full-time director, the Office of Accessible Education provides an array of services to students with certified disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The types of disabilities students may present include mobility, visual, hearing, psychological, ADD/ADHD, and such illnesses as autoimmune disorders and allergies. Among the accommodations that may be provided are extended time and/or separate rooms for exams, note takers for classes, and audio recording of course syllabi and assigned readings. The director works closely with students and faculty to insure that students with disabilities can thrive at Williams.

Outreach to parents

With changing parental expectations over the past decade or more, and with a growing number of students whose families may be unfamiliar with Williams or American higher education generally, we sensed a need to significantly enhance our outreach to parents. In 2014, we created the new Office of Parent and Family Programs, with a full-time director. Through newsletters, emails, and its website (https://families.williams.edu/), this office regularly communicates news about the college (and, when needed, facilitates translation of key communications for non-English-speaking families). It responds to families’ questions (or directs them to appropriate offices) and organizes programs directed at families (e.g., preorientation programs, family weekends, etc.).

Residential life

Since our last self-study, there have been several important developments in the area of residential life.

Motivated in part, but not exclusively, by the 2008 financial crisis, we undertook a yearlong analysis of our student dining operation. Williams had five dining halls, some large, some quite small. The study showed that several were being underutilized. While still protecting existing staff jobs, we decided to close two dining halls and consolidate our efforts on the remaining three. The change has allowed us to expand service hours, speed up service, and increase menu and program options. A team of students and staff continues to monitor these changes and solicit input, but the popularity of the new arrangements is evident from that fact
that the number of meals served per year has risen in five of the past six years. The consolidation has saved the college several hundred thousand dollars each year in operating costs.

Williams created a new “neighborhood” system for our upper-class residential houses in 2006-07; it underwent a full review by a committee of faculty, students, and staff in 2009-10, leading to a series of revisions that have greatly improved student satisfaction. (Reports related to this review are in the workroom.) In 2014, we created the Upper-class Residential Life Advisory Committee; its faculty, student, and staff members meet weekly to assess the residential system and consider further refinements.

A related initiative (mentioned in Standard 2) with a somewhat different emphasis began in 2011 with the launch of a two-year residential sector planning process, led by a working group of faculty, students, and staff. The group’s first step was to carefully consider the educational and developmental goals of our residential system, and then to create a planning process that would insure that our 20-plus residential houses can support that programmatic vision. Architectural consultants were hired to assess current buildings and student attitudes toward them, as well as develop options for the future and analyze their financial implications. (The consultants’ reports, hundreds of pages long, will not be in the workroom, but can be found at http://campus-life.williams.edu/category/reports/). As a result, we now have in place plans that will guide a systematic renovation of our entire upper-class housing stock over the next 20 years. As part of those plans, we built our first new residence hall in over 40 years—Horn Hall, which opened in 2016; it will allow us each year to close one or more of the other residential houses while they’re under renovation.

**Campus safety and emergency planning**

Campus Safety and Security (CSS) seeks to create a secure environment for the Williams community and to build partnerships that foster trust, mutual respect, and cooperation. CSS also provides core regulatory compliance services; this includes acting as Williams’ Clery data collection and reporting office. Among its many duties, CSS manages security and access to campus buildings, works closely with the fire safety team, and provides multiple educational programs, including rape defense classes.

To help provide a safe environment on campus, CSS works closely with local and regional organizations. The CSS director serves, for example, on the Northern Berkshire Region Emergency Planning Committee and on the Joint Terrorism Task Force.

In the last decade, the college’s emergency planning efforts have grown more ambitious and sophisticated. Many things have prompted these efforts, including increased regulatory compliance, shootings on other campuses, and the need to prepare for crises produced by severe weather or large-scale epidemics. Among other things, we have significantly improved our ability to rapidly communicate emergency information on campus (CSS and the college’s Office of Communications are closely partnering on this work) and invested in such infrastructure upgrades as high-capacity standby generators.

One notable feature of our planning is a tabletop exercise, conducted each spring for the past four years. Led by CSS and outside consultants, the exercise presents a simulated emergency and tests the college’s ability to respond to it. Participants include the president and his senior staff, dozens of administrators and staff members from across the college, and local as well as regional law enforcement and emergency response professionals. The event helps identify gaps in our response systems, educates us about new strategies and technologies, and forges deeper bonds with off-campus agencies.
Sexual misconduct, disciplinary processes, and Title IX

As the scope of the problem has become increasingly visible, Williams—like other colleges and universities—has sought better ways to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct and other forms of intimate partner violence, such as relationship abuse, stalking, and harassment. In 2011, we started using an outside consultant for staff training and strategic planning, and we analyzed data from surveys by the National College Health Association (NCHA). The data suggested that our rates of sexual violence were similar to both peer and national averages, but significantly higher than our rate of reporting.

Soon thereafter, we created the Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness (SAPA) group, a standing committee of students and staff charged with policy analysis and coordinating student-driven programming. SAPA developed a set of recommendations that Williams ultimately adopted. We have made several important changes in the past few years:

1. We changed our processes for investigating and adjudicating cases of sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence. Previously, such cases were jointly investigated by the dean of the college and Campus Safety and Security, and adjudicated through the same process used in other student conduct cases: the dean rendered the initial decision and (if applicable) sanction, and appeals went to the 17-member faculty-student Discipline Committee, which would hear the case afresh. Surveys of students and staff involved in this process identified several shortcomings. Both deans and CSS officers serve multiple roles, most related to wellness and student success. Students reported that their need to utilize deans and CSS officers in other capacities was a deterrent to making formal reports of intimate partner violence cases. Students also said that the appeals procedure, which enlarged the number of people with knowledge of the case and essentially restarted the process, was a major deterrent to reporting. From staff, SAPA learned that the amount of time needed to conduct complex investigations in a timely, thorough way was taxing their offices, and that the relatively sporadic nature of cases did not allow staff to develop the proficiency required for this specialized task.

As a result, in 2013, the college delegated investigative responsibilities to a professional, external investigator and changed the disciplinary system. Cases are now adjudicated by a rotating panel of three trained members of the Williams staff, and appeals are addressed by the vice president for institutional diversity and equity (who oversees the Title IX coordinator, as well as discrimination and grievance policies).

In 2015, we assessed the effect of these changes by collecting anonymous survey data from complainants, respondents, witnesses, and staff involved in cases heard from 2010 to 2015—that is, under the old and new systems. All parties reported more favorable views of the new system.

In addition, we changed our policy so that all college employees, except those serving as confidential resources, are required to report information about alleged sexual misconduct to the Title IX coordinator or one of the deputy Title IX coordinators.

2. We created a new, full-time position to centralize and coordinate our efforts. In 2014, Meg Bossong, a 2005 Williams graduate with nationally recognized expertise in this field, was appointed director of sexual assault prevention and response. Her charge is both to consolidate responsibilities that had been spread over several different offices and to create and administer comprehensive prevention and response plans. Since 2014, Williams has expanded the 24/7 confidential staff on-call system from two individuals to six, gathered comprehensive climate survey and incidence
data while doubling (from 832 to 1,619) the number of responses from the 2011 NCHA survey, increased—to 250—the number of student leaders who are required to complete bystander intervention training, added a required educational program for first-year students, and implemented a customized bystander and resources app. We will continue to expand our efforts and monitor our results.

3. We also created the new, full-time positions of assistant vice president for institutional diversity and equity and Title IX coordinator, in part in response to new requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. In 2015, after a national search, Toya Camacho—with more than a decade of experience in Title IX, mediation and conflict resolution, and employee relations—was appointed to this position. As Title IX coordinator, she is responsible for ensuring that the college’s response to sexual misconduct is respectful, accessible, and effective, as well as compliant with all relevant laws. She also leads a team that consists of three deputy Title IX coordinators (the dean of the college for students, the dean of the faculty for faculty, and the director of human resources for staff). The Title IX coordinator routinely examines ways to improve our policies and practices, and continues to educate all campus constituents about available resources and processes pertaining to Title IX.

**Student health services**

Following a yearlong study in preparation for the 2014 retirement of our long-serving director, Williams adopted a matrix-style leadership structure for Health Services, featuring three coequal directors for administrative, medical, and psychological counseling services. With rapid changes in health care nationally, we wanted to have a proactive, nimble structure that reflects the integrated approach we take to holistic student wellness. We also implemented an electronic health record system to integrate information available to the various clinicians and departments involved in student wellness.

Like other colleges and universities, Williams has seen steep increases in demand for medical and mental health services in the past decade, as well as the acuteness of presenting conditions.

Psychological Counseling Services (PCS) provides a full spectrum of services, including individual psychotherapy, including walk-in appointments; crisis assessment and 24-hour crisis-call coverage; psychiatric assessment and medication management; psychotherapy groups; and educational outreach to the whole campus on mental health issues. Students are referred off campus only when hospitalization is required. There is no set limit on the number of counseling sessions a student may request (in 2016-17, 20 percent of the students using PCS services had 10 or more individual therapy sessions).

Several statistics illustrate the growth in demand. The percentage of graduating seniors who used PCS during their time at Williams grew from 37 percent in 2008-09 to 57 percent in 2015-16. Comparing 2016-17 to the previous record-breaking year, the total number of unique students utilizing services grew 13 percent, demand for every type of service that PCS provides grew 15 percent or more, and there was a 78 percent increase in crisis walk-in appointments.

To meet this demand, PCS has more than doubled its staffing in the past decade. We believe that we now have one of the lowest ratios of total students to clinicians in the country. Combining the clinical services provided by our professional staff and trainees (postgraduate/postdoctoral fellows and interns), our ratio has fallen below 200 students per clinician. By
comparison, the mean ratio for schools our size in the 2015 report from the Association of University and College Counseling Center Directors is 889 students per therapist.

We are also seeing an increase in the variety and complexity of the medical conditions our students present at our Health Center. And as our student population has grown increasingly diverse socio-economically, we have been encountering many students who arrive on campus with limited—or nonexistent—histories of medical and dental care.

We faced a particular challenge in March 2014 when the regional hospital in nearby North Adams collapsed financially and closed with three days’ notice. With students soon returning from spring break, we met with staff from various medical practices and hospitals in the region to ensure that services for our students—including emergency care—would continue uninterrupted. We also launched a program to provide vans that transport students to local doctors’ offices, physical therapy, and regional hospitals in Pittsfield (about 20 miles away) and Bennington (about 15 miles away). The van service, which we have more recently outsourced to a local ambulance service, provides nonemergency transports 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

The local health care environment has mostly stabilized in the past couple of years, and we have substantially deepened our associations with our two closest hospitals (Berkshire Medical Center and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center); with Williamstown Medical Associates, which provides our medical director and overnight physician-on-call services; and with Williamstown Physical Therapy.

One area of special focus recently has been to develop new approaches to treating and managing concussions. Like many schools, we’ve seen a substantial increase in reported concussions. Some of that is attributable to an increase in occurrence, but much of it is due to better education on campus about how to identify and report concussions. Collaborative cross-departmental protocols have been developed by medical staff, the Dean’s Office, Athletics, the Office of Accessible Education, and the faculty. When a concussion is suspected, students receive an immediate assessment, followed by regular (often daily) checks at the Health Center. Students are not allowed to fully re-engage in academic work or physical activity until the problem is resolved satisfactorily. Deans and other staff work closely with students and their teachers to arrange whatever academic accommodations are needed. We are continuing to assess our protocols in light of emerging research and best practices nationally.

**Athletics**

Williams belongs to the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), which is pledged to maintain athletics in proper relation to the academic mission of its members. Unlike many other institutions, NESCAC schools have no out-of-season practices, fewer contests, and shorter seasons.

Our coaches are faculty members who see teaching as their primary role; they care deeply about the college’s educational mission and the academic lives of their students.

In addition to an extensive roster of physical education classes, intramural sports, and recreational programs, Williams sponsors 16 men’s and 16 women’s varsity teams, as well as two men’s and three women’s JV teams. Approximately 750 students each year participate on varsity or JV teams. Practices and contests are carefully coordinated with classes to ensure that athletes have the same academic opportunities as other students. The Athletics Department works diligently to reduce to a bare minimum the number of classes missed for away contests, rotating the days of games and sometimes arranging special transportation to help students avoid conflicts.
By most measures, our athletics programs are meeting their goals. The admission process ensures that admitted athletes meet the rigorous academic standards set for all students. Measured by GPAs, student athletes perform at the same level compared to similar admitted students, and they graduate at slightly higher rates than other students. In competitions, our athletes have been remarkably successful, outperforming most Division III institutions. In the 22 years that the National Association of College Athletic Directors has awarded The Directors’ Cup to Division III teams, Williams has won 20 times (the award recognizes colleges whose broad program has achieved the most success as measured by place of finish in NCAA championships).

The Athletics Department is actively considering new ways to address issues of diversity and inclusion among varsity athletes. Last year, 24 percent of varsity athletes were domestic students of color, contrasted with about 40 percent of the current student body as a whole. The department is taking multiple steps to understand and bridge that gap. First, the college’s alumni survey this year asked students about their experiences with athletics, why they persisted or not with their teams, and what barriers they may have faced during recruitment or in their time at Williams. We are also analyzing data from senior surveys to determine whether racial or ethnic differences affect how students perceived their athletic experiences.

Second, we are creating a subcommittee of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee to focus on issues of diversity and inclusion. It will serve as a conduit of student views about all aspects of athletic life, including recruitment, coaching, group cohesion, and academic/athletic balance.

Third, starting this year, coaches are being provided with additional funds for recruiting in order to expand their recruitment strategies to better identify talented athletes from underrepresented groups.

Finally, the department hopes to diversify its faculty by adopting some of the same strategies the dean of the faculty has successfully used to identify and recruit academic faculty from underrepresented groups.

Religious and spiritual life

Williams students are affiliated with nearly 40 different faiths. They find support for their religious and spiritual lives from four chaplains in full-time positions. For several decades, we’ve had chaplains from the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish traditions. With a growing number of Muslim students, we created the new position of Muslim chaplain in 2011. All chaplains are available to work with all students (believing and nonbelieving); they are trusted counselors on both religious and nonreligious subjects.

In 2013-14, a team of faculty, students, and staff undertook a comprehensive study of religious and spiritual life at Williams. Its report included recommendations about the quality, quantity, and location of programmatic spaces that would nurture the practice of a wider variety of religions and about seeking better ways of supporting traditions that have small numbers of adherents on campus. There is more to be done, but several positive changes have occurred in the wake of that study. The Muslim Prayer Room was relocated to more spacious and appropriate quarters in the college chapel and a new interfaith common room was dedicated. Students took the initiative to create InterFaith, an organization that—through open discussions and programming—explores issues that cross many faiths. In 2016, it hosted a regional conference attended by students from several colleges. Students also took the lead in creating a chapter of Black Campus Ministry, and Buddha Lab, a weekly opportunity for Zazen practice.
**Center for Learning in Action**

Civic education has always been an important part of the college’s mission, but in recent years, our efforts in this area have been reorganized and greatly expanded. After extensive data gathering and several studies—notably, the comprehensive report of the 2011-12 Community Engagement Task Force (workroom), the college created the Center for Learning in Action (CLiA) in 2013. Its twin mission is to deepen engagement with local and national communities (e.g., through volunteer service), and to assist students and faculty in developing and implementing academic courses that incorporate opportunities for experiential learning.

