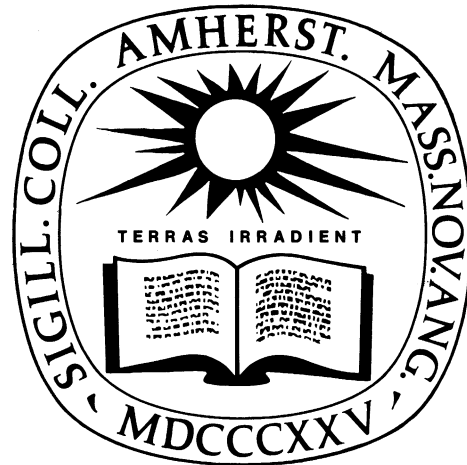


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NOT FOR CIRCULATION

Amherst College



Report to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

November 15, 2007

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Preface

The following self-study report will in final form be submitted to the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Earlier drafts were reviewed by various faculty and college committees, the board of trustees, the student senate, and senior administrators (see below). This draft is being distributed for commentary by all on-campus constituencies in November and December. Final submission will be early in January of 2008 in preparation for the visit of the evaluation team on March 2-5, 2008.

Our self-study began in the spring of 2006 with the organization of the Reaccreditation Steering Committee¹ and the appointment the Ad Hoc Faculty Advisory Group on Reaccreditation.² Barbara Brittingham, director of the CIHE, visited Amherst in May of 2006 to discuss the accreditation review with the faculty advisory group and with President Marx and his senior staff.

In the fall of 2006, the steering committee prepared a schedule, an outline, and a plan for distributing responsibility for preparation of the self-study, and launched a Web site (https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/reaccreditation). The dean and associate dean of the faculty met with the chairs of academic departments to solicit their advice and to request information about how departments address students' educational needs beyond the major and assess learning within the major. The faculty advisory group was asked to draft a college mission statement in consultation with all college constituencies, as requested in 1998 by the CIHE. That process is described under *Mission and Purposes*. After a series of four public drafts, the faculty and trustees approved a mission statement in May of 2007.

¹ Members: Amrita Basu (political science and women's and gender studies), associate dean of the faculty; Greg Call (mathematics), dean of the faculty; Rick Griffiths (classics and women's and gender studies), associate dean of the faculty (coordinator); Shannon Gurek, associate treasurer and director of the budget; Gerald Mager, registrar; Anthony Marx (political science), president; Marian Matheson, director of institutional research; Nancy Ratner, assistant dean of admission and researcher for academic projects; and Janet Tobin, assistant dean of the faculty.

² Members: Professors Greg Call (mathematics), dean of the faculty, ex officio; Rhonda Cobham-Sander (black studies and English), special assistant to the president for diversity; Rick Griffiths (classics and women's and gender studies), associate dean of the faculty, ex officio; Tekla Harms (geology); Peter Lobdell (theater and dance); Rose Olver (psychology and women's and gender studies); and Stanley Rabinowitz (Russian) (2006-07).

In the summer of 2007, responses to the CIHE's eleven standards for accreditation were drafted by the appropriate administrative offices. These drafts were reviewed by the steering committee, the president's senior staff, and the faculty advisory group. In September of 2007, the first draft of the entire report was reviewed by the Committee of Six, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR), the faculty advisory group, and the president's senior staff. In October and early November, the second draft was reviewed by the chair of the evaluation team, President Alfred Bloom of Swarthmore College; Louis Zak, Associate Director of the CIHE; the Board of Trustees of Amherst College; the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council; the Advisory Committee on Personnel Policies (ACPP), and the College Council. The *Overview* and *Students* were discussed with the Student Senate and at an open forum for all students.

This draft is being shared with all on-campus constituencies for individual commentary and for discussion at a series of forums. There will also be further consultation with faculty governing committees.

The documentation for this report is being assembled and will be made available to the evaluation team electronically and in the team room.

Further particulars about our self-study process and a link to CIHE's *Standards for Accreditation* can be found at our Web site (above).

All readers of this draft are invited to address suggestions and questions to reaccreditation@amherst.edu. Written comments can be addressed to Rick Griffiths, AC #2209, Amherst College, Amherst, MA 01002-5000.

Primary contributors

Listed below are the primary drafters of each of the standards:

Mission and Purposes: Rick Griffiths

Planning and Evaluation: Marian Matheson

Organization and Governance: Susan Pikor and Nancy Ratner

Academic Program: Nancy Ratner and Rick Griffiths

Faculty: Nancy Ratner and Rick Griffiths

Students: Tom Parker, Ben Lieber, and Janet Tobin

Library and Information Resources: Sherre Harrington, Peter Schilling, and Amrita Basu

Physical and Technological Resources: Jim Brassord

Financial Resources: Peter Shea and Shannon Gurek

Public Disclosure: Stacey Schmeidel

Integrity: Rick Griffiths

Nov. 3, 2007

OVERVIEW

Our self-study proceeded over three semesters during which we were concluding and implementing a five-year academically focused planning initiative. We took this occasion to adopt a mission statement through what proved to be a spirited year-long conversation among all college constituencies. The report to follow takes stock of how well we live up to that declared mission and can fulfill it better. In the last decade, Amherst has both thrived as never before and taken a long, unflinching look at how we can more effectively serve our students.

There is much to celebrate. The talent assembled on this hillside has never been more impressive, more various, or more capable of forging an inclusive and intellectually vibrant community. We have kept pace with the increasing resources needed to support this enterprise and extensively renewed our historic campus for next-century needs. As knowledge and technology expand, we have consolidated our strengths as a small college—intense, but not insular—that offers, through the Five College consortium and other off-campus opportunities, university-scale specialization and cultural range.

From the last decade, the following accomplishments stand out. We have:

- Enrolled a more diverse student body, while increasing selectivity. Over half of entering classes now receive Amherst-based aid. Almost 40 percent of our students identify as U.S. students of color; 7 percent are non-U.S. citizens. We have recruited and enrolled an increasing number of students from the lower quartile of US family income distribution.
- Made a college education more affordable, particularly for students in the middle two quartiles of income distribution, by eliminating loan expectations for many (and, as of 2008, all) aid recipients.
- Established college-wide curricular priorities and incorporated them in the process of allocating new faculty positions.
- Established the Teaching and Advising Project to assist faculty in developing new pedagogies, skills as advisors, and tools for understanding student learning.
- Created substantial capacity for institutional self-appraisal and planning by creating the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and by expanding of the Office of the Dean of the Faculty.
- Instituted an Honor Code for students.

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- Instituted more rigorous standards for the award of graduation honors. Almost half of students are graduated having completed an independent honors project.
- Developed and completed the first phase of the Residential Master Plan, housing all first-year students in the central quadrangle, whose buildings have been renovated or rebuilt to allow new forms of intellectual and social interaction. We have eliminated significant amounts of deferred maintenance.
- Enhanced academic support services for students, including the writing and quantitative centers and in support of students for whom English is a second language.
- Reorganized and expanded the Department of Information Technology, including a new unit, Academic Technology Services, to support instruction and research, and tripled the number of computerized classrooms.
- Strengthened procedures for evaluating and mentoring untenured faculty and provided a full year of sabbatical leave after reappointment.
- Launched the Center for Community Engagement to integrate service and study through enhanced programs of public service, internships, and community-based learning courses. Interested students are assured of a paid summer internship at a non-profit organization.
- Revitalized our three distinguished museums by renovating the Mead Art Museum, building a new facility for the Museum of Natural History, joining the Dickinson Homestead and the Evergreens into the Emily Dickinson Museum, and co-founding the Museums10 collaborative. We also opened the Center for Russian Culture as a scholarly and cultural resource and have collaborated with the new educational initiatives of the Folger Shakespeare Library.
- Further strengthened the financial position of the college by superior endowment performance and by adherence to prudent budgeting and capital planning.

However, our most hard-won and perhaps enduring accomplishments have come from a concerted inquiry, of a breadth and intensity not seen in decades, into the Amherst education.¹ Our previous reaccreditation review asked us to examine our general education program

¹ The core of this process has been a succession of ad hoc committees: the Special Committee on the Amherst Education (SCAE) (2002-03), a half-dozen related faculty working groups in learning areas (2004 onward, some still in service), and the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) (2005-06), whose planning function has been given over on a continuing basis to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), with revision of the CEP's charge and enhanced administrative support. The reports of these ad hoc committees are available at the CAP Web site: <http://www.amherst.edu/%7Ecap/>.

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carefully. There have been other spurs, including a new administration, a changing student body with increasingly complex needs, a faculty on the verge of rapid turnover, the accelerating growth of knowledge and the arts, and new pressures on liberal arts colleges to prove our viability as an educational model in a global culture that values scale and specialization and that imperils intellectual freedom. In keeping with the American tendency for curricular rethinking to follow wars, Amherst adopted a stringent core curriculum in 1945 and, at a polar remove, an open curriculum in 1970, and thrived with both. The new millennium may mark another such turning point, as global conflict intensifies and technology hurtles forward, while the public schools and other civic institutions continue to decline. As the world darkens, we have grasped with new clarity our privilege, vulnerability, and responsibility. After decades of impasse in setting college-wide educational priorities, we have—while agreeing to disagree on many points—declared our mission and found a direction forward in fulfilling it.

This inquiry has had a threefold focus, which has led to commitments for action:

Access

The first principle of our mission is to “educate men and women of exceptional potential from all backgrounds.” That objective entails an obligation not only to enroll the most promising individual students but to assure that the whole student body is more than the sum of its parts “in order to promote diversity of experience and ideas within a purposefully small residential community.” We have strengthened our outreach to talented students wherever they may be in US and global society and to provide them access “whatever their financial need.” To meet that goal, we have undertaken to replace loans with grants in financial aid packages from 2008 onward, to increase socio-economic diversity, and to enroll more international students and transfer students from community colleges. In order to broaden access while maintaining current patterns of diversity, we will expand the student body by some 5 percent.

Faculty and curricular renewal

We are analyzing multiple dimensions of our educational program: the breadth of students’ course selection in the open curriculum; the role of pre-major advising; the development of foundational expressive, analytical, and creative capabilities; the impact of variable levels of student preparation and the capacity of departments to address that variability; the increasing role of learning beyond the classroom—in independent and directed research, experiential learning, internships, and study abroad; the fairness and credibility of our grading system; and the need for new courses and programs to keep pace with the growth of knowledge, the arts, and technology. We accept that the price of curricular freedom is rigorous oversight and are addressing the central challenge of giving diverse students, with a range of preparations and goals, meaningful and well-informed educational choice by an enhanced advising system, experimental courses in writing and quantitative subjects, increased academic support services, and new opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. We are undertaking to assess their curricular choices systematically.

The faculty, faced with an anticipated rapid turnover from retirements in coming years and the growing demands of teaching, advising, research, and governance, has taken a stand against the

Overview

fragmentation undergone by faculties elsewhere. They have reaffirmed their responsibility for the full range of students' learning needs, from fostering foundational skills to supervising cutting-edge research, and have endorsed our traditional model of the scholar-teacher and artist-teacher, without recourse to an adjunct or second-tier faculty. To meet these responsibilities and cover new fields, a significant expansion of the size of the faculty is under consideration by the board of trustees, with the additional positions to be allocated by a new system that balances college-wide needs with the demands for specialization in particular disciplines. Administrative and financial support for faculty research will be increased, as will support in developing capabilities as teachers and advisors.

Campus and community renewal

In clarifying our mission as a residential college, we have developed principles for integrating academic, co-curricular, residential, and administrative functions on a "mixed-use" campus. With the completion of the first phase of the Residential Master Plan, we are assessing needs and formulating planning processes for a range of possible projects: the Merrill Science Center, Frost Library, the expansion of office and classroom space, the renovation of the remaining residence halls, and the construction of a quadrangle on the east campus to replace the so-called Social Dorms. We have committed ourselves to high standards of environmental sustainability. With the new cogeneration plant and other conservation measures, we can meet the Kyoto Protocol of reducing by the year 2012 our greenhouse gas emissions to 7 percent below 1990 levels.

Underlying our goals in the above areas and in all areas of campus life is our commitment to diversity and inclusion. Our progress in bringing together a student body from all backgrounds and their continuing progress in forming a cohesive community inspire us to redouble our efforts to create a comparably inclusive culture among faculty, administrators, and staff.

These points are further explained in the text.

A NOTE ON THE FIVE COLLEGES

Throughout this report we note Amherst College's collaboration with the other members of Five Colleges, Incorporated: Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Below we offer a general view of the consortium to provide background for these later references.

The consortium grew out of a successful collaboration begun in the 1950s among Amherst, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and the University of Massachusetts. It was incorporated as a nonprofit educational organization in 1965 and resulted in the founding of a fifth institution, Hampshire College, in 1970. Five Colleges, Incorporated is one of the oldest consortia in American higher education and is regarded as one of the most successful. It administers cooperative agreements that give students open access to courses, library holdings, and a range of co-curricular activities. Under its auspices more than eighty committees of faculty, administrators, and staff plan and implement joint programs and projects. The Five College community has in all some 26,000 undergraduate students, 2,200 faculty members, 5,300 undergraduate courses, and nine million volumes and other paper holdings.

Five Colleges, Incorporated is governed by a board of directors, consisting of the presidents of the four colleges and the chancellor of the Amherst campus of the university, along with the executive director. The board meets monthly to oversee policy, management, and finances. The Five College Deans Council meets five or six times each semester with the executive director to coordinate matters of curriculum and research. The principal student affairs officers meet several times a year, and the principal business officers meet monthly with the executive director to oversee collaboration in their respective domains. The consortium has an annual budget of over \$6.5 million, derived chiefly from institutional assessments and grants from outside sources.

Programs for faculty include exchanges, joint appointments, joint residencies for scholars and artists, faculty seminars, lecture funds, and fellowships for scholars writing doctoral dissertations.

Among the academic programs are two Five College departments (Astronomy and Dance), interdisciplinary and area studies programs, and various certificate programs (listed below under *The Academic Program*).

Joint administrative programs include joint purchasing and management training. The four colleges share the services of a risk manager and a recycling manager and (without Hampshire) an energy manager and a central office for rental housing.

Overview

Other shared resources include:

- Student interchange (open cross registration)
- The Five College Library Depository
- The Center for the Study of World Languages
- Bus systems under the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
- Meal exchange
- WFCR (Five College Radio)
- Women's Studies Research Center (located at Mount Holyoke)
- Fiber-optic network
- Online resources: library search for holdings of all five institutions, course catalog, database of art museum holdings, calendar of events
- Museums 10, a partnership of the seven museums in the Five Colleges, plus three neighboring museums (Historic Deerfield, the National Yiddish Book Center, the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art)

The consortium maintains a Web site (<http://www.fivecolleges.edu/>) with information about the programs and with links to the individual colleges.

