REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM

ACCREDITATION REVIEW

To Saint Mary’s College of California

September 9-12, 2014

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The team evaluated the institution under the 2008 WSCUC Senior College and University Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission.

The formal action concerning the institution’s status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.
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SECTION I: OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History

Background information

Saint Mary’s College of California was founded in 1863 by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese as a diocesan college for boys; in 1868 the De La Salle Christian Brothers assumed direction of the school, and the first SMC bachelors’ degrees were awarded in 1872. The College has been located in Moraga since 1928.

The world’s largest Roman Catholic order dedicated to teaching, today’s “Lasallian” network includes sixty-five colleges and universities worldwide, six in the United States. The Lasallian community strives to understand and live by the five core principles: faith in the presence of God, concern for the poor and social justice, quality education, inclusive community, and respect for all persons.

The mission of Saint Mary’s College of California is “to probe deeply the mystery of existence by cultivating the ways of knowing and the arts of thinking;” “to affirm and foster the Christian understanding of the human person which animates the educational mission of the Catholic Church;” and “to create a student-centered educational community whose members support one another with mutual understanding and respect.” The College promotes the dialogue of faith and reason, building community among its members through the celebration of the Church’s sacramental life, defending the goodness, dignity and freedom of each person and fostering
sensitivity to social and ethical concerns. A distinctive mark of a Lasallian school is its awareness of the consequences of economic and social injustice and its commitment to the poor.

Today Saint Mary’s College (SMC) offers approximately 4,200 students a unique educational experience embedded in 38 undergraduate majors and 18 graduate programs in a range of subject areas across four schools: the Kalmanovitz School of Education, the School of Economics and Business Administration, the School of Liberal Arts, and the School of Science.

In addition to distinctive majors, the College offers a developmental and integrated undergraduate core curriculum. The core curriculum requires coursework in each of three areas: Habits of Mind; Pathways to Knowledge; and Engaging the World. Two hallmarks of the core curriculum are the Collegiate Seminar, consisting of a series of courses taken over 4 years that examine major works of western civilization—literature, philosophy, history, political theory, art and science through shared inquiry—and the January Term, a month-long session in which every undergraduate each year explores a single topic in great depth and at an accelerated pace, featuring learning opportunities on and off campus.

The College enrolls a high percentage of Pell eligible students and is known for its High Potential Program, which supports first generation students in their transition to Saint Mary’s, as well as for its high percentage of students who study abroad (55 percent).

**Recent accreditation history**
SMC was first accredited by WASC in February 1949. The College was most recently reaffirmed in its accredited status in 2004. At that time, the WASC Commission requested two Special Visits.

- The first Special Visit occurred in fall 2005 and involved a review of the doctorate in Educational Leadership in regards to capacity, enrollment, vision and educational effectiveness; in February 2006 the Commission acted to permit the College to continue to recruit for the EdD program.

- The second Special Visit occurred in fall 2007 and addressed four areas: 1) library resources; 2) adult and graduate education; 3) the EdD program; and 4) diversity and civility. Following the Special Visit of 2007, the Commission issued a formal Notice of Concern and requested another Special Visit for fall 2009 in order to determine progress in addressing these four areas. Following the Special Visit in fall 2009, the Commission acted in February 2010 to remove the Notice of Concern and noted “evidence of sustained engagement and observable progress in each of the four areas.”

Over this same 2004-2012 time period, SMC has submitted three Substantive Change proposals and received approval to offer (1) a Bachelor of Arts in Performing Arts: Liberal Education for Arts Professionals (LEAP) program for dancers in New York City (March 2007), modeled after a similar program in Los Angeles approved in 2003; (2) an EMBA program (April/May 2008), and (3) a Bachelor of Arts in Performing Arts: LEAP Program in Las Vegas.

*Description of Team’s Process*
St. Mary’s College is in the Pilot 2 Cohort exploring a 2-step, one-visit process for Reaccreditation. It underwent an Offsite Review (OSR) on December 2, 2013; the Accreditation Visit (AV) was carried out over September 9-12, 2014.

1. Off-site review (OSR): December 2013

In preparation for the OSR, the Visiting Team reviewed SMC’s Institutional Report dated September 23, 2013, the College’s Academic Catalog, and other documents provided by the College. In addition, the Team examined WASC documents outlining the Institutional Accreditation History, the Report of the WASC Special Visit Team dated October 28-30, 2009, and the Action Letters of March 1, 2005 and March 3, 2010. The Team of 5 members met in Alameda for the Offsite Review on December 2, 2013. The Team developed preliminary lines of inquiry during a Team conference call held on November 5, 2013 and even further during the morning of December 2 prior to the Virtual Conference with the Institution.

Based on its OSR findings, the Team recommended that the process proceed with the scheduled Accreditation Visit for September 9-12, 2014.

The OSR gave rise to several lines of inquiry that the WASC Visiting Team wished to pursue in terms of progress from the time the Institutional Report was written; the seven broad areas for further inquiry include developments in:

- Assessment of student learning
In addition, the Team requested 3 additional pieces of information to better inform the upcoming visit:

- The process and timeline for developing the new Strategic Plan;
- Minutes of the Academic Senate that describe the senate’s role in responding to credit hour regulations (CFR 2.4); and
- An updated schedule of academic and learning support programs to be reviewed, along with samples of two academic program reviews that have been carried out within the past 3 years.


To prepare for the AV, the Visiting Team once more reviewed SMC’s self-study, its OSR Team findings, and the three additional pieces of information provided by SMC. The Team discussed the AV schedule, assignments, and lines of inquiry to be further pursued during its conference call on August 6, 2014.
Off-campus locations

Saint Mary’s College offers a BA in Performing Arts to professional dancers in four cities, three of which qualify as off-campus locations: San Francisco (within 25 miles of the main campus in Moraga), Los Angeles, New York City, and Las Vegas. Referred to as LEAP (Liberal Education for Arts Professionals) Programs, one team member visited the Los Angeles program and another visited New York City to view facilities, talk to faculty and students, and observe a class. In addition to the LEAP Program, SMC offers an EMBA in Santa Clara and San Ramon.

B. Institution’s Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor

The Team found the Institutional Report to be well organized and clearly written. The strength of the mission is evident in the institutional history and a strong relationship between mission, curriculum, and institutional strategies is conveyed. The Report portrays the institution as one with the leadership, planning, staffing, and vision being developed or in place necessary for a strong and sustainable future for the college.

SMC began preparing its Institutional Report in June 2012, as the former President was ending his tenure and the search for a new President was in progress. The College’s Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) formed the WASC Reaccreditation Committee in June 2012 which included the provost, accreditation liaison officer, senior administrators, staff, and faculty representatives. The Reaccreditation Committee was primarily responsible for drafting the report and organizing college community input. The college community was involved in several ways throughout the 2012-2013 academic year:
Community conversations. There were 12 such conversations throughout the year that focused on historical WASC issues and each of the essay prompts for the Report. Although there is no information about just who participated, there were about 250 members of the community attending at one time or the other.

Presentations of the ALO. There were 20 such presentations focusing on the WASC process and drafts of the Institutional Report given to groups of trustees, alumni, staff, faculty, deans, graduate program directors, etc.

Discussions and reviews of drafts of essays. These discussion and reviews were carried out in several key standing committees of faculty as well as institutional committees, among them the Campus Committee on Inclusive Excellence, the Student Success Task Force, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, the Core Curriculum Committee and the graduate and undergraduate Educational Policies Committees. These committees also drafted institutional learning outcomes which were reviewed and approved by the Academic Senate during the 2013-2014 academic year.

The Institutional Report has provided a foundation for the strategic planning process guided by the new President.

C. Response to Issues Raised in Previous Commission Actions and Reviews

In its action letter dated March 3, 2010, the Commission “acknowledged both the progress the
college has made, and highlighted the need for continuing attention” to each of four areas first identified by the Commission in its letter of February 27, 2008 which also communicated the Commission’s action to impose a formal Notice of Concern. The four areas are: the Library, Adult and Graduate Education, the Education Doctoral (EdD) Program, and Diversity; the action letter dated March 3, 2010 directed the College to place “a particular emphasis on developing the EdD program within a vibrant graduate culture” and on “continuing efforts in the areas of diversity and civility.” The issues below are presented in order they were listed in the WASC action letter.

**Library.** The Commission urged the institution to continue its development efforts toward the completion of a new library as a critical aspect of an academically vibrant institution. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7)

*Response:* Previous WASC reports about the Library focused on three areas: the centrality of the library to the campus, access to scholarly resources, and improvements to the library’s physical facilities. The 2009 team report acknowledged progress in the first two areas and expressed the need for tangible progress toward improving library facilities.

1. Centrality—library staff are now more integrally involved with the wider academic community and have helped to shape information literacy instruction at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Staff has assumed a significant role in defining and assessing the information literacy outcomes for the core curriculum.

2. Access—the Library has increased its holdings of print books and significantly increased the number of electronic books. They currently hold over 58,000 serial subscriptions and have
implemented electronic discovery services that have increased users’ ability to search and find text resources. By SMC’s own comparisons, the college is above average of its peers in the number of E-books and serial subscriptions held. During this same time period, the library has added staff and extended Library hours for pre-finals and finals week.

3. Facilities—Funding for a new Library and Learning Commons is still in progress. At the time of the Institutional Report, the College indicated that it had secured more than one-third of the project cost of $40 million and had identified several new principal donor prospects. Full funding was anticipated in time to meet the projected 2016 goal to start construction; at the time of the Accreditation Visit, a lead matching gift had been withdrawn for lack of matching funds and the start date of 2016 is not probable. The capital campaign has been reinvigorated under the new President, and at this time the institution seems to be on the right track to securing funding. In the meantime, in response to student and faculty concerns the college has added more student study space to the present Library and provided an additional 60 computers and on-site support of technological tools needed for learning and research.

**Adult and Graduate Education.** The Commission urged the institution to continue to place a priority on strengthening the role of adult and graduate education within the mission of the traditional liberal arts college and supporting the needs particular to non-traditional graduate students within the institution’s strategic planning process. (CFRs 2.2b, 3.11, 4.1, 4.2)

*Response:* The 2009 Visiting Team found that the college had made significant steps in this area; for example, a new vice provost had been specifically charged with providing greater support for graduate programs. The graduate advisory group had been reformed, graduate
housing and expanded library services provided, and a comprehensive Graduate and Professional Student Handbook developed.