The results thus far have been encouraging. CLiA directly supports at least a dozen experiential learning courses annually and many more courses (83 in 2015-16) that include an experiential component. And in the past couple of years, over 800 students have been engaged in some form of noncurricular community work. CLiA has developed a detailed assessment model that tracks the quality and effectiveness of these efforts each year.

**Records retention and confidentiality policies**

Williams values the privacy of its students and seeks to preserve the confidentiality of their educational records. The college fully complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, which permits students to review their educational records and creates certain obligations for the college to protect them.

Williams also has policies governing the kinds of information that will be included in students’ permanent records, as well as the retention, safety, security, and disposal of records. These policies cover such subjects as academics, health, discipline, and financial matters.

Policies regarding student records are publicly available in the Academic Information section of the registrar’s website. In addition, a copy of the college’s Student Records Disclosure Policy is emailed to students annually to inform them of their rights.

**Other**

We’ll report here briefly on several other topics relevant to Standard 5.

- Williams runs an eight-day orientation program, First Days, for all incoming students. It seeks to educate them about the wide range of academic and residential opportunities they will have at Williams, and to start building a strong sense of community among both new and upper-class students.

- The college’s expectations regarding student behavior and adherence to the academic honor code are explained during First Days. These expectations, as well as the standards and procedures the college uses when they are violated, are readily available to all students in detailed form on the website of the dean of the college.

- The college’s efforts to understand and address alcohol use on campus (through data collection, educational programming, and the disciplinary process) are concisely summarized in Dean of the College Marlene Sandstrom’s presentation to Williams trustees in June 2017. It is available in the workroom.

- The Office of Student Life offers an array of advising and support programs related to student activities, leadership development, upper-class residential life, and event planning. Williams has nearly 170 registered student organizations.
Our Career Center offers multiple programs to help students explore and then pursue options for their lives after Williams. The center works on the premise that career planning should not be an activity for senior year alone, but rather an integral part of a student’s experience from the beginning. In fact, through a recently launched initiative, 80 percent of students in the Class of 2020 had individual advising appointments at the center during their first year. A recent survey showed that, within six months of graduation, nearly 90 percent of respondents from the Class of 2016 were either employed, attending graduate or professional school, or engaged in volunteer service work. More than 80 percent of the respondents said that their postgraduate activities are related to their career interests, and they are “extremely” or “somewhat” satisfied with their primary activities.
Student-faculty interaction is at the very core of Williams College. It defines our sense of purpose and motivates our decisions. Indeed, the image of a professor and a student engaged in one-on-one intellectual conversation is iconic at Williams, and it is always our goal to sustain that conversation and to enrich it by supporting scholarly and creative work. To that end, the structures of the faculty and the academic staff, and the policies and practices that guide their work, are designed to promote highly effective teaching and engaged student learning.

We describe below the composition of the academic staff, and then discuss and appraise our progress toward three goals: diversifying the faculty, enhancing faculty development, and strengthening our teaching and learning initiatives.

**Building the Faculty**

The numerical breakdown and demographics of the faculty and staff are fully documented and analyzed in the December 2016 report on staffing produced by the Provost’s Office and the October 2016 report on diversifying the faculty produced by the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity (workroom). The Common Data Sets produced annually by Institutional Research provide additional counts of faculty by rank, level of education, and other variables. Many of the facts and figures cited below are drawn from those sources. (Please note: The data forms for this self-study, and the Common Data Set, employ the IPEDS counting methodology, whereas staffing reports done by the Provost’s Office and the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity use a slightly different convention. For example, IPEDS counts all part-time faculty as one-third of an FTE vs. actual FTE values for our internal counts. This explains the variance between some of the numbers cited in this standard and those in the data forms.)

As of December 2016, Williams had 1,288 active employees, totaling 1,191 FTE. The academic faculty composes 28 percent of the whole, or 337 FTE. The academic staff, including department and program administrators, lab, studio and performance personnel, librarians, instructional technologists, museum curators, and others whose work directly supports the faculty compose about 17 percent of the whole, or 199 FTE. The rest of the staff (55 percent = 655 FTE) serve in such college operations as admission, athletics, dining, facilities, alumni relations and development, and human resources. The overall staff-to-faculty ratio is 2.5-1. This number has remained virtually constant over the last decade, when both the faculty and staff have grown. Between 2006 and 2016, the faculty increased by 31 FTE, while the staff increased by 88 FTE.

Of our 337 academic faculty, 252 (75 percent) are tenured or in tenure-track positions, 53 (15 percent) are visitors, and 32 (10 percent) are in non-tenure track but nonvisiting positions such as lecturers and instructors. The tenure-track faculty has grown by just 2 FTE (<1 percent) since 2006, a deliberate strategy after a decade of dramatic growth. The other two categories have grown more significantly: non-tenure track faculty by 14 FTE (78 percent) and visitors by 16 FTE (43 percent). We’ll explain the growth in these faculty types after breaking down the tenure-line numbers.
**Professors**

At present, 159 (63 percent) of the 252 tenure-line faculty FTE are full professors and 38 (15 percent) are associate professors. The remaining 54 FTE (21 percent) are assistant professors. The ratio of tenured to tenure-eligible faculty now stands at 78:22 (compared to 66:34 in 2006, 64:36 in 1996-97, 57:43 in 1987-88, and 50:50 in 1977-78). The increasingly top-heavy ratio is explained by a demographic bulge and by the promotion to tenure of a large cohort of faculty hired prior to 2006. In fact, the tenure-line faculty ranks grew by more than 50 FTE in the decade prior to our last self-study. And with an overall tenure rate of about 61 percent during that time, the senior ranks now contain most of that growth.

Projecting forward, we expect the tenured to tenure-eligible ratio to move in the other direction as senior faculty begin to retire in greater numbers and are replaced at the junior rank. This is already starting to happen as the wave of retirements predicted in our last self-study gains momentum. On average, about three professors retired each year during the decade prior to 2007, compared to about five per year since then. That average will continue to rise. We currently have 36 professors over the age of 65, including 14 over the age of 70. Others have delayed retirement for financial reasons. We introduced a generous retirement incentive plan in 2014 in part to help ease those concerns (see Standard 2). In 2017 and 2018 alone, we have 27 retirements confirmed.

To balance the exodus, we have been hiring large cohorts of assistant professors: 15 new tenure-track faculty in 2016 and 20 scheduled to arrive in 2017. Thus the ratio of tenured to nontenured professors is likely to fall back to the 2006 ratio within three to four years, while the overall size of the tenure-line faculty will remain about the same, just as it has over the last 10 years.

**Non-tenure track faculty**

In contrast, the number of non-tenure line faculty—instructors, lecturers, senior lecturers, and artists in residence—has been growing. This group of faculty had 18 FTE in 2006 and now has 32.5. Most of these are renewable positions with contract terms of one to five years. They are evaluated on the basis of teaching effectiveness. They are not obliged to produce scholarly or creative works, but many of them do. There are several reasons for the growth of this faculty subset. One is that we brought three FTE on board from the Williams-Mystic Program, positions that used to be counted as staff jobs at Mystic Seaport. Another is that we shifted several long-serving staff members in Music to faculty status, recognizing that their jobs were primarily instructional in nature rather than administrative.

A third and critical reason for the uptick in non-tenure track FTE is that we have been hiring the academic spouses and partners of incoming assistant professors in greater numbers. Most typically, they are appointed as visitors at the outset, with promotion later to nonvisiting status. This strategy has proven to be an effective—and, given our rural location, necessary—recruiting tool. As of 2016, approximately one-third of the nonvisiting, non-tenure track faculty are spouses or partners of tenure-line professors. We are committed to this strategy for the years ahead. In fact, we recently developed an official statement of practices about hiring academic partner/spouses of tenure-line candidates and faculty. We are also working to provide enhanced support for nonacademic partners and spouses through the office of Spouse Partner Resources, which provides job search support, social networking, workshops and seminars, coworking space, and a professional development fund.
Visitors

There are three functional categories of visitors at Williams. First, we hire most of our visitors at the assistant professor or lecturer level to fill in for permanent faculty who are temporarily on leave, phasing into retirement, or serving in administrative posts. In 2006, there were 26 FTE of these “regular” visitors. By 2016, that number had grown to 34. The growth reflects an increase in faculty on phased retirement plans and an increase in the number of faculty serving in temporary administrative roles (e.g., we've created two new associate deanships). Second, each year, we hire a number of distinguished or advanced-rank visitors who hold endowed- or gift-funded positions. These teacher-scholars are meant to provide special curricular opportunities beyond those offered by regular faculty. In 2016, we had eight FTE filled by these “special” visitors. Third, each year, we hire a number of pre- and postdoctoral fellows, such as the Bolin Fellows and Mellon C3 Fellows. We describe those fellowships in detail below in the context of our diversity initiatives. For now, note only that the number of visiting fellows between 2006 and 2016 increased from seven to 11 FTE.

Our overall FTE goal for visitors in the future is 40 per year. We have exceeded that number by at least 15 percent every year since 2012-13. While there are many good reasons for hiring visitors and many talented teachers who come to Williams as visitors, there are also trade-offs. Students are wary of taking courses from instructors they don’t know, so their courses are often underenrolled. Student course survey results also indicate a lower level of satisfaction with courses taught by visitors. We therefore intend to deliberately reduce our reliance on visitors, especially those who come as “regular” visitors, as described above.

Hiring practices

All searches are conducted by the faculty of the hiring unit within parameters set by the dean of the faculty and the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity (OIDE), and nearly every hire is the result of a national search. We state in every job announcement that Williams meets its legal obligations for nondiscrimination and that we are committed to building a diverse and inclusive community where members from all backgrounds can live, learn, and thrive. Candidates are reviewed for academic qualifications and experience, and finalists are brought to campus for intensive interviews. We then send offer letters that include details not just about title, term of service, teaching load, salary and benefits, but also about the schedule and criteria for reappointment and promotion (if applicable). Since our last self-study, we have made all offers of employment contingent upon the completion of a background check—to verify educational records and employment history, and to conduct a criminal records and sexual offender registry search. We also require all faculty to complete online training modules on workplace harassment and sexual misconduct.

Salaries and benefits are set at levels to attract the most talented applicants. According to data from the 2015-16 AAUP report on the Economic Status of the Profession (Appendix 1 and Survey Report Tables 13-14), Williams faculty salaries and total compensation are above the 95th percentile for all baccalaureate institutions. We have been able to fill most of our faculty positions with our first-choice candidates (12 of 14 during 2015-2016, and nine of 15 during 2016-17). Ninety-three percent of all Williams faculty members hold a Ph.D. or other terminal degree. Surely the pay scale isn’t the only reason we’re able to hire well, but it is a necessary condition.
**Student-faculty ratio**

To summarize the facts and figures outlined above, we have worked deliberately over the last 10 years to maintain a highly qualified, well-balanced, and relatively large faculty. We are therefore able to offer a dynamic, broad, and deep curriculum, as we hope Standard 4 demonstrated. And the fundamental goal, as always, has been to enable close student-faculty interaction. At seven students per faculty member, Williams has one of the lowest student-to-faculty ratios among our liberal arts college peers. The average undergraduate course has 15 students enrolled. We intend to sustain these numbers in the years ahead.

**Aiming for Faculty Diversity**

Diversifying the faculty is a high institutional priority at Williams. This isn’t new. At the time of our 2007 self-study, we had already hosted our own minority fellowship program—the Bolin program—for several decades; we had gradually strengthened our curricular offerings and hired in such areas as Latina/o Studies, Africana Studies, Women’s and Gender Studies, and American Studies; and we had just appointed a vice president (as the chief diversity officer) and an associate dean for institutional diversity. Those two new positions, one held by a senior staff member and one by a faculty leader, were created to help department and program chairs recruit and retain faculty from ethnic and racial groups still underrepresented at Williams, as well as female faculty members of all backgrounds in fields where they are still underrepresented. We recognize that there are other categories of underrepresentation, including first-generation, LGBTQ, or disabled faculty members. But the historical effects of sexism and racism are those we have been measuring for many years and that still persist.

Before turning to the results of our efforts, we want to articulate why faculty diversity is such a high priority for us. There are at least five ways in which pursuing this goal supports our core educational mission.

First, diversity is necessary for being on the cutting edge of academic knowledge. New Ph.D.s from underrepresented groups bring insights about the academy, about teaching, and about scholarly and creative endeavors that complement traditional approaches. They can transform whole fields by pursuing research questions that are derived from their own experiences or interests and that have not previously occurred to other scholars. They can broaden the curriculum in ways that reveal the complexity and diversity of the world.

Second, with greater racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the faculty, we can offer our students more role models in all fields. Doing so will increase the likelihood that the next academic generation will feature significantly fewer racial and gender disparities. The role-model effect should also spread to other careers in which gender and racial/ethnic disparities remain salient.

Third, diversifying the faculty is not just a matter of broadening perspectives for students; the benefits extend to the entire college community. The multiple perspectives faculty members bring to the college infuse new energy into our already shared commitment to undergraduate education, including in the form of respectful debates outside of the classroom.

Fourth, Williams aims to make a contribution to the world through the students we educate and the work of our faculty. In both national and international landscapes of ongoing racialized, gendered, and economic inequalities, Williams has a crucial role to play as a leader in bringing about change. In so doing, we hope that other institutions can continue to look to Williams to set trends and establish benchmarks.
Finally, it’s important that faculty diversity keep pace with student diversity. All segments of the college community should be welcoming and reflective of our increasingly diverse society. The historical context and current demographics of the college also mean that faculty of color often spend a disproportionate amount of time supporting and mentoring students of color. So another good reason to prioritize diversifying our faculty is one of retention.

**Diversity gains**

Most of our progress in diversifying the faculty has come over the last two decades. Women now make up 44 percent of all tenure-line faculty, as compared to 33 percent in 1994. The percentage is higher in the assistant (60 percent) and associate (46 percent) professor ranks. So overall gender parity is coming soon. In the meantime, our numbers and trajectory track closely with our liberal arts peers (Amherst, Carleton, Grinnell, Middlebury, and Swarthmore, to name a few), who all have about 43-48 percent women faculty.

In terms of racial and ethnic diversity, we’ve made gains in both absolute numbers and percentages. As shown in the chart below, faculty of color now make up 21 percent of all tenure-line faculty, as compared with just 14 percent in 1996 and 19 percent in 2006.