There was a comprehensive external review of Five Colleges, Incorporated in the spring of 1999. The two Five College departments undergo periodic external reviews. Consortial administrative programs and projects are regularly assessed.

1 MISSION AND PURPOSES

OVERVIEW

The college has adopted a mission statement that grew out of a process of self-examination and planning that began in 2002 and that has involved all college constituencies.

DESCRIPTION

The Mission of Amherst College

Terras irradiant

“Let them give light to the world.”

1821

Amherst College educates men and women of exceptional potential from all backgrounds so that they may seek, value, and advance knowledge, engage the world around them, and lead principled lives of consequence.

Amherst brings together the most promising students, whatever their financial need, in order to promote diversity of experience and ideas within a purposefully small residential community. Working with faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to intellectual freedom and the highest standards of instruction in the liberal arts, Amherst undergraduates assume substantial responsibility for undertaking inquiry and for shaping their education within and beyond the curriculum.

Amherst College is committed to learning through close colloquy and to expanding the realm of knowledge through scholarly research and artistic creation at the highest level. Its graduates link learning with leadership—in service to the College, to their communities, and to the world beyond.

Approved by the faculty and board of trustees
(May 2007)

This statement appears in the college *Catalog* and Web site; the *Faculty, Trustee-Appointed Employee, Staff, and Student Handbooks*:¹ and in admission and financial aid

¹ *Faculty Handbook*: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fachandbook/missionstatement
Trustee-Appointed Employee Handbook: <http://www.amherst.edu/~hr/tahdbook/03i.html>
Staff Handbook: <http://www.amherst.edu/~hr/staffhdbook/mission.html>

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literature and other official college publications. It is consistent with the Charter of Amherst College of 1824 and with subsequent amendments.

Like other close-knit communities, Amherst long shied away from the delicate process of finding common language for our deeply shared purposes. For almost two-hundred years our trustees, faculty members, and administrators have issued statements and adopted programs that explain our central and continuing purpose of attracting highly qualified students from many backgrounds and providing them with an excellent liberal arts education in the expectation they will benefit others.² Broad consensus on a single statement had not been attempted or achieved. We were ready for that large conversation by 2006 after four years of intensive discussion of our identity and the challenges that face us as an institution, as described in *Planning and Evaluation*. In 2005 the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) asked all academic and related administrative departments to submit planning documents outlining their mission and needs. These impressively articulate statements allowed CAP to begin looking at individual departments and move on to viewing the institution as a whole. The CAP introduced their final report with a four-page profile of the college's mission entitled "What Amherst Can Be," which was well received by many constituencies, on campus and off.³ The posting of the CAP's report on the Web, with invitations for commentary, and a subsequent mailing to all alumni by President Marx elicited hundreds of responses about the college's character, purposes, and obligations. The major themes of these responses were summarized as background for the subsequent conversations.

In the fall of 2006, at the behest of the board of trustees and the Committee of Six, the Ad Hoc Faculty Advisory Group on Reaccreditation undertook a consultation with faculty, students, staff, administrators, and alumni about the adoption of a mission statement. Amherst's culture of shared governance informed the process from the outset. All of these constituencies had a hand in the drafting, and all are cited in the mission statement.

All participants were assured that a detailed report of unresolved issues would be made in order to inform interpretation and revision of the statement. That report follows in the remainder of this section.

The faculty advisory group began by distilling from the CAP report and official college publications eleven principles to be presented with the question, "Are these the principles that most warrant inclusion in a mission statement?" With slight revisions, these principles were presented at every stage of the consultation to clarify the intent of the necessarily more compressed prose of the statement itself. Those principles are, in their final form and in no particular order:

- High standards of intellectual and creative work;
- Purposeful smallness to allow students to interact with teachers, staff, and each other;

² For a compendium of statements by Amherst's presidents, see "Amherst's Philosophy" at <https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/philosophy>.

³ CAP report: http://www.amherst.edu/~cap/report2006/1_1.html

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- Faculty research and artistic creation;
- Fostering intellectual autonomy;
- Access for the most promising students without regard to their ability to pay;
- A community diverse in background and outlook living in a climate of civility and mutual concern;
- Producing graduates who will lead and serve in all fields;
- Freedom of inquiry and expression;
- Fostering a balance of intellectual engagement and principled action;
- Providing rich opportunities for co-curricular activities complementary to academic work;
- Active engagement with the world, both on and beyond the campus.

The phrasing of some items evolved during the consultation: For example, “purposeful smallness” was originally related only to the interaction of students with teachers; in the above language, that interaction has come to involve staff and other students as well, and in the mission statement administrators have also been cited. “Active engagement with the world beyond the campus” was amended to “on and beyond the campus” in light of the cultural and intellectual diversity that thrives on campus.

The above eleven principles proved to be at the top of virtually all respondents’ lists, even though individuals would rank them differently or would extend the list in different ways. Five College cooperation and the strength of faculty self-governance were suggested by some as distinguishing features of Amherst but were finally not included on the grounds that they are means to achieving our educational mission rather than ends in themselves. Some suggestions were noted for consideration in future years, such as the college’s obligation to serve the needs of local communities. Life-long learning is not among the eleven, but, upon multiple recommendations, was drawn into first and last sentences of the statement, which refer to the lives of graduates. Suggestions to be explicit about “residential” and “undergraduate” were also incorporated in the final statement. Though some respondents proposed special mention of athletics among co-curricular activities, the prevailing sentiment resisted further specificity in this area. Some participants asked if Amherst should identify itself as an American institution or foreground leadership in and service to the nation. All discussants agreed about the need to set out priorities forthrightly rather than resorting to endless list making; “less is more” was the single most frequent comment.

On the basis of these eleven principles, the faculty advisory group offered from November onward four successive drafts of the statement for public commentary in meetings or by e-mail, with accompanying explanations of the role of mission statements in institutional self-assessment, in disseminating institutional identity, and in the reaccreditation process. From January to May, drafts of the statement were posted on the college Web site for all on-campus constituencies, graduates, and parents of current students. The discussions proceeded with comparable vigor both on- and off-campus and with no overall differences of view between the two groups. The board of trustees was consulted in a series of four conversations from October through May.

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Even with a working consensus on the eleven principles, this iterative process involving hundreds of independent-minded and articulate participants elicited far more competing suggestions than there are words in the final statement; no particular of the evolving drafts went unchallenged. Below the level of wordsmithing, some central issues proved to be relatively uncontroversial: liberal arts education, faculty research and artistic creation, intellectual freedom, cultural and intellectual diversity, access for students whatever their financial circumstances, student responsibility, the small size of the college (with some proposals for modest growth), and a highly personal approach to education.

Some participants suggested that the statement should define liberal arts education in more detail. Glancing affirmations of “critical thinking” or “creativity” were generally considered too banal to be included. Listing specific learning goals was held to be at best premature and potentially also restrictive over the life of the institution in light of our current intensive conversations about writing, quantitative and scientific reasoning, global comprehension and foreign languages, the arts, experiential education, and interdisciplinary studies. Our search for a common vocabulary over the last few years has inspired caution about pat formulations. This issue will need to be revisited as the mission statement evolves in future years.

Two areas of particularly lively debate were the role of tradition and our aspirations that graduates lead and serve throughout their lives.

To acknowledge tradition, the college’s founding motto, *Terras irradiant*, has stood as epigraph in all drafts—questioned but never dislodged. The first sentence of the first (November) public draft made a link to the motto: “We honor our tradition by educating men and women....” The faculty advisory group’s report to the board of trustees in December 2006 summed up the debate that ensued on campus:

“We honor our tradition”:

Con: We don’t do what we do because of history. We should break free and look to the future.

Pro: Look around you; it’s who we are and it marks us out among schools.

About some points of continuity there was no dispute. Amherst College opened its doors in 1821 under the auspices of the Charity Institution, a fund established in 1818 for “the classical education of indigent young men of piety and talents.” In 1824 the Trustees secured a charter under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that affirms the mission to “promote virtue and piety, and the knowledge of such of the Languages and of the Liberal and useful Arts and Sciences, as shall be directed, from time to time, by said Corporation.” The charter further stipulates that the college will exclude neither students nor instructors on the basis of their religious opinions. About this legacy, there was strong agreement in all quarters about some central points: The liberal arts remain central, as do the connection of learning with service and the commitment to educate students of exceptional potential, whatever their financial need. The Charity Fund has become the college’s endowment, which supports need-blind admission. However, opinions differed about how directly freedom of belief, among the pious, is a precursor to or historical

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equivalent of intellectual freedom and about how far back Amherst can claim an institutional commitment to diversity, in our current understanding of the term.

The resolution reached was to present our mission in the present tense, but in a historic frame. The statement is prefaced by “*Terras irradiant*” and concludes with a sentence that voices the current understanding of that exhortation: “[The college’s] graduates link learning with leadership—in service to the College, to their communities, and to the world beyond.” In a global age, Amherst has the good luck to have “*terras*” as half of its motto.

On the second issue, all constituencies strongly agreed that meeting obligations beyond the self is central to a good life and a desirable outcome of the college experience. But spirited discussion ensued about how to affirm these aspirations without claiming to “teach” virtue. The opening sentence of the first draft was criticized for voicing exaggerated ambitions to educate students to “increase the sum of human knowledge and lead lives of consequence and ethical engagement.” Increasing the sum of knowledge (“Bombastic!”, “Unjustified!”) was ultimately refined into a progression: “seek, value, and advance knowledge”—and some respondents would still prefer to emphasize process (“learning”) rather than product (“knowledge”). The phrase, “lead lives of consequence and ethical engagement,” was compressed into “lead principled lives of consequence”—not a large change, but a telling debate. “Ethical engagement” drew the response that “the college is not a church” and questions about whether we can make this claim if we do not require courses in ethics and have not invested institutional identity in public service to the degree that some colleges have. The phrase, “principled lives,” proved to be better matched to the college’s character and goals.

A similar debate ensued about how and how much we can legitimately claim to foster “leadership” (which quickly became “leadership and service”). In the concluding sentence of the mission statement, the service of the college’s graduates is seen as a fulfillment of our mission, balancing “*Terras irradiant*” at the outset: “Its graduates link learning with leadership—in service to the College, to their communities, and to the world beyond.” It is left to the graduates to make the connection of learning to leadership by their own lights—a more indirect (but also prouder) claim than would be “we educate to serve” and one in keeping with the statement’s emphasis on students’ responsibility in inquiry and co-curricular activities.

This multi-stage adoption process demonstrated the depth of consensus among various constituencies about our mission, as well as about the need to communicate that mission to the outside world and to have clear understandings among ourselves as we embark on a period of rapid change. The adoption process in itself usefully gauged the degree to which the various college constituencies understood and subscribed to the large planning initiative. The statement was approved with overwhelming support by both the faculty and the board of trustees.

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APPRAISAL

It is too soon to revisit the mission statement to see how effectively it expresses our identity and purposes. We anticipate that the statement will serve as a guide to assessment of the college's practices in the following ways:

The statement sets a high, but flexible and non-reductive, standard for admitting "the most promising students" and students "of exceptional potential from all backgrounds." An applicant's capacity and will for growth should be the standard rather than formal credentials in and of themselves, given the different levels of educational opportunity available to the most talented and dedicated students. No single admission criterion, such as test scores or secondary school grades, should serve as a metric for future compliance. Similarly, the goal of seeking students from a range of backgrounds "to promote diversity of experience and ideas" cannot be met by demographic criteria without reference to the balance, energy, and versatility of the classes that are admitted.

The commitment to "bring together the most promising students, whatever their financial need" expresses what is currently the practice with students from the USA and what is aspired to, and largely achieved, with international students. Even if changing financial circumstances should force changes in policy, the commitment to broad access is presented as one of the central and defining goals of the college.

The statement affirms that being a small, residential, exclusively undergraduate institution is central to the Amherst education. It provides a criterion for judging the planning of facilities, for example, in asking if residence halls, academic buildings, and other facilities effectively foster community and the interactions of student with faculty, staff, and administrators.

The commitment to intellectual freedom extends and reinforces the provisions of the college's "Statement on Freedom of Expression and Dissent."⁴ It will be applicable in judging the working of the various disciplinary codes for students, faculty, staff, and trustee-appointed employees, as well as in judging the general climate on campus. In being linked to students' responsibility for shaping their education, this commitment also entails the obligation to provide the resources and latitude for intellectual self-determination.

The aspiration to maintain the highest standards in instruction in the liberal arts obliges the college to benchmark its practices against the first rank of peer institutions. Other ends are cited: that students should come to seek, value, and advance knowledge; take responsibility in inquiry; and link learning with service and learning throughout life. This standard is applicable in the evaluation of individual faculty members, in the reviews of academic departments, and in assessing the institution's address to the basic intellectual

⁴ Statement on Freedom of Expression and Dissent:
https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/policiesprocedures/freedomofexpression

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and creative competences of students. Since the statement does not stipulate particularized learning goals, the standard is flexible and holistic. The locus of the judgment is in the development of the individual student as realized ultimately in “principle lives of consequence” and is not invested in any list of areas to be covered but rather in the capacity to master new areas. There is no commitment to any given curricular structure. Measures of learning within the four years of the B.A. provide a necessary, but not sufficient, indication of effectiveness. Because the great majority of graduates proceed to further study and remain in contact with the college, it is feasible to track outcomes and gather retrospective evaluations on a longer term.

The affirmation that the advancement of knowledge and of art “at the highest level” is central to the college’s mission provides a standard of the faculty’s scholarly and artistic contributions, but one that is not reductive nor based on quantity or any single metric of influence and reputation. The college faces the challenge of developing mechanisms to assess those accomplishments.

PROJECTION

The consultation about adoption was conducted with the aim of stimulating, not foreclosing, conversation about the mission and purposes of the college. At all points, it was made clear that the statement would continue to be a work in progress and that dissents and suggestions would be noted for interpretation and revision of the statement.

Within the next five-years, the implementation of the CAP priorities and the formulation and execution of a comprehensive fundraising campaign will provide broad and continuing forums for discussion of Amherst’s missions and goals.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

We have pursued an integrated process to adopt a mission statement, plan strategically, and formulate the goals of a comprehensive campaign. The aspirations of the mission statement are therefore reflected in the CAP recommendations, for which the college is taking steps to provide resources. The close engagement of the board of trustees in all of these processes provides continuity as we shift from planning to implementation and fundraising. On the level of faculty governance, there has been an orderly transition from ad hoc to standing committees, in particular from the CAP to the Committee on Educational Policy in respect to curricular planning. Other standing committees of the college will continue to monitor and advise the implementation of the CAP recommendations and our fulfillment of our declared mission: the Committee of Six, the

Mission and Purposes

Committee on Priorities and Resources, the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, and the College Council.