Since the time of the 2009 Special Visit, the college has:

1. Created and filled the position of Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies (2011) charged to provide leadership, strategic planning (including budgeting) and policy development in order to achieve and maintain excellence in graduate and professional programs;
2. Founded the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, housing a Coordinator of Marketing and Recruitment and a Coordinator of Student Services (2012) to provide focused student support;
3. Created a Graduate and Professional Student Advisory Council; and
4. Established a Graduate and Professional Student Development Fund (2012) which provides individual grants to support and encourage independent academic research and professional development for students. CFR 3.11, 4.1, 4.2

SMC’s new strategic plan will set the vision of graduate and professional studies for the future; the Visiting Team believes that this plan promises to create a program development process that will provide a full integration of graduate education with unified institutional learning outcomes, shared support services and deep inclusion in the Saint Mary’s community. The President’s 2011 Statement of Institutional Direction calls for steady growth in graduate and professional programs and for a “curricular distinctiveness that includes community outreach and relevance to society” including the development of new graduate programs in social justice and environmental studies, 4+1 programs and a longer-term plan for online learning. CFR 4.1, 4.2
The Education Doctoral (EdD) Program. In its 2010 action letter, the WASC Commission expressed its expectation that the college will demonstrate a more complete graduate culture through policies and practices related to faculty research, advising, and clearly defined expectations for student theses and dissertation work in this review. (CFRs 2.2b, 2.6, 4.3, 4.8) The 2009 Special Visit Team found that the EdD had undergone significant revision to align coursework and research requirements with learning outcomes based on Lasallian principles; however, assessment activities needed to be more fully developed.

Response: Faculty members in the EdD program are expected to engage in scholarship that “enables them to contribute to new knowledge in their field, to develop greater expertise in their discipline, and to enrich their own teaching.” Reassigned time for scholarship has been built into faculty workload, and there are some funds to support scholarship/professional development and exceptional expenses that might be incurred as part of scholarly activity. Beginning in 2013, each faculty member develops an annual research plan and the faculty review each other’s progress at the end of the year.

In response to the need to develop more robust graduate level experiences and a comprehensive assessment of student learning, EdD faculty revised the curriculum in 2012 by integrating three research cycles into the doctoral coursework: collaborative inquiry, community-based research, and participatory action research. Faculty assessments are conducted at the end of years 1, 2, and 3—and end-of-research cycle assessments are conducted at the end of each of the research cycles. The dissertation is the culmination of the doctoral program. Students work directly with
their advisor until the dissertation is completed; the dissertation committee assesses the proposal and final dissertation using a rubric, and students defend their research through a Proposal Hearing and a Dissertation Defense.

**Diversity.** The Commission, by means of the 2010 action letter, urged SMC to continue its development toward a community of inclusion in transforming the learning environment as well as the academic success of under-prepared and under-represented students.

*Response:* The 2009 Special Visit Team reported on the creation of the College Committee on Inclusive Excellence (CCIE) which had begun to brainstorm on how to better meet the needs of the diverse students admitted and to provide a culture of respect, civility, and cultural competency in keeping with Lasallian core principles. CCIE adopted the 4-phase Organizational Developmental Model of Inclusion (ODMI) to establish the language for inclusion, indicators for success and to track data and progress towards inclusive excellence through program reviews.

In its Institutional Report, the college places itself as emerging in the third phase of the ODMI, *Prescribed Inclusion.* Progress on strengthening the inclusive culture at SMC has been achieved through CCIE-sponsored development programming throughout the College:

- Human Resources has provided training, consulting, and updating policies and procedures to support inclusiveness and diversity among staff.
- The Director of Learning and Organization Effectiveness (DLOE) has developed integration of inclusive excellence training for faculty and staff supervisors and employees and works with the Director of Recruitment, Special Projects and HR
Consultation to build diverse candidate pools.

- Student Life has implemented initiatives to institutionalize inclusive excellence among the student population: the Women’s Resource Center, the Delphine Intercultural Center, and Student Involvement and Leadership all calendar activities that demonstrate a commitment to developing a culture of inclusiveness.

- Some academic units, e.g., the School of Economics and Business Administration, have added inclusive excellence in its strategic plan and have set up ways to assess its success.

The impact of diversity initiatives on College life is measured by means of internally-developed surveys (Campus Climate and Mission Assessment surveys), nationally-administered surveys including: the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) 2012 national survey of faculty, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) first and senior-year surveys. Each of these instruments has shown evidence of changed attitudes toward diversity and inclusion:

- The HERI survey of faculty showed higher levels of job satisfaction than faculty at other private and Catholic institutions;

- The Campus Climate survey shows increasing numbers of staff, faculty and students saying that the College places “a great deal of emphasis” on developing an inclusive community; respondents also note a decrease in disparaging remarks made about demographic groups.

- The CIRP Senior Surveys showed that SMC seniors show higher self-reported skill improvement in categories such as understanding of national and global issues, knowledge of different peoples, ability to get along with people of different
During its visit, the Team found evidence that there are still residual pockets in the community where people do not feel respected because of their ethnicity, gender, and/or sexual identity. The Team urges the College to continue to deal with issues of inclusivity through deep dialogue with all constituents and a sensitivity to racial, cultural, gender, and sexual identity concerns.

**Major changes since the last WASC visit**

Saint Mary’s has seen several significant changes since the last comprehensive accreditation in 2004. The undergraduate population has grown by over 15%. The graduate and professional population has changed significantly: the College closed the School of Extended Education in 2005 and subsequently taught out the majority of the population of degree completion students by 2007; the number of graduate students has remained relatively constant, but programs in business and counseling have grown significantly. The ethnic distribution of students has also changed significantly, with decreases in white and African American students and growth in Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and mixed race students. Enrollment data from the fall of 2012 census indicated an undergraduate Hispanic/Latino population constituting 24.5 percent of the overall population, and the College is planning to seek designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) this year.

At the time of its last visit (the Special Visit in 2009), Brother Ronald Gallagher was President and held the post until June of 2012. He led the *Building on Strengths* Strategic Plan, which
provided a road map for College planning and development. Dr. Bethami Dobkin, currently the Provost, assumed the position in 2008 and has subsequently led the College through an academic planning process, the development of the College Committee on Inclusive Excellence, and many of the recent changes outlined in this report supporting diversity and inclusion, student success, the undergraduate core curriculum, and graduate and adult education.

On July 1, 2013, Saint Mary’s welcomed its first lay president, Dr. James A. Donahue, after a comprehensive international search. In January 2014, President Donahue began engaging the College in developing a Strategic Plan which will be its roadmap for the next 5 years (2015-2020). The inclusive planning process spanned January 2014 – June 2014 for gathering input, and July-October for the plan’s development. The Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees in October; it is to be finalized in time for initial implementation in January 2015.

SECTION II: EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

A. Essay 2.1) Defining the meaning of degrees and ensuring their integrity, quality and rigor

The meaning of a SMC degree is rooted in the institution’s Liberal Arts, Catholic and Lasallian traditions. The College mission is:

- To probe deeply the mystery of existence by cultivating the ways of knowing and the arts of thinking;
- To affirm and foster the Christian understanding of the human person which animates the educational mission of the Catholic church; and
• To create a student-centered educational community whose members support one another with mutual understanding and respect.

The core curriculum reflects the meaning of the undergraduate degree and is explicitly linked to the mission through an education that stresses the Liberal Arts. It is organized around three major areas: Habits of Mind, Pathways to Knowledge, and Engaging the World. This curriculum forms the basis for twelve learning goals and two signature programs. These two signature programs, the January term and the Collegiate Seminar, together make an undergraduate degree from Saint Mary’s distinct from many other four-year institutions. The Collegiate Seminar is a series of courses focused on shared inquiry. Students take a one semester Collegiate Seminar each year, built around reading, discussion, writing and reflection. The distinctive January Term (“Jan Term”) is an annual requirement designed to engage students in a one-month long intensive study of a single topic not related to their major or the core curriculum. The Team heard excitement from both students and faculty about these courses, which promote a liberal arts education and interdisciplinary exploration.

The Team commends SMC for

- relating the meaning of the degree to the institution’s Liberal Arts and Lasallian mission
- explicitly addressing meaning, quality, and integrity in the Self-Study
- the intentional design of its general education curriculum for learning goals
- the intentional progression of learning designed to align to a student population that largely starts as freshmen with BA-degree intent
The Team also notes the intentional focus on mission that permeates the culture, including sustained efforts coordinated and resourced through the Office of Mission to strengthen the meaning of a SMC education. These include monthly “Soup and Substance” gatherings for students, faculty and staff; an interfaith welcome mass; Mass of the Holy Spirit during which all offices close; living learning communities; Lasallian internships; and an annual array of summer retreats and professional development opportunities open to faculty/staff. Mission-based faculty development examples have included Lasallian Social Justice Institute trips to study gang violence in Chicago, immigration issues in Arizona, homelessness in San Francisco; Lasallian Leadership trips to Rome; the Buttimer Institute; a longitudinal project in Sri Lanka; and participation in the Boston College Catholic leadership program.

**Quality of the Degree.** Saint Mary’s enjoys a stable full-time faculty committed to teaching, advising, and institutional service. The tenure process supports institutional fit and commitment through a series of annual peer reviews and feedback. The Academic Senate’s Rank and Tenure Committee approaches these responsibilities thoughtfully.

The Team also noted institutional commitment to academic quality and the centrality of the academic life at SMC. This was evidenced by the organizational structure, with the Provost currently overseeing academics, enrollment, student life, technology and institutional research. It is also reflected in the new Strategic Plan’s call to “be nationally recognized for academic excellence achieved by students and faculty which is distinctively motivated by social justice, inclusive in practice, and transformative in results.” The Team heard this commitment in its meeting with the President, read it in his Inaugural address, and saw it evidenced through load release and faculty development in conjunction with curricular and mission initiatives.
Program Learning Goals are articulated for undergraduate and graduate degrees and include mission-based elements. For example, the Executive MBA program aims to “Think globally. Lead responsibly.” with a Learning Goal to become ethically aware and socially responsible managers. However, the team notes that significant work remains to be done to convert these broad goals into assessable evidence of learning and to formally operationalize these as part of program review and institutional effectiveness.