The gain in absolute numbers over the same time period—from 29 to 49—is less impressive, especially when the current number is broken down by racial identity: only 13 Black/non-Hispanic, 15 Hispanic, 20 Asian or Pacific Islander, one American Indian or Alaska Native, and two of multiple ethnicity. Most of our peers have similar numbers, although Pomona is a notable outlier with nearly 35 percent faculty of color.
We do not have any specific numerical or percentage targets in mind, but we know we’re not done. We want to continue increasing faculty diversity, and we know that we can. The large number of retirements projected over the next few years creates opportunities, and there’s no shortage of excellent candidates to fill those positions. Between 2010 and 2014, U.S. scholars of color were awarded Ph.D.s in the following numbers: 10,309 Latinos/as, 10,234 Black or African-Americans, 570 Native American or Alaskan Natives, and 14,288 Asian Americans. Percentage-wise, in 2014, U.S. students of color received between 22-28 percent of all Ph.D.s awarded in the sciences, social sciences, engineering, and education. Only in the humanities did they receive less than 20 percent of the Ph.D.s awarded. So the pipeline is diverse. And those new Ph.D.s are interested in Williams. Our Bolin Fellowship program (see below), for example, attracts more than 200 applicants each year for just two positions.

**Diversity strategies**

Our challenge is to attract more of those new Ph.D.s to apply for our tenure-line positions and to cultivate applicant pools that are as diverse as the U.S. graduate student population. We have adopted several strategies. Most important, Williams established an Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity (OIDE) in 2006, earlier than most of our peers. That office has been working closely with the dean of the faculty ever since. Together, they are involved in the faculty search process at every step, from shaping the job description to advertising to interviewing to extending the offer. The OIDE also tracks information about the demographics of the applicant pools at all stages so that the hiring units can be more reflective about their decisions.

In recent years, we have provided formal training for the representatives of search committees. Beginning in 2014-15, we engaged the services of an external consulting firm that works with academic departments around issues of diversity, equity, and implicit bias. The consultants have conducted four intensive (and required) workshops each year, timed to coincide with the different phases of the hiring schedule. This is a new way of doing business—several extra steps in an already crowded and complex process. For example, every faculty job ad must now include a diversity statement. Also, we ask the search committees to build evaluation rubrics and to appoint a diversity advocate. And sometimes—when the demographic profile of the applicant pool changes with successive cuts—we ask them to reconsider their short lists. Some of the academic departments and programs have felt the extra work to be distracting, or worse, intrusive. Nevertheless, everyone is participating, and the last three hiring seasons seem to indicate the desired trajectory, as this table shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty of Color</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015 cohort</td>
<td>5 of 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 cohort</td>
<td>9 of 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 cohort</td>
<td>8 of 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another important diversity strategy has been to build and contribute directly to the pipeline. We’ve already mentioned the Bolin Fellowships, which offer doctoral students from underrepresented groups the opportunity to complete their dissertations in residency at Williams and to experience life as a faculty member at a small liberal arts college. This homegrown program was established in 1986; since then, 68 fellows have been appointed. Nearly all of them have gone on to academic careers, including seven who were hired into tenure-track positions here at Williams.
In 2008, building on that record of success, we upgraded the Bolin program from a one-year to a two-year fellowship. This change has been very successful in enabling the fellows to complete their dissertations in year one, to gain teaching experience (one course each year), and to take advantage of professional development opportunities before going on the academic job market during the second year. We also upgraded the compensation package by boosting the salary nearly 30 percent over the last decade, providing more generous moving allowances, and creating more affordable housing options. Two of our current Bolin Fellows have been successfully recruited into assistant professorships here at Williams beginning in summer 2017, proving that this program is an attractive avenue into a liberal arts career.

Inspired by the success of the Bolin program, our chief diversity officer co-authored the C3 grant, which was funded by the Mellon Foundation in 2013. C3 stands for the Creating Connections Consortium, a collaboration among four liberal arts colleges and four research universities dedicated to advancing the goals of inclusion and full participation in the academy. The original partners were Williams, Middlebury, Connecticut College, UC Berkeley, and Columbia University. The partnership expanded in 2015-16 to include Bates College, the University of Chicago, and the University of Michigan.

A central feature of the C3 grant is a postdoctoral fellowship that, like the Bolin program, provides underrepresented scholars the opportunity to spend two years at a liberal arts college in order to discover the rich professional careers that can be pursued in this context. As part of the recruiting effort, representatives from Williams, Middlebury, and Connecticut College have traveled annually to UCB and Columbia. Another element of the grant is an annual conference that brings together faculty, staff, and students from the member institutions. Williams hosted this conference in Spring 2017.

The C3 program has been moderately successful. The grant provides funding for three cohorts of fellows at Williams (and at the other LACs too), each for a two-year residency. Now in the final year of the grant, we appointed a total of eight fellows into the nine available positions. Of those, four left after one year: three for tenure-track positions and one for another postdoc. The other four have already completed—or will soon complete—their two-year stints, and all but one (who decided to leave the academy) have lined up tenure-track jobs. Notably, one has accepted an assistant professorship at Williams, starting in 2018.

An important lesson learned from the C3 grant is the value of presearch outreach. Based on the success of the C3 recruiting visits and recognizing that this Mellon-funded program excluded many disciplines in which diversity remains a particular challenge, Williams and a broader group of colleges—the Liberal Arts Diversity Officers group (LADO)—began in 2014-15 to expand the number of visits made to R1 institutions. They typically involve half-day visits to meet with graduate students, especially at institutions with a strong record of training underrepresented doctoral students in the sciences. These have included Emory, Georgia Tech, Howard University, UCSD, UCD, and UCLA, along with the C3 R1 institutions: UCB, Columbia, U. Chicago, and U. Michigan. The visits have been very well received, and we believe they will provide an important pipeline for prospective new faculty in the coming years.

In the same spirit, we have increased our presence at disciplinary conferences (or sessions at disciplinary conferences) that focus on underrepresented groups. We have also encouraged faculty, when making professional visits to other institutions in order to present their work, to consider requesting time to meet with local graduate students to talk with them about careers at liberal arts colleges.
There are a few more strategies to mention briefly here. First, starting in 2012, we transitioned away from a paper-based application process to a fully online process (Interfolio/ByCommittee). Not only is the online process more modern and efficient, but it is also so convenient for candidates that they apply in much greater numbers. Bolin applications more than doubled in the first year we used Interfolio. The software has also improved our ability to gather and track demographic data. Second, we have expanded the numbers of candidates who are invited for on-campus interviews. We used to restrict the total for each search to three. Now, to ensure fully diverse finalist pools we routinely invite four. Third, we have more frequently been making opportunity appointments—i.e., recruiting faculty members without a national search as a fast and efficient means to hire additional outstanding candidates from underrepresented groups. New opportunity appointment hires in 2016-2017 include four talented faculty members of color.

Enhancing Faculty Development

Clearly, recruiting a diverse and talented faculty is sine qua non to meeting a standard of excellence in teaching, learning, and scholarship. But so too is job satisfaction, at every stage of a faculty member’s career. To advance this goal, we created a new associate dean of the faculty position in 2013, a two- to three-year rotating post held by a recognized faculty leader. This position expands the scope of services and mentoring available on matters of teaching, scholarship and creativity, tenure preparation, leadership, and work-life balance.

We have also worked broadly to enhance communications and networking. For example, we created the NetWorks for Faculty Development webpage in 2013 as a means of gathering information on the many faculty support services offered on campus. The site serves as a centralized directory of resources, distributed around the college, that at some colleges are gathered within a center for teaching and learning. Another example: since Fall 2014, the dean of the faculty has sent an annual formal letter to the faculty (workroom) detailing the work done over the past year and providing an overview of things to come. There are so many things that the dean of the faculty’s office works on, many of which are visible only to small groups of faculty at a time. This letter has become an important way of bringing everyone up to date and reminding them of our goals and priorities.

Other simple mechanisms used to enhance communications and networking have included social gatherings hosted by the dean several times each semester, in rotating venues around campus, to encourage cross-disciplinary conversation; biweekly drop-in lunches hosted by the new associate dean of the faculty and the associate dean for institutional diversity, for discussion of current faculty affairs; and all-faculty lunches co-hosted by the dean’s office and others to address questions of interest to faculty at all stages of their Williams careers.

Pretenure faculty development

When new faculty members arrive on campus, they are full of questions. Yet until 2013, our orientation programming consisted only of a single one-hour meeting with the deans and the president, a one-day teaching workshop, and a series of welcome-to-Williams receptions. That approach has changed, largely the result of bringing on the new associate dean. We now have a robust orientation program for all new faculty, including visitors and fellows. It is spread out over a week or more in late August, and includes assistance with syllabus design, training on our course management software and classroom technologies, a physical and a virtual campus tour, and panel presentations from various groups of faculty and staff. Some
of the sessions are purely practical (e.g., how to work with the Registrar’s Office), and some are meant to provoke discussion (e.g., how assistant professors find time for scholarship). The latter sessions are especially popular, but survey results indicate that the full package of orientation events is necessary and appreciated.

Beyond orientation, all new faculty (tenure track, non-tenure track, and visitors alike) are invited to participate in the First3 program (est. 2013). First3 is the new iteration of the Project for Effective Teaching (est. 1994). That original program was successful as a cohort-building tool and mentoring venue primarily for new tenure-track assistant professors. But it was largely the project of a single director—an experienced senior faculty member—with a single disciplinary focus. First3 is still focused on teaching, mentoring, and cohort building, but it is now led by a group of three senior faculty, one from each of the academic divisions, and the name is descriptive of the expanded cohort: all faculty members in their first three years. First3 programming includes a one-day teaching and learning conference in late August, twice-weekly cohort lunches throughout the academic year on various topics associated with pedagogy and the Williams classroom experience broadly, opportunities to visit classes taught by other faculty (in an entirely nonevaluative manner), and occasional all-faculty lunches on special topics.

The Faculty Steering Committee (FSC) has spent a lot of time over the last 10 years assessing mentoring programs at Williams. It was their initiative in 2008 to create a non-disciplinary mentoring program for first-year faculty (we described it in our 2012 interim report). The FSC then created an ad hoc Mentoring Review Committee in 2012-13. That group surveyed the faculty to assess the effectiveness of mentoring at the college and produced a summary report with recommendations. For example, they suggested a number of changes for the PET program—and thus, First3 (as described above) was born.

Another of their recommendations was for the college to provide more effective mentoring during all of the pretenure years. To help accomplish that goal, the dean of the faculty’s office established an expanded schedule of individual meetings. The dean now meets with the assistant professors in their first, third, and sixth years, and the associate dean meets with them in their second and fifth years (the fourth year is their sabbatical year). Those meetings serve as a chance for individual faculty members to communicate any particular concerns they might have regarding their progress toward tenure or their experience at the college. Further, in 2016, OIDE expanded mentoring resources for faculty of color by pairing them with the faculty fellow at the Davis Center. The two Davis Center fellows also serve as cohort mentors for our pre- and postdoctoral fellows.

A third recommendation was to increase clarity in the evaluation, reappointment, and tenure review processes. In fact, we need to complete a comprehensive revision of our Faculty Handbook, where all policies regarding faculty career advancement are recorded. And we need to apply consistent methods of evaluation across all departments and programs (for example, most but not all departments and programs conduct class visits as part of the evaluation process for their junior colleagues). This work is continuing, but we’ve already made good progress. For example: To create more transparency in the tenure process, the faculty approved a proposal that faculty coming up for tenure have the opportunity to see and respond to the departmental evaluation of their dossier and the recommendation based on that evaluation (see, in the workroom, the April/May 2016 report and motion of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Tenure Review Year). Another step is that the OIDE now holds informal informational meetings for faculty who are about to submit a tenure or renewal package. These meetings include former members of the Committee on Appointments and Promotions; they are in a good position to provide candidates some guidance on expectations and
perspective on their dossiers. A third step is that the dean of the faculty now meets annually with those department and program chairs who have assistant professors coming up for tenure to review policy and procedure.

Finally, based on feedback especially from the C3 postdoctoral fellows and the assistant professors, the dean of the faculty’s office and the OIDE have created a comprehensive document titled *Professional Development and Mentoring Guidelines* (workroom). It outlines the formal and informal practices and programs at Williams for the support and enhancement of faculty careers. It includes prompts for setting professional goals, acting on them, seeking advice, and assessing progress. This document was written not just for pretenure faculty, but for all faculty, and as a resource for mentors and mentees alike.

**Post-tenure faculty development**

A common challenge for faculty in the post-tenure years is finding balance between enhanced service expectations, continuing teaching responsibilities, and maintaining a vibrant scholarly profile. Particularly at smaller institutions, the service expectations in the years immediately post-tenure can take a heavy toll. It is not uncommon for new associate professors to find themselves asked to serve as chair of their academic units or to lead important institutional committees. At Williams, we have developed several ways of supporting post-tenure faculty. They are described in detail in a soon-to-be-published book chapter co-authored by the dean and the associate deans of the faculty, titled “Getting Over the Hump: Continued Professional Development for Mid-Career Faculty” (workroom).

One simple strategy has been to provide more information and more training to our faculty so that they are prepared to take on leadership roles. We’ve updated our handbooks and websites with practical advice, and we’ve offered workshops on such things as budgeting and staff evaluation. We also now offer a “How the College Works” series. It ran for the first time in 2016 and covered such topics as the organization of the college, its financial workings, its faculty governance and committee structures, the work of our Committee on Appointments and Promotions, admission, financial aid, and capital projects. We limited participation to 14 tenured faculty and provided them with a modest stipend. The satisfaction survey indicated that participants found the series especially rewarding for the ways it familiarized (or refamiliarized) them with the institutional structures at the college and how they might best engage with those structures.

A second strategy has been to clarify policies and expectations around evaluation and promotion. The most important step in this direction was to update the official policies and procedures around the evaluation of associate professors and promotion to full professor. That review required a full year of CAP and FSC discussion, leading to a faculty vote in 2012-13. With the new policy in place, the dean of the faculty now meets individually with all new associate professors in the summer after they receive tenure. This meeting enables the dean to communicate in some detail the basis for the positive tenure decision, to articulate any expectations or even concerns the CAP or home unit may have, and to ask the faculty member to express their hopes, plans, and questions for the next five to six years. Additional mandated communications and meetings are scheduled in years three, four, and six in rank. By offering a clear path to promotion, we have effectively demystified the process and created greater transparency. Upon a faculty member’s promotion to full professor, the dean of the faculty again meets individually with the newly promoted faculty member to discuss his or her aspirations for the next five to six years.

A third strategy has been to develop broad intellectual networks through partnerships with peer institutions. For example, we are a member of the Alliance to Advance Liberal Arts
Colleges, allowing our faculty to participate in collaborative workshops with their disciplinary colleagues from 24 other LACs. We are also a founding member of the Liberal Arts Consortium for Online Learning, which explores new models of teaching and learning in the service of residential liberal arts education. As noted above, we also belong to the LADO and C3 consortiums. All of these provide opportunities for our faculty to work with colleagues beyond Williamstown.

**Supporting scholarship and creativity**

Support for faculty scholarship and creative work is embedded in many of the faculty development programs outlined above. There are also many research funds and resources that have been in place for years to provide Williams faculty with opportunities to pursue their scholarly and creative work. A few examples: We offer a generous sabbatical leave policy, where eligibility for a paid semester’s leave accrues after just six semesters of teaching; we have the Oakley Center for the Humanities and Social Sciences, where faculty members can retreat for sabbatical residencies or to form research groups; and we have a thriving summer science research program for faculty and for students. Since 2006, we have enhanced this kind of support in several ways.