2 PLANNING AND EVALUATION

OVERVIEW

Over the last ten years, our capacities for planning and evaluation have increased substantially in ways that grow out of and reinforce our culture of broad and well-informed participation. The strategic planning exercise that began in 2002 has allowed the coordination of planning in all sectors of the college, with a strong link between setting priorities and providing resources and with new structures and staffing that allow continuous planning and assessment. Empirical evidence has become central to decision making for both the administration and the faculty, with constant reference to the best practices of peer institutions. We are still catching up in some areas of evaluation but proceeding with strong momentum.

DESCRIPTION

In 1998 the evaluation team found that all realms of college life were subject to intense self-examination, in large measure through the work of the standing committees of the college. The team also noted the heavy burden on these committees, especially the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), and the sparse use of comparative data. In recent decades the college had been leaving institution-wide coordination to blue ribbon committees, convened every ten years or so. The Priorities Planning Committee (PPC) (1993) led to the adoption of a model of financial equilibrium and other improvements in administrative procedures, which put the college on a secure footing. However, the curricular recommendations of the PPC and other ad hoc committees had little impact, other than the creation of seminars for first-year students in 1978. The self-study report of 1998 noted that Amherst's "democratic" traditions of decentralized authority might put limits on the college's ability to assess, plan, and change: "At times we identify problems and possible answers to them and yet find ourselves too atomized to achieve significant reforms." The evaluation team listed at the top of its concerns: "Promoting action in a community unusually dependent on consensus."

On a continuing basis, well-written committee reports poured forth in no particular relationship to one another or to the large number of externally administered surveys that were commissioned and largely ignored, including the Five College cycles survey and the Consortium on Financing of Higher Education (COFHE)-sponsored surveys of seniors, enrolled students, alumni, and current parents. Although a consultant compiled volumes of summary tables for Amherst, even administrators often did not know about the results, let alone incorporate them into decision making.

Successful reform and planning in various areas of college life paved the way for the planning initiative that began in 2002. Perceived inequities in the evaluation and support

Planning and Evaluation

of untenured faculty across departments led to an ad hoc faculty committee, which proposed wide-ranging changes in reappointment and tenure procedures, especially in respect to the evaluation of teaching, based on a survey of the practices of thirteen peer institutions (1997-98). To date, procedures have been amended on some sixteen issues in the *Faculty Handbook*. The committee's recommendations also led ultimately to the Mellon Project for Teaching and Learning from 2002 onward, now renamed and expanded as the Teaching and Advising Project (TAP), which supports the development of new pedagogies, advising practices, and evaluative mechanisms.

The Residential Master Plan process, which began in the spring of 2000, made broad consultation with students, faculty, and staff central to facilities planning so as to produce an integrated view of living and learning on a liberal arts campus. The success of this process now provides a model for planning the reconstruction of the east campus.

In response to requests for an expansion in the size of the faculty, then capped at 165 full-time equivalents (FTEs) for tenured and tenure-track appointments, the board of trustees in 2001 requested a full-scale review of the educational program. In the spring of 2002 the Committee of Six appointed the Special Committee on the Amherst Education (SCAE), consisting of five professors, the president, and the dean and associate dean of the faculty. Charged with reviewing all aspects of the academic program in light of the practices of peer institutions, the SCAE visited ten colleges and universities to investigate best practices; reviewed data about students' course selection, performance, and self-reports in surveys; and consulted broadly with faculty and students, alumni, and the board of trustees. In the spring of 2003 the SCAE recommended creating faculty task forces to examine five areas of the curriculum, further empowerment of the CEP, and an expansion of our institutional research (IR) capacities. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning was created in the fall of 2003, with a director who reports directly to the president.¹

In 2003, the Committee of Six appointed five working groups to examine writing, quantitative skills, global education, experiential education, and visual understanding. In individual ways, these five groups continued the methods of the SCAE in benchmarking the effectiveness of our programs against best practices elsewhere and consulted broadly with Amherst faculty and students. Each ad hoc working group submitted its findings for discussion at a faculty meeting. The Quantitative Skills Working Group continues to meet; the other groups have handed on their charge, in whole or part, to successor groups.²

In 2004, under a new president a more comprehensive planning group, the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP), was appointed to extend and complete the work of the SCAE and to inform the setting of goals for an anticipated comprehensive fundraising campaign. The CAP was asked to take an expansive view of how the college might fully realize its potential and play a leadership role in transforming liberal education. The

¹ SCAE report: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees

² Working groups' reports: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees

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CAP, co-chaired by the president and a faculty member, comprised four other faculty members, two students, a member of the staff, two administrators, and the dean and associate dean of the faculty. The committee reviewed reams of institutional research, the reports and recommendations of the ad hoc working groups, and some fifty planning documents from all academic departments, related administrative units, faculty committees, and consortia of faculty proposing new programs. The CAP consulted regularly with the trustees and held thirty open and invited meetings for faculty (90 percent participated), administrators, staff, students, and alumni, as well as for committees and departments. The CAP recommendations³ were discussed in detail by the entire faculty during twice-monthly faculty meetings in the spring of 2006 and approved in principle in May 2006, with modifications and additions spelled out in a “sum and substance” document.

At the same time as these broad planning initiatives were set in motion, the college supplemented the cycle of annual surveys with program assessment for smaller initiatives, including the Phoenix Program for students in introductory chemistry, the summer science program, the first-year seminars, the success of graduates in mathematics and science majors PhD programs, the advising program, and scheduling conflicts for students in electing courses. We also launched more substantial assessment efforts to examine the library facilities, the honors program, the athletics program, the community outreach program, the Mead Art Museum, information technology, the quantitative center, the writing center, the career center the January interterm offerings, and selected academic departments. Most of these assessment efforts have combined internal review with input from faculty, students, and alumni, as well as an external review by a panel of peers.

The college has also joined, and persuaded several of our peer institutions to join, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the survey of untenured faculty satisfaction made by the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE).

The findings and recommendations of the SCAE, the related faculty working groups, and the CAP are described under *The Academic Program*. Changes in the procedures for evaluating untenured and tenured faculty members are addressed in “Procedures for Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion” in the appraisal section of *Faculty*.

³CAP report: http://www.amherst.edu/~cap/report2006/1_1.html.

Current Amherst College Survey Projects

Survey	Target Population	Focus	History
CIRP	Incoming first-year students	High school experiences and activities, college search, social and political views, self-assessment.	Developed and administered by UCLA (Astin) for close to 40 years. Reports on national results issued in late fall. Amherst has participated in many of the 40 years.
Enrolled Student Survey	First-year students, sophomores and juniors in the spring	Academic engagement, advising resources, time diary, academic self-assessment.	Developed and administered in cooperation with COFHE. Amherst has participated in this project for the past 3 years.
Senior Survey	Graduating seniors in the spring	Satisfaction with academics, services and campus life, academic self-assessment, future plans, evaluation of career services, assessment of experience in the major, time diary.	Developed and administered in cooperation with COFHE. Amherst has participated in this project for the past 3 years, and several years prior.
Alumni Survey	Alumni ten years out and other classes as needed (usually up to 25 years out in 5-year increments)	Immediate post-graduation and current educational and work experiences, advanced degrees, perception of Amherst's emphases, self-assessment, college and graduate school financing, personal development, service & philanthropic activities, connection to alma mater, political and social values.	Developed and administered in cooperation with COFHE. Amherst has participated in 2000 and 2005.
Parents' Survey	Parents of current students	Assessment of the child's Amherst experience, information shared with parents, involvement in child's life, concerns about child, financing.	Developed and administered in cooperation with COFHE. Amherst has participated in 2002 and 2006.

APPRAISAL

The past decade has brought not only an intensification of activity, from a combination of external and internal pressures, but also substantial progress toward creating more durable structures of planning and evaluation that bring the faculty, administration, and board of trustees into effective collaboration.

The external pressures are those felt on all campuses: Expectations have increased for the reporting of institutional information to government agencies, foundations, and the various stakeholders of the institution. Amherst finds itself in an intense competition in recruiting and retaining the most promising students and faculty. The office of admission and financial aid has long been a leader in the use and dissemination of data, and its close working relationship with the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA) has been a model to peer campuses. A major review of admission standards by FCAFA in 1999, with extensive discussion and action by the faculty, led to substantial changes in admission procedures (see under *Students*). As noted above, since 2002 the faculty, trustees, and administration have been engaged in assessment and strategic planning to renew the academic program and to set priorities in preparation for a comprehensive campaign. The SCAE and the CAP have in various ways initiated and coordinated planning efforts that encompass reports from a score of appointed and self-formed working groups and from all academic and related administrative departments; the sustained participation of virtually all continuing faculty members and of the central standing committees of the faculty; and dialogue with the board of trustees on an unprecedented scale.

This evolving process has generated new capacities for planning and evaluation that are powerful, but not yet fully realized on all levels or ideally coordinated with one another. Initiatives discussed under *The Academic Program* include: the transfer of long-term planning functions from an ad hoc committee (the CAP) to a standing committee (the CEP);⁴ the organization of the Teaching and Advising Project (TAP), charged with supporting faculty development as teachers and advisors and with developing new mechanisms for measuring student learning; the development of a model of experimental writing-intensive classes and of supplemental-instruction programs for quantitative courses with systematic assessment and refinement; and clearer articulation of purposes on the level of the college (including a mission statement), of academic departments, and of particular courses (such as the first-year seminars, in an explanatory booklet sent to incoming students to inform their choice of seminar).⁵

⁴On the modification of the CEP and its continuation of the planning function of the CAP, see under *Organization and Governance* and the report to the faculty by the CEP of May 2007:

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees

⁵First-year seminar brochure with description of courses:

<http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/orientation/07%20PDFs/FYSbook2007.pdf>

Planning and Evaluation

To support this transition from sporadic to sustained evaluation and planning, we have increased staffing through the creation of:

- the Office of Institutional Research and Planning;
- the position of director of sponsored research with central responsibility for compliance with federal and state regulations;
- two new associate dean of the faculty positions with responsibilities that include planning and evaluation;
- two new positions of senior advisor for academic life in the dean's office;
- a half-time position of researcher and coordinator to assist the CEP with its increased responsibilities for curricular planning;
- positions in the dean of students office, library, and athletics department charged in part with assessing needs and finding solutions in respect to the challenges of creating a diverse and inclusive campus community.

As will be discussed under *Faculty*, these new positions in large measure respond to what had become excessive demands on faculty committees for time and expertise and provide continuity to bridge the regular turnover in committee chairs and members. We make better use of faculty members' knowledge and judgment if they are not at the same time saddled with onerous administrative duties. These increases were also needed to secure grant support for new academic initiatives and for faculty research, because foundations, corporations, and government agencies increasingly require systematic reporting of institutional data and of the impact of grants. Common to all of these initiatives is increased rigor in the use of internal and comparative evidence.

As a result of our expanded IR and planning office, we have been able to take on a number of new projects with direct impact on education at Amherst. We have participated in a Teagle Foundation-funded project that assessed the impact of an open curriculum at eight institutions⁶ and have investigated best practices in the teaching of first-year seminars. Our faculty committees finally find themselves positioned to make decisions based on reliable quantitative and qualitative data, with assistance in analysis and interpretation from professionals in survey design and statistical analysis. As we look toward the future, we can now launch new ventures, such as the Center for Community Engagement, with assessment and planning built in from the ground up.

In 2007 the board of trustees devoted a significant portion of their summer retreat to reviewing with the IR director and other senior administrators the range of the college's assessment projects.

The stresses noted in the self-study of 1998 are with us still. Amherst has traditions of strong faculty self-governance, resistance to bureaucracy and centralized mandates, and widely shared convictions that the power of the Amherst education—made evident by the strength of the applicant pool, the satisfaction expressed by current students, and the

⁶ Teagle Foundation, "The Open Curriculum: An Alternative Tradition in American Higher Education" (2006): http://www.teaglefoundation.org/learning/pdf/2006_brownwg_whitepaper.pdf .

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informed loyalty of alumni—cannot be well captured by any metrics or descriptors. Constant turnover in standing committees makes it difficult to see complex projects through to completion over multiple years, and the need to achieve consensus across the faculty slows decision-making, but with the important benefit of assuring participation in the programs and procedures that are approved. Our academic departments tailor the assessment of student learning to their respective disciplines in ways that are useful for program development, but that do not support college-wide evaluation (see under *The Academic Program*).

Despite these stresses, the recent strategic planning endeavor has revealed elements of common mission that may have been unsuspected, and were certainly untapped, ten years ago. The availability of reliable evidence has offered a foundation for agreement in controversial areas. Though wary of centralization, the faculty, functioning as a town-meeting democracy, remains strongly committed to maintaining its close oversight of all aspects of the academic program and to avoiding the fragmentation into a collection of non-communicating specialists that has happened on other campuses (see under *Faculty*). For all their diversity, academic departments have proved to be highly capable of articulating their missions and of formulating long-term plans for both program and staffing that mesh with institutional priorities. Indeed, it is often departments that have, through self-assessment or through external reviews, come to define the limits of their individual capacity to address students' learning needs and to suggest where college-wide solutions are needed.

PROJECTIONS

Oversight and implementation of the recommendations of the CAP and the working groups that led up to it will continue to be vested in standing committees and administrative entities: The CEP will continue to build capacity in short- and long-term planning for the academic program (see under *Organization and Governance*). The Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) will monitor the alignment of resources to our program goals. FCAFA will monitor the initiatives in admission and financial aid. The TAP will develop programs to support the improvement and assessment of teaching and advising (see under *The Academic Program*).

In keeping with the college's mission to realize the potential of individual students and lead them to lives of consequence, the dean of the faculty's office, dean of students office, and IR office will collaborate to find measures of students' development and accomplishments through time from admission to later life (see under *The Academic Program*).

As was the case with the Residential Master Plan, which included input from all major constituencies as well as a rigorous comparison to our peer institutions, all facilities planning now incorporates rigorous deliberation about what we are trying to achieve within the mission of the college before addressing the bricks-and-mortar issues of renovation or new construction. These mechanisms will be applied in the campus-wide

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review of academic facilities, as well as the planning of the east campus (see under *Physical and Technological Resources*).

We now foresee a major role for the IR office in nearly all aspects of the college. Indeed the office may well require even further expansion to accommodate the increasing requests for data and analysis to support decision-making. Like other administrative units, this office will receive periodic external reviews.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Amherst's vigorously participatory culture provides close and continuous oversight over planning and evaluation. The trustees address these issues and receive direct reports from the IR director at virtually every meeting and periodically make a systematic review of our assessment efforts. Standing faculty and college committees, most of them with student membership, exercise continuing oversight of aspects of planning and evaluation, above all the Committee of Six, CEP, CPR, FCAFA, and College Council. The staff association (Advisory Committee on Personnel Policies) and Executive Committee of the Alumni Council are consulted on a regular basis. The independent-mindedness that, as noted, sometimes slows decision-making, also provides effective vigilance about the effectiveness and transparency of the processes involved.