In the case of core curriculum, the team recognizes significant institutional commitment and faculty leadership in curricular design. Today, the implementation team consisting of ranked faculty, is resourced through load release and support from the recently created position of Director of Educational Effectiveness, but the question remains how assessment of this highly engineered cross-departmental curriculum will be administered and resourced. It appears to the team that the elegantly designed and inspiring curriculum is now in need of a practical and sustainable assessment plan (such as rubrics, assignments, plan for collection of artifacts, related faculty training and administrative support.) The team commends SMC faculty for their investment in curricular design and wishes to draw attention to the needed assessment of student learning. Focus on a few metrics and exit-level competencies may alleviate the need to “assess everything all the time”. This seems particularly important given the demands created by many concurrent reviews and planning exercises in motion in this institutional time of strategic alignment of efforts and resources. (See Recommendation 3 in Section II.B.)

**Integrity.** The institutional self-study refers to program review and assessment as processes to ensure the integrity of the degree. Program review is described as including external review and addressing mission, curriculum, faculty, advising, program infrastructure, enrollment, budget and services. Program review also includes dean and vice provost feedback. Programs and disciplines
have stated student learning outcomes (SLOs), and the college hired new assessment leadership in 2012 to coordinate collection and assessment of learning data. The Core Curriculum committee is charged with assessment of the core, with focus on different competencies in different years. This work has recently begun.

The team noted that assessment of student learning at SMC is still at the emerging stage, with SLOs defined but not consistently measured or analyzed. It appears that faculty are invited to participate in forums aimed at developing institutional capacity in the areas of assessment policy and practice.

While the team noted the elegantly developed design of institutional learning goals, this structure needs to be further evidenced in assessment plans, rubrics, learning data collection and evidence-based analysis.

**Recommendation 1. The Team recommends that SMC prioritize efforts to move assessment of programs and institutional learning outcomes to a higher stage of development.** “Closing the loop” on assessment and seeing practical results will come by collecting appropriate evidence, interpreting results, and implementing actions to improve learning.

In particular, the Recommendation 1 means that SMC will need to be more intentional in assessing its Institutional Outcomes through:

- differentiation of content knowledge from intended competencies/skills [CFR 2.2]
- a focus on exit level degree competencies [CFR 2.2]
- a distinction between BA-level and graduate-level competencies [CFR 2.2]
- assessment folded into faculty policies [CFR 2.4, 2.6]
- learning data within disciplines and within the core curriculum [CFR 4.4]
- diversity goals and evidence [CFR 1.5]

This needed curricular and assessment infrastructure will grow in importance as Saint Mary’s College pursues its strategic drive to diversify its programs and student body by becoming a 24/7 campus and providing students with several access points to programs.

B. Essay 2.2) Achieving core competencies

Essay 2, Achieving Undergraduate Core Competences, clarifies and extends the ways in which SMC students achieve core learning outcomes. The essay articulates how the faculty intensely reviewed its general education curriculum and designed a new core aimed at student achievement of explicit learning goals, and set structures and committees in place to determine policies and practices to support a new core curriculum.

The revised core curriculum was rolled out in the fall of 2012 after extensive meetings and discussions among faculty and institutional representatives. A number of meaningful learning outcomes anchor this new curriculum in three major categories: Habits of the Mind, Pathways to Knowledge, and Engaging the World. Examples of learning goals under the Habits of the Mind Category include: critical thinking and oral communication/shared inquiry, written and oral communication, and information evaluation and research practices. Once these learning goals were articulated, faculty committees were charged with developing benchmarks for each of the learning goals.
The faculty then mapped these learning outcomes to the signature general education courses that have been the hallmark of the SMC undergraduate degree: four collegiate seminars that use as content the "Great Books" and the January term. The Core Curriculum Committee also put in place a process by which other courses could be considered part of the core if they met the guidelines for designation as a core course. Faculty committees constantly noted that they kept the three legs of the SMC mission, Catholic, LaSallian, Liberal Arts, in mind while designing the new core thus providing evidence of connecting the curriculum to the college's mission. This process also provides the means by which SMC's curricular plan helps to prepare students for work, life, and citizenship. (CFR 2.2a)

A notable requirement in the new core is that all students must demonstrate "community engagement" in at least one course designated as offering this outcome. For instance, students in a marketing class can join other class students in studying the marketing needs of a local non-profit organization (e.g., a local food bank) and designing a program to meet these needs (CFR 2.5). The college is commended for supporting faculty development workshops to help faculty develop these community outreach projects, for subsidizing student transportation to community sites, and for putting in place a coordinating group (the Community Engagement Hub) that also includes community members.

This whole curricular change process, as reported by the faculty during the visit, was not without struggle. For instance, some faculty have felt that too much of the Catholic intellectual tradition was dropped from the seminars while others noted that the social and behavioral sciences have
greater opportunity to be designated core courses than other disciplines. Still others noted the heavier workloads required to implement these changes. Nonetheless, the team affirms that the faculty did come to consensus around a new curricular structure and policies and a set of clear learning outcomes that have been communicated well in course syllabi and college catalogs (CFR 2.2, 2.4). Some faculty noted that though the new core curriculum may not be as easy to communicate in shorthand as the old was, it does provides a meaningful language to use when advising students. One faculty member noted, for instance, that it is far more meaningful to let students know they are taking a seminar to develop their ability to think clearly and deeply and prepare effective arguments to support a thesis than to say you have met course distribution requirements.

The faculty also set forth a strategy for assessing student learning by first articulating benchmarks for each of the learning outcomes. For instance, the critical thinking learning outcome was broken into these benchmarks:

- identify and understand assumptions and theses that exist in the work of others;
- ask meaningful questions, originate plausible theses, and identify their own underlying assumptions;
- seek and identify confirming and opposing evidence relevant to original and existing theses; and
- evaluate and synthesize evidence for the purpose of drawing valid conclusions.
These benchmarks then serve as the basis for the development of rubrics to assess programs, majors, and courses. What the team noted as an important next step, however, is the need to have a more systematic and robust way to use these benchmarks in assessing programs and courses in ways that will lead to curricular improvements and better teaching. The team applauds the addition of a Director of Educational Effectiveness who has set forth a timeline in the document “Assessment and Assurance of Learning Process for CCC, 2014-15” which will be helpful in coming up with a more robust plan. This director has also provided helpful feedback to a number of programs that are developing assessment plans (Politics, Trans-Global Executive MBA, Counseling, Environmental and Earth Science) and also instituted a set of meetings (Assessment Forums) with departments who have begun assessment projects as a means for peers to assist peers.

**Recommendation 2. The Visiting Team recommends that SMC consider how to best administer and resource the assessment of the core curriculum.** The team feels that this inspiring curriculum is in need of a practical and sustainable plan for needed assessment of student learning.

Furthermore the essay notes that the faculty expect students to demonstrate learning outcomes "with increasing proficiency" but does not spell out how they will determine levels of proficiency. The team strongly encourages SMC to continue to explicate what it means by increasing proficiency and setting forth a more explicit developmental framework for its core courses that support increasing proficiency.
SMC is to be commended for adding a writing center to support the development of one major learning outcome and also having faculty and librarians partner to help both undergraduate and graduate students develop their information literacy competencies. As noted above, the Team also commends SMC for helping faculty develop assessment plans and for hiring a staff member to assist faculty in developing assessment capability. Faculty Assessment Grants to spur the development of meaningful program assessments have also been a very helpful addition. Nonetheless many of the majors or programs have not yet fully implemented their assessment plans. Ramping up the implementation of assessment plans, with a focus on “closing the loop” in each area, is at the heart of Recommendation 2.

C. Essay 2.3) Defining and promoting student success

SMC’s essay on Student Success describes a well-developed system of collecting and analyzing data regarding student success, and then acting upon that data to improve retention and graduation rates. The Visiting Team found that SMC has a robust system for improving undergraduate student retention and graduation rates, and that the system has proved to be effective. For example, from the fall of 2006 freshmen cohort to the fall 2012 cohort, the first year retention rate has improved from 78.1% to 89.4%. During the same time graduation rates have also improved, from 48.4% to 60.7%. At the time of the Accreditation Visit, the College’s system for collecting and analyzing data regarding graduate students’ success was not as developed.
Rooted in the Lasallian tradition of Catholic education, the institution places a high value on providing access to its educational services for those who need it most: first generation college students and members of underrepresented groups. SMC believes student success is integral to its mission, for without learning, and completion of the degree, the College has not fully satisfied its mission. This sense of purpose was widely known and embraced by all facets of the SMC community with whom the Team met. (CFR 1.1, 1.2, 3.4)

SMC defines what it means by student success, “…the persistence and timely completion at all degree levels for all student populations. Students leave Saint Mary’s with the disciplinary expertise for success in their chosen field and with the capacity for lifelong learning and professional flexibility.” Essay 3 articulates the learning elements that are identified in SMC institutional learning outcomes, which will lead students to learn and embrace the Lasallian tradition of helping the disadvantaged. (CFR 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4)

The institution states in Essay 3, that it rigorously measures student success through “graduation and persistence rates, time to degree, assessment of learning, employment, graduate school placements, and professional certifications.” The Visiting Team found that it carefully and thoroughly measures graduation and persistence rates for the traditional undergraduate through its Institutional Research (IR) function, and that the data analysis for graduate students is in an emerging status. The data that it collects for other elements of its definition (e.g., learning assessment, or post-graduation employment data) are less well refined. The Visiting Team suggests that these data be more fully captured and reported upon as student success data, given its own definition. The graduation and persistence data is carefully disaggregated to allow for
clear understanding of what groups are doing well, and which are below the institutional averages. The Visiting Team also found that this information was used in its planning and allocation of resources, especially for the undergraduate program. (CFR 3.4, 4.6)

The institution also relies on surveys such as those of CIRP and NESSE to inform its understanding of its student body. The information from these surveys is widely distributed, and the Team observed that the information was widely used by officers and committees when planning for future activities. (CFR 4.1, 4.2)

A number of years ago SMC believed that its first year retention rate could and should be raised significantly, and set a goal of 90%. Through careful planning and a host of interventions it has nearly achieved this goal. Changes were structural as well as operational; for example, the institution structurally changed to a Provost model in order to better integrate all curricular and co-curricular activities. The Vice Provosts of Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies were added to the academic administrative structure, and each of them was charged with improving student success. The Visiting team observed the close collaboration between the Vice Provost for Student Life, and her academic counterparts. In addition, the Student Success task force was created by the Provost in 2011 to further study, analyze, and integrate all student success intervention activities. This task force, now chaired by the Vice Provosts for Undergraduate Academics and Student Life, continues its work today; it serves as a clearing house for studying student retention and graduation rates, generates ideas on how to improve student success and formulates intervention practices that cut across departments and functions. In addition, an
Office of Student Success, with a director who is the primary executive agent for carrying out the priorities, was established.