One big improvement is that we now guarantee assistant professors a full year of salary for pretenure research leaves. Until 2012-13, the policy was to guarantee 100 percent salary for six months plus 50 percent salary for another six months, or 75 percent for a year. Some assistant professors were able to afford the second semester of salary at reduced pay, but others weren’t. So now the college is committed to topping up the second semester if there is no external funding available. This new approach ensures that all pretenure faculty have ample and equitable time to dedicate to scholarship and creative endeavors.

Building on the success of the Teachers Roundtable Program (est. 2007; more below), we established the Writing and Creative Endeavors Roundtable Program in 2013. It encourages faculty members, in groups of four, to gather to exchange ideas and seek feedback about scholarly or creative works in progress. The demand for this program is very strong. We have funded 23 roundtable groups so far, with more than 90 participants (several of whom have participated more than once). Their evaluation reports on the experience are glowing.

Nearly every year since 2009, we have hosted a Publishing Day. This is a forum for all Williams faculty (and often faculty from colleges nearby) to meet acquisitions editors from university presses; over the years, we’ve had representatives from presses at Cornell, Harvard, UMass, MIT, Yale, Princeton, and Oxford. Typically, the day begins with a panel discussion on the current state of academic publishing and a conversation about many of the practical and logistical questions that authors have about the publishing process. Later in the day, there are one-on-one meetings between faculty and individual editors to discuss specific book projects.

Another new resource for authors is the Manuscript Review Program, run by the Oakley Center since 2013. It is open to faculty in the humanities and social sciences who have manuscripts that are near completion but still need revision. The review includes a one-day seminar with one or two external specialists and up to three Williams colleagues. Similarly, but less intensively, our director of writing programs organizes a few daylong writing retreats each year. These events provide faculty the opportunity to focus on writing in the company of colleagues, as well as the chance to share and workshop writing samples.

In 2015, we began an annual Grants and Funding workshop co-hosted with the Office for Corporate and Foundation Relations (OCFR). This workshop highlights both internal and external sources of funding, as well as different types of funding (to support pedagogy,
scholarly projects, sabbatical leaves, etc.). The OCFR has increased capacity to assist faculty in finding sources of funding (particularly helpful in the humanities and social sciences) and can assist faculty as they develop project ideas and write grant proposals. We put on a special workshop in April 2017 to focus on the National Endowment for the Humanities as a funding source. One of the NEH program officers came to campus to give a presentation, to conduct a mock panel review, and to meet individually with faculty from Williams and other colleges in the New England region.

In 2016, we developed a series of additional workshops, together with the library and the Office for Information Technology, on various tools/skills that faculty might use in their teaching or scholarly pursuits. The topics included “Collaboration Tools,” “Using Data across Disciplines,” and “New Media.”

Finally, in 2016, we formally established an intellectual property policy (workroom). Previously, faculty had no guidance about the ownership of their scholarly and creative works, or how to collaborate with researchers at universities that have IP policies, or whether they could freely share their classroom materials, software, and methodologies with colleagues. The primary intent of the policy is to protect the ability of faculty to control the use of their own work.

Teaching and Learning

This topic is part and parcel of the diversity and faculty development topics discussed above. For example, the director of writing programs was hired in 2008 in part to support faculty authors, but more so to support the faculty in their teaching of writing and to oversee the student-staffed Writing Workshop. There are a number of additional teaching and learning projects that are new since our last self-study. Several deserve mention here because they help illustrate our attempts to understand how students learn and how to provide effective instruction.

The Teachers Roundtable program—now 10 years old—provides funding (a $500 incentive, plus meal money) for small groups of faculty from across the college to visit each other’s classes and discuss them over lunch. These groups are designed to provide constructive, nonevaluative feedback and to discuss issues of pedagogy. We have funded 45 groups to date, with nearly 200 participants. They have proven to be a simple, effective way of encouraging discussion about teaching techniques, and they have also inspired a lot of interdisciplinary thinking.

A more focused kind of effort was launched in 2014, when we applied for and received a grant from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation to support underrepresented students in STEM-related disciplines (broadly defined, including both psychology and economics). The first step in this project was to survey peer institutions on the kinds of support they provide to this student cohort. Drawing on what we learned, we hired a director of quantitative skills programs and peer support. This is not a faculty position but a full-time academic staff job meant to support students in developing quantitative methods and concepts across the Williams curriculum. The director also collaborates with faculty on quantitative skills workshops for students in their courses or on development and implementation of course-specific assignments, activities, and programs related to quantitative skills.

That position has dovetailed nicely with other conversations on campus around issues of classroom inclusivity and climate. We held a one-day faculty retreat about this in May 2016. All were invited to participate, and about 50 attended. The overarching topic was “Teaching at Williams Today: Inclusive Classrooms, Effective Pedagogies, Challenges, and
Strategies.” The retreat provided an opportunity for faculty to discuss various challenges that they face in the classroom and to share strategies for addressing them. We also discussed student perceptions of classroom dynamics and climate. The day was very productive and well received. We held a comparable retreat in May 2017, focused on campus cultures as experienced by the faculty.

Another initiative grew out of a 2013-14 study conducted by the Committee on Educational Policy. Their initial question was about the impact of declaring two or more majors on curricular breadth. The analysis, presented in Standard 8, generated an even broader set of questions and gave rise the over the next two years to a campuswide conversation entitled “Why Liberal Arts?” This multipronged effort, spearheaded by the associate dean of the faculty, brought faculty, staff, and students together to discuss various aspects of our shared academic endeavor. There was a series of different kinds of events in various venues (dinners, ice-cream socials, coffee nights, etc.). The goal of each was for the community to consider various aspects of what it means to be at a liberal arts institution, and what our goals are and should be. The co-sponsors of this initiative included the President’s Office, the dean of the faculty’s office, Phi Beta Kappa, the Career Center, the college museum, and others. We expect to continue these campuswide conversations in coming years.

We will continue to ask deep questions about how and what we teach, and whether we’re doing it well. An important line of inquiry in the coming years will be to experiment with “Design Thinking” as a rubric for teaching. We have already offered several Winter Study courses and guided workshops on this topic, and we’ve come to realize that many of the key elements of this pedagogical approach align with our fundamental academic and curricular goals. These include collaboration, critical discourse, creative confidence, and divergent thinking. To push this initiative forward, we are hiring a nonfaculty fellow—a “Design Thinker in Residence”—to spend three years at Williams. This person will consult with faculty members, students, and staff to provide a framework for the thoughtful design of courses, assignments, and projects to enhance critical thinking and teamwork skills. The Design Thinker will also collaborate with a growing network of faculty and staff at our peer institutions (e.g., Smith, Pomona, Amherst, Middlebury, and Oberlin) to foster design thinking at LACs. During the final year of the initial residency, a faculty advisory group will determine whether there is sufficient interest to continue this position in later years.

Summary

The various initiatives we have described above have aimed to create a positive institutional climate where all faculty can thrive. One proxy of how well we’re doing is the rate of retention, which is quite good. Of those tenure-track faculty hired over the past decade, 83 of 104 (80 percent) are still at the college. One hundred sixty-four of the 249 (66 percent) faculty members hired over the past two decades are still at the college. Among those who left, 16 were denied tenure. The rest left voluntarily, including 10 after receiving tenure. The reasons offered for those departures cover the spectrum from personal illness to enhanced professional opportunity, including greener pastures elsewhere for spousal employment. There are no significant disparities in retention rates for men and women, nor among faculty of different races and ethnicities.

Mostly, we have anecdotal information about those departures, and we recognize the need to better understand the factors that contribute to a decision to leave Williams. So for the past two years, we have been doing formal exit interviews. This is a voluntary exercise offered to all tenure track faculty, full-time visitors who have been at the college for at least
one full year, and fellows who are leaving the college. The interviews are conducted either by the dean of faculty’s office or by the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity, at the departing faculty member’s choice. In addition, all faculty (including part-time and short-term visitors) who are leaving the college receive an online exit survey. The response rate has been ~65 percent. The information gathered from these interviews and surveys will help us better understand the faculty experience at Williams and the surrounding community.

Projection

Looking forward to the next decade, we project the following:

- The overall size of the faculty in terms of FTE will remain about the same, and we intend to maintain the current student-faculty ratio of 7-1.

- The age profile of our faculty suggests that the pace of retirements will continue to accelerate and the average age at retirement will fall somewhat as a result of the retirement incentive program.

- Hand in hand with the increased pace of retirements, we expect the ratio of senior-to-junior faculty to recede, resulting in greater numbers of assistant professors relative to associate and full professors.

- Through careful staffing and leave planning, we intend to reduce the recent spike in the hiring of short-term visitors, and to bring the visiting faculty count back to about 40 FTE per year.

- Through national searches and opportunity appointments, we will continue to place a high priority on diversifying the faculty along the lines of gender, race, and other factors. We will especially aim to cultivate applicant pools that are as diverse as the U.S. graduate student population.

- Following the First3 model, we will further enhance development opportunities for faculty who are beyond their third year at Williams, including programming and resources related to course development, time management, scholarship and creativity, as well as faculty governance, service, and leadership.

- In teaching and learning, we are committed in the next few years to implementing and evaluating several initiatives described earlier, including the three-year pilot program in Design Thinking, the quantitative skills program (funded by the Sherman-Fairchild grant), and the first-year writing seminar program. We also expect to continue campus conversations in our “Why Liberal Arts?” series.

- To be sure that we have a community of learning in which students and faculty alike are thriving, we will continue to use—and carefully assess the results of—such instruments as COFHE surveys to gauge student satisfaction and engagement, and the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) survey, as well as our own exit surveys, to gauge faculty satisfaction.
Standard Seven: 
Institutional Resources

Williams is fortunate to have a large endowment for a school its size. That endowment—a reflection of the past and present generosity of alumni, parents, and friends—is what allows us to achieve our mission of offering a high-quality education that is accessible to all students, regardless of their ability to pay. It also allows us to offer a high level of support to our students and competitive compensation to our faculty and staff, and to make ongoing investments in our facilities. We work hard to steward our resources in such a way as to ensure the college's financial stability, both as an educational institution and an economic engine in a region where we employ over 1,000 people. We invest carefully in recruiting, retaining, and supporting our employees. We regularly reinvest in our facilities through a rigorous maintenance and renewal program, and a robust capital construction plan. And we devote close attention to our libraries and information technology infrastructure—crucial assets in our mission. Williams has existed for over 200 years, and as its current caretakers, we take seriously our role in ensuring that it will thrive and continue to educate students for generations to come.

Description
Williams has four major categories of institutional (as distinct from academic) resources: our people, or human resources; our finances, including our endowment; our campus facilities; and our other infrastructure, including libraries and information technology systems. We manage each of these resources in close alignment with our mission to ensure that they are fully directed toward supporting our core educational values. The day-to-day management of these assets is done by administrative staff, but faculty members are consulted and included in major decisions.

Appraisal

Human resources
Our ongoing success depends on our ability to attract, retain, and support a skilled workforce—both faculty and nonfaculty. The qualities of our faculty were discussed in Standard 6. As for nonfaculty, a recent comprehensive report on staffing (workroom) showed that:

1. Our nonfaculty staff FTE is appropriately sized to support the number of faculty and students we have, and to maintain the size of our physical plant.

2. Over the past decade, faculty FTE has grown more (+20 percent) than nonfaculty FTE (+14 percent).

3. Staff growth, where it has occurred, has been most significant in the areas of student support (e.g., health center, Davis Center, academic resources, career counseling) and faculty support (e.g., child care center, departmental administrative assistants, libraries).

4. The current ratio of staff-to-faculty FTE (at 2.5-1) is below the 2003 level.
We assess the sufficiency of our staff through the annual budget process. We add positions when needed, but every request must be backed by a clear business case and a persuasive explanation of its connection to the college’s educational goals (see Standard 3). We also have the ability to adjust staffing midyear in response to emerging needs, and occasionally do so.

When we hire, we do it through a fair, transparent process. We require departments to secure prior authorization to hire, post available positions both internally and externally, conduct screenings and interviews, and check background and references before hiring.

All new employees are supported with a rigorous orientation and onboarding process that extends through the first six months of employment. The college continues to invest in their ongoing professional development. Several years ago, we implemented a competency-based performance development program that calls for annual evaluations of all employees. The program includes three elements: reviewing the past year and evaluating goals, setting goals for the coming year, and establishing long-term goals and aspirations. Each assessment is reviewed by the staff member’s immediate department head and his or her senior staff member. We also have hired a dedicated training and development coordinator who offers a suite of programs every year focused on individual and departmental needs, including management and supervisory training programs. Although staff development budgets had to be reduced during the economic downturn, the college has consistently increased those budgets over the years since.

Employment policies and expectations for employees are codified in three online handbooks: the *Faculty Handbook*; the *Administrative Staff Handbook* (for exempt staff); and the *Support Staff Handbook* (for nonexempt staff). These handbooks serve as the archives of policies governing employment at Williams. They are reviewed regularly by committees such as the Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee, which routinely recommends valuable improvements. For example, after several large increases in health insurance premiums in recent years, the committee proposed adding lower-cost deductible plans to our menu of options. We did that in 2017. The college now pays 75-80 percent of employee premiums and uses its share of the savings to partially offset employees’ deductibles, making the new plans more affordable for staff.

Williams is committed to employing a diverse workforce. We use numerous professional associations and employment search venues to recruit, including specialized outlets devoted to diverse candidate pools. HR works closely with the vice president for institutional diversity and equity on recruitment and retention issues.

We are currently experiencing a generational shift in staff as well as in faculty. Our staff is aging, and the pace of retirements will accelerate over the decade ahead. Given our reputation in the community as a stable employer with competitive salaries and generous benefits, some positions will be easy to fill. We may, however, be challenged in filling certain technical positions. We have begun working closely with department heads on succession planning in advance of key retirements.

Williams practices a market-based compensation philosophy. We seek to pay staff above the median of our peers, based on annual review of salaries against the market, and accompany this with a robust set of benefits, including highly subsidized health insurance, a generous retirement program, and liberal leave policies.

As an enhancement to this program, we also have a staff member dedicated to spouse/partner assistance. She regularly works with several dozen families who are making the transition to Williams, helping them locate employment and other opportunities in the region.
We have also purchased or leased a variety of local houses and apartments over the years, which we offer to eligible faculty and administrative hires on a temporary (though multiyear) basis to ease their transition and allow them time to purchase a suitable home. Once they find one, they can also take advantage of the college’s subsidized mortgage program.

Financial resources

The college’s finances are managed by a Finance Team that includes the provost, the vice president for finance and administration (VP-FA), and the chief investment officer (CIO). In principle, the CIO invests and grows our endowment, the provost allocates funds to our highest priorities, and the VP-FA monitors and reports on spending. These interrelated responsibilities require close, consistent coordination among these three senior officers.

Annual Budget

The Finance Team works together to develop an annual budget and a five-year financial plan with input from a wide range of stakeholders, including department heads, faculty, and key staff across campus. As with most important resource decisions, the annual budget is then vetted by our Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) and ultimately by the Board of Trustees.