3 ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

OVERVIEW

The Board of Trustees of Amherst College is the legal corporation, in which are invested ultimate authority and responsibility for the institution under the charter granted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1824. The board elects the president and approves appointments to the faculty and to senior administrative posts (known as trustee-appointed employees). The rights and responsibilities of the various classes of college employees are laid out in the *Faculty*, *Staff*, and *Trustee-Appointed Handbooks*, the last of which was thoroughly revised by a broad consultative process in 2004-05. All three handbooks are available on line.¹ Students play a significant role in committees, in academic departments, and in academic and administrative searches.

Shared governance structures have long been a hallmark of the college. Since the last NEASC re-accreditation, the college-wide planning processes have brought closer working relationships among all constituencies, especially those of faculty committees with the administration and with the trustees.

DESCRIPTION

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The board of trustees is a small “working board” with uniformly high levels of participation and regular turn-over. Its operation is governed by the college’s charter and the By-Laws of the Trustees of Amherst College. The board consists of the president plus a statutory limit of twenty other trustees, of whom there are currently nineteen, including thirteen term trustees elected by the board and six alumni trustees elected by alumni. Both term and alumni trustees are elected to serve for a six-year term; individuals in either category may be elected by the board for a second term of six years as a term trustee. Trustees may not serve a third consecutive term, but are eligible for re-election after a year. In 2007-08 the board consists of fourteen men and five women. Three are non-alumni. Four are African Americans. Five represent the academy; two combine medicine and scholarship; seven are from various corporate sectors; three are from the field of law (one of whom is also a writer); two are journalists; one is a homemaker; and one works in the non-profit sector. (Some trustees have multiple callings.) The current chair of the board is the first African American to occupy that position.

The standing committees of the board include Advancement, Audit, Budget and Finance, Buildings and Grounds, Honorary Degrees, Human Resources (known as Personnel until

¹Faculty Handbook (updated continuously): <http://www.amherst.edu/~deanfac/handbook/index.html>;
Trustee-Appointed Employee Handbook (2005): <http://www.amherst.edu/~hr/tahdbook/index.html>;
Staff Handbook (2003): <http://www.amherst.edu/~hr/staffhdbook/index.html>.

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amended in the by-laws in 1998), Instruction, Investment, Student Life, and Trusteeship. Although the number is not prescribed, each trustee generally serves on three (or more) standing committees. In January 2007 two ad hoc committees were formed—one to study the size of the student body enrolled at the college; the other to examine the current financial model of comprehensive fees. Both committees were charged to report their findings to the board by its 2008 commencement meeting. In January 2007 the board also created an ad hoc committee to advise the decennial reaccreditation review of the Mead Art Museum by the American Association of Museums. Two elected representatives of the faculty meet with the Honorary Degrees Committee and with the Trusteeship Committee.

In 2003 the by-laws were amended to eliminate the mandatory trustee age limit of 72. As noted by the U.S. Census Bureau, life expectancy continues to increase, rendering the former age limit irrelevant and allowing the board to benefit from trustee productivity and contributions regardless of age.

At the same time, the by-laws also were amended to define more clearly the rights and responsibilities of former trustees. The board may designate as a trustee emeritus any term trustee or alumni trustee whose term has expired. The designation of life trustee is conferred upon a trustee whose term or terms has expired and “who has served with unusual distinction.” All trustees with these honorary designations have the right to march in academic processions and, with concurrence of the chair of the board, attend and participate in board meetings with the proviso that they do not retain voting privileges.

The board convenes four times a year (fall, winter, spring, and commencement), generally on campus, and holds an off-site retreat biennially to focus intensively on topical issues and/or to do self-assessment and long-range planning. Binders with materials pertinent to standing committees and to the board as a whole are sent to trustees about ten days prior to board meetings. Upon request, emeriti and life trustees may also receive board materials.

Among their responsibilities, the board annually sets the comprehensive fee and approves the college budget, administrative appointments, faculty promotions and tenured appointments without term, and the award of degrees to students who have completed the college’s required courses of study. The board meets annually with the Committee of Six without the president and dean of the faculty in order to assess the performance of the administration. The board conducts an annual review of the president. The chair, who also chairs the Trusteeship Committee, solicits feedback from each trustee and compiles their responses. Subsequently the board meets with the president, usually during the commencement meeting, to discuss accomplishments, goals, and objectives. Following that dialogue, the board meets in executive session to conclude their evaluation. At that same meeting, the president reports to the board on his or her annual evaluations of the college’s senior staff. A trustee is also designated annually to solicit feedback about the effectiveness of the chair.

Organization and Governance

The board has recently delegated responsibility for governance of two non-degree granting entities under its ownership. In 2003 the board acquired the Evergreens, the Austin Dickinson house, and combined it with the adjacent Dickinson Homestead to constitute the Emily Dickinson Museum, which is governed by its own board of governors, subject to the supervision of the board of trustees. In 2005 the board voted to amend its by-laws to allow greater autonomy to the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., which was bequeathed to the college in 1932 by Henry Clay Folger. The board, which heretofore maintained responsibility for the educational content, business, and maintenance of the library, delegated to the Folger's board of governors, under supervision of the president of the college, oversight of all aspects of the library except for control of its financial assets. The director of the Folger Shakespeare Library attends a board meeting on an annual basis to report on the status of the library, and the treasurer of the college serves as a liaison to the Folger's board of governors.

The board has, in its ongoing policy of self-examination, instituted a conflict of interest policy that is reviewed and signed annually by all trustees and designated administrators.² At the urging of students, and facilitated by the president, the board has resolved to avoid financial gain in areas inconsistent with the moral and ethical values of the college. In 2006 the board voted to divest direct holdings in companies whose activities support the Sudanese government.

Over the past ten years the board has undertaken closer interaction with all campus constituencies, including the central faculty committees. Relations between the board and the campus are normally mediated through the Office of the President, but there is increased emphasis on face-to-face accountability in all directions. The long-standing institution of Instruction Weekend, one of the regular spring meetings, has been expanded to entail regular meetings of board sitting as a committee of the whole with the Committee of Six, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), and the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR), as well as on occasion with the College Council and the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA). During Instruction Weekend, the president's office arranges to have individual trustees dine with small groups of faculty to allow informal and candid conversations about the functioning of the college. The board met regularly with the Special Committee on an Amherst Education (SCAE) and the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) during their deliberations, as well as with the Ad Hoc Faculty Advisory Group on Reaccreditation in the iterative process that achieved a strong consensus about the college's mission. The board also holds an annual, open-invitation meeting with students, and the Human Resources Committee meets annually with the staff's Advisory Committee on Personnel Policies (ACPP). These closer working relationships have increased communication among the various sectors of the college.

The Trusteeship Committee regularly analyzes board composition with respect to gender, diversity, geography, occupation, and representation across the classes. For the integrity of the board, all of these criteria are considered, and the qualifications of individuals under consideration are vetted during the process of recommending candidates for term

² Conflict of interest policy: <http://www.amherst.edu/~hr/policies/conflictinterestpolicy.html>

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trustees to the board as vacancies occur. Each year, the Committee to Nominate Alumni Trustees of the Alumni Council interviews a broad cross-section of potential candidates and selects three to stand for election as an alumni trustee. Throughout the selection process, the committee consults with trustees, faculty, administrators, including the president, and students. Each alumni trustee candidate submits a substantial position statement, which is distributed along with the ballot to all voting alumni in order for them to cast an informed vote.

Under the direction of the former chair, Amos B. Hostetter, Jr., and the current chair, Jide J. Zeitlin, the board has implemented a continual process of self-evaluation with the aim of maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of this relatively small board and using the abilities and contributions of each trustee to the fullest. Attendance at meetings and significant participation are expected, and trustees notably respond to these expectations. The chair opens each meeting with a comment on attendance, indicating the reasons for any absences and seeks to provide an opportunity near the conclusion of each board meeting for trustees to informally offer perspectives, assessments, and recommendations. At most board meetings, the president meets with the trustees in executive session to report progress on and assess initiatives and projects, an exercise that allows the board to continually evaluate the college's current and long-range goals. The board meets annually with the Committee of Six in the absence of the president and the dean of the faculty to assess campus governance.

CAMPUS GOVERNANCE

President and Senior Administration

The president of the college is elected by and serves at the pleasure of the board of trustees. The president has charge of the internal administration of the college and is the presiding officer of the faculty. Subject to the control of the board, the president supervises all officers of the college and the director of the Folger Shakespeare Library. Officers who report directly to the president include the treasurer, the dean of the faculty, the dean of admission and financial aid, the dean of students, the chief advancement officer, the director of institutional research and planning, the special assistant to the president for diversity and inclusion, the director of the Center for Community Engagement, the college ombudsperson, and the executive assistant to the president/secretary of the board of trustees.

The senior staff meets weekly with the president to discuss and review topical items, agenda-setting, immediate goals, and long-term planning. The dean of the faculty is responsible for academic programs and departments, the library, information technology, the Mead Art Museum, the Amherst College Museum of Natural History, the registrar's office, and the department of athletics and physical education. The dean of students supervises the career center, the counseling center, the campus center, health services, the religious advisors, the residential life office, the quantitative center, the writing center, and the class deans. The chief advancement officer supervises the offices of alumni and parent programs, development, and advancement operations.

Organization and Governance

The treasurer is elected by and serves at the pleasure of the board and has general supervision of the internal business affairs of the college. The treasurer supervises “the long-range planning of the investment of all endowment funds of the college, and all other funds and property that are in the form of investments and the receipt and disbursement of moneys pertaining to such funds.”³ He or she has general responsibility for college properties and all business-related functions and supervises the department of physical plant and the offices of the comptroller, human resources, risk management, administrative services, and investments. He also is the liaison to the Emily Dickinson Museum and the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Faculty

The responsibilities of the faculty are described in the *Faculty Handbook* (II.C): “Subject to the reserve power of control by the Trustees, the Faculty (a) shall have the power and the duty to fix the requirements of admission, the course of study and the conditions of graduation, to establish rules for ascertaining the proficiency of students and for the assignments of honors, to determine the academic calendar, and to fix the times of general examinations; and, (b) may establish rules of conduct to be observed by the students and penalties for the violation thereof.”

Faculty members participate in the governance of the college through regular meetings of the faculty, at which attendance is obligatory, and through service on twenty-one faculty standing committees and currently five ad hoc committees, as well as continuing committees appointed by the dean of the faculty, Five College committees, and the faculty representatives to the Honorary Degrees Committee and Trusteeship Committee of the board of trustees. Committee service is expected of all tenured and tenure-track faculty, except for those in their first year. The Committee of Six is elected directly by the faculty. Members of the CEP, the College Council, the CPR, and the Committee on Adjudication are elected by the faculty after nomination by the Committee of Six or after nomination from the floor of the faculty meeting.

Particular power is vested in two faculty committees, the Committee of Six and the CEP. Composed of six faculty members, the Committee of Six is chaired by the president, who serves ex officio and without vote, and meets also with the dean of the faculty, who acts as secretary, also ex officio and without vote. As the only directly elected committee of the faculty, the Committee of Six has responsibility for advising the president on all major decisions, including reappointment, tenure, promotion to full professor. It also sets the agenda of faculty meetings and makes appointments to faculty standing and ad hoc committees and drafts charges for those committees. Through the minutes of its conversations, the committee puts arguments about significant issues before the faculty. The committee also reviews all faculty committee reports, assesses the honors projects of all candidates for graduation *summa cum laude*, and reviews exceptions to degree requirements.

The CEP is composed of five faculty members and three students. The faculty membership is elected by the faculty, upon nomination by the Committee of Six, in a

³ By-laws of the Trustees of Amherst College, Article V

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process engineered to ensure representation of the humanities, the arts, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. Faculty members serve a three-year term in a sequence that ensures overlap and continuity. Unlike the Committee of Six, the CEP has student representation and the students have voting privileges. The student members are elected by the Student Senate from its members and serve for one- or two-year terms. The CEP has responsibility for reviewing, evaluating, and reporting to the faculty on the general educational policy of the college and for advising the president and the dean of the faculty on these matters. It oversees proposals for new courses, new departments and programs, new Five College certificate programs, and altered major programs or honors requirements. It supports faculty in curricular development, for example by meeting with interdisciplinary faculty working groups on areas such as quantitative reasoning and film and new media. The CEP also makes recommendations to the administration each year on the allocation of new faculty positions to departments.

During the last five years, the SCAE and the CAP have recommended changes to the CEP. The SCAE noted that the CEP had little time for broad curricular evaluation and planning because of time spent in reviewing the minutiae of scores of new course proposals and in gathering their own data to support decision-making. The SCAE therefore made three central recommendations, which have since been implemented: First, the CEP should be relieved of its more time-consuming bureaucratic functions; a half-time researcher and coordinator was hired for the committee in 2006. Second, the CEP should be assisted by an expanded office of institutional research, as was done in 2005. Third, the CEP should consult more closely with the dean of the faculty on appointments and curricular developments; as of 2003, the dean serves on the CEP as an ex officio member, without vote.⁴

In 2006, as a critical element in a package of recommendations to strengthen the curriculum, the CAP recommended that “the faculty establish academic priorities to guide the allocation of additional faculty positions and that departments make formal agreements with the CEP to teach courses serving those priorities in return for additional allocations of faculty lines.” The report empowered the CEP to “serve as the central body for assessing curricular needs and recommending the allocation of FTEs”⁵ and placed responsibility for monitoring the system in the newly collaborative relationship between the CEP and the dean of the faculty. The CAP acknowledged in its report that the recommendations of the CEP would reshape the faculty for decades to come and that the CEP would need to sustain the dialogues with departments, programs, and interdisciplinary groups that the CAP had begun. At the end of 2006, the faculty voted a revised charge for the CEP, which acknowledges the new mechanism for considering additional faculty positions and extends the ex officio service of the dean of the faculty on the CEP (to be reviewed after three years).⁶ While retaining regular oversight of the curriculum, the CEP has now streamlined the clerical procedures for course approval and

⁴ SCAE recommendations concerning the CEP:

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees/scaereport

⁵ CAP recommendations concerning the CEP: http://www.amherst.edu/~cap/report2006/3_1.html

⁶ Revised charge of the CEP (*Faculty Handbook* IV.S.1.i):

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fac handbook/facresponsibilities/committees

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anticipates being able to concentrate on implementing the CAP recommendations in 2007-08.