The institution has made many changes in practice during the past 5 years to increase retention. It has improved student advising by requiring all new students to meet with a faculty advisor before registering for the upcoming term’s classes; installed an early alert system to identify potential problems; begun a summer program allowing first generation college students to become acclimated to college life prior to regular student orientation; added a year-long course that all first year students are required to attend, taught by faculty, that is designed to provide clear pathways to success; modified the first year seminar to better serve its incoming students; and, provided the technology needed for deans and chairs to manage student advising. In addition, interventions designed to improve graduation rates included: creation of a subcommittee to draft a plan to address the needs of seniors who are within a few courses of finishing, and have either left the institution, without completion, or are in a “danger zone” of not finishing; created workshops for students on probation; and reduced summer school tuition for those students who need to catch up with their cohort.

By 2012 the institution’s persistence rate for freshmen reached 89.4% percent, a remarkable improvement in four years. During the same time period the graduation rates rose as well, from 48.8% (cohort 2006) to 60.7% (cohort 2009). The Team commends the institution for these significant improvements.
The graduate persistence and graduation rates contained within the Institutional Report are by the degree, not by program. SMC should consider expanding its approach to tracking graduate persistence and graduation rates by program in order to better understand underlying dynamics of the institutional numbers.

While SMC considers student success more broadly than just persistence and graduation rates, the Student Success Task Force’s primary function is to carefully describe current results, with the help of the institutional research function, and to provide policy level guidance to operating departments to improve both persistence and graduation rates. One member of the Task Force did note that true student success is both completion of the degree and the learning that goes along with the degree. So far almost all of the work by the Task Force has been focused on the undergraduate program, but the members of the Task Force want to now place more emphasis on results in the graduate program. The current draft of the new Strategic Plan contains six themes, one of which is student success. This is further evidence that the institution values student success, and in spite of many improvements, believes more can be done.

The Visiting Team observed that, in terms of student success, the institution’s primary effort to date has been with the undergraduate program, and that graduate issues are less well analyzed and described.

**Recommendation 3. The Visiting Team recommends that the same level of effort to increase student success applied to the undergraduate program be applied to the graduate program.** This would include the comparative survey and data analysis activities as well as the appropriate student support activities.
D. Essay 2.4) Ensuring institutional capacity and effectiveness in the future, and planning for the changing environment for higher education

The purpose of Essay 4 is to articulate compliance with Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability. Supporting the achievement of SMC’s educational objectives is the goal and the Standard considers institutional investments in human, physical, fiscal, and information resources as well as an “appropriate and effective set of organizational and decision-making structures.” Essay 4 calls for the institution to demonstrate that it is “ensuring institutional capacity and effectiveness in the future, and planning for the changing environment of higher education” and to provide a “description, analysis, self-assessment and next steps.”

In large measure, Essay 4 succeeds in responding to these expectations and addresses each of the areas spelled out in Standard 3 in some way. Along with the self-assessment of strengths and challenges summarized in Essay 4 and in the Integrative Essay that follows, SMC shows admirable candor about the state of its progress in key areas such as assessment of learning, which the Team believes is moving more slowly than expected in light of the increasing attention that the public, WASC and other agencies have come to expect over the past decade.

SMC has put a sound infrastructure in place to support its educational objectives and meet the expectations of this Standard. The Institutional Report describes many long-standing as well as new operational groups—several of which are large, campus wide committees—that both engage the campus broadly and monitor policy and practice in key areas, from administrative program review to institutional effectiveness, curriculum at both graduate and undergraduate levels,
program review, quality assurance, diversity and strategic planning. At the same time, it is not always clear whether, and if so, how these groups are effectively meeting the campus expectations. Several of these operational groups are new and the results and impacts of their efforts are still in process.

**Faculty needs.** SMC has sufficient faculty (CFR 3.2), but does not provide an instructional staffing plan that links faculty staffing to degree programs and disciplines. The program review process (recently lengthened to a six-year cycle) allows departments the opportunity to make the case for additional faculty recruitment, based on ratios of courses taught by permanent or contingent faculty, numbers of majors and advisees, etc. However, this approach does not drive a plan for program growth, development and staffing at the institutional level.

Essay 4 (p. 34) acknowledges the increased role of contingent faculty throughout higher education and benchmarks the percentage of undergraduate and graduate classes taught by permanent faculty with 2011-12 data. However, there is no indication whether SMC believes these percentages are acceptable, optimal, or desirable. Currently SMC academic leaders are studying this problem and have not yet set a target. There is an intention to improve orientation and integration of contingent faculty in the “culture and operations of the College;” however, it is not clear whether SMC has a plan with milestones and responsibilities set out. The Faculty Salary Plan allows for disciplinary salary differentials, has been reviewed and approved by the Academic Senate, and is included in the Faculty Handbook. The final achievement is the expansion of the top step for full professors.

There is some evidence that “the institution systematically engages full-time, non-tenure track, adjunct, and part-time faculty in such processes as assessment, program review, and faculty
development” (CFR 3.2); but efforts in each of those areas are nascent, and it is too soon to evaluate assessment, program review and faculty development as “developed” processes. The Team recommends continued implementation of the effort to balance equitable workload demands with the broad engagement and participation of all faculty, with attention to adjunct faculty.

**Recommendation 4.** The Team recommends that SMC examine its academic structure with particular note to the equity of faculty loads and clarifying the role of department chairs. Further, the Team urges evaluation of compensation and/or administrative support in terms of workload, and professional training and development opportunities for faculty and chairs.

Given the centrality of student learning to the academic experience, evaluation of faculty should include appropriate peer review and “consideration of evidence of teaching effectiveness” (CFR 3.3). Because assessment data are currently captured in the program review process (and documents for some programs reveal a notable lack of evidence documenting assessment of student achievement of learning outcomes), the Team finds it difficult to see how teaching effectiveness can be reliably ascertained in the acknowledged absence of dependable assessment data in some programs showing whether students are meeting established learning outcomes in classes and in degree programs overall.

The assessment process is intended to ensure that SMCC achieves its educational objectives and maintains the distinction and high quality that the College’s reputation and business model depend upon. The structures and processes in place are appropriate and sufficient, but it is not always clear that the programs implement what the policy and process promise. The Team notes
that the College is taking significant steps to improve assessment of learning across campus, including hiring a Director of Educational Effectiveness specifically tasked to support and improve assessment of learning. This office developed a detailed 3-year implementation plan to culminate in 2014-15 with department reports on changes implemented as a result of assessment findings. The IR office has also marshaled resources to support faculty development in this area, including an incentive program of $5000 assessment grants to faculty who lead improvement in assessment practice in their departments; to date 13 programs have received the awards.

**Facility Resources.** SMC has a focused system of analyzing facility needs and the needs assessment is aligned with institutional planning efforts. SMC has a Campus Facilities committee, comprised of members from a cross section of the institution that is chaired by the CFO, which routinely conducts a needs assessment and advises on the allocation of capital and routine maintenance funds. The institutional report, with accompanying exhibits, carefully documents the needs and priorities. The next major project, driven by a long-standing need, is a new library/learning commons. Originally planned for completion by 2016, the date has now been pushed back until 2017, largely due to SMC’s failure to raise the matching funds for a $12M gift.

The President has taken steps to improve accountability for such fundraising, and challenged the Board of Trustees to take additional aggressive steps. The foundation grant may not be lost, but will have to be sought again when the matching funds have been secured. The President and the Board are committed to this effort.

Another high priority project that needs attention is the construction of additional faculty offices, as not all full-time faculty have dedicated office space. This has had the additional negative
impact of slowing faculty hiring in needed areas. The current plan of renovating the existing library for additional faculty office space after the new Learning Commons is constructed will take a number of years to complete and will continue to negatively impact SMC goal attainment. SMC is urged to continue its efforts to provide adequate office space and to work with faculty in moving these efforts forward.

**Program Review.** Another key element of supporting and assuring educational effectiveness is the expectation of rigorous periodic program review (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and especially 4.4). The Team acknowledges the work of the Program Review Committee (PRC) and several challenges as SMC continues to work toward full faculty engagement and department participation with assessment of learning outcomes. The PRC has worked to improve the program review process in response to workload concerns. Foci identified for this improved process include the essential elements: assurance of learning, enrollments, faculty qualifications, coverage and allocation, budgets, and service to core curriculum. However, the Team noted that reviews of at least ten of the 52 listed programs have been delayed, rescheduled, or (in a few cases) allowed to continue without meeting the requirement. The PRC indicated that internal conversations with Deans are underway to move these programs to compliance and that some rescheduling has been accomplished to put those programs back on schedule. The process will be improved when SMC does not allow several programs to continue five or more years beyond a scheduled program review without a formal intervention of some sort.

The Program Review Committee has recently begun to provide feedback to departments on their program review reports. They are engaged in process improvements, including a pilot program to move to all-electronic submission of program portfolios; having the IR Office produce and disseminate a common data set to programs at the start of their review; and considering
additional support (e.g., course release) for faculty members tasked to produce the final draft of the review.

**Recommendation 5.** The Visiting Team recommends continued diligence to engage all programs in meaningful and timely program reviews and that the campus exercise firmer oversight during this transition period to full department participation. Careful follow up to complete all program reviews on schedule and to fulfill the requirement for reporting assessment of learning outcomes should be an important focus of college activities.

**Information Technology Resources.** One of SMC’s most ambitious strategic efforts centers on the information technology upgrade. The Team appreciates that this kind of networking, wireless and infrastructure building is currently underway on many campuses nationwide; it has a clear priority at SMCC in their efforts to keep pace with the changing ecology of higher education. It will be important to learn how this investment pays off in terms of improving educational effectiveness.

While the Institutional Report acknowledges the coming challenges and opportunities with online classes and other educational uses of information technologies to improve learning, SMC chooses to rely primarily on traditional face to face pedagogies for the foreseeable future. Their preference for small seminar style classes throughout the core, and their ability to sustain that commitment, is commendable. As the campus embarks with deliberate caution about the role and ratio of online learning as a contribution to overall curriculum, they must monitor impacts on student success, and take account of the changing demographics and academic preparation of their students.
The Team saw clear evidence that SMC provides resources to support strategic objectives and commends SMC for prudent deployment of the Filippi Endowment to support needed improvements and/or upgrades in curriculum development, faculty development, assessment training, and improved technology in classrooms. Resources that support faculty at appropriate workloads, with appropriate salary, incentives, training and development are key indicators of CFR 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4. Completion of the Faculty Salary Plan indicates substantial progress in this area of Standard 3.