Budgeted expenses are allocated across three general categories: (1) salaries and benefits; (2) operating budgets; and (3) support for facilities. The budget for each category is developed through different rigorous processes.

1. Salaries and benefits are the biggest piece (59 percent) of our total annual spending. Faculty salaries are set according to well-established guidelines that are designed to keep Williams competitive with its peers (a form of horizontal equity) and to hold the ratio of average full-professor pay to average assistant-professor pay at a proscribed target (a form of vertical equity). The salary-setting process involves deliberations between the provost, dean of the faculty, president, and Faculty Compensation Committee. The faculty compensation plan for the following year is explained annually at the May faculty meeting.

Staff salaries are set by the provost and the vice president for finance in consultation with senior staff, and include adjustments for an across-the-board cost of living increase as well as merit and market adjustments that are allocated by managers.

2. Operating budget (23 percent) requests are submitted by department heads, who are expected to keep budgets flat unless an increase is absolutely necessary to meet their highest priorities. Managers must first submit such requests to their senior staff supervisors for consideration. If the supervisor supports the request, it is then
reviewed by both the provost and the vice president for finance, by the Committee on Priorities and Resources, and finally by the full senior staff. Only requests that earn strong endorsements are included in the budget submitted to the trustees for final approval.

3. Most of the remainder of the budget supports our facilities (16 percent), through either debt service on capital projects or ongoing maintenance and renewal of existing facilities. Each year, departments submit requests for the capital renewal budget, which are then reviewed by the provost, vice president for finance, and staff in Design and Construction, Facilities Operations, and the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives. Projects are prioritized, and the most needed are scheduled into a rolling, five-year capital renewal plan.

Finally, we budget some contingency funds to be used at the provost’s discretion to address emergencies or to fund unanticipated but compelling midyear needs and opportunities. Budgeted revenues are derived from three main sources: (1) net student charges; (2) gifts for current use; and (3) draws on the endowment (also known as the “avail”).

1. **Net student charges** (36 percent) are modeled by applying the known comprehensive fee to our enrollment projection, and then deducting an estimate for financial aid. Our enrollment is very stable, and projections rarely vary much. Although the college is need blind and imposes no absolute limit on student financial aid, the Provost’s Office is able to plan reliably by estimating the financial need of our continuing and incoming students based on past experience with similar classes.

2. **Philanthropy** (11 percent) has a long history at Williams. Major gifts and bequests have fueled our endowment for over 200 years. We have a distinctively strong tradition of annual alumni giving, providing us a steady expendable cash flow. Indeed, gifts for current use make up about 11 percent of our annual revenue; it would take additional endowment of $500 million to generate an equivalent revenue stream. Gift revenue projections are discussed annually by the provost, VP-FA, and vice president for college relations. We are now in the fifth year of our Teach It Forward Campaign (details below), and estimates for gift receipts are carefully calibrated with campaign goals. Even so, the volume of current-use gifts and bequests can vary, so we budget these amounts based on historic trends. Gifts to the endowment and capital projects are not included in the operating budget, but are projected in the financial plan and also tie back to campaign goals.
3. Williams’ largest revenue source (49 percent) is its endowment avail. The college aims for an avail rate that is 5 percent of the endowment’s market value, averaged over the preceding 12 quarters. The avail funds the difference between budgeted expenses and other revenue sources. Because we will not draw much more than 5 percent in any year, the avail rate also acts as a natural limit on budget growth.

Once expenses and revenues have been carefully projected and vetted, the budget is presented to the Budget and Financial Planning Committee of our Board of Trustees, and, subject to their recommendation, approved by the full board in April of each year. A copy of our FY 2018 budget presentation to the board is in the workroom.

Once the budget has been approved, our Budget Office monitors spending against the plan throughout the year. Department heads, managers, and senior staff receive regular tracking reports. The VP-FA and provost provide quarterly updates to trustees on spending vs. budget.

Budget Pressures

Despite relatively ample resources, Williams faces budget pressures. On the revenue side:

- Our commitment to affordability, staying need blind, and meeting 100 percent of demonstrated need limits the utility of tuition increases as a way to grow revenues.

- Individual philanthropy is correlated with national economic trends which, while relatively good now, will decline in the next economic downturn.

- Our alumni, though exceptionally dedicated to Williams, must weigh competing priorities for their philanthropic dollars.

- While the college has earned excellent endowment returns in recent years, a market correction could stress our ability to fund programs.

On the expense side:

- We are experiencing sharply increased demand for student support services, ranging from financial aid to academic and career advising, health care, psychological counseling, and cocurricular options.

- We note continual pressure to increase support for faculty, including sabbatical support and such auxiliary services as rental housing and the child care center.

- Like many other institutions, we are seeing growth in total salaries, especially due to the aging of faculty. As noted earlier, Williams recently implemented an early-retirement incentive program for faculty.

- The costs of health insurance premiums have risen faster than inflation, leading to overall compensation growth but disproportionate growth in the benefits line vs. salary. We recently sought to reduce health benefit costs by transitioning to deductible plans (without cost shifting to employees), and we are in the fourth year of a wellness program that we hope will eventually reduce health care costs—particularly given the long average tenures of our employees.

- There is a constant need to maintain, improve, replace, and sometimes expand facilities.
Financial Planning

Our financial planning process is described more fully in Standard 2. We routinely analyze, track, and project key performance indicators and test our financial model. Much of this work is included in our “Financial Fundamentals” dashboard; it tracks and projects data across numerous areas and compares our performance to peers (the most recent version is in the workroom).

As part of the annual budget process, we also prepare a five-year projection of revenues, expenses, and endowments. The forecast produces an avail rate that must be held in range of our 5 percent target.

Anticipating future volatility, we periodically perform stress tests on the college’s financial model. Our analysis simulates a market downturn and its impacts on the endowment avail, tuition, and gift revenue. We then assess which expense levers can be shifted to maintain the targeted avail, and the associated consequences. While a major downturn would put pressure on our ability to maintain the current level of programs and services, these exercises reassure us that Williams could weather a recession without incurring permanent harm.

Finally, we regularly review our financial aid program and our affordability. The results are reviewed by the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid, and then presented to the campus and Board of Trustees. A copy of a recent campus presentation on affordability is in the workroom.

Audits

The college’s financial statements are prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Our auditors—currently PwC—present an audit plan to the board’s Audit Committee each year. The plan describes areas of emphasis and a series of required communications with the administration and Committee. PwC’s audit team attends all Audit Committee meetings and meets privately with the members without the administration present. The auditors also periodically perform other reviews for the college as required, such as the A-133 audit. A copy of the most recent audit report is in the workroom.

Endowment

The value of the college’s Investment Pool (the “endowment”) as of June 30, 2017, was $2.5 billion, and it supports approximately half of the college’s total budget.

In the early 2000s, as Williams’ endowment rose above $1 billion, we recognized that our increasingly complex portfolio and expanding network of outside investment managers would require full-time professional oversight. In 2006, we hired our first chief investment officer and established the Williams College Investment Office in Boston. October 2016 marked that office’s 10th anniversary. In the 10 years ending June 30, 2016, our endowment produced an annualized return of 7.3 percent, outperforming our policy portfolio return of 5.1 percent as well as our long-term return objective of 5 percent real return, and placing Williams in the top quartile among its peers for the period.

We maintain a policy of careful stewardship and broad oversight of the endowment. The highest level of oversight is provided by the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees, which sets asset allocation, investment policy, and strategic direction for the Investment Pool, and then monitors results to ensure that objectives are met.
The Investment Office’s work centers on selecting and monitoring our over 90 investment managers, allocated across 10 asset classes. This deep roster of managers allows Williams to take advantage of sophisticated investment strategies and private markets, and gain exposure to a diverse basket of assets that reduces our risk profile.

More information about Williams’ investment program, including our investment results, can be found on the Investment Office’s website: https://investment.williams.edu/.

Development

The president and senior staff set fundraising priorities in collaboration with several campus committees, subject to approval by the board. Operationally, the vice president for college relations works with the provost to ensure that fundraising priorities are consonant with our highest institutional needs.

Our written policies on gift solicitation and acceptance (workroom) make clear that the programs and departments that benefit from gifts are expected to assist the Development Office with regular reports to donors—part of our overall commitment to careful stewardship.

Currently, development activity is focused on Teach It Forward (TIF), the most ambitious comprehensive campaign in the college’s history, with twin goals of $650 million in gifts and 75 percent participation. TIF seeks to build significant support for core aspects of a Williams education, chief among them financial aid, faculty, and science education. Beginning with a silent phase in 2012, TIF is set to conclude in June 2019. By July 2017, the college had secured $560 million toward its goals, and 72 percent of alumni had participated, putting Williams on track to exceed our goals by 2019.

Despite historically strong alumni participation in annual giving, Williams is paying close attention to the challenges posed by negative national attitudes toward higher education, declining giving rates at schools nationally, and the increasingly consumerist perspective of current students and parents. The Alumni Fund has managed to stay above 55 percent participation—a high rate by national standards—even in our worst years. But in order to sustain that success, we are adapting our program to suit changing demographics, preferred methods of communication, evolving philanthropic behavior, and competition for the attention of our alumni volunteers.

Facilities Management and Capital Planning and Construction

The college’s physical plant is managed by Facilities Operations and the Design and Construction department. Operations maintains existing buildings and grounds, while Design and Construction oversees new capital construction.

Since the economic recovery, Williams, like other schools, has experienced a building spurt as we catch up on delayed renewal and capital construction projects. We anticipate that this higher level of activity will continue for several more years and have increased our staff accordingly. One pressing problem is a regional shortage of construction labor, which acts to increase the overall cost of our projects. Some of this will be resolved as our building program slows down toward the end of the decade, but for now, we intend to remain aggressive in recruiting bids and managing projects.
Controller’s Office

The Controller’s Office supports college financial operations through its accounting, cash management, debt management, audit, and tax preparation functions. To enhance the capabilities of our Finance Team, the college merged the Budget Office and Controller’s Office in 2013. This has resulted in closer coordination of our budget, accounting, and audit functions, and enhanced our financial reporting and planning capabilities. We also recently hired dedicated finance professionals who are attached to our two largest departments, Facilities and Dining Services, resulting in improved financial planning and oversight in those complicated areas.

Board Oversight

The Board of Trustees oversees all aspects of college finances. Some of this work—related to budget, endowment, and audit processes—has been described in earlier sections of this standard. The board’s governance practices were discussed in greater detail in Standard 3.

In addition to approving the annual budget, the board’s Budget and Financial Planning Committee (B&FP) reviews quarterly current-year revenue and spending, endowment avail, and cash flow. (The full board also receives a summary of this presentation at each meeting.) The committee also reviews and recommends to the board the annual comprehensive fee, financing plans for all capital projects, real estate transactions in excess of $500,000, and any other significant financial transactions, including any debt issuance.

Debt management is guided by a debt policy adopted by the board. Projected debt issues are included in the financial plan, reviewed by B&FP, and recommended to the full board, which approves all debt.

The board’s Audit Committee approves the college’s annual audit. It also reviews the A-133 audit of federal research and development and financial aid, and the college’s tax submissions (Federal 990 and Massachusetts PC), and provides oversight for the college’s enterprise risk management program.

The board’s Operations and Planning Committee reviews all sector plans (see Standard 2) and approves all capital projects. The committee also receives regular updates on all capital projects (in the planning stage through completion) and the college’s sustainability initiatives.

The board’s Investment Committee oversees the endowment. It sets the asset allocation, investment policy, and the strategic direction of the Investment Pool, and monitors investment results. In addition, there are three Advisory Committees that provide guidance and industry expertise to the investment process.

Libraries and Information Technology

Williams Libraries

The libraries are and have always been central to the college’s educational mission. Libraries are not just repositories of information and materials; they are also places for study, research, collaboration, and, increasingly, a resource for instructional technology, as well as access to new media tools and coaching on their use.
We continue to build our deep collection of traditional library materials, though perhaps at a slower rate than in the past. Our libraries hold more than 1 million books. We have been building substantial digital collections, including over 90,000 e-journals, 500,000 e-books, and streamed audio and video content. Our memberships in the HathiTrust, the Center for Research Libraries, and the Boston Library Consortium enrich our access to both print and digital content. The college recently implemented a next-generation integrated library system (Alma/Primo from Ex Libris) that provides easier access to our full range of traditional and digital resources in a single search.

In the last decade, we have invested deeply in library facilities. The new Sawyer Library was built and opened in 2014 (see Standard 2). Housed within Sawyer—now with greatly expanded and enhanced facilities—is the Chapin Library, one of the country’s pre-eminent rare book libraries; dozens of faculty members use the Chapin's collections for research and teaching purposes. The Schow Science Library, completed in 2001, has been renovated twice to increase the mix of seating and to add two large classrooms to meet campus needs. Nearly 60 percent of all students can be accommodated in our libraries at the same time—a rare level in higher education. In addition, the college invested in an off-campus library shelving facility (LSF) to hold parts of our library collections; it is also increasingly used by other campus departments, including the college's art museum. An addition to the LSF is in the planning stage.

Another notable innovation of the new library was the addition of studio and makerpaces. Students, faculty, and staff now have a state-of-the-art venue where they can create and record a wide range of video and audio projects. Departments such as Africana Studies and Romance Languages have already used the studio for course projects, and faculty from all three divisions have gone there to record lectures and other course content.

Much of this success is rooted in the close partnership between our libraries and the Office for Information Technology, which was heavily involved in the planning for Sawyer and in the continuing development of “Unbound,” our institutional repository.

A librarian and an information technologist now jointly visit individual faculty members to learn how best to support their teaching and research. The feedback received from these conversations is used to improve library services. The partnership has resulted in our offering Shibboleth authentication, allowing faculty and students to more easily access a long and expanding list of digital resources.

The libraries are embracing new approaches to information literacy. Since our last self-study, we have incorporated outreach leadership into the job description of a designated librarian. Recognizing that Williams does not offer the kind of required first-year course that many schools use as a venue to teach library skills, the designated librarian has partnered with faculty from high-enrollment introductory courses across our divisions, hosting 36 sessions last year for nearly 200 students in Economics 110, and another 400 in introductory biology and chemistry courses. Librarians have hosted 120 additional sessions on research skills in classes primarily taken by juniors and seniors. The range of campus partnerships also includes the Davis Center, our deans for first-year and international students, academic support staff, and the Williams College Museum of Art.
Information Technology

The Office for Information Technology (OIT) contributes to Williams’ mission by supporting effective use of technology in the teaching, learning, research, and business functions. Support is largely centralized, but OIT also collaborates with staff in other offices (e.g., Information Systems in the Office of College Relations and Web Services in the Communications Office).

OIT itself is organized around four groups:

- Instructional Technology, which supports teaching, learning, and scholarship.
- Networks and Systems, which is responsible for the information infrastructure, from the physical network and servers to cloud-hosted services.
- Desktop Support, which provides and supports all college-owned computers and helps members of the college community with their use.
- Administrative Information Systems, which supports administrative computing needs, including PeopleSoft, as well as a large and growing number of satellite systems.