Other standing committees have intentionally been delegated more responsibility in recent years. On the CPR, see under *Financial Resources*. In 1999 FCAFA undertook a major review of admissions standards, particularly in relationship to athletic admits. Subsequently they hosted two innovative conferences for admission directors and faculty on admission policy committees from the schools of the New England Small College Athletic Conference. In 2007 FCAFA conferred with the trustees about a proposal for a modest increase in the size of the student body.

The College Council exemplifies our culture of shared governance in its broad membership, being composed of three members of the faculty, the dean and associate dean of students, the director of residential life, the director of student activities, and five students. The committee makes recommendations concerning issues of common interest to the faculty, administration, and student body. In recent years the committee has implemented a new honor code, presided over discussions about possible modifications in the academic calendar, and participated in the adoption of the college's mission statement.

All members of the faculty are expected to attend faculty meetings, which, apart from the start of the year and the degree meeting in May, are held on an as-needed basis, as determined by the Committee of Six. In recent years, the total number of meetings has ranged from as few as seven to as many as twelve.

Staff

As an advisory committee to the Office of Human Resources, the Advisory Committee on Personnel Policy (ACPP) works to foster an effective relationship between staff and the administration through actively communicating with and soliciting concerns from staff on matters relating to policies, benefits, and other matters that affect their work. The ten members of the committee are elected by the staff to represent the ten work areas of the college. The ACPP meets monthly with the director and other representatives of the Office of Human Resources.

The ACPP plays a significant role in the formulation of new policies and benefits. They have represented staff concerns by serving on various ad hoc committees including search committees for the president and director of information technology; the Health Insurance Review Committee (2002-03) for active employee and retiree health benefits; Position Classification Committee; Leave Provision Policy Committee; and various diversity initiative committees. They were instrumental in establishing a dog policy for the college and made recommendations concerning the increase in the educational assistance benefit for staff. They also participated in the adoption of the college's mission statement.

Students

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For governance purposes, the student body constituted as the Association of Amherst Students (AAS),⁷ an independent corporation, of which the elected body is the Student Senate. This body, upon the recommendation of the Budgetary Committee, disburses the student activity fee (1 percent of tuition; currently approaching \$700,000 per year). Students serve on the CEP, CPR, College Council, FCAFA, Library Committee, Education and Athletics, and Library Committees, as well as on search committees for senior administrative appointments, including the presidency, and on planning committees, such as the SCAE and CAP. The officers of the AAS, as well as members serving on some standing faculty and college committees, have the right to attend faculty meetings. On committees, students are encouraged to participate as equals, with full speaking and voting privileges. At most board of trustee meetings the Student Life Committee meets with seven representatives of the AAS, including the president of the student body. In 2003 the AAS was instrumental in helping to formulate a student referendum that approved the new Honor Code and in 2007 were consulted about the college's mission statement.

APPRAISAL

In the past ten years, our system of shared governance has continued to work well and has developed broader and more effective consultation among the trustees, faculty, administrators, staff, and students.

Expectations of consultation in decision making have traditionally been high. Summaries of actions taken by the board of trustees are distributed to the campus after each meeting. Minutes of the meetings of the Committee of Six, CEP, and CPR are made available online to all faculty. Student members of major faculty committees are permitted to attend faculty meetings, as are reporters from the student newspaper. At all faculty meetings time is reserved for questions to the administration and for questions arising from the minutes of the Committee of Six. Although it is challenging—and some would say, stressful—for faculty members to keep track of developments with the college moving on so many fronts, the vigorous discussions at faculty meetings demonstrate that they do.

Amherst relies on faculty governance to an unusual degree because of the faculty's traditional willingness to shoulder this responsibility. That system is now facing a period when Amherst, like all institutions of higher education, must adapt rapidly to changes in higher education, technology, and the surrounding society. Although there was ten years ago widespread frustration that a culture of consensus was hindering institutional change, as was noted by the evaluation team, new capacities for self-assessment and decision-making have emerged from the planning process of the last five years by virtue of the remarkable levels of faculty participation (see under *Planning and Evaluation*). In deliberating about the recommendations of the CAP, the faculty voiced a strong resolve to maintain close oversight of all aspects of the academic program, to strengthen the planning and oversight function of the CEP, to continue to give academic departments a

⁷ Constitution of the Association of Amherst Students: <http://www.amherst.edu/~aas/constitution/>

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central role in curricular innovations, including the development of new pedagogies, and to request more administrative support for committees and departments.

This heightened level of engagement and collective decisiveness has its costs, starting with a measure of fatigue from the effort involved and unease about the rate of institutional change. Some faculty members would like to reopen the CAP discussions. Others express their delight that the college is in motion. Some believe that our system of faculty self-governance is overgrown and maladaptive.

As is discussed in *Faculty*, the burden of committee service is felt increasingly, especially as responsibilities for hiring, mentoring, and evaluating untenured colleagues grow. Given the frequency of leaves, there are more seats on standing and ad hoc committees than there are faculty members eligible to fill them, leading to double assignments for some individuals. There is universal respect for committee service as central to our democratic culture, but also concern that, as on peer campuses, committee service is not equitably shared, acknowledged, and rewarded.

Various solutions have been sought to these problems. The Committee of Six periodically reviews committees' responsibilities in order to allow them to focus their attention on the most critical policy issues. Periodic reviews of committees' charges by the Committee of Six have not uncovered substantial redundancy, and the number of standing faculty committees (twenty-one) has remained constant over the last decade. In the past ten years there has been a marked increase in administrative support for committees. The CEP and CPR have both received support in recording minutes, doing research, and handling paperwork. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Human Subjects) now has the assistance of the director of sponsored research. The creation of two associate dean of the faculty positions (totaling 1.5 FTEs) has provided support for the Teaching and Advising Project, First-Year Seminar Committee, and various ad hoc committees and hiring searches. This administrative support alleviates the discontinuities caused by the practice of having committee chairs serve only one year.

In addition to faculty and college committees, several administrative posts are currently filled by faculty: the dean and two associate deans of the faculty, the dean of new students, and the special assistant to the president for diversity. The inescapable cost is that these faculty administrators are lost to classroom and to departmental service. In the dean of the faculty's office there are two recently-created positions of senior advisor to the dean for academic life, who undertake special projects. The president came directly from another faculty. These appointments have helped to keep academic values central to the workings of the college and have facilitated communication between the faculty and administration.

As in past decades, the efficacy of faculty meetings as a forum for decision making is under constant scrutiny. Faculty time is scarcer than ever, and the demands of evidence-based decision making increase the pressures on a town-meeting model of democracy. However, the increasing rigor with which faculty committees do research, with the assistance of the IR office, and preliminary consultation has regularly led to a way

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forward on controversial questions. New members of the faculty frequently have difficulty knowing the background for discussions, but, as the minutes of faculty meetings reflect, untenured faculty members contribute to discussion significantly more than they did a decade ago, and indeed the range of participants has broadened.

The question has been raised whether the representation of staff in college governance is adequate, though the ACPP has been highly effective on many issues. Formally, the ACPP is an advisory body to the Office of Human Resources, and its representation on select committees and administrative searches is a matter of practice, not statute (as is also the case for faculty, students, and trustee-appointed employees).

Student service on faculty committees is considered to be essential and generally successful. Surveys suggest low satisfaction on the part of students with the student government system, perhaps because its important role in selecting student members for college and faculty committees is overlooked, in contrast to its inevitably controversial role in allocating funds from the student activity fee. The Student Senate is addressing these perceptions by attempting to elicit broader participation in governance.

PROJECTIONS

With a culture of shared governance now being reinforced by participatory strategic planning, the college does not foresee fundamental changes to the structure and practices of governance, though the process of ongoing reform in such a self-analytical and open system is inevitable and welcome.

The college will continue the transition to permanent and coordinated structures for planning and assessment, as exemplified in the enhanced charge of the CEP, with increased support from the dean's and IR offices.

The proposed increase in the size of the faculty, perhaps on the order of 10 percent, will ease the staffing pressures on existing committees.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The college's organizational structure and governance system are periodically reviewed. The structure of reports to the president has been changed by the addition of the IR director and the special assistant to the president for diversity (the latter position currently under review; see under *Integrity*). The Committee of Six, which recommends appointments to faculty and college committee, annually examines the working of the committee system. The strategic planning exercise led to significant changes in the charge and staffing of the CEP.

4 THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

Our academic program has been under intensive review since 2002 in respect to both students' changing learning needs and the rapid growth in scholarly and artistic fields and in technology. A succession of faculty committees has assessed college-wide needs with close reference to the expectations and practices of other institutions. All academic departments and academic support units have undertaken self-appraisal and planning exercises, and many have already implemented substantial changes. More than half the senior class is now enrolled in major programs modified since 2005 to make their expectations more rigorous and better articulated. Individual faculty members, departments, and self-formed faculty groups have experimented with new subjects and pedagogies.

In its scale, persistence, and level of participation, this initiative is unprecedented in the college's history, as is the degree of attention paid to the experience of peer institutions. This has been a period of unfettered inquiry and of vigorous, fruitfully disputatious faculty deliberation. We have not hidden our self-criticism: The reports of the Special Committee on the Amherst Education (SCAE), the SCAE-related curricular working groups, and the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) are all publically available on the CAP Web site: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/cap.

Also new to college practice is a systematic effort to translate this concentrated energy into sustained practice. New administrative positions and structures have been created to implement policy and personnel decisions made by the faculty and trustees, and to continue and coordinate the various initiatives in institutional self-appraisal.

We are still in the early days of implementation, though some outcomes have already occurred in terms of new courses, faculty and post-doc appointments, academic support programs, funding for faculty and student research, support for course development and faculty training in new pedagogies, resources in academic technology, and adaptations of departments' major programs and staffing objectives. Lively debate continues, as it should, and not all ventures will succeed. Like our peer institutions, we are still struggling with the questions of how students learn, including how they learn from diversity, and how advising can guide the process. But five years into this large initiative, we have a stronger sense of shared mission—or at least a new readiness to claim that mission—and new capacities to move forward on the basis of a working consensus.

DESCRIPTION

The Undergraduate Degree Program

Undergraduates at Amherst College may pursue just one degree, the Bachelor of Arts. The expectation that students take central responsibility in inquiry, emphasized in the college's mission statement, is realized through a curriculum that provides maximum flexibility while imposing three requirements. All students must: 1) complete a minimum of thirty-one full-semester courses, at least sixteen of them at Amherst College; 2) take a first-year seminar if they enroll as first-year students; 3) complete the requirements for a major in at least one discipline or interdisciplinary area.

Added to these requirements is the advisory, approved by the faculty in 1977, that students should consider courses that foster capabilities in six areas of learning, as is articulated in the *Catalog* (2007-08, p. 69):

As student and advisor together plan a student's program, they should discuss whether the student has selected courses that:

- provide knowledge of culture and a language other than one's own and of human experience in a period before one's lifetime;
- analyze one's own polity, economic order, and culture;
- employ abstract reasoning;
- work within the scientific method;
- engage in creative action—doing, making, and performing;
- interpret, evaluate, and explore the life of the imagination.

The evaluation team in 1998 noted that this advisory had limited currency and authority for students and their advisors. These and related learning areas have received intensive attention in the SCAE and CAP processes and are currently under review by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) (see below under "General Education and the Breadth of the Course of Study").

In any given year Amherst offers nearly seven hundred courses organized around thirty-six majors.¹ The college also encourages interdisciplinary study through colloquia (non-departmental courses), some of which are supported by the President's Initiative Fund for Interdisciplinary Curricular Projects, established in 2004-05. Course information is

¹ American studies; anthropology; art and art history; Asian languages and civilizations; astronomy; biology; black studies; chemistry; Chinese; classics; computer science; economics; English; European studies; French; geology; German; Greek; history; Japanese; Latin; law, jurisprudence, and social thought; mathematics; music; neuroscience; philosophy; physics; political science; psychology; religion; Russian; sociology; Spanish; theater and dance; women's and gender studies; and, as of 2008-09, environmental studies.

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available in the *Catalog*, both in its annual printed version and in its constantly updated online version.

Amherst students may also enroll in liberal arts courses at Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges and at the University of Massachusetts and may pursue a number of Five College certificate programs that have received approval through a rigorous review process.²

Classes are generally small to allow the close faculty-student interaction emphasized in our mission. The student-to-faculty ratio, based on the Common Data Set method of calculation of 201 instructional FTEs, is currently eight-to-one. The faculty and administration have worked hard to reduce the already small number of large lecture classes, even while welcoming Five College students into Amherst classes. As a consequence, just three courses in 2006-07 had an enrollment in excess of 100 students, and two courses in the fall semester of 2007. In the fall semester of 2006, the mean class size was 19 and the median was 15; in the spring of 2007 the mean was 18 and the median was 14; in the fall of 2007, the mean was 17 and the median was 14.³ Nearly half of graduating seniors have completed an honors project. In 2006-07, some 205 students took one or more tutorial courses with faculty, most often on a one-to-one basis.

Amherst continues to be the most popular destination for Five College students, annually importing many more students from the other four institutions than it exports. In 2006-07 we imported 1,125 course registrations and exported 405, for an imbalance of 720 or the equivalent of 90 full-time students.

The trustees have delegated authority over the curriculum to the faculty, subject to the concurrence of the president. The faculty enacts its authority through its departments, its faculty meetings, and its standing and ad hoc committees. Responsibility for administering the academic program falls under the dean of the faculty, who is assisted by an assistant dean and by two associate deans, one full-time and one half-time, both of whom are senior faculty members. Both positions represent an expansion of the dean's office during the last decade, in large measure to support curricular renewal and assessment, and faculty development. There are also two senior advisors for academic life, who are senior faculty members and who work on special projects. The two major academic faculty committees, the Committee of Six and the CEP, review all new proposals for academic programs and advise the faculty. The CEP, Committee of Six, and faculty also review proposals for new courses, and the CEP reviews major revisions of courses. The rate of replacement and revision of courses is notably high. Of the courses offered in the 2007-08 *Catalog*, 112 are new and 74 are revised.

² African studies; Asian/Pacific/American studies; Buddhist studies; culture, health, and science; international relations; Latin American and Caribbean studies; logic; Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

³ These figures exclude tutorial ("special topics") and honors courses. The number of faculty on sabbatical leave in any given semester make these course sizes larger than the eight-to-one faculty-student ratio would suggest.