E. Essay 3. *Optional essay on institution-specific themes (Not applicable)*

F. Essay 4. *Integrative Essay*

The Integrative Essay is a summary of SMC strengths, challenges and top priorities mostly derived from the Self-Review under the Standards, but also informed by the community discussions regarding the essays that comprise the Institutional Report.

Standard 1: *Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives.*

The College has a clear identity, based on its mission and the heritage of the Christian Brothers. The educational enterprise is at the center of its activities. In this period of leadership transition, the institution sees great opportunities to continue to refine leadership structures and expectations for performance, responsibility and accountability (CR 1.3). The College acknowledges, and the Team concurs, that there is not yet sufficient assessment of educational objectives and that it must continue to work on inclusive excellence in response to the increasing diversity in society. (CFR 1.5)
Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions.
SMC’s curriculum is aligned with its mission and at the heart of each student’s experience is a core curriculum that integrates mission and core competencies. High priority challenges for this Standard include the need to refine expectations for learning, and assessing learning to determine whether or not those expectations are being met. The College lags behind its peers in large part in their assessment at the academic and co-curricular and student support services programmatic levels. SMC needs to move its assessment to the point where results of student learning are used to guide curricular revision, pedagogical development, and strategic planning.
(Recommendations 1,2,3,5)

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability.
SMC has a long record of balanced budgets and unqualified independent financial audits. (CFR 3.5) It employs a highly qualified faculty who exercise academic leadership through an appropriate shared governance structure. Levels of staffing in some areas are being addressed. The major challenges involve the Library which has limited holdings and insufficient access to electronic resources and study space. Improvements to the current building have been made to increase study space and IT assistance. The College had anticipated reaching appropriate funding levels to begin construction of a new Library and Learning Support Center in 2016; however, the loss of a major gift means that the construction start date will now likely be in 2017, commencing only after funding is achieved. The College is taking steps now to improve its IT infrastructure with the hiring of a new chief technology officer who led the development of
a clear and ambitious technology plan, a revamped technology committee and strategic funding.

**Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement.**

Since its last reaccreditation in 2004, Saint Mary’s College has strengthened its Institutional Research capacity and established a culture of data-based decision making and inclusion of internal stakeholders in planning processes. Strategic planning is based on integrating academic, personnel, fiscal, physical and technology needs which ensures strategic resource allocation in alignment with strategic priorities. Increased understanding of student learning through assessment will allow important connections between outcomes, curriculum and grading practices to be made. (CFR 4.7)

Its Self-Review under the Standards, analysis of data, and reflection by the SMC community on information collected for the Institutional Report have suggested three major areas of high priority to the College and the Team agrees: institutional capacity and infrastructure, educational effectiveness, and leadership and strategic planning. The Team’s analysis of SMC’s compliance with the Standards is in Section III.B (below) of this Team Report.

**SECTION III: EVALUATION OF ELECTRONIC EXHIBIT PORTFOLIO**

A. *Compliance Checklist*

The Institution has provided links to website or document portfolio for each document required. While Team members encountered some difficulties in using the links in the Compliance Audit,
all policies were accounted for. (See Appendix A for the Compliance Audit confirmed by the Team)

B. Self-review under the Standards

In general, the institution carried out a thorough review of its performance under the Standards through its WASC Steering Committee which rated performance in each area. The review provided a candid look at areas of strength and those in need of attention. Areas identified by SMC that are or need to be highly prioritized involve assessment of student learning and evidence that those results are used to improve learning (CFR 1.2, 2.2a, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7); assessment of diversity initiatives (CFR 1.5); and strengthening learning support systems, including library space (CFR 3.6) and technology resources (CFR 3.7). The Team found the following:

**STANDARD 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives**

*Institutional Purposes and Integrity*

SMC has a formal statement of educational mission and values rooted in three traditions: its Liberal Arts, Catholic and Lasallian heritage. The institution visibly has education as its primary purpose, has defined degree objectives, has established review processes, tracks student success data in its annual Fact Book, and operates with transparency and integrity. (CFR 1.1, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

Assessment of student learning relative to intended Learning Goals remains a high priority. The team encourages SMC and academic administration to work closely together to establish and
administratively support a sustainable model of assessment of degree-level and core competency achievement. (CFR 1.2; Recommendations 1, 2)

Academic freedom is formalized in the Faculty Handbook and enables meaningful dialog, including on matters of philosophy and institutional identity. The visiting team noted open conversations and sharing of views among faculty, staff, administration and the Christian Brothers about different interpretations of the Liberal Arts and Catholic identity, reflecting meaningful dialog on issues of philosophy and institutional identity. (CFR 1.4)

The Visiting Team saw evidence of active engagement to promote diversity through policies, programs, practices, and noted positive improvement in campus climate in both survey data and personal testimonials, including interviews with faculty, students, Staff Council, Student Affairs staff and Human Resources staff. (CFR 1.5) During its visit, the Team found evidence that there are still residual pockets in the community where people feel discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, gender, and/or sexual identity. The Team urges the College to continue to deal with issues of inclusivity through deep dialogue with all constituents and a sensitivity to racial, cultural, gender, and sexual identity concerns.

The Visiting Team appreciates the welcoming and responsive hospitality experienced during the visit, and the thoughtful preparation and disclosure of data and documents. The team noted close involvement of the SMC community with the accreditation process, including visible support from the President. (CFR 1.9)

**Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

*Teaching and Learning*
SMC ensures that its academic programs conform to disciplinary and professional standards and has plans for systematic assessment and program reviews. It has also instituted plans for Administrative Department Reviews. (CFR 2.1, 2.3) It clearly defines its core curriculum and degrees in terms of learning outcomes and provides students with offerings that help them build capacity for work, life, and citizenship. (CFR 2.2, 2.2a)

Expectations for student learning are beginning to be widely shared as the new core curriculum is fully implemented and revised as needed and appropriate committees and structures are established to support this work. (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.6) Assessment plans have been developed and some have been implemented and results used to improve courses, teaching, and learning.(CFR 2.4) A new requirement for community engagement as well as the Collegiate Seminars and long-standing Jan-term ensure that all students will have significant active learning opportunities.(CFR 2.5)

The criteria for rank include the requirement that faculty continue scholarship in their discipline but also work to connect this scholarship with their teaching. The new president, along with the provost, have made ramping up faculty scholarship a priority and are budgeting funds to assist faculty scholarship and where appropriate, support creative work. (CFR 2.8, 2.9)

**Support for Student Learning and Success**
Though systematic program review requirements are in place, the reviews themselves are uneven and at times not completed in a timely manner. (CFR 2.7; Recommendation 5) The college's IR staff provides excellent data collection, survey, and analysis support. (CFR 2.10)

There are robust co-curricular programs at the college that support many aspects of student life and learning and the college offers advising, library, and technology support to students, including transfer students. (CFR 2.12, 2.13, 2.14)

**Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability**

SMC recognizes the high-priority need for a faculty staffing plan and they have begun the work to achieve faculty sufficiency, broadly defined. In addition to developing appropriate indicators to guide their planning, they have made faculty sufficiency the number two priority after facilities issues. Faculty needs are currently assessed in program planning, but that occurs on a six-year cycle. The College should develop a process for collating emergent needs of all programs throughout the overlapping program review cycles. While there is not yet consensus around the appropriate percentage of undergraduate classes taught by ranked faculty, the College is committed to a definition of faculty sufficiency that includes enough faculty to perform the work of shared governance within reasonable workloads. (CFR 3.1, 3.2; Recommendation 4)

SMC faculty and staff identify strongly and align with the College’s Mission, though there continues to be healthy debate over changes in the Collegiate Seminar. Faculty have workload
concerns that have been exacerbated among the “growing pains” of many changes over the past few years. The Faculty Welfare Committee along with the Senate and the faculty salary initiative are elements of a systematic approach to incentive and evaluation for faculty. Evaluation processes are systematic and aligned with educational objectives but it is not clear how evidence based on assessment of student learning is considered in the overall evaluation of teaching effectiveness. (CFR 3.3; Recommendation 4)

SMC supports faculty development in many ways. They have a dedicated Faculty Development Office that provides or coordinates training opportunities in pedagogy and use of instructional technology. Office of Mission provides travel support for faculty to continue development in Catholic mission. The addition of an Associate Director of Institutional Research has allowed additional focused support for improving assessment of learning. The Faculty Wellness Office also contributes to supporting faculty needs and aspirations. Librarians have been particularly helpful with both teaching and helping to assess information literacy. Recently, SMC has created a new Faculty Advising Office with a faculty director to support that dimension of faculty development. (CFR 3.4)

The institution ranked its performance under CFR 3.5 as a strength and the Visiting Team concurs with that assessment. For example, the last Fiscal Year, ending June 30, 2014, the College ended the year with a positive surplus of approximately $3.4M unrestricted (GAAP). This surplus improved all of its WASC tracked ratios and continues to demonstrate that the institutional has a history of strong financial performance. (CFR 3.5)

SMC recognizes that the current library is inadequate to support its, growth and the College has made it their highest priority for new buildings to raise funds for a new Library/Learning
Commons. Architectural planning is complete and fundraising appears to be halfway to the goal. The project was slowed by the unfortunate failure to match a $12 million foundation grant, but President Donahue has taken quick steps to challenge the Board of Trustees to undertake aggressive fundraising. Both the Chief Development Officer and the President believe that this project can be funded to enable construction to begin in 2017. This will in turn free up the space in the existing library to provide faculty office spaces, which are insufficient to support current and anticipated levels of staffing.

To support faculty and students while fundraising continues, the College has moved to increase current library capacity by remodeling significant areas to accommodate more student quiet study areas; they have also culled tens of thousands of books with compensating increases in electronic holdings and subscriptions. The remodel will be complete in Spring 2015.

The institutional goal is to fully “fund” building improvements, meaning designate the amount of cash equal to the non-cash expense of depreciation for capital renewal and modernization. This goal has led to a decrease in the backlog of deferred maintenance during the past three years.