The biggest single enhancement to OIT’s services since our last self-study was the opening of the new Sawyer Library, with its technically advanced classrooms, studio and makerspaces, and integrated technology supporting a host of research and archival tools. OIT moved its student helpdesk into Sawyer, bringing support services closer to students and forging a closer working relationship with Sawyer’s Research Help Desk.

Across campus, OIT provides many platforms to support learning and teaching. Approximately 70 percent of faculty use the learning management system (Canvas) each semester, reaching 99 percent of students for one or more of their classes. The OIT team also maintains 140 presentation spaces—double the number available in 2007. Well over half of these have two computers (usually both an Apple and a Windows machine) and a full complement of audio and video equipment, while the rest of the spaces are tailored to specific needs. OIT also coordinated installation of a state-of-the-art audio and projection system in the renovated Chapin Hall to support the numerous musical performances and lectures that take place there.

The biggest technical infrastructure change in the last decade has been the shift to virtual and cloud computing. This includes core services such as email, calendaring, and collaboration, which were moved to the Google Suite for Education in 2014. Similarly, our 2015 change to Canvas enabled us to make best use of a new generation of learning technologies, while moving to the cloud.

Explosive growth in the number of such services and the servers they required set the college on an unsustainable path over the past decade. In order to satisfy the demand, OIT has now virtualized 80 percent of its servers: nearly 500 servers are running on only about 110 physical machines. Increased reliance on the cloud also requires a reliable, high-bandwidth connection to the Internet. From 2007, when Williams had a 50Mb/s connection, we have now moved to 2Gb/s, a 4,000 percent increase over the course of a decade.

The biggest change on the administrative side has been increased use of PeopleSoft and satellite systems; OIT has added 14 such systems for various offices in the last three years alone. The most prominent example is the Admission Office’s move to Slate, a comprehensive application, review, and relationship management system for prospective students.
All this work requires a solid campus network. Thanks to a major upgrade to the campus switches and fiber-optic network, we have increased network speeds tenfold, with 10 Gb/s interconnects between buildings and 1 Gb/s to the desktop. The same project was able to eliminate more than 200 switches from around campus. Our wireless infrastructure, students’ predominant mode of connection (and, increasingly, faculty’s and staff’s as well) is ubiquitous and continues to improve, with over 900 access points campuswide.

Campus IT governance is provided by four committees made up of faculty, staff, and students. The faculty-chaired Information Technology Committee reviews and recommends OIT policy, activities, and budgets. The Data Stewardship Council oversees standards and policies for data use. The Administrative Steering Committee provides guidance on the use of PeopleSoft and its satellite systems. And the Enterprise Risk Management group (discussed in Standard 2) is involved in managing risks related to information security.

Recognizing that information security has become an urgent concern for higher education, Williams has created a consortium with Amherst, Mt. Holyoke, and Vassar. The consortium has hired an information security firm to advise on security practice and policies. In Fall 2016, Williams completed a comprehensive risk assessment, based on the National Institute of Standards and Technology framework, NIST SP 800-53. Risks found during the assessment are now being examined and prioritized, and projects to address them are underway. A special tabletop exercise on information risks in Spring 2017 further informed this work.

Institutional resources: the climate change initiative

In Fall 2015, after extensive consultations with members of the Williams community, the president and trustees announced an ambitious initiative to enhance and expand the college’s role in addressing climate change. This multifaceted initiative, which involves investments of about $50 million over five years, includes: (1) setting the goal of reducing the college’s greenhouse gas emissions to 35 percent below 1990 levels by 2020; (2) seeking ways for the college to achieve sustainable carbon neutrality after 2020; (3) charging the Campus Environmental Advisory Committee to lead the community in identifying potential changes in policy and practice that would support short- and long-term reductions in energy use on campus; (4) seeking opportunities to allocate a portion of the endowment to “impact investment” managers whose areas of expertise include companies, projects, or technologies focused on the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions; and (5) making new investments in the college’s educational efforts on environmental issues, including the creation of two new, separately funded positions for faculty whose scholarship and teaching are in the areas of climate change science or related public policy (one of these positions has been filled in the Center for Environmental Studies, and a search is underway to fill the other in Geosciences). As part of this last commitment, the 2016-17 academic year was devoted to a campuswide program entitled Confronting Climate Change; it consisted of a wide variety of activities, including films, speakers, debates, seminars, classes, and art projects.

There are other dimensions to this plan, and we won’t try to summarize all of them here. The full text of the plan is in the workroom and is also available at: https://president.williams.edu/board-of-trustees/statement-by-the-board-of-trustees-and-president-adam-f-falk-on-the-colleges-role-in-addressing-climate-change/
Projection

- Williams’ continuing success depends on our ability to attract, retain, and support a skilled workforce. Like many of our liberal arts peers, Williams is contending with the trend of migration away from rural areas and a declining local jobs economy. The latter is especially challenging for our efforts to recruit individuals from dual-career households. Other factors that affect our workforce include the state of local health care (see Standard 5) and the dearth of housing that is both near campus and affordable to middle- and low-income families. We will seek ways to address these recruiting challenges.

- The aging of our workforce implies that key leadership positions will be transitioning from one generation to the next. We will plan for succession to train those future department leaders.

- We will continue to engage alumni and will finish the Teach It Forward Campaign by successfully meeting or exceeding its $650 million goal.

- We will continue to develop our approach to enterprise risk management, seeking to catalog, prioritize, and address risks as appropriate.

- A priority for our new research services librarian will be engagement with first-year students.

- Increasing campus expectations, the costs of technology, and the need to attract and retain excellent professional staff will be the largest challenges for OIT.

- We will develop a collegewide information security incident response plan.

- We will continue to devote significant attention and resources to implementing the college’s climate change initiative, as described above.
Standard Eight: Educational Effectiveness

As an institution, we try to do what we ask our students to do: continually assess the nature and quality of our work, gather evidence that will test our judgments, and reflect on ways to improve. In its evaluation report during our 2007 accreditation review, the visiting team wrote that Williams “embraces assessment throughout its academic program” and “has developed an admirable culture of review and reflection.” In the decade since, our commitment to detailed, systematic examination of the quality and effects of a Williams education has, if anything, deepened. In this section, we will discuss these aspects of the college’s work, both generally and in terms of some particular issues we have focused on in recent years.

Description

At Williams, assessment of student experience and achievement is guided largely by faculty-led standing committees and by the college’s senior staff. Primary responsibility for assessment of student learning rests with academic departments and programs, reflecting our belief that assessment is most effective when it is led by experts in the discipline. This work, at all levels, is supported by the work of an expanded staff in Institutional Research.

Faculty governance and autonomy are at the core of Williams’ culture. Our approach to teaching and learning is to hire the best faculty we can, support their development as teachers and researchers through mentoring and support programs, such as our First3 program, and give them regular feedback on their teaching through multiple methods, including required course evaluation surveys in every course.

Many of our goals are difficult to measure directly, yet this does not mean we are complacent about assessing student learning and achievement, both academic and personal. Instead, it means that much of our assessment of how we’re doing as educators takes on a qualitative form, such as exit interviews with graduating seniors, conversations among faculty about what majors can and can’t do, or discussions in committees about how to best support a changing student body. We also have very good information about student experience, which we analyze extensively. For example, we analyze students’ course selections, looking at whether certain groups are disproportionately moving away from particular fields of study and who is taking advantage of various programs (for example, the Tutorial Program) that we view as central to a Williams education.

Our committee structure is the primary mechanism through which we consider and evaluate collegewide learning goals. As we noted in Standard 4, until 2015, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) was responsible for considering collegewide curricular issues. After discussion and a faculty vote, the CEP was disbanded in 2015 and replaced by two new committees: the Curricular Planning Committee (CPC) and the Committee on Educational Affairs (CEA). The CPC’s work was discussed in Standard 4. The CEA has taken over much of the work done by the CEP and, like the CEP, is responsible for collegewide oversight of the curriculum.

As we also explained in Standard 4, every department and program undergoes periodic (typically decennial) reviews; reviews include a self-study followed by an external team’s visit.

In 2016-17, we asked all units to articulate their learning goals and to post them online (see form E1, part A). In addition, we asked them to describe how they know whether these
goals are being met. What emerged was very encouraging. The ease with which units were able to respond to these requests suggests that they are engaging in continuous self-reflection and seeking to adapt curricula to better meet student needs.

Assessment of academic success is driven by individual units and the CEA, but the data to support their inquiries often comes from Institutional Research. Institutional Research provides a standard set of enrollment and major data, as well as student satisfaction data, to units undergoing self-studies, and then typically meets with representatives of the unit to determine how to answer other analytical questions (e.g., which courses attract the most majors, how students move through the curriculum). Departments and programs frequently choose to administer alumni surveys, also in conjunction with Institutional Research.

Appraisal

Exploring the liberal arts

In 2013-14, motivated by concerns about growth in double majoring and a sense that students may not be broadly exploring the liberal arts, the CEP undertook a systematic analysis of students’ curricular choices. Its year-end report is in the workroom.

We’ve seen a steady rise in the percentage of graduates with more than one major. At the time of our last self-study, 32 percent of the most recent graduating class had more than one major. That has now increased to 42 percent. Among our closest peers, there’s a huge range in this statistic: between 9 percent and 40 percent. Williams is an outlier. The CEP’s analysis found that students with single majors took an average of 12-13 different course prefixes while at Williams, whereas students with double majors took 10-11. The CEP also examined what percentage of students were taking the bare minimum number of courses required in each division (as noted in Standard 4, students are required to take at least three courses in each of our three academic divisions). It turns out that approximately 5 percent of graduates took the minimum number of courses in Division II (social sciences), 10-20 percent took the minimum number of courses in Division I (languages and the arts), and 30-40 percent took the minimum number of courses in Division III (sciences and mathematics).

The CEP also conducted two student surveys and ran focus groups with students. They found that many students (50 percent of juniors and seniors, and 40 percent of first-years and sophomores) report pressure to double major. Sixty percent to 70 percent of respondents cited peer pressure and the perception that future employers will value the double major as the primary sources of this pressure, with only 15-20 percent citing family pressure as a significant factor. Most double majors (90 percent) reported that they chose their two majors based on intellectual interests, although 34 percent reported that they finished their second major because they were “almost there” anyway. Some choose their two majors based on practical concerns; others, out of a desire to present themselves as well-rounded. Students reported that much of our marketing seems to value double majors, and that it seems like a typically “Williams” thing to do.

For many students, it seems that the value of a liberal arts education primarily means that they do not have to choose a major too early in their college career, and that they are allowed to explore. Many students cited the development of critical thinking skills as of primary importance, but wished that faculty would talk more about what students should or could be getting from their education, as well as what the purpose of a liberal arts education is.

As noted above, students are highly attentive to the credentials they amass. For this reason, there is significant interest among students in establishing minors (which Williams
has never had). Roughly 80 percent of students responded that they would add a minor if they could, and 40 percent of juniors/seniors reported that they would drop one of their majors in favor of a minor. That said, students also reported being grateful to faculty who suggested that they did not have to complete a second major in a given subject. Many recognize that double majoring can limit their curricular choices, and that because our majors are not overly demanding (requiring fewer courses—typically, nine or 10—than at many other institutions), they are not truly becoming expert in two areas.

On the basis of these findings, the CEP recommended that we take steps to improve the advising system, reimagine the online course catalog, initiate a broader conversation about the value of the liberal arts, and continue to talk about the idea of minors at Williams. The CEP’s work gave rise over the next two years to a campuswide dialogue entitled “Why Liberal Arts?”—an initiative described in Standard 6.

Exploring diversity

Williams has long maintained a commitment to the teaching of diversity as part of its overall mission. We live in a globalizing world that tends toward the redrawing of lines of identity and power, and our campus community has, by many measures, become significantly more diverse in the past few decades. In this context, a liberal arts education that critically examines the mechanisms, histories, and practices behind social, political, and philosophical structures of difference and power is urgently needed.

As we mentioned in Standard 4, part of our continuing efforts to examine how well we are meeting that need was done by a small working group, led by the director of the Exploring Diversity Initiative (EDI), in 2013-14. That group assessed and proposed clarifying and streamlining the requirement. The subsequent director of EDI led another small team—in broad consultation with the CEA, the dean of the faculty, and the faculty at large—to host a series of speakers and open fora to review the effectiveness of EDI and suggest how the college might reimagine it for the 21st-century liberal arts setting.

After reviewing all of the prior reports related to the creation and impact of the EDI requirement, and conducting 18 months of its own broad programming and consultation, the EDI working group compellingly argued that one of the strongest messages to emerge from its work was a simple one, with complex implications: The notion of “diversity” has undergone profound changes since the college originally adopted the Peoples and Cultures requirement (in 1989) and the subsequent creation of the Exploring Diversity Initiative (in 2006). Believing that the college can better shape thoughtful citizens by embracing new approaches to diversity that go beyond exposure to the variety of human experiences, in March 2017, the faculty voted to change the requirement from “exploring diversity” to a “difference, power, and equity” requirement. The DPE requirement will instead foster critical engagement with the practice and experience of difference in our world, especially as it relates to differential power dynamics. Students will be required to take at least one DPE course.

Administration of the DPE requirement, like that of the Writing Intensive and Quantitative and Formal Reasoning requirements, will be the responsibility of the CEA. To support and encourage faculty to formulate DPE courses, a DPE coordinator will facilitate faculty workshops on pedagogical strategies. These will build on discussions that have been taking place on campus, such as the “Why Liberal Arts?” series, pedagogy discussion groups at the Davis Center, and the EDI Speaker Series.
Examination of writing-intensive courses

Students are required to take two courses designated as writing intensive. These courses, designed to improve students’ writing skills, require a minimum of 20 pages of writing. That they are offered by many units signals the understanding that writing conventions and skills can be discipline dependent. Faculty members have significant latitude in shaping these courses. The director of writing programs can offer help in the design of syllabi and assignments, as well as the resources of student writing tutors (who may be dedicated to a specific course). The college also sponsors occasional faculty workshops by outside experts on designing effective writing assignments and on effective grading. Faculty are strongly encouraged to introduce students to different kinds of writing in these courses, and to structure writing assignments so that they are stepped and cumulative, such as by requiring drafts and revisions.

In Spring 2017, the CEA sponsored a faculty seminar to develop new techniques for the teaching of writing. The seminar focused on the development of pedagogical techniques for first-year writing-intensive courses. The faculty who taught these courses met throughout the semester to learn from outside experts on writing pedagogy, and to discuss among themselves the pros and cons of the techniques they are using. In addition, the instructors of these courses set up a variety of events (lunches, speakers, colloquia, etc.) to which faculty not involved in the seminar were invited, the object being to generate a campuswide, cross-disciplinary discussion of how best to teach writing at Williams.

The CEA-sponsored seminar brought together faculty who have experience in teaching writing-intensive introductory courses with those who have not previously taught such courses at Williams. In the next few years, the CEA is particularly interested in including faculty from departments that have not usually emphasized writing at the introductory level. The program includes from six to eight courses and will continue for three years, with new participants brought into the seminar each year.