Advising

Because of the value we place on student self-determination, as well as on close colloquy with faculty, academic advising plays a larger role than in some undergraduate programs. All regular faculty serve as advisors after their first year of service, and only faculty members serve as academic advisors. Pre-major advising is presided over by the dean of new students, a senior faculty member who serves half-time in the dean of students office. Under a program begun in 2005-06, all incoming students meet with an orientation advisor at the start of new student orientation to discuss the interests and objectives that they have summarized in an academic portfolio submitted over the summer⁴ and to shape a course schedule as the beginning of a self-designed program of general education. (The required first-year seminar is chosen over the summer; see below.) This marks a change from the practice of having incoming students make their preliminary course selection in the summer without the benefit of a faculty advisor. In the new system, after the schedule is finalized, the student is assigned to a college advisor, who is to the degree possible one of the student's instructors. When a student declares a major, he or she is assigned a major advisor in the department by the chair, where possible in keeping with the student's preferences.⁵ Double majors have an advisor in each department. Course registration requires the approval of the advisor(s). Through the *Catalog* and its supplements the registrar provides full information about the courses available, about department requirements and expectations, and about the eligibility of individual students for some sequential courses. As mentioned above, advisors are individually responsible for urging students to elect courses that develop a range of capabilities. Departments post full descriptions of their major programs on their individual Web sites and offer information sessions during new student orientation. Additional pre-professional guidance is provided by a pre-law and a health professions advisor in the career center, the latter of whom works with the faculty Health Professions Committee.⁶

As will be discussed below in the appraisal section, pre-major advising has been one of the areas in our program under the most scrutiny, because of its central and complex role.

Curriculum: General Education

Creating a balance of freedom and responsibility lies at the heart of our educational mission: "Working with faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to intellectual freedom and the highest standards of instruction in the liberal arts, Amherst undergraduates assume substantial responsibility for undertaking inquiry and for shaping their education within and beyond the curriculum." By "intellectual freedom" as an underpinning for liberal arts education, we mean not just the absence of constraint on inquiry and expression, but the latitude and resources given to students and faculty for self-determination. In shaping their education, students are enjoined to use this freedom

⁴ Academic portfolio: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/orientation/07%20PDFs/AcademicPortfolio5-07.pdf>.

⁵ To avoid confusion with the more general usages of *program*, the programs that sponsor majors, European studies, neuroscience, and the newly formed environmental studies will be included in the general category "departments," with which they are in this discussion functionally equivalent. Neuroscience and environmental studies have no faculty lines of their own, and European studies has .75 FTE.

⁶ Advising resources for faculty: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/tap/advising_faculty

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responsibly, in the classroom and beyond, as a preparation to link learning with leadership and service throughout their lives.

To attain this goal, we strive to offer students broad choice among rigorous alternatives in the expectation that, the freer the choice, the more fruitfully demanding the course, major, or independent research project can be. We believe that students learn best when pursuing their interests and having ownership of the undertaking. The spirit and intensity of courses taught to the willing by the willing are frequently noted on campus. Not to be found at Amherst are apologetic courses designed primarily to shepherd resistant students through subject area requirements.

For first-year students, the initial choice is among a score of options in the required first-year seminar program.⁷ In a range of clearly announced ways, the various seminars provide an introduction to liberal studies taught outside of departments, in sections of fifteen students, and with attention to fundamental expressive, analytical, and creative capacities. Because students have broad options in pursuing their interests, these seminars can proceed as intensively as other college courses.

As mentioned, in their first day on campus new students meet with faculty advisors to discuss the profile of interests and objectives that they have submitted in their academic portfolios. At this point students have a free choice of the courses whose prerequisites they have fulfilled and are asked to propose their own program of general studies. This phase of our program falls in the broad category of “open curricula,” a term that draws a useful contrast to core curricula and systems of required course distribution, but is otherwise imprecise. Institutions using the term “open curriculum” in fact have a range of structures and requirements within the general education program. For example, most have a writing requirement, and some require a minimum number of credits taken outside of the major department.

Since its inception in 1971, this system of broad choice of non-major courses has generally been found to have many strengths. It attracts independent-minded students to Amherst who, having jumped over many hurdles to gain admission, welcome a period of exploration and self-definition not scripted by another set of requirements. This phase of self-fashioning allows students flexibility to find, change, combine, and create majors; accommodate foreign study and career preparation; and, in some cases, carve out areas of self-expression outside of parental pressure. This flexibility allows students to build on experience in internships, employment, and foreign study as they shape their academic programs. We believe that required exposure to subject areas or enforcement of minimum competencies would in most—but not all—areas serve to mandate what students already do by choice. When students are forced outside of their interests, such required courses might often achieve little for the unwilling, but at the price of diminishing the experience for interested students. Amherst students arrive with considerable breadth; for example, 56 percent of the incoming class have completed five or more Advanced Placement

⁷ First-year seminar descriptions:

<http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/orientation/07%20PDFs/FYSbook2007.pdf> .

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courses. We expect that students who are discerning and energetic in their commitments should be capable of filling gaps as they confront the explosions of knowledge, technology, and art forms to be expected in their lifetimes.

The costs of freedom are, however, never far from view. We are constantly aware of the potential for students to skirt their weak areas, and the role of academic advisors is particularly central and complex. As will be discussed further in the appraisal section, a strength and a burden of the open curriculum is that it is endlessly open to question and debate. A central project of the last five years has been to make this a productive and evidence-based debate.

The individual academic departments meet students' general education needs through department courses. It is a point of pride in our academic culture that the interests of general students not be addressed with less seriousness than those of concentrators in a department. The ability to reach and inspire beginning students and students at a distance from one's discipline is held in particular esteem. Year after year the volunteers to teach the first-year seminars come disproportionately from the most experienced members of the faculty. In recent years, departments have increasingly designed their offerings to respond to students' general education needs as assessed by cross-departmental college committees (see below under "Curricular Renewal" and "Addressing Variable Levels of Student Preparation").

As is discussed under *Faculty*, Amherst's departments preside over both disciplinary specialization and cross-disciplinary integration. Approximately one-fifth of the faculty have joint appointments in two departments; seven percent of courses are cross-listed between departments (e.g., *Religion and Society in the South Asian World* is listed as both Anthropology 34 and Asian Languages and Civilizations 60, and as a "related course" in the religion department.) Of the new faculty positions proposed by departments to the CAP in 2005, one third involved joint appointments. Since Amherst does not have interdisciplinary centers or institutes, departments have evolved to provide that integration, as well as to connect with departments and programs elsewhere in the Five Colleges. The three academic programs (environmental studies, European studies, and neuroscience) and some departments (American studies; Asian languages and civilizations; black studies; women's and gender studies; law, jurisprudence, and social thought [LJST]) are by nature interdisciplinary and, other than LJST, comprise mainly or exclusively jointly-appointed faculty. An indication of the interconnectedness of the faculty and the general lack of insularity of departments is that, at any given meeting of the "studies" departments or of large departments such as English and history, representatives of four or five other departments will be present, with a good chance that the chair has chaired another department.

Amherst has a long history of interdisciplinary undertakings, which has been revitalized by the President's Initiative Fund for Interdisciplinary Curricular Projects (see below under "Curricular Renewal"). The required first-year seminar is taught outside of departments and evolved from the interdisciplinary, team-taught Introduction to Liberal Studies course (1978-1997). The first-year seminars continue cross-disciplinarity both in

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multi-section courses taught by faculty from different departments (recently between a quarter and a half of the sections) and in some sections taught by a single instructor (e.g., *Improvisational Thinking*, which addresses the arts, sciences, and other domains of activity). A new program supports first-year seminars taught by multiple instructors from different disciplines (see below under “First-Year Seminars”).

Training in information resources occurs both during new student orientation and also in individual courses, labs, and research projects. As is discussed under *Library and Other Information Resources*, the faculty, the librarians, and Academic Technology Services collaborate in training students in appropriate library and information technology use.

Curriculum: The Major

The period of exploration under the open curriculum gives students latitude to select and prepare for majors carefully. Students must elect a major by the end of sophomore year, but majors may be changed or added subsequently. Again, there is broad choice among rigorous alternatives: Students may carry one, two, or three majors simultaneously, but no minors. Typically, 30 to 35 percent (146 students of the graduating class of 2007) opt for the double major, and a small number (four students in the class of 2007) carry triple majors. Students electing a major in more than one department must complete the requirements for each, including the comprehensive requirement. Alternatively, students may opt for an interdisciplinary major by submitting to the Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors a proposal endorsed by one or more professors from each of the departments involved. The interdisciplinary proposal must include a minimum of six upper-level courses and a thesis plan. Ten students elected interdisciplinary study in the class of 2006. A limited number of students also participate in the Independent Scholar Program, in which the student under the guidance of a faculty member plans a personal program of study in lieu of courses.

Departmental majors all require completion of between eight and fourteen courses, usually divided between core courses and upper-level electives, and successful completion of the department comprehensive requirement. In the great majority of departments this requirement is fulfilled by a seminar, an examination, or an extensive independent project (often an honors thesis or equivalent), sometimes with the option of examination or project. A description of each major, including the theoretical underpinnings, the methods of inquiry, and an explanation of the requirements, appears in the *Catalog*. Each department also maintains a Web site with this information. Many faculty members also maintain personal Web sites with information about their courses, as well as their research interests and opportunities available to undergraduates who might wish to participate in their research.

Although all departments have seen some minor fluctuations in the numbers of majors over the last twenty-five years, the relative popularity of most majors has remained constant for the most part. In the trailing three-year average for students in the classes of 2005, 2006, and 2007, the most popular majors were economics, English, psychology, and political science (all in the range of 12-to-13 percent of the class).

Academic Support and Information Resources

In the past ten years, we have made substantial efforts to expand and coordinate the resources for instruction and support beyond academic departments. As will be discussed under *Faculty*, the faculty and administration have in the SCAE and CAP processes given careful attention to the distribution of responsibilities between faculty and academic support personnel and taken a comprehensive view of students' learning needs. This has been a coordinated effort, though the components are discussed separately over this and the following three standards sections. Our mission statement reflects this sense of common project in noting that students work with and profit from the dedication of faculty, staff, and administrators.

As is discussed under *Students*, the writing and quantitative centers have both experienced large increases in use and have expanded their capacity accordingly. Under *Library and Other Information Resources*, we discuss the instructional mission of the newly formed Academic Technology Services in the IT department and the library's enhancement of its instructional programs, both for courses and for individual students. The support of the new Center for Community Engagement (CCE) for community-based learning and research is described below in the appraisal section.

Museums and Collections⁸

Among the resources for learning beyond the classroom are Amherst's rich array of museums and collections, all with national and international reputations. These institutions not only support our educational program but connect students to local and regional communities, as well as the international community of scholars. Because each of these institutions is well described on its Web page, only brief mention will be made here. Across the board, each has been enhancing its instructional program over the last decade, as well as increasing its collections and in most cases modernizing or replacing its facilities.

- *The Mead Art Museum*
With a collection of some 16,000 objects and particular strengths in American, European, Russian, Japanese, African, and Mexican art, the Mead Art Museum, under the leadership of a new director, is undertaking a major initiative to improve access to the collections, strengthen service to Amherst courses, and broaden educational opportunities to students as researchers, docents, and interns.
- *The Amherst College Museum of Natural History*
With eight major collections, encompassing some 50,000+ objects and lots, including a world-famous collection of dinosaur tracks, the natural history museum is an important resource for the study of geology and the environment. Administered by the geology department, the museum's new home and redesigned displays in the earth sciences building have transformed the teaching use of the collections and brought a large increase in attendance.

⁸ The Web sites of the museums are available at <https://cms.amherst.edu/campuslife/museums>

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- *The Amherst College Center for Russian Culture*
Opened in 1998 and administered by the Russian department, the center has a unique collection of some 15,000 books, periodicals, and manuscripts from late-nineteenth and twentieth-century Russia and sponsors a lively series of readings, concerts, and special events. The center also has an art gallery containing fifty pieces of twentieth-century art from the collection of Thomas P. Whitney '37.
- *Archives and Special Collections in Frost Library*
With more than 10,500 linear feet of institutional records and publications, biographical materials, personal papers, historical and literary manuscripts and more than 70,000 rare books, Archives and Special Collections is one of the largest and oldest (established in 1851) such departments in an undergraduate institution. It supports courses across the curriculum and original research of students, faculty, and the college and scholarly community, as well as a continuing series of exhibitions and programs in Frost Library and online.
- *The Emily Dickinson Museum*
The enlarged Emily Dickinson Museum, now including the Austin Dickinson house, the Evergreens, is enhancing its program of collaboration with faculty, including Amherst courses taught in the Dickinson Homestead and research opportunities for students.
- *The Folger Shakespeare Library*
The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., has continued to host Amherst students doing research in January as part of a fellowship program and has worked collaboratively with an Amherst course, *Renaissance Marvels*.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit

All courses award four credits, apart from two-credit courses in music performance and dance technique, and language practice in Japanese and Russian. Students must enroll in four four-credit courses each semester and may carry an additional two-credit course or petition the dean of students for permission to enroll in a fifth four-credit course. The faculty and registrar also oversee a strict system of awarding credit. No credit is awarded for pre-professional Five College courses (e.g., courses in engineering or elementary education) or for courses that are viewed as remedial (such as mathematics courses below the level of calculus). No credit or advanced standing toward graduation is awarded for advanced placement or any other exam results or, for entering first-year students, any courses taken prior to enrollment as a full-time student.

Students opting to study abroad during their junior year must receive approval in advance for their courses from their major department(s) and from the registrar and must enroll in a program approved by the Faculty Committee on Study Abroad.⁹ Credit is awarded to transfer students only after careful scrutiny to ensure that the courses qualify as liberal arts courses, at a level equivalent to Amherst courses. No credit is awarded for life

⁹ Web site of the study abroad advisor: <http://www.amherst.edu/~careers/abroad/studyabroad.html>.

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experience or for classes that consist of a practicum, apart from a program that the faculty has approved in conjunction with Mount Holyoke, which allows students to become licensed to teach in the public schools. In that case, the student teaching portion occurs in conjunction with a seminar on teaching.¹⁰

Students must complete a minimum of two years of their course work in residence at Amherst College, and the majority of courses for the major typically must be fulfilled with Amherst College courses, apart from astronomy, which is a Five College major.

Each year the faculty proposes new courses and revises old courses. New courses must be approved by the CEP, the Committee of Six, and the full faculty in a vote. Revised courses also must undergo review by the CEP. The CEP reviews course proposals both for content and also for the instructor's rationale for any enrollment limitations and/or pre-requisite. Courses not taught for two successive academic years must go through the approval process again. Approval for Five College programs and certificates follows a similar process. Recommendations begin with the relevant departments and then receive a thorough vetting from the CEP and the Committee of Six, and are finally voted by the full faculty.