In concert with these building plans, the new strategic plan prioritizes investments in academic technology. Though the College does not yet participate extensively in online education, the current improvements will lay the foundation for expansion into that area when and if the College decides to move in that direction. The College has adopted a detailed technology improvement plan to support its goals. (CFR 3.6)

Though the College indicated in the self-review that significant development is needed to information technology resources, the Team believes that the recent hire of Chief Technology
Officer and adoption of the detailed technology improvement plan indicate they are moving forward appropriately to address this need. (CFR 3.7)

The Team finds that the institution’s organizational structures and decision-making processes are generally clear and consistent with its purposes, though some committees and initiatives are emerging to address new challenges. This is especially evident in role definition and preparation of department chairs that is currently and appropriately under review. Student Success support initiatives and committee structure seem significantly productive and broadly participative. The Team recognizes the excellent progress made in this area. The Team suggests that the College continue its work toward developing a sustainable model of assessment of learning outcomes integrated into a timely and efficient program review process. (CFR 3.8)

SMC has an appropriate independent governing board exercising oversight over institutional integrity and policies. The Team commends in particular the strong academic leadership team the Board has started to assemble at the Provost and Vice Provost level. (CFR 3.9, 3.10)

College faculty are significantly engaged in governance across an appropriate range of policy and operational committees looking after academic quality and adherence to Mission. The campus has a long standing Academic Senate. The Team heard some faculty concern about the workload impacts of the many governance committees. (CFR 3.11)

**STANDARD 4: (2013 version) Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement**

*Strategic Thinking and Planning*
SMC has long engaged in rigorous strategic planning. The last strategic plan, *Building on Strengths* (2007-2012) contained 6 themes, 23 objectives and 41 essential tasks. SMC closely tracked the goals and the goal attainment. By the conclusion of the plan, most of the 41 essential tasks had been achieved. The plan’s creation had widespread campus involvement, and included input from the Brothers, faculty, staff, the institutional leadership, Board of Trustees, alumni, friends, and the public. Nearing the end of the plan, then-president Brother Ronald Gallagher drafted another planning document, a Statement of Institutional Direction, that was to guide the next strategic plan. One of the key results of this planning activity was the development of the Academic Blueprint which is intended to guide the College’s academic planning into the next decade.

At the time of the Visit the institution had drafted a new set of themes that will be presented to its Board of Trustees at the end of September, 2014. The planning process was inclusive and rigorous. (CFR 4.1, 4.2)

The institution, in its self-review, states that it has established quality review processes at each level, noting that these processes are required for new program development, and the periodic program reviews for its academic programs. The Visiting Team found that the institution takes continuous review and assessment seriously evidenced by the institutional, programmatic, and administrative assessments that it regularly conducts. It has created structures to ensure that all programs are aligned with the mission and are regularly evaluated. For example, the Program Review Committee, a faculty governance committee has the following charge (identified in the Faculty Handbook):
Create clear guidelines regarding content and form for a systematic review of all undergraduate, graduate and professional studies degree and non-degree programs on a five-year, rotating basis.

In order to facilitate comprehensive reviews of each program, a document entitled, “Guidelines for Departmental and Program Reviews” was created, and last updated in 2010. While programmatic reviews have been a part of the culture of SMC since the 1990s and many programs are meeting the goal of five year reviews, the Team notes that the schedule of reviews has not been met. (Recommendation 5)

Another of the structures created by SMC to ensure that a high level of quality control processes are applied institutionally is the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, co-chaired by the Provost and Vice President of Finance. It membership includes most of the senior leadership of the institution. It is involved with overseeing all assessment activities, except learning related activities, managed directly by the faculty.

In order to provide assessments with comparisons to other similar or aspirant institutions the institution participates in a number of national undergraduate surveys, for example: CIRP’s “The Freshman Survey,” and the “College Senior Survey,” and, “Your First College Year” NSSE, and the Association of College and University Housing Officers’ Resident Assessment survey.
In addition the institution regularly assesses the performance of both academic and administrative departments. For example, the institution regularly conducts administrative department reviews, and the reports are provided to the senior leadership, through the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, for action and follow up. (CFR 4.3, 4.4)

**Commitment to Learning and Improvement**

The institution seriously engages in institutional research (IR). Its IR department (consisting of two full-time, seasoned staff) supports the institution’s decision making, planning, and policy formulation efforts. It does so by providing timely and accurate data through the use of surveys, questionnaires, analyses, program reviews and special studies. For example, SMC administers three national surveys developed by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) that allows SMC to evaluate how it is performing regarding student learning and student success compared to other institutions. SMC also uses the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to evaluate how it ranks, compared to others, in the areas of: Level of Academic Challenge; Active and Collaborative Learning; Student-Faculty Interaction; Enriching Educational Experiences; and Supportive Campus Environment. Overall, SMC has done very well, when compared to other similar institutions.

IR data are widely disseminated within the institution and can be easily accessed via the website and printed Fact Book. (CFR 4.5)
The institution, with significant faculty involvement, engages in on-going inquiry into teaching and learning. The faculty has developed program and course learning objectives and these can be found in syllabi. The Program Review Committee reviews program reviews and provides feedback to faculty, deans and provost. SMC noted, in its Self-Review Under the Standards, that additional attention is needed in this area, and the Visiting Team concurs. (CFR 4.6, 4.7; Recommendations 1,2,4,5)

The institution has established numerous advisory councils to obtain stakeholder input in order to improve the programmatic outcomes. Alumni are routinely surveyed to obtain follow-up data both for planning purposes and providing needed data on graduate school attendance and the types of positions the College’s alumni are holding. At the outset of the planning process a situation and threat analysis was conducted and included a discussion regarding the changes affecting, or expected to affect higher education. The strategic planning process in place includes themes to address the changing challenges facing SMC. (CFR 4.8)

C. Required Data Exhibits

Required data exhibits are all included. Data Exhibit 5, Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators, shows almost no ways in which results are being used to improve student experiences or educational effectiveness, and the Team has noted the status of assessment of student learning as one of its concerns. (Recommendations 1,2,4,5)

D. Response to previous reviews, including Commission actions, finance review, and
retention/graduate review

This section offers a candid review of issues that were identified in 2007 and which persisted through 2009. Progress in these areas has been notable through 2012-2013, as discussed in Section I of this Team Report.

A Substantive Change for offering an EMBA off campus was approved in 2008 and one for offering the innovative LEAP program in Las Vegas was approved in early 2013. Staff findings for the most recent approval included 4 recommendations, three of which involved learning outcomes and assessment of student learning:

1. Consideration should be given to modifying LEAP program learning outcomes, to move beyond “demonstrate” to such competencies as critique, analyze, etc. as suggested in Bloom’s Taxonomy.

2. The curriculum map should be modified to reflect the progression of student learning, from introduced through demonstrated/mastery for each learning outcome.

3. The assessment plan for LEAP, including program and major learning outcomes, should address all learning outcomes in years between program reviews.

The fourth recommendation asked that copies of appropriate MOUs with program sites should be provided in future substantive change proposals for off-campus programs.

None of these recommendations was addressed in this Appendix to the Institutional Report, although team visits to both the New York and Los Angeles sites confirm that program assessments are being responsive to recommendations.
E/F. Continuing Momentum on Program Review and Assessment

This short appendix provides the reader with links to various sites for (a) Program Review; (b) Assessment; (c) Institutional Research; and (d) Inclusive Excellence. As noted earlier, program review and assessment are in need of attention and further development.

SECTION IV: FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEAM REVIEW

The Team found an enthusiastic and visionary community committed to planning for a strong and sustainable future for Saint Mary’s College through thoughtful dialog and careful planning. Gael pride was evident in the educational and professional development offered to students, staff, and faculty and in senior administrators who see SMC as a high quality institution whose visibility to the world-wide community needs to be increased. The self-study that formed the basis of the Institutional Report has been integral to the community-wide strategic planning discussions begun in January 2014.

The Team found much for which SMC is to be commended.

1. The Team commends SMC for providing an innovative and unique holistic experience to its students, with a special recognition of the role its Collegiate Seminar and January terms play in a SMC education. The team is impressed with the institution’s commitment to engagement with community by instituting a community engagement requirement for all students. It has also provided an infrastructure that helps support faculty to provide a community engagement activity. It specifically offers a faculty development workshop, transportation for students to
community engagement sites, and implements a coordinating body called the Community Engagement Hub that brings community members into its policy making.

2. The Team commends SMC for engaging faculty in deep dialog about a meaningful degree and for developing and implementing a core curriculum that reflects the institution’s mission and values.

3. The Team commends SMC for its focus on inclusive excellence. The College Committee on Inclusive Excellence has helped the institution focus its efforts on significant policies, practices, and activities. For instance, it recently inaugurated BIRT (Bias Incident Response Team) which helps the SMC community respond quickly to incidents. Its underlying philosophy is to educate the community on how to effectively deal with differences.

4. The Team commends SMC for improvements in student success, its notable attention to faculty advising, and the implementation of a first-year experience for students.

5. The Team commends SMC for its proactive leadership in engaging the SMC community in strategic planning and meaningful dialog about the institution’s future and its Catholic identity. Its planning processes, which resulted in the Academic Blueprint and Campus Master Plan, are providing a strong foundation for the new Strategic Plan. Further, the institution is to be commended for aligning its resource allocations with strategic priorities.

6. The Team commends SMC for instituting an administrative department review (ADR) process, though the Team recognizes that the ADR process needs development into a robust and systemic practice.
Along with commendations, the Visiting Team offers the following recommendations.

**Recommendation 1.** The Team recommends that SMC prioritize efforts to move assessment of programs and institutional learning outcomes to a higher stage of development. Closing the “loop” on assessment and seeing practical results will come by collecting appropriate evidence and interpreting results to improve learning.

**Recommendation 2.** The Team recommends that SMC consider how to best administer and resource the assessment of the core curriculum. The team feels that this inspiring curriculum is in need of a practical and sustainable plan for needed assessment of student learning.

**Recommendation 3.** The Team recommends that the same level of effort to increase student success applied to the undergraduate program be applied to the graduate program. This would include the comparative survey and data analysis activities as well as the appropriate student support activities.

**Recommendation 4.** The Team recommends that SMC examine its academic structure with particular note to the equity of faculty loads and clarifying the role of department chairs. Further, the Team urges evaluation of compensation and/or administrative support in terms of workload, and professional training and development opportunities for faculty and chairs.

**Recommendation 5.** The Team recommends continued diligence to engage all programs in meaningful and timely program reviews and that the campus exercise firmer oversight during this transition period to full department participation. Careful follow up to complete
all program reviews on schedule and to fulfill the requirement for reporting assessment of learning outcomes should be an important focus of college activities.
CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW – TEAM REPORT APPENDIX A

Institution: St-Mary’s College (Moraga, California)

Date: 9/12/2014

Overview:
Under federal regulations, WASC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s credit hour policy and processes as well as the lengths of its programs.