The classes included in this program are labeled as writing-intensive courses, and students will sign up for them as they would for other classes. As with all writing-intensive courses, it is expected that the quantity of formal materials students are responsible for learning will be reduced in order to afford additional time to focus on their writing. The faculty involved in the Spring 2017 seminar produced a report based on their discussions; it contains recommendations on how to improve writing pedagogy and student writing (workroom). The CEA will bring this report to the faculty for discussion this year.

Assessing quantitative skills

Over the past 10 years, we have made a number of significant changes in our Quantitative Studies Program. We used to assess the level of preparation of our incoming first-year students with a multiple-choice, paper-based exam given during orientation. Three years ago, we switched to an online test called WQLRA (Williams Quantitative Literacy and Reasoning Assessment), which students take prior to their arrival on campus.

WQLRA includes a nationally normed assessment instrument designed to evaluate the quantitative skills of our students. While WQLRA is not a placement test, the scores are used by the Williams quantitative and formal reasoning (QFR) faculty coordinator and by the director of quantitative skills programs and peer support to identify the students with deficiencies in math preparation and those who may need additional advising before enrolling in quantitative courses. The position of director of quantitative skills programs and peer support was created in 2016 with support from a grant from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation. Every year, the WQLRA helps identify about 70 incoming students who need additional sup-
port, and the QFR faculty coordinator follows their progress throughout the year. Up to 10 of these students are required to take the course Math 102: Foundations of Quantitative Skills. Math 102 is offered to students who need additional instruction before taking a QFR course (each Williams student must pass such a course in order to fulfill the degree requirements). This class is now offered as a tutorial and, in addition to the standard topics in algebra, trigonometry, probability, and statistics, it incorporates several computational components. The students also learn how to use specialized software (Mathematica and Excel) in order to apply these concepts to concrete, real-world math problems.

Assessment of student learning at the unit level

On form E1 part A, we enumerate how each academic unit defines its desired learning outcomes, how they determine whether students are achieving these outcomes, and some of the changes that have been made as a result of these determinations. Because Williams has small class sizes (half of the class sections last fall had 12 or fewer students) and relatively low teaching loads, many of these determinations, while rigorous, are qualitative rather than quantitative. However, the majority of Williams majors do include some form of intensive, mandatory capstone experience that builds on knowledge and skills developed in earlier courses. Critical observation of the work produced by seniors in these capstone courses is often a fruitful way for departments and programs to determine whether students are achieving the desired learning outcomes. A few examples—one from each division—of how particular units are directly assessing student learning provides a sense of the many and varied forms assessment takes at Williams.

One of the Mathematics and Statistics Department’s learning goals is that majors be able to effectively explain technical ideas to technical and nontechnical audiences. Toward this end, the major includes a noncredit colloquium requirement. In this colloquium, majors give a 30- to 40-minute talk to faculty and students about a topic in mathematics or statistics that they haven’t encountered in their coursework. After observing the talk, faculty members meet to evaluate each of these presentations. Presenters are later notified about whether or not their talk passed and receive constructive feedback on the quality of their presentations. While many students are nervous about the requirement, senior exit interviews consistently demonstrate that students find it to be a rewarding experience.

Studio Art majors are required to take a capstone senior tutorial. In Winter Study during senior year, they develop a project and a plan of action for the spring semester, which they present to a panel of Art faculty. Students incorporate the critical feedback they receive, then produce a body of creative work that draws on all of the work they have done to that point, but brings it to a new level of depth, finish, and expansiveness—both conceptually and in terms of craft. Majors then display this work publicly as part of a year-end senior exhibition at college’s museum. This is an extraordinary opportunity for Studio Art majors to explore what is involved in a career as an exhibiting artist. Majors must then present their work to the entire Studio Art faculty in individual public critiques. Thus, they develop the important skill of talking about their art.

Political economy, which is Williams’ oldest interdisciplinary major, draws from political science, economics, and public policy. To help fulfill the program’s learning objectives, political economy majors must complete a two-semester senior capstone requirement. In the second semester of this course, majors work in small groups to formulate a policy question, extensively research the issue, and travel to Washington, D.C. during spring break to conduct relevant interviews. Students then write a major report and present and defend their findings and recommendations in a public talk. These presentations provide an excellent opportunity
to assess the extent to which majors have mastered the full array of learning objectives. The Political Economy Program has made extensive changes to its curriculum, major requirements, and prerequisites in an effort to better prepare students for these projects.

**Student thriving/course progressions**

At the time of our 2012 interim report to NEASC, our Diversity Action Research Team (DART) had just been established and begun tracking our student thriving metrics. (DART’s membership is a mix of faculty and staff, including our vice president for institutional diversity and equity, dean of the college, and dean of admission and financial aid). We selected a set of measures that we believe are key indicators of academic performance or represent important aspects of a Williams education. We track aggregate groups by race/ethnicity, gender, first-generation status, parent income quintile, and participation in our pre-first-year summer programs. Many of the group disparities observed in these metrics have helped to guide DART’s agenda in recent years and have prompted discussions and initiatives with academic departments and others on campus.

One of the imbalances observed in the thriving metrics is the disproportionate representation of particular groups in academic majors (see graph below). The STEM fields in particular tend to have fewer women and underrepresented students of color, though this isn’t universally the case.

![Graph showing Majors Where Women are Significantly Over- and Underrepresented (Classes of 2013-17)](image)

DART wanted to better understand what accounted for some of these differences and how they might be addressed. DART gathered data about representation and attrition across course sequences in STEM+ fields (see examples in workroom), and then met with most of these units individually to discuss the data and ask a series of questions about how the
units work to encourage diversity. DART also worked with the dean of the faculty’s office to add this set of diversity-related questions to the prompts units are given when undertaking self-studies. Discussions are currently underway about how to continue these conversations and how departments that are leaders in this area might share best practices with other departments.

**Understanding shifts in graduation rates**

One of the most basic outcomes we expect of Williams undergraduates is that they be able to complete the degree within six years. Our six-year graduation rate for the cohort of students entering in Fall 2010 was 94 percent. While very high compared to national averages and well in line with the graduation rates of our closest peers (which have averaged about 94 percent in recent years), this is the lowest Williams’ six-year graduation rate has been after 15 years in the 95 percent-96 percent range. While we had a sense of why students may be taking longer to graduate (or not graduating at all)—namely, changes in policies and practices intended to help support students along many dimensions—we wanted to develop data to analyze the different factors that may be contributing. With the understanding that slightly lower graduation rates weren’t necessarily a bad sign, we sought more quantifiable information on why students aren’t graduating in four years and whether this is affecting certain groups of students more than others.

Williams’ six-year graduation rate hovered between 95 percent and 96 percent for the cohorts beginning in Fall 1996 through Fall 2009. For the Fall 2010 and 2011 cohorts, this fell to 94 percent. Similarly, Williams’ four-year graduation rate, which varied between 89 percent and 92 percent for the Fall 1996 to Fall 2008 cohorts, has dropped to 86 percent–88 percent for more recent cohorts (the Fall 2012 cohort is an exception, having rebounded to 90 percent). Our sense was that this was primarily due to two factors. First, we have introduced and made increasing use of an option for students to take a reduced load of three courses per semester, where needed, for a wide variety of reasons (e.g., disabilities). Second, there has been an increase in leaves. Still, we didn’t have a good sense of the extent to which each of these were contributing factors. We also sought to learn more about how many students were enrolling for more than eight semesters, and whether this was disproportionately affecting any particular groups of students.

One might expect that with dipping graduation rates, students may be enrolled for more terms. This does not seem to be the case. Looking only at students who took more than four years to graduate, the average number of terms enrolled has only risen slightly over time, from 7.9 for the cohort beginning in Fall 2001 to 8.0 or 8.1 for all of the more recent cohorts. We should note, however, that some of the students in more recent cohorts may still graduate and bring these numbers up further. The vast majority of students (95 percent) who either don’t graduate at all or graduate late are not enrolled for more than eight terms.

Where we do see a difference is in the number of students who took at least one voluntary leave while at Williams (see graph below). Looking at the data back to Fall 1990, it is striking how closely the trend in students who took at least one voluntary leave parallels the total number of students not graduating within four years. Of course, it’s not surprising that taking a leave would lead to not graduating on time, but this graph makes it clear that voluntary leaves are the main issue—not reduced course loads, transfers, involuntary leaves, or dismissals.
This raises the question of whether this upswing was due to changes in characteristics or circumstances of the student body, whether there were changes in college practices around leaves, or both.

Setting aside these questions for a moment, we wanted to look more closely at voluntary leaves, which have seen the largest increase, and determine whether particular groups of students took voluntary leaves more often than others. Looking at bivariate correlations, there are many patterns that emerge—for example, women are less likely to take voluntary leaves, and students on financial aid are more likely to take leaves—but we wanted to create a multivariate model to try to isolate which variables are truly predictive. We developed a regression model based on characteristics such as race and ethnicity, gender, first-generation college student status, level of financial aid, athletic participation, admission reader rating, and GPA. The regression model’s predictive power was weak, but it turns out that by far the biggest predictor of whether or not a student takes a voluntary leave is their cumulative GPA. Obviously, it is unclear whether the lower GPA leads to taking a voluntary leave or whether there is some other reason that a student takes a leave, which also causes the GPA to be lower.

**Tracking alumni outcomes**

While Institutional Research conducts alumni surveys every four years and our Office of College Relations maintains its own records on alumni degrees and employment, we have not done a very good job of tracking alumni outcomes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The highly time-intensive methods for tracking alumni that many of our peers have adopted—yearly alumni surveys, coupled with data from the National Student Clearinghouse and data gathered by hand from LinkedIn—are ones that we’ve consciously not adopted for a few reasons. First, we had a one-person Institutional Research office until only a few years ago. Second, it was unclear to us that our outcomes measures would show much variation from year to year. Finally, there was little internal demand for such data, other than from our Admission and Communications offices for marketing purposes.
While we have been behind the curve in terms of tracking alumni, we have recently started to catch up. In 2014, after we hired a second person in Institutional Research, we conducted a First Destinations survey of recent graduates to find out what they were doing roughly six months after graduation (see Standard 8 data forms for some of the results). We did another such survey in 2016, and now plan to do it annually as we refine the instrument to comply with NACE standards and collect the information we most need while keeping the survey as short as possible.

Self-reported student learning
While we acknowledge the limitations of self-reported gains in student learning, it is still interesting to look at how seniors and alumni view what they learned at Williams and how well it prepared them for their futures. In addition to the alumni surveys we conduct every four years, we conduct senior surveys every two years. Results from our most recent senior and alumni surveys are available in the workroom.

The following graph shows that many of the skills we value most highly, as expressed in our mission statement, are those in which graduates and alumni report the most gain: critical thinking, clear and effective writing, and the ability to learn independently. The skills where graduates and alumni report the smallest gains and/or preparation are unsurprising given Williams’ rather open curriculum and lack of foreign language requirement: critical appreciation of the arts, understanding the process of science and experimentation, using quantitative tools, and reading or speaking a foreign language. Students also report relatively low gains in career-related knowledge or skills, but since one of Williams’ primary aims is to enable students to go off into the world as intellectually curious, independent learners, this is not of particular concern.

Summary
Williams employs many different methods of direct and indirect assessment of student learning, outcomes, experience, and satisfaction. Our robust system of faculty governance ensures that we have a good feedback loop to inform decision-makers about the most pressing educational issues. We employ a mixture of direct measurement of classroom performance, anecdotes, survey data, and peer comparisons to determine where to focus our analyses. Our COFHE membership also gives us extensive access to a wide array of peer data not typically available to most colleges, and that has been very helpful in identifying some of our strengths and weaknesses. Through our consortial relationships, we conduct six periodic surveys of current students, alumni, and parents. We benefit not only from the data available from these groups, but also from the connections they facilitate and the opportunities they offer for sharing information and best practices.

Although we have many structures in place to assess and continuously improve our educational program, a lot of our effort has shifted to trying to understand and support a more diverse student body, both inside and outside the classroom. As we succeed in attracting a student body that’s more diverse along many dimensions, we need to be increasingly introspective about whether we have the appropriate institutional structures in place to support all students, and we need to critically examine institutional practices that might perpetuate inequities. Fortunately, we have fairly good data available to help us monitor many of these issues.
2014 & 2016 Senior Survey Self-Reported Gains
To what extent has your experience at Williams College contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

2017 Alumni Survey Self-Reported Preparedness (10-12 years out)
Based on what you know now, how well do you think your undergraduate experience at Williams prepared you to...
Projection

- The Diversity Action Research Team will continue to work with academic departments to disseminate data about attrition in STEM fields and discuss ways in which we can share information with all units about best practices in supporting all students.

- We will continue to track data on student leaves and to monitor how changes in policies affect time to degree and any financial impacts they might have on students.

- To better track alumni outcomes, in the next five years, we plan to:
  - Standardize our First Destinations survey and administer it annually.
  - Consider whether to administer our senior survey annually rather than biennially.
  - Create synergies between the Institutional Research, Career Center, and Advancement Information Systems staff to better share data about alumni careers and education post-Williams.
  - Explore partnerships with vendors and other institutions.
  - Ultimately, our goal is to be able to report accurate statistics on how many of our graduates go on to further schooling and what other types of activities they pursue shortly after graduating.

- Institutional Research will continue to work on creating and disseminating a report for academic departments, showing demographic trends, changes in enrollments and majors over time, faculty FTE trends, and student satisfaction data.

- We will continue to work to increase student satisfaction with academic advising.

- We will continue to conduct decennial reviews of every academic unit, with the goal of reviewing every unit before our next comprehensive evaluation in 2027.

- The Committee on Educational Affairs will bring the Spring 2017 Faculty Writing Group’s report to the full faculty for discussion, and from there, we will take steps to improve student writing and writing pedagogy.

- We will continue to participate actively in national meetings related to student assessment, looking to learn from other institutions about best practices in the area of direct assessment of student learning.
Standard Nine:  
**Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure**

Williams treats our commitments to integrity and transparency as deeply entwined. This is exemplified in two particular aspects of our practice:

First, we conduct our governance and decision-making processes openly. This means communicating not only the outcomes of deliberations, but also (when possible and appropriate) information about the data and reasoning that informed our decisions. Like many schools, we are paying increasing attention to the questions of when and how to publish institutional data and analyses, and when it is appropriate to be candid about prospective strengths and challenges.

Second, as explained in Standard 3, we also strive to make college governance and administration inclusive, where this can be done without eroding privacy or legal privilege, or negatively affecting our responsibilities to our mission. Students and staff, as well as faculty, play important roles in governance.

Such practices are rooted in the idea that, for better or worse, our society increasingly seems to define integrity *in terms of* transparency: that is, most people no longer accept an institution's word that we act with integrity, but instead want to see the inner workings in order to judge for themselves.

**Description**

To quote the ecologist Aldo Leopold, “Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one else is watching—even when doing the wrong thing is legal.” At Williams, we define institutional integrity as consistent adherence to the college’s mission and core principles in both public and private settings. We ensure this integrity through a mutually reinforcing structure of formal policies and cultural practices, which depend on information sharing and effective “small c” communications (as distinct from Communications in the marketing sense).