Grades and Honors

Since our last self-study for NEASC was submitted in January 1998, the percentage of grades in the A range has increased from 50.2 to 58.8. The college mean grade has risen from 11.20 to 11.46 (B+) on our 14 point scale (14 = A+). This trend, which we share with many peer institutions, is a source of concern for some on campus, as is the unequal distribution of grades across fields. A senior advisor to the dean for academic life is undertaking a study of the issue. Some faculty believe that this trend has lowered the level of students' intellectual engagement, in the expectation that an A- can be attained without extraordinary effort. Others believe that the strongest incentives for excellence are the desire to perform well in interactions with faculty and peers (discussion, performance, creation in studio). The IR office is conducting focus groups of students to investigate the motivational impact of grading in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences/mathematics/computer science. Convergence does mean that grades contain less information, but the generally small size of courses and faculty's close attention to learning provide other sources of feedback and evaluation.

A large increase in the number of students receiving graduation honors was reversed by the faculty. Graduation honors are awarded both for completion of the honors program in a department or equivalent (graduation *summa cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, *cum laude*) and for attaining a grade point average (GPA) in the top 25 percent of the class (graduation with distinction). An earlier version of this system, begun with the class of 1997, used fixed GPA levels for the non-departmental honors. Because the grade point minimums had not kept pace with grade distributions, 74 percent of the class of 2001 were graduated with GPA-based honors (many of whom also achieved departmental honors for a senior project). By vote of the faculty in the spring of 2002, new

¹⁰ Information on teaching-licensure: <http://www.amherst.edu/~careers/gradstudy/licensureatamherst.html>.

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requirements were established for a degree with honors beginning with the class of 2004. Candidates eligible for the degree *summa* and *magna cum laude* must have a grade point average in the top 25 percent of the class and have received, respectively, a recommendation of *summa* or *magna* based on a thesis or comparable work from the department in which they majored. (Students recommended for *summa* or *magna*, but below the GPA threshold, are graduated *cum laude*.) Degrees *summa cum laude* are reviewed by the Committee of Six. Candidates eligible for the degree *cum laude* must receive a recommendation of *cum* based on a thesis or comparable work from the department in which they major. All students in the top 25 percent of the class receive their degree with distinction. Forty-eight percent of the class of 2007 were graduated with Latin honors (up from 40 percent three years earlier), and another 5 percent achieved distinction without receiving Latin honors.

Assessing Programs

The dean's office oversees external reviews of both department programs and academic support units. Since 1998, reviews have been conducted or are under way for Asian languages and civilizations, biology, the Chinese language program, economics, English, French, music, Russian, physics, Spanish, and women's and gender studies. The Five College dance program has also been reviewed, and the Five College astronomy department has conducted a comprehensive self-study. In addition, in 2005 all departments developed long-term department planning documents for the CAP.¹¹ These documents received careful consideration during the committee's year-long comprehensive appraisal of academic strengths and weaknesses at the college.

In addition to departments, a number of academic centers and programs have undergone external reviews over the last decade, including the quantitative center, the writing center, the Mead Art Museum, information technology (IT), institutional research, and physical education and athletics. A number of smaller program reviews also have occurred during this period, including an evaluation of the academic support system, the summer science program for underprepared entering students, the Phoenix Program (for struggling students in chemistry), pre-major advising, the first-year seminar program, course scheduling, interterm (by an ad hoc committee), the role of athletics at the college (by a trustee-faculty committee), and academic peer mentoring.

Assessing Student Learning

The assessment of student learning is evolving at Amherst, with progress both on the departmental and institution-wide levels. There is growing, if still uneven, coordination between these two levels.

As noted above and under *Planning and Evaluation*, the college regularly assesses learning through a range of means: departmental capstone experiences; program evaluations; surveys of graduating seniors, alumni, and current students; and data collection on student performance. We participate in broad cycle surveys that compare

¹¹Many departments have made their planning documents available on the CAP Web site: <http://www.amherst.edu/~cap/>.

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experiences across all Consortium on the Financing of Higher Education (COFHE) and Five College institutions. We also regularly collect data on graduate school acceptance and employment rates. The IR office runs focus groups, executes in-depth surveys of selected areas (such as the first-year seminars), issues frequent small surveys on specific topics, and analyzes data on a wide variety of topics each year at the request of the administration, faculty committees, and the board of trustees.

Academic departments and programs track student learning closely in ways that are useful for adapting their curricular offerings and major programs. Students of Japanese take the proficiency exam of the Japan Foundation Language Center. Majors in theater and dance meet every semester with all members of the department for a review of their portfolios and plans and must complete a senior project, which usually consists of a publically performed work and documentation of its creation. To look at one department in more detail, the biology department solicits feedback from all students in introductory courses and in Biology 19, *Molecules, Genes and Cells*, has introduced an optional online post-lecture quiz, which most students use. Feedback from students led the department to move exams to evening hours to alleviate time pressure and to provide “lecture TAs” in introductory courses, students who have mastered the course and who are available for weekly help sessions. The department’s “3+4 Committee”—four students and three faculty—provides a venue for the regular exchange of information between the department and its majors.

Departments closely monitor the level of honors work year by year, currently involving almost half of graduating students. As mentioned, honors theses nominated for graduation *summa cum laude* are read by the Committee of Six. Norms for students’ achievement across departments become known to faculty by the network of joint appointments, by advising of interdisciplinary projects, and by service on the Committee of Six.

Departments fulfill the mandated comprehensive requirement in ways appropriate to their disciplines. Most frequently used is an examination for seniors, though forms vary widely. Economics uses the Major Fields Test in Economics of the Educational Testing Service. Majors in geology must pass an oral examination that includes questions about each geology course they have taken and that thereby provides some indication of the effectiveness of those courses. Frequent in the humanities is to ask senior majors to demonstrate skills by writing essays or being examined on works not assigned in any course. In some cases this examination is a group discussion in which all members of the department participate, or do so on a rotating basis. Some departments require a junior proseminar or a non-credit senior seminar involving all faculty and senior majors in the department. By various mechanisms, departments assure that senior majors become known to members who have not been their instructors.

Departments’ self-monitoring has led to substantial revision of majors (see below under “Majors”). Through the SCAE, CAP, and curricular working groups there have been increased levels of reporting to college committees and to the IR office about perceived problems in student preparation. New positions in the IR office and the dean of the

faculty's office are intended to consolidate and continue these college-wide assessment efforts.

APPRAISAL

There are many general indicators of a strong and well-received academic program. Of students who matriculated in the classes of 2000 to 2005, some 96 percent were graduated within six years, a retention rate that is essentially equal among all cultural groups. In the 2007 Senior Survey, 97 percent of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of instruction, and everyone was satisfied with the out-of-class availability of faculty. In the 2006 Senior Survey and 2005 Alumni Survey, the percentage of respondents who would encourage a high school student to attend the college was the highest among thirty peer institutions. Of all living alumni, more than 60 percent contribute to the college in any given year. The size and strength of the applicant pool for admission have grown steadily, enabling us to increase both selectivity and diversity in a way that few liberal arts institutions can rival. The very strength of those incoming classes imposes a large obligation to live up to their potentials and expectations, and in the last five years we have given our academic program the longest and hardest look it has received in many decades.

The Teaching and Advising Project

Concurrent with the planning initiative since 2002 has been a faculty program to enable discussion of teaching and learning. There was a history of successful but sporadic discussion groups, informal seminars, and workshops to address issues such as writing instruction, quantitative skills, and issues of gender and race in the classroom. In 2002, with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, three faculty members began the Mellon Project on Teaching and Learning, which hosted a series of monthly open-invitation discussions for faculty, as well as specialized workshops and programs for untenured faculty. These events proved to be well received, often drawing thirty-to-forty faculty members, and were particularly successful in enabling conversation between newer and more senior faculty, as well as across departments. On occasion, this forum provided a fast track for response to shared concerns outside of the mechanisms of the committee structure. For example, a discussion of student plagiarism and cheating in 2003 led to the creation of a session about intellectual property in new student orientation. On some sensitive topics, such as the role of social class and of race in the classroom, the informality of the format allowed multiple iterations until colleagues broke through to an engaged and candid discussion.

At the recommendation of the CAP, this format was regularized and expanded in 2007 as the Teaching and Advising Project (TAP), administered by the dean's office with the assistance of a faculty advisory committee. This project will continue the frequent lunches, workshops, and seminars for faculty interested in issues of pedagogy, while expanding other opportunities for pedagogy support, for example through a pilot program in "open classrooms" to invite faculty to observe each other's classes and through opportunities to have classes videotaped, with consultation from a representative of the

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Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard. As will be discussed below, our increased focus on advising as a crucial element of the open curriculum is reflected in the project's title. Like all new initiatives, the TAP is designed from the ground up to incorporate systemic self-assessment. In planning the program for the TAP, the dean's office with the assistance of the IR office conducted a survey of faculty to evaluate their experience of the Project on Teaching and Learning and their preferences for new directions. Interviews with untenured faculty were conducted. A central function of the TAP will be to provide training to enable faculty to offer courses with central attention to quantitative reasoning and to writing.

General Education and the Breadth of the Course of Study

In its fluidity, adaptability, and complex dynamics, Amherst's open curriculum has the virtue and the liability of being permanently under active review in all quarters and at all levels of the college. Because this curriculum exists within a culture of deep engagement by both students and teachers, rather than within an administrative structure, we run no risk of assuming, even briefly, that we've "got it right." Since 2002 Amherst's curriculum has been the subject of two cross-institutional reviews: In 2002-03 the SCAE compared Amherst's curriculum to those of ten peer institutions, only two of which have open curricula. In 2005-06 Amherst participated in a Teagle Foundation-sponsored working group with representation from seven other institutions with open curricula of various sorts, who compared their learning goals and explored ways of developing instruments to assess their effectiveness in attaining those goals.¹²

From its comparison to other institutions, the SCAE observed that Amherst stood out both in strengths and weaknesses. On the plus side, by giving both students and teachers unusual latitude for self-direction and by leaving departments free to structure their individual approaches to general education, our open curriculum succeeded in allowing faculty and students to put intense intellectual demands on each other. But Amherst gave comparatively little institutional assessment and academic support to its least well-prepared students. As on other campuses, quantitative skills and writing were found to be particularly problematic. The SCAE found that departments and individual faculty were left grappling with variable levels of academic preparation beyond what they could adequately assess or remedy. In their investigations of peer institutions the committee concluded that simply requiring courses in particular areas may often accomplish only nominal compliance rather than engaged learning. The SCAE suggested, rather, that ways be devised within the open curriculum to assess students' needs and to build fundamental competencies that would allow students to maneuver freely within the open curriculum to pursue their interests and career goals. The SCAE also suggested that the college investigate ways to widen its offerings in global preparedness, visual comprehension, and experiential learning.

¹² The report of the working group on the open curriculum is available at http://www.teaglefoundation.org/learning/pdf/2006_brownwg_whitepaper.pdf. The other schools are Antioch College, Brown University, Hampshire College, New College, Sarah Lawrence College, Smith College, and Wesleyan University.

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The Teagle working group on the open curriculum involved comprehensive reporting from the eight schools and a pilot assessment project consisting of interviews with alumni and faculty, which yielded results highly compatible with Amherst's own survey data and the central findings of the SCAE. The open curriculum has multiple strengths: Students' ability to design their own general-education programs strengthens their motivation to learn and thereby enlivens the courses that they take, fosters active learning, makes course choice—with the inevitable hits and misses—part of the education, encourages student-centered pedagogies and creative collaboration with faculty, and fosters independence and personal growth. In Amherst's 2005 Enrolled Student and Senior Surveys, 93 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have used the open curriculum to explore areas that they might not have otherwise pursued, and 83 percent agreed or strongly agreed that it was an essential element in their decision to attend Amherst. In addition, 88 percent reported that the open curriculum had allowed them to consider or pursue more than one major, and 77 percent reported that they had enough information to make informed choices about course selection. In addition, Amherst's academic departments reported to the CAP that the open curriculum gives departments and individual faculty the flexibility to respond quickly to changes in academic disciplines and in students' interests.

Major weaknesses noted in the Teagle project were that the open curriculum can abet risk-avoidance or allow students to over-specialize, to proceed without a plan, or to pursue credentialism (double majors and certificates) at the expense of breadth. The open curriculum may serve the needs of the best prepared students better than it does the least well-prepared. The very intensity of courses composed of self-selected students can be intimidating to those without the background to keep pace. All eight schools in the study put academic advising at the top of their concerns. The pressures put on advising by the open curriculum are both a boon and a burden: Such advising can be a more creative collaboration with students, and closer to teaching, than would be coaching advisees through requirements or a "system." But such advising is hard to do well. (See "Advising" below.)

An important finding of the Teagle working group is that learning outcomes may be even harder to assess under open curricula than under more structured alternatives, such as core curricula and course distribution schemes, which, on balance, put more emphasis on coverage of subject areas or mastery of canons. In contrast, Amherst and other open-curricula schools tend to emphasize capabilities (cf. the six learning areas cited at the outset) and such difficult-to-assess qualities as curiosity, intellectual self-reliance, love of learning, imagination, and ability to work from theory to application. Our mission statement affirms the aim to educate students to "seek, value, and advance knowledge, engage the world around them, and lead principled lives of consequence" and names students' responsibility in inquiry as a distinguishing characteristic of the school. Students' ability to design their own programs and to advance those programs through close collaboration with faculty leads to self-realization in directions that differ from student to student and that therefore elude uniform measures.

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In terms of divisional breadth, Amherst students distribute their course elections well for the most part. In classes of 2002-06, 88 percent took three or more courses in the arts and humanities, and 92 percent took at least two. Similarly 87 percent took three or more courses in the social sciences, and 91 percent took at least two.

There are also weaker areas:

- *Foreign languages:* For the classes of 2002-2006, 36 percent took no course, though we do not know how many of them were functionally bilingual; currently 16 percent of students report a native language other than English.
- *Studio and performing arts:* Fifty-eight percent took no course; that figure drops to 42 percent if courses in creative writing and music composition are included. High, and growing, levels of co-curricular participation in the arts, often involving close collaboration with faculty, suggest both breadth in student experience beyond what these statistics indicate and potential interest in coursework that is not being met by the current number of offerings.
- *Mathematics and the natural sciences:* The fourth report of the Quantitative Skills Working Group (QSWG) provides the fullest profile yet of enrollments in mathematics and the natural sciences.¹³ Of the class of 2006, 87 percent took at least one course, and 73 percent took two or more. Fifty-eight percent of the class did not take a lab science course, and 44 percent took no mathematics course.

The faculty as a whole has not decided what would be acceptable levels for these gaps. The deficiencies in quantitative subjects and foreign languages are confirmed by students' self-reports in the 2007 Enrolled Student Survey. Students reported strong progress in multiple areas: writing ability, the ability to acquire broad knowledge in the arts and sciences, analytical and logical thinking, the ability to identify moral and ethical issues, and the ability to place current problems in a historical, cultural, and philosophical perspective. Significantly less progress was reported in the use of quantitative tools, understanding the processes of science and experimentation, and the ability to read or speak a foreign language.