Credit hour is defined by the Department of Education as follows:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Program length may be seen as one of several measures of quality and as a proxy measure for scope of the objectives of degrees or credentials offered. Traditionally offered degree programs are generally approximately 120 semester credit hours for a bachelor’s degree, and 30 semester credit hours for a master’s degree; there is greater variation at the doctoral level depending on the type of program. For programs offered in non-traditional formats, for which program length is not a relevant and/or reliable quality measure, reviewers should ensure that available information clearly defines desired program outcomes and graduation requirements, that institutions are ensuring that program outcomes are achieved, and that there is a reasonable correlation between the scope of these outcomes and requirements and those typically found in traditionally offered degrees or programs tied to program length.

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations section of the team report.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Policy on credit hour | Is this policy easily accessible? YES  
Where is the policy located? St-Mary’s website (Under registrar/ Unit of Credit)  
Comments: 1 unit = 15 hours of 50 minutes = 750 minutes |
| Process(es)/periodic review of credit hour | Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? YES  
Does the institution adhere to this procedure? ☐ YES  
Comments: New course syllabi are reviewed by the Senate and the Provost’s office. Periodic review then occurs through Program Review. |
| Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet | Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? YES  
Comments: Most courses carry 3.5 units and meet in 65 minute classes 3 times a week or 95 minute classes twice a week (52.5 hours = 2,625 minutes per semester).  
Syllabi reviewed: Math 103, Psych 003, Kinesiology 015 |
| Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level. | How many syllabi were reviewed? 4  
What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Hybrid, 4-unit quarter class  
What degree level(s)? Master’s  
What discipline(s)? MA/Leadership, EMBA  
Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? YES  
Comments: |
| Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level. | How many syllabi were reviewed? 1  
What kinds of courses? Accelerated  
What degree level(s)? MA  
What discipline(s)? Leadership  
Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? YES  
Comments: |
| Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials) | How many programs were reviewed? All Bachelor degrees  
What kinds of programs were reviewed? BAs  
What degree level(s)? BA  
What discipline(s)? All  
Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? YES, all Bas require more than 120 units.  
Comments: BA requirements: minimum of 36 courses of 3.5 units each = 126 units. Number of major requirements within that varies. |
APPENDIX B. STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW – TEAM REPORT

Institution: Saint Mary’s College of California  
Date: September 15, 2014

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)</th>
<th>Verified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Policy on student complaints | Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints?  
Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Where?  
The Student Complaints procedure is found in the Undergraduate and Graduate and Professional Student Handbooks:  
http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/student-life/your-safety-resources/student-handbook (page 68)  
http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/graduate-and-professional-studies/graduate-professional-student-handbook  
Currently, these departments or locations handle various student complaints:  
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academics - for grade challenges or classroom instruction concerns:  
Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies– for complaints from graduate and professional students:  
http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/graduate-and-professional-studies/graduate-professional-student-handbook  
Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) – for reporting a bias incident or hate crime:  
http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/student-life/your-safety-resources/bias-incident-response-team-birt  
Community Life - for reporting discipline-related cases:  
Student Disability Services – for grievances concerning student disability accommodations:  
http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-resources-support/student-disability-services/grievance-policy | Yes |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process(es)/procedure</th>
<th>Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? Please describe briefly:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(See above)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the institution adhere to this procedure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Records</th>
<th>Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? Where?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(as stated above with those specific departments)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? Please describe briefly:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(see above)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
# Appendix C. MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW: TEAM REPORT

Institution: Saint Mary's College of California  
Date: September 12, 2014

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.</th>
<th>Verified Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *Federal regulations  
Staff Handbook; discussions with HR Director and chief enrollment officer. | Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?  
As a college receiving federal funding, Saint Mary’s College of California (SMC) abides by federal regulations governing the recruitment of students. Every qualified prospective student is given equal opportunity to enroll at the university. FERPA policies are provided and followed to protect the privacy rights of each student. No monetary (or otherwise) incentives are provided to any employee of the university engaged in the recruitment of students. No agents are compensated for recruitment in the domestic United States or abroad. The university is a member of the National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC):  
http://www.nacacnet.org/Pages/default.aspx and abides by the ethical admissions practices of this organization.  
Information presented to prospective students accurately represents the university Admissions website:  
http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/undergraduate-admissions  
Regarding international recruitment:  
Currently we recruit internationally through Colleges That Change Lives consortium tours in Asia and Latin America, as well as selected Pacific Rim nations in the fall. The College that Change Lives Organization is a select group of liberal arts and sciences colleges. For more information on this organization please visit:  
http://www.ctcl.org/events/programs  
Additionally, we do not contract with international agents on a commission basis.  
Finally, our NCAA Division I Athletics program attracts international students as well.  
Comments:  
No incentive programs are used to recruit students eligible for federal aid. This was verified with the Human Resources Director.  
| Yes |
| Degree completion and cost  
Website; course catalog; enrollment brochures | Does the institution provide accurate information about the typical length of time to degree?  
Under the “About us” page on the SMC’s website the fact book provides persistence and graduation rate information (4, 5, and 6 year) providing an accurate account of average time to degree by cohort year:  
http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/about-smc/facts-figures/fact-book  
The Institutional Fact book is annually updated and available to prospective students and the general public via the SMC website.  
| Yes |
SMC’s website, specifically the Fact Boo, that is available to anyone visiting the website, provides clear graduation data for the undergraduate program, disaggregated in many ways. The on-line course catalog typically describes a four-year course of study. All of the graduate and professional program enrollment brochures clearly describe the typical length of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the institution provide accurate information about the overall cost of the degree?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A tuition schedule is posted on the SMC website: <a href="http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/admissions-aid/tuition-fees">http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/admissions-aid/tuition-fees</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tuition schedule is also included within the SMC catalogs:

- Undergraduate Catalog: [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-resources-support/course-catalog](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-resources-support/course-catalog)
- Graduate and Professional Studies Tuition

Due to the multiple graduate and professional degree programs and formats that are offered, tuition varies by program.

### Graduate Business:

- Trans-Global Executive MBA: [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/trans-global-executive-mba/tuition](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/trans-global-executive-mba/tuition)
- Professional MBA: [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/trans-global-executive-mba/tuition](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/trans-global-executive-mba/tuition)
- M.S. in Accounting: [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/ms-in-accounting/tuition](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/ms-in-accounting/tuition)

### Graduate Education:

- [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/kalmanovitz-school-of-education/prospective-applicants/tuition-fees](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/kalmanovitz-school-of-education/prospective-applicants/tuition-fees)

### Graduate Kinesiology:

- [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/graduate-kinesiology/for-prospective-students/admissions](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/graduate-kinesiology/for-prospective-students/admissions)

### Graduate Leadership:

- [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/ma-in-leadership/what-else-you-should-know/estimated-program-costs](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/ma-in-leadership/what-else-you-should-know/estimated-program-costs)

### MFA in Creative Writing:

- [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/mfa-in-creative-writing/prospective-students/faqs#Funding](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/mfa-in-creative-writing/prospective-students/faqs#Funding)

### MFA in Dance:

- [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/mfa-in-dance/admissions](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/mfa-in-dance/admissions)
Senior College and University Commission

| Bachelor of Arts in Leadership & Organizational Studies: [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/ba-in-leadership-organizational-studies/what-else-you-should-know/estimated-program-costs](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/ba-in-leadership-organizational-studies/what-else-you-should-know/estimated-program-costs) |
| Liberal Education for Arts Professionals (LEAP): [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/liberal-education-for-arts-professionals-leap/tuition](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/liberal-education-for-arts-professionals-leap/tuition) |
| SMC also has a net price calculator at the following website: [https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/node/12074](https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/node/12074) |

Comments: All of the enrollment brochures for the graduate and undergraduate programs clearly explain the cost of attendance. The net price calculator is available on the website.

| Careers and employment Alumni survey; enrollment brochures | Does the institution provide accurate information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? | Yes, primarily for graduate and not-traditional students |
| Does the institution provide accurate information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? | The Division of Student Life maintains a “Career Center” that aids students in identifying employment opportunities: [https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/career-center](https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/career-center) |
| The career center also offers services for alumni: [https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/career-center/for-alumni](https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/career-center/for-alumni), also, for graduate students: [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/career-center/for-graduate-students](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/career-center/for-graduate-students) |
| The institution also maintains LinkedIn Alumni: [https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=45082&mostPopular=&trk=tah&trkInfo=tarld%3A1400632601491%2Ctas%3Asaint%20mary's%20college%20of%20california%20a%20Cidx%3A1-2-2](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=45082&mostPopular=&trk=tah&trkInfo=tarld%3A1400632601491%2Ctas%3Asaint%20mary's%20college%20of%20california%20a%20Cidx%3A1-2-2) |

Comments: The institution does a good job at this, especially in the non-traditional undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs; The information for traditional undergraduate programs and majors is more difficult to find. It is available, to some extent, through the results of the Alumni Survey

*Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.*

Reviewed by: Robert P Allison
Date: September 12, 2014
Under federal regulations*, WASC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

### Appendix D. TRANSFER CREDIT REVIEW CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)</th>
<th>Verified Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Credit Policy(s)</td>
<td>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the policy publically available? If so, where? Also available at: <a href="http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/undergraduate-admissions/transfer-students/admissions-process/transfer-credits">http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/undergraduate-admissions/transfer-students/admissions-process/transfer-credits</a></td>
<td>YES -- also in University Catalog (2014-15), p. 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: Transfer Credit page (Admissions materials) also includes links to ASSIST (<a href="http://www.assist.org">www.assist.org</a>), the California UC, CSU and CCC intersegmental articulation database, as well as a link to data base of college specific articulation agreements: <a href="http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/undergraduate-admissions/transfer-students/admissions-process/articulation-agreements">http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/undergraduate-admissions/transfer-students/admissions-process/articulation-agreements</a>.</td>
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*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

1. Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and
2. Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Dennis Jaehne  
Date: September 11, 2014
OFF-CAMPUS LOCATIONS REVIEW – TEAM REPORT APPENDIX (2008 Standards)

Institution: Saint Mary's College
Name of reviewer/s: Eleanor D. Siebert
Date/s of review: September 15, 2014

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all visits in which off-campus sites were reviewed1. One form should be used for each site visited. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

1. Site Name and Address
   Doubletree Hotel (by Hilton)
   120 S. Los Angeles St., Los Angeles, CA

2. Background Information (number of programs offered at this site; degree levels; FTE of faculty and enrollment; brief history at this site; designation as a regional center or off-campus site by WASC)
   One program is offered in Los Angeles: Liberal Education for Arts Professionals (LEAP): leading to a B.A. in Performing Arts. This is a bachelor’s degree program for professional dancers offered in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Las Vegas.