Williams is formally authorized to operate in Massachusetts pursuant to the Statutory Charter of 1793. Additionally, the College Laws provide direction to the Board of Trustees and president. We comply with state requirements by annually filing reports and a Certificate of Change of Directors or Officers of Non-Profit Corporations with the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The college also operates two academic programs outside Williamstown (see Standard 4 for more details):

- The Williams-Mystic Program operates in Connecticut through a partnership with Mystic Seaport. Williams complies with Connecticut regulatory requirements by registering with the Connecticut secretary of state, the Connecticut Department of Revenue, and the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection.

- The Williams-Exeter Programme is a study-abroad, academic credit-granting program at the University of Oxford’s Exeter College. It is operated through a U.K. subsidiary nonprofit corporation, the Williams College Oxford Programme, registered under the U.K. Companies Act as a company limited by guarantee. The program is also regis-
tered with the U.K. Charitable Commission. Williams also operates a second, subsidiary company, the Williams College (U.K.) Foundation Limited, to facilitate fundraising in the U.K. That entity is also formed and registered under the Companies Act and registered with the Charities Commission.

In the domain of campus policy, Williams’ code of conduct, developed since our 2007 self-study, is a comprehensive expression of our expectations regarding ethical behavior, conflict of interest, transparency, and institutional loyalty (workroom). Williams also subscribes to and supports all privacy rights, including FERPA, HIPAA, and Title IX, and maintains rigorous privacy standards in Information Technology, Human Resources, and elsewhere across the operation.

Our student honor code, code of conduct, and student handbook are regularly reviewed by a variety of governance committees and constituent groups, including the Honor and Discipline Committee, the dean of the college, the dean of the faculty, the vice president for institutional diversity and equity, the Faculty Steering Committee, the Human Resources Office, and the Staff Council. We frequently update the code to keep pace with evolving expectations, such as changes in regulations guiding sexual misconduct prevention and response.

Reaching beyond specific policies, Williams aims to sustain an overall culture of truthfulness, clarity, and fairness. This expectation is communicated from the very top of the organization. The president’s website includes President Falk’s major campus communications and writings on relevant topics, such as inclusivity, transparency, and community standards of respect. The site is further discussed in the section below on transparency.

As noted in Standards 3 and 7, Williams also has staff and faculty handbooks that explain the college’s governance, professional conduct standards, programs, and benefits. The handbooks include policies on computer network use, copyright, research involving human and animal subjects, and safety. The code and handbooks also set out processes for identifying problems and taking appropriate action when our standards are not met. These materials are updated regularly by committees that include significant representation from the relevant constituencies.

Williams’ Board of Trustees and administration are subject to additional provisions laid out in our governing documents. The “College Governance” section of the president’s website includes full copies of the college’s charter and the College Laws, a copy of our current conflict of interest form, and all materials from our most recent (2007 comprehensive, 2012 interim) accreditation processes. The site also includes a section on the Board of Trustees where readers can learn about its work.

An inventory of all revisions to the College Laws since 1998 is provided in the workroom.

Our formal administrative structure, described in Standard 3, is augmented by numerous working and advisory groups, including the President’s Advisory Group, the Communications Advisory Group, and others, which give stakeholders ways to learn about college operations, understand major decisions and strategies, and share their views.

The ability to share those views is closely related to the issue of intellectual freedom. That freedom is defined broadly at Williams to include the unfettered exchange of diverse points of view, the dissemination of original scholarship, and respect for faculty, students, staff, alumni, and others who wish to share their opinions on how the college is governed. This “basket of rights” must sometimes be actively managed. For example, while input is typically welcomed, few administrative decisions are submitted to a referendum. And some-
times free speech interests brush up against competing prerogatives of campus security—the notion that “my freedom to swing my fist stops where the other fellow's nose starts.” The appraisal section below includes discussion of how Williams is responding to this latter question, which is lately occupying a significant share of public attention. That said, in approaching the question, Williams starts from a presumption of absolute intellectual and academic freedom as one of our foundational values.

At the heart of our work is the effort to educate students and expose them to a full range of viewpoints on important issues. Every year, Williams welcomes prominent policy-makers, scholars, and public figures to campus at the invitation of departments and programs, student organizations, and individual faculty, students, and staff. Such efforts are further discussed below.

In some instances, intellectual freedom also intersects with questions about intellectual property. As we mentioned in Standard 7, since our last self-study, we have developed a more detailed IP policy embodying these principles; it is included in the faculty handbook. Similar concerns also fuel our efforts to hire outstanding scholars, artists, and teachers from the broadest, most inclusive pools, and to support their growth through diverse programs and faculty development initiatives.

Williams has had an explicit nondiscrimination policy in place since 1972. The most current version is included in our course catalog, in college handbooks for students, staff, and faculty, in multiple places on the college’s website, and in our Guidelines for Contractors (workroom). We apply our policies and practices to all college-sponsored activities. As at most schools, we maintain separate policies that apply to outside operations renting college facilities.

In 2006, in part to respond to community concerns as well as the practical difficulties of recruiting and supporting a diverse faculty and staff in rural Massachusetts, the college created the Office of Vice President for Institutional Diversity and Equity. In addition to providing extensive student, faculty, and staff support, the office develops and implements practices for recruiting a diverse faculty and staff. Representatives from this office participate on many faculty and staff search committees.

Detailed grievance procedures are available to any member of the college community who believes that he or she has been discriminated against. These protocols are described in the student, faculty, and staff handbooks, and are supported by a detailed online guide for individuals wishing to file a complaint. The guide describes two clearly defined procedures: the General Grievance Procedure for Complaints of Unfair Employment Practices and the separate Discrimination Grievance Procedure for Sexual Harassment and Discrimination. The college anticipates that a revised nondiscrimination policy, along with modified procedures for investigating and resolving complaints of discrimination, will be adopted in Fall 2017.

Designated members of the community are appointed to serve as college discrimination and sexual harassment advisers. They include health care staff and counselors, assistant and associate deans, human resources officers, chaplains, and staff in the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity, including the vice president, who also serves as our affirmative action officer. A number of them have extensive backgrounds in discrimination or sexual harassment counseling.

Williams, like almost every school in the country, is working to uphold these commitments in the midst of great uncertainty in federal enforcement. As described in the Code of Conduct section above, in February 2017, President Falk sent a message to the campus community affirming that, whatever the regulatory environment, the college will keep working assiduously to prevent and respond to sexual violence on campus. For example, in April 2017,
Dean of the College Marlene Sandstrom continued our annual practice of reporting to the campus about the outcomes of sexual misconduct processes from the prior academic year. This information is also now being shared with alumni and parents via social media and EphNotes, our monthly college e-newsletter.

Such careful (and often public) assessments of our effectiveness are necessary to ensure that the college operates with integrity. Williams conducts numerous such analyses on everything from college finances to staff morale to the academic program. To take one small example, the most recent edition of our staff climate survey (2017) showed a significant increase in the percentage of staff who reported that they understood what was expected of them in their roles—a sign that recent enhancements to the performance review process are now taking root.

Assessment is a form of introspection, but public trust relies on our ability to communicate the results of these analyses. As described above and in Standard 3, institutional transparency is central to Williams’ definition of integrity. We continually search for new ways to share information with our community and to educate them about the administration of the college. The college’s website is the foundation for this effort, with print publications and social media all pointing back to the website as the repository of news and information about Williams.

This work must also be accessible to its broadest audience. The college’s chief communications officer, who oversees work on our website, has recently made web accessibility a high priority. An initial site audit yielded good scores overall. But it showed that some elements of campus communications—notably, the Daily Message emails—are not fully accessible to users who rely on screen readers or other assistive technologies. That problem is now being addressed—a change that will improve the messages’ utility for all readers.

Recent efforts to share more information with more audiences—for example, by sharing in Spring 2017 a detailed analysis of trends in staff vs. faculty FTE growth from 2003 to 2016—have been welcomed both for their content and as a sign of increased trust by our constituents. This response prompted the Provost’s and Communications offices to explore the idea of a series of educational videos that would teach the campus and alumni about how Williams works. We hope to pilot this program in 2018.

The Williams website itself contains comprehensive information on educational programs, quality, and offerings; cost and affordability; student life and athletics; institutional history and characteristics; and many other topics. It is designed to be useful to prospective students and families looking to make a college choice, and also to faculty and staff candidates who are evaluating Williams as a potential place of employment. It includes an easy-to-use A-Z index and a search engine that is extensively “seeded,” or optimized, to deliver relevant results. The website includes data on student life; HR and benefits programs; college finances and budget, including Form 990 and audited financial statements; data on retention and outcomes; and accreditation, among many other topics.

Our admission and financial aid websites are among the most frequently visited. They provide detailed information about affordability, the comprehensive fee and net price, and available aid. Our financial aid website also lists both the percentage of students who borrow and average debt on graduation—indices on which Williams is a national leader. A new round of improvements to the financial aid website is now underway.

On the national stage, the college and President Falk have been deeply involved in efforts to promote college affordability. Williams is a founding member of COFHE and the American Talent Initiative, an effort by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Aspen Institute, and ITHAKA S+R to recruit students from underrepresented groups to the nation’s best col-
leges and universities. President Falk has also written prominently on the topic, including a well-received piece in the Washington Post proposing that colleges let go of their rhetorical attachment to "need blindness" in favor of declaring themselves to be explicitly "need seeking" (workroom).

In another key area of the website, Williams recently completed a comprehensive make-over of its online course catalog. An archive of earlier catalogs is also included. The catalog lists all classes offered and those available during a given year, and connects to a page on the dean of faculty’s site that shows lists of faculty scheduled for leaves in the next three years.

Overall, the website anchors a complex collection of print materials about the college. In partnership with departments and staff from across the campus, the Office of Communications coordinates external communications, ensuring their quality, consistency, and accuracy. This includes admission marketing and financial aid information, development and alumni communications, press releases and public relations work, college social media accounts, executive messaging, emergency preparedness and crisis communications, and sports information, as well as our policies and processes for admission, financial aid, misconduct, and retention and graduation rates.

The goal of this work is not only to provide a consistent sense of Williams that is true to the college’s mission and spirit, but also to make that message appealing, informative, and accessible to audiences with varied interests and knowledge of higher education. A selection of our most prominent publications related to admission and financial aid, alumni, and development is provided in the workroom.

Appraisal

Williams works hard to live faithfully by our principles of institutional integrity and to project that integrity in our public conduct and communications. Yet that work is inherently imperfect and ongoing. Like every school in the country, we are working to keep pace with rapid shifts in public attitudes toward higher education, and expectations about institutional disclosure and transparency. Intense political, media, and public attention to higher education—on campus discourse, affordability, outcomes, sexual assault, and other issues—has produced demands for more insight into institutional decision-making. Similar expectations are also shaping relations with alumni, who increasingly expect a voice in governance, and with parents and families, who are thoroughly analyzing institutional costs, outcomes, and culture before choosing a school. Many of the efforts described earlier in this standard reflect our understanding of these expectations.

This is rapidly becoming the new normal on campus, and we will need to work hard and carefully to position the college in the higher-education marketplace. Here are several examples of how we are working through such challenges.

Campus discourse: In 2015-16, the college weathered negative publicity resulting from the cancelations of appearances by two speakers, one (an outspoken antifeminist) canceled by the student organizers, and the other (an avowed white supremacist) by the college. Following that experience, we have reflected on the challenges posed by potential hate speech on the campus, in the context of a deep commitment to productive, substantive debate on controversial issues. Since then, as we had before, Williams has hosted appearances by speakers of all stripes, including a Williams Forum debate on campaign finance reform between Ilya Shapiro of the Cato Institute and Daniel Weiner of the Brennan Center for Justice, a lecture by conservative scholar Charles Murray, and an analysis of the 2016 presidential election, co-led by former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm and former U.S. Senator Scott
Brown. All of these events were well attended, with challenging but respectful engagement by students. We also put protocols in place by which we guarantee registered student groups the chance to bring speakers of their choice, as long as they accept responsibility for the work of planning these events and agree to disclose any outside funding.

In the current political environment, we expect ongoing challenges in navigating these issues, and our goal will be to encourage the campus to engage in ways that embody our highest values. We will also work to depict such commitments more fully in our communications with alumni, prospective students and families, and the media, as we did with President Falk’s Summer 2017 *Williams Magazine* column, “Space for Disagreement” (workroom).

*Conflicts of interest:* With the growing interconnectedness of the world economy and the broadening financial involvements of trustees and officers of the college, we project a need to review with increased frequency our policies and practices regarding real and perceived conflicts of interest. These efforts start from a solid foundation: Every year, administrative staff whose positions, responsibilities, or relationships could give rise to conflicts of interest are required to review our conflict of interest policy and file a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form with the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration. Designated members of the faculty whose job responsibilities or relationships create potential conflicts of interest are asked to submit a comparable disclosure form to the dean of the faculty. As noted above, all trustees are required to submit disclosures to the board’s Executive, Audit, and Governance Committees.

*Title IX:* As noted above and in Standard 5, Williams is continually investing in efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault. National attention to the rights of the accused, along with signals from Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos about a possible change in direction for the Office of Civil Rights, have introduced new uncertainty into the regulatory environment. Recognizing this fact, President Falk sent out a campus message in February 2017 (also shared with alumni) that affirmed the college’s principled commitment to this work based on concern for the well-being of our community, even if the law no longer compels it (workroom). Williams recently received several grants from the U.S. Department of Justice to explore research-based methods for sexual assault prevention, as just one aspect of what will have to be a holistic approach to education, prevention, and response.

*Internal communications:* Given our increasingly dense, complex, and fast-moving information environment, globally and on campus, we foresee a need to attend even more systematically to the transparency and inclusiveness of our campus communications. Our Communications Advisory Group is considering a campus communications audit to understand the range of ways in which people receive (or want to receive) information about the college, and would develop recommendations from the results. We are also renovating our Daily Message email system, exploring options for improving the campus events calendar, and looking at options for systematically publishing detailed data and information about college operations.

*Outcomes:* In Fall 2016, our new director of Career Services launched our first-ever First Destinations survey. While we lagged many of our peers in fielding such a study (see Standard 8), we achieved a remarkable 70 percent return on the first round, complemented by a 91 percent return on our COFHE Senior Survey. The Career Center is now partnering with the Communications and Admission offices on strategies for better informing prospective students and their families about the outcomes they can expect from a Williams education—information we can also make available to alumni, policymakers, and the general public.
Projection

Looking forward to the next decade, we project the following:

- The college will continue to develop processes and communications that reinforce our dual commitments to free speech and inclusion.

- We will continue to review and update our processes for monitoring and limiting conflicts of interest.

- As the college evolves, the relationship between central administration and campus units will too, and so will people’s communications expectations and habits. The college will want to find new ways to enhance internal awareness and engagement, possibly including electronic “push” communications, “pull” methods such as the campus calendar, and regular review of in-person faculty and staff forums.

- We will want to focus attention on the accessibility of our website and digital learning platforms, and we hope to develop a section of the website where we can gather information for our community about accessibility and disability-related resources, policies, and accommodations.

- With President Falk stepping down at the end of 2017, Williams has launched a presidential search that keeps our community well informed about the process and timeline, and offers all of the college’s constituencies the opportunity to provide input.