The planned conversion to online course registration will allow more refined assessment of course-taking patterns and more information for advisors and advisees in the process of discussing course selection. The college is investigating ways to rubricate courses against the six recommended areas (above), or against refinements of those categories, so that students and their advisors may have a matrix that displays a student's breadth of course taking, as well as what courses are available in various areas. We will also investigate developing a degree audit system to make it possible to track what requirements toward a major a student has completed.

¹³ The Quantitative Skills Working Group 2006/7 Summary:
https://cms.amherst.edu/media/view/25801/original/QSWG_2007_Report.pdf.

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As on most campuses, the issue of underprepared students has come to the fore in the past ten years, especially in the work of the SCAE. (See “Addressing Variable Levels of Student Preparation” below.)

In all, we find that in respect to general education, our system of student choice, guided by faculty advising, works well in allowing students and faculty to attain their full potential. It permits quick adaptation on the part of teachers and departments as fields and students’ needs change. Since 2002 the multifaceted initiatives in academic self-appraisal and planning have addressed both how the curriculum and our pedagogies should adapt to address new areas of learning and the arts and how we can better meet the needs of students at various levels of preparation. Given the number of separate initiatives, it will be clearest to handle separately in the next three sections what have been coordinated undertakings: expanding and updating our offerings across departments (“Curricular Renewal”), addressing the needs of students both in and across departments (“Addressing Variable Levels of Student Preparation”), and creating new major programs and modifying existing majors (“The Major”).

Curricular Renewal

As recommended by the SCAE, a number of faculty working groups investigated areas of the curriculum with reference to developments in academic and artistic fields, current understandings of student learning, and expectations and practices at peer institutions. These cross-disciplinary groups, most of which included student members and a designated liaison from the CEP, are a mechanism for self-appraisal, experimentation, and planning that is new to the college—one at a level beyond individual departments, but more focused and hands-on than the ineffectual college-wide curriculum committees of recent decades.

These working groups were given broad latitude to shape their own approaches, and there have been major course corrections and sequels along the way. The Working Group on Visual Comprehension determined that it had no mission and dissolved. Subsequently studio and performing artists formed a working group that was incorporated into the faculty’s CAP deliberations. The Quantitative Skills Working Group (QSWG) continues and has submitted a fourth report. The need to decide on the future of instruction and research in Merrill Science Center has led to the appointment of the Ad Hoc Science Planning Committee, whose work is continuous with the other chapters of the SCAE-CAP process. Other groups have passed their work onto standing committees or successor ad hoc committees.

This flexible structure, for which the CAP, Committee of Six, and CEP have served as umbrella committees, has lacked the neatness of tightly centralized planning, but has tapped the energy and ingenuity of an independent-minded and fiercely dedicated faculty. For all their diversity of approach, the working groups have shared characteristics that have given their reports credibility: (1) Those doing the appraisal and planning had first-hand experience with what they were investigating and will be the implementers of proposed changes; (2) the groups considered how students learn; (3) they reviewed the practices of peer institutions; (4) they had the support of an effective IR office; (5) the

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faculty participants had the incentive that resources would be available to support new appointments and programs.

The work of these groups fed into the work of the CAP in 2005. Their recommendations for new faculty positions and for programs to support faculty development are discussed under *Faculty*. As will be noted, there are already a number of substantial outcomes of these groups—new courses, new faculty and administrative positions, and new structures, such as the CCE. Other recommendations remain under consideration.

The following thumbnail sketches are meant to lead the reader to the reports submitted by these groups, which are for the most part available on the CAP Web site:

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/cap.

Quantitative skills and literacy

The second and third reports of the QSWG (November 2005 and May 2006) advocate quantitative literacy as a goal for all Amherst students, and one to be achieved “across the curriculum,” not just through courses in the natural sciences, mathematics, and economics. Those reports make the distinction between quantitative literacy and the quantitative skills needed for study in these departments and concluded that more deliberation would be needed before recommending how the college should define this goal and help students to achieve it (e.g., by a “quantitative” requirement or increased numbers of quantitative courses in the social sciences). The question of quantitative literacy is related to, but separate from, the expectation that students seek courses that “work within the scientific method” (see above). The QSWG has not determined whether a quantitative requirement is warranted. In its third report the QSWG also considered the question of whether we are providing sufficient support for students who wish to pursue quantitative majors. They found that among the 40 percent or so of students who have mathematics SAT 1 scores under 700, very few take mathematics or science courses beyond the first year course. (The work of this group is discussed further below in “Addressing Variable Levels of Student Preparation.”)

Writing

The Working Group on Writing Instruction (WGWI) investigated writing instruction at a dozen peer institutions and surveyed Amherst students, departments, and individual faculty about the effectiveness of writing instruction across departments. They found a widespread sense that more needs to be done. Students and advisors often do not know what courses centrally address writing. Students report that they often do not get helpful comments on writing assignments. Some of the students most in need of help avoid courses that involve demanding writing assignments and thereby limit their ability to make full use of the open curriculum. The WGWI recommended that a “writing attentive” course be required of all students by the end of their second year, and that pedagogical instruction be given to faculty willing to offer such “W” courses in various departments. They also recommended the creation of a Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum. The recommendation for a required writing-attentive course was put forward by the CAP, whose report was approved in general terms by the faculty. The Ad Hoc Committee on Writing met in 2006-07 to formulate a specific proposal. They

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recommended that, before embarking on a course requirement, the college build up its capacity in writing instruction by appointing a senior faculty member to lead instructional efforts, creating a standing faculty committee, providing visiting and permanent staffing to departments providing “W” courses, making a portion of the first-year seminars writing attentive, and enlarging the writing center. The CEP may bring forward to the faculty recommendations about writing instruction in 2007-08. The WGWI and the First-Year Seminar Committee both sponsored well-attended workshops on writing instruction, which variously presented practitioners from elsewhere and Amherst faculty reporting on innovative classes. In 2007-08 two faculty members who had served on these committees are offering, with the support of the dean of the faculty’s office, semester-long seminars for faculty interested in broadening their skills in writing instruction. The recommendation of both committees that the staffing of the writing center be increased has been implemented, and the center has been given new and expanded quarters. (On the WGWI see also below in “Addressing Variable Levels of Student Preparation.”)

Creative and Performing Arts

Courses that “engage in creative action—doing, making and performing” were addressed by the Working Committee on the Arts at Amherst, which drew attention to the ways that under-staffing limits students’ access to courses in the practice of the arts (in contrast to the historical and scholarly study of the arts). They pointed out that attention to the arts throughout the curriculum has grown steadily, to the point more than a third of the non-arts faculty teach courses incorporating the performing or visual arts, but that there are only six artists among the 167 tenured and tenure-track FTEs (as well as, in any given year, more than a dozen continuing lecturer, visiting, or “in residence” positions). Understaffing means that artists must constantly teach their core disciplines without much latitude for interdisciplinary and collaborative courses. Their 2005 report argues that under-preparation at the high school level is even more severe in the practice of art than it is in other fundamental areas, such as writing and quantitative skills. In its discussion of the CAP report, the faculty resolved that support of such courses should be included among the priorities for the allocation of new faculty positions. To explore new possibilities of the arts in the life of the college, in 2007-08 the Copeland Colloquium program has brought five practicing artists to campus for a year-long colloquium on “Art and Identity.” In 2007-08, national searches are being conducted for a tenured position in photography and a continuing resident artist position (trustee-appointed) in drawing and painting. A group of faculty is meeting to formulate a major in film and new media.

Global Comprehension

The blanket description of courses that “provide knowledge of culture and a language other than one’s own” was refined and analyzed by the Working Group on Global Comprehension. They found that in addition to the study of other cultures, the current dynamics of globalization and diasporas also have important claims to attention. They urged a range of initiatives: to provide more support for students studying, volunteering, and working abroad, including a faculty oversight committee for study abroad; to create new faculty positions in global issues; to increase the number of international students at the college, as well as the breadth of countries and regions represented; and to support faculty in increasing their own command of foreign languages or in making connections

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with international colleagues. Through college and high school transcript analysis, this group also assessed levels of fluency among our students. They found less fluency than the course-election statistics might suggest, given the number of students who take courses only at the introductory level. In an interesting reflection on the workings of the open curriculum, the working group also noted that in the classes of 2000 to 2004, the number of foreign language majors ranged from 13 to 16 percent, which is high by comparison with the peer institutions studied by the SCAE that have language requirements, presumably since these institutions have other breadth requirements that keep students from pursuing languages. The group recommended against imposing a foreign language requirement. In the wake of their recommendations, the position of study abroad advisor has been raised to a full-time position; the Faculty Committee on Study Abroad was instituted; the number of international students has been increased; and their recommendation for need-based support to encourage students to enroll in intensive summer language courses was put forward by the CAP and endorsed by the faculty. The Five College deans are currently discussing greater collaboration in foreign language instruction and wider use of Five College mechanisms, such as the Five College Supervised Independent Language Program (offering a score of less commonly taught languages),¹⁴ shared positions, improved program coordination, and a summer program in classical languages.

Experiential Education

This broad category largely falls outside of the six learning areas defined by the faculty in 1977, though, as discussed under *Mission and Purposes*, the questions of civic responsibility and service figured importantly in the debates about the mission statement. The term represents important developments in higher education in recent decades both in academic study—community-based learning and research—and in students' public service work and internships. With the assistance of a consultant, the Experiential Education Working Group made a broad survey of work in this area at peer campuses, as well as at Amherst, which had been slow to develop in this area. They proposed enhancing programs in a way that integrates co-curricular work with academic study. With slight modifications, their recommendations were put forward by the CAP and endorsed by the faculty. With the help of a donor, their central proposals were realized in 2007 as the CCE (see below), whose advisory committee will continue the work of this group.

Science Planning

As an outgrowth of the CAP process and preparatory to a major renovation of the Merrill Science Center, four faculty members from the Merrill Science Center and the McGuire Life Sciences Building departments (biology, chemistry, physics, and psychology) met frequently in 2006-07 to consider the strengths, needs, and potentials of science education and research in their departments. They drafted a mission statement for the sciences at Amherst and prepared a white paper, "The Future of Sciences at Amherst College," which they shared with their departments and with geology, mathematics, and computer science. Among their concerns were the need to draw a wider range of Amherst students

¹⁴ Five College Supervised Independent Language Program: <http://www.umass.edu/fclang/fcsilp.html>

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into deeper and more protracted engagement in the sciences and the need to create a vibrant interdisciplinary community, with expanded opportunities for student research that will enable us to compete with research universities in recruiting students interested in science. They also recommended expanding course offerings for non-majors. They foresaw the possibility of an integrative scientific community at Amherst. To continue their work, the Ad Hoc Science Planning Committee was appointed in the fall of 2007. The biology, chemistry, mathematics, and physics departments already collaborate in scheduling introductory courses to avoid time conflicts among courses that students frequently take simultaneously.

Beyond these ad hoc committees, there have been other mechanisms for expanding and renewing the curriculum:

On a permanent basis, there are several readerships and limited-term professorships intended to foster curricular innovation, usually across disciplinary boundaries. These include the Bruss Readership (women's studies), the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professorship (encouraging collaboration between tenured and untenured faculty), the Luce Professorship (natural sciences), the Andrew W. Mellon Professorship (interdisciplinary), and the Pick Readership (environmental studies). The newly established Five College Fortieth Anniversary Professorships enable exchanges among the colleges of distinguished senior professors.

From 2004 onward the President's Initiative Fund for Interdisciplinary Curricular Projects (PIF) has allowed cross-departmental groups of faculty the chance to explore new curricular directions by investigating offerings and structures elsewhere, hosting lectures and conferences, developing courses, and hosting post-doctoral fellows in emerging areas.¹⁵ Almost half of the faculty participated. Groups have addressed a range of areas: the environment, global sound, human rights, law and science, the American founding, education and social justice, film and video arts, the urban imagination. These groups have resulted in two-year post-doc appointments in new areas, well-received courses, and, in the case of environmental studies, the creation of a new major. The program will end in 2007-08. The initiatives that have evolved through PIF have now shifted to the next phase of consideration by the CEP and the faculty as a whole, after serving to inform the planning process of the CAP.

Starting in 2006, a pilot program, the Faculty Innovation Fund (FIF), has supported course development and the renewal of department programs on the part of individuals and groups.¹⁶ Areas encouraged include comparison of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches in both courses and department programs; development of courses addressing global issues, cross-cultural analysis, experiential learning, and the uses of new technologies and artistic media. Proposals are considered by the CEP, which makes recommendations to the dean of the faculty.

¹⁵ The President's Initiative Fund: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/funding/pifguidelines.

¹⁶ The Faculty Innovation Fund: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/funding/fif.

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The Dayton Environmental Science Fund provides support for curricular development in environmental science, including course development, interdisciplinary seminars, instructional equipment, and summer stipends for student assistants.¹⁷

Addressing Variable Levels of Student Preparation

The growing disparities in preparation and learning style among the most talented and dedicated high school students have become a dominant theme in higher education, given the inequitable distribution of educational opportunity and access to technology. A student body drawn from all sectors of US American society and from dozens of cultures abroad presents opportunities and challenges at the heart of our mission to educate “men and women of exceptional potential from all backgrounds.” Our open curriculum has the advantage of allowing individual students to find their own way into college-level work by striking a balance in course selection between their stronger and weaker areas. But it can also allow students to over-commit before knowing what they are getting into or to avoid the areas in which they need the most work. Students and advisors need good information about what various courses demand, what capabilities they develop, and where students can go for academic support.

In terms of resources, our largest response is the proposed expansion of the faculty by approximately 10 percent to meet the needs of an increasingly various student body. Part of this expansion is needed to staff new types of introductory courses, as will be explained below.

Concerted institutional response to this concern may be traced back to the 1994 Drew House Forum on the Academic Concerns of Black Students, which led to an ad hoc committee. Their report, “A Promise to Keep” (1995), brought enhancement of the tutoring program, creation of the ad hoc (now, standing) Committee on Academic Support, and the founding of what has now become the Moss Quantitative Center. As has been discussed, the SCAE drew central attention to the problems of underprepared students and led to the appointment of curricular working groups, all of which addressed levels of student preparation. An important, and much discussed, principle that emerged from these discussions is, to quote the first QSWG report, “*the problem has to be solved in our classrooms*”—that is, solved by faculty members in taking direct responsibility. In deliberating on the CAP recommendations, the faculty agreed that an adjunct or a second-tier faculty should not be hired to address the most frustrating and