3. Nature of the Review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)
   Reviewed as a part of the Reaccreditation of Saint Mary's College of California, Sept. 9-12, 2014.

Materials studied:
- Saint Mary’s Institutional Report
- LEAP Curriculum
- LEAP Goals and Learning Outcomes
- Online information
- 2014 Student Guide

Individuals interviewed:
- Mark Baird, LEAP Program Director
- Annie Colbeck, Program Coordinator for LEAP’s Southern California program
- Miri Hunter, Ph.D., Adjunct Faculty (Personal and Professional Assessment (PPA)) Fall 2014
- Students in Los Angeles PPA class

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1 See Protocol for Review of Off-Campus Sites to determine whether and how many sites will be visited.
## Observations and Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Inquiry</th>
<th>Observations and Findings</th>
<th>Follow-up Required (identify the issues)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fit with Mission.</strong> How does the institution conceive of this and other off-campus sites relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How is the site planned and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1)</td>
<td>The LEAP program was founded in 1998 by a faculty member who was director of the dance program at SMC. LEAP would offer professional dancers a comprehensive, affordable liberal arts education and “honor the academic standards and traditions of SMC.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Connection to the Institution.** How visible and deep is the presence of the institution at the off-campus site? In what ways does the institution integrate off-campus students into the life and culture of the institution? (CFRs 1.2, 2.10) | The Student Guide includes a history of SMC; program materials identify SMC as having a reputation for excellence, innovation and responsiveness in education that derives from its Catholic, Lasallian and Liberal Arts heritage. 
I didn't see the SMC mission in any materials; students identified mission concepts as social justice and equitable opportunities. It is a program offered to cohorts generally consisting of 20 or so students; students must have a minimum of 2 years as a professional dancer. It may be the only program specifically designed for this group of professionals, and that is the apparent motivation drawing students to this program—not the SMC mission. 
Students are integrated into the academic departments as they submit individualized study petitions or portfolios for evaluation to receive credit on for experiential learning; transfer courses for General Education credit; and courses for the major. 
The academic goals and learning outcomes mirror those of the traditional UG BA in Performing Arts offered at the Moraga Campus. 
The Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Programs oversee the program—its match with SMC academic quality and mission. | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Quality of the Learning Site.</strong> How does the physical environment foster learning and faculty-student contact? What kind of oversight ensures that the off-campus site is well managed? (CFRs 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5)</th>
<th>Los Angeles classes meet in a hotel conference room, with students around a table. Materials are provided in advance and arrangements are ensured by the local Program Coordinator.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Support Services. CPR:</strong> What is the site's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? <strong>EER:</strong> What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)</td>
<td>The LEAP Program Director and Los Angeles Program Coordinator advise students in courses, occasionally life balance counseling (for adult learners). Faculty provide out-of-class access through email, Skype, and during class breaks. The student guide informs students how to utilize College services (e.g., library, career development, graduate advising, and information technology services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty.</strong> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty are involved in the academic oversight of the programs at this site? How do these faculty members participate in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.4, 4.6)</td>
<td>Approximately 30 faculty nationwide teach in the LEAP program; all have master's degrees and most have doctorates. Onsite faculty are provided with course syllabi and materials and are in communication with department chairs for relevant course evaluations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum and Delivery.</strong> Who designs the programs and courses at this site? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus? (CFR 2.1-2.3, 4.6) [Also submit credit hour report.]</td>
<td>The curriculum for the LEAP program is the same, regardless of the City in which it is being offered. The programs and courses are comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus, delivered in ways that are appropriate for adult learners with a professional background in dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retention and Graduation.</strong> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students enrolled at this off-campus site? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to programs at the main campus? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)</td>
<td>Retention and graduation rates are maintained with all other programs. Term-to-term retention rates for nontraditional students is not as meaningful as for full-time traditional students, but graduation rates over 10 terms has been as high as 73% and as low as 47%. Staff are very proactive in outreach to students and inviting them back to the program when they begin to have other commitments that interfere</td>
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<tr>
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A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all visits in which off-campus sites were reviewed. One form should be used for each site visited. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

1. Site Name and Address

**Hotel Penn, New York City**

2. Background Information (number of programs offered at this site; degree levels; FTE of faculty and enrollment; brief history at this site; designation as a regional center or off-campus site by WASC)

The program: Liberal Education for Arts Professionals (LEAP): leading to a B.A. in Performing Arts. This is a bachelor’s degree program for professional dancers offered in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Las Vegas.

The BA in Performing Arts degree has been offered since 1992 specifically to dance professionals whose careers often begin in the elementary school period and extend through their early 30s. Because of the demands of the profession, auditions, practice, performances in many venues other than their home city, most dancers do not have the opportunity to earn a college degree.

The New York City site was initially co-sponsored with another Christian Brothers college, Manhattenville, but after the first year of operation, SMCC became the sole administrator. The current program director pointed out that NYC is a particularly good site because of the number of professional dance companies and the number and breadth of dance opportunities.

LEAP uses a cohort model, starting 18 - 20 students each semester. Its core courses meet from 6 - 10 pm on Sunday nights to avoid the practice and performing schedules of the dancers. The program director strives to schedule the classes each semester around the traveling schedules of the larger dance companies such as the American Dance Company.

3. Nature of the Review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

Reviewed as a part of the Reaccreditation of Saint Mary’s College of California, Sept. 9-12, 2014.

**Materials studied:**
- Saint Mary’s Institutional Report
- LEAP Curriculum
- LEAP Goals and Learning Outcomes
- Online information
- 2014 Student Guide

**Individuals interviewed:** Program Director, two instructors and students in March 2 class and morning of March 3.

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1 See Protocol for Review of Off-Campus Sites to determine whether and how many sites will be visited.
# Observations and Findings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lines of Inquiry</th>
<th>Observations and Findings</th>
<th>Follow-up Required (identify the issues)</th>
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<td><strong>Fit with Mission.</strong> How does the institution conceive of this and other off-campus sites relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How is the site planned and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1)</td>
<td>The LEAP program was founded in 1998 by a faculty member who was director of the dance program at SMC. LEAP would offer professional dancers a comprehensive, affordable liberal arts education and “honor the academic standards and traditions of SMC.”</td>
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<td><strong>Connection to the Institution.</strong> How visible and deep is the presence of the institution at the off-campus site? In what ways does the institution integrate off-campus students into the life and culture of the institution? (CFRs 1.2, 2.10)</td>
<td>The Student Guide includes a history of SMC; program materials identify SMC as having a reputation for excellence, innovation and responsiveness in education that derives from its Catholic, Lasallian and Liberal Arts heritage. The academic goals and learning outcomes mirror those of the traditional UG BA in Performing Arts offered at the Moraga Campus. The Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Programs oversee the program—its match with SMC academic quality and mission.</td>
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<td><strong>Quality of the Learning Site.</strong> How does the physical environment foster learning and faculty-student contact? What kind of oversight ensures that the off-campus site is well managed? (CFRs 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5)</td>
<td>NYC classes meet in a hotel conference rooms. Materials are provided in advance and arrangements are ensured by the local Program Coordinator. The curriculum has four distinct components equaling 120 units. All LEAP students take the same first 30 units. The curriculum is patterned after the great books core on the main campus. Until recently, the learning outcomes were course by course based, but LEAP and the main campus now have explicit learning outcomes for all the performing arts and for the LEAP program in particular. They are at the beginning of linking these outcomes to specific courses and assessments. SMCC hires adjuncts to teach LEAP courses. Faculty teaching at the NYC site (physically located at a conference center at the Hotel Penn) have impressive credentials appropriate to the courses taught, have and are teaching at other colleges, and, as observed during the site visit, worked hard to involve the students in critically reflecting and analyzing the material using evidence and examples from the books read. On the Sunday night of observation, one class discussed Gilgamesh, the epic poem from 2500 BC Mesopotamia as well as AE Rex. The other class discussed a contemporary book by a Buddhist nun. Especially notable was each instructor’s encouragement to these adults who as the program director mentioned, are often required by artistic directors to simply dance, not think. The director noted that in the past, other than for modern dance, dancers were</td>
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prohibited from bringing newspapers, books, or other reading materials to practices. Though this culture is changing somewhat, the LEAP program tries to instill a level of self-confidence in its students, inviting and encouraging participation in the Sunday night classes.

Another way the curriculum is tailored to dance professionals is its focus on prior learning assessment and internships. Offering up to 30 units (credits) for performing arts experience which is assessed through essays the students learn to write in PPA....

LEAP also incorporates internships that are tailored to particular interests of the students. For instance one student wanted to learn more about managing a non-profit, so the program directors scouted out opportunities and connected the student with..... The internships are particularly important to dance professionals who have spent much of their lives in the performance arena, and now, with the physical demands of the profession move them out of dancing, and find themselves without a career path to follow.

Student Support Services. CPR: What is the site's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? EER: What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)

The LEAP Program Director in NYC advises students in courses, occasionally life balance counseling (for adult learners). Faculty provide out-of-class access through email, Skype, and during class breaks.

The program director makes himself visible and accessible to the students, spending a week or more in NYC each month, visiting the classes, asking if there were questions on typical college logistics (financial aid issues, registration etc.) and inviting contact as needed.

The student guide informs students how to utilize College services (e.g., library, career development, graduate advising, and information technology services)

Faculty. Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty are involved in the academic oversight of the programs at this site? How do these faculty members participate in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.4, 4.6)

Approximately 30 faculty nationwide teach in the LEAP program; all have master's degrees and most have doctorates.

Onsite faculty are provided with course syllabi and materials and are in communication with department chairs for relevant course evaluations.

Curriculum and Delivery. Who designs the programs and courses at this site? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus? (CFR 2.1-2.3, 4.6) [Also submit credit hour report.]

The curriculum for the LEAP program is the same, regardless of the City in which it is being offered. The programs and courses are comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus, delivered in ways that are appropriate for adult learners with a professional background in dance.
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<th><strong>Retention and Graduation.</strong> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students enrolled at this off-campus site? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to programs at the main campus? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)</th>
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<td>Retention and graduation rates are maintained with all other programs. Term-to-term retention rates for nontraditional students is not as meaningful as for full-time traditional students, but graduation rates over 10 terms has been as high as 73% and as low as 47%. Staff are very proactive in outreach to students and inviting them back to the program when they begin to have other commitments that interfere with their academic studies.</td>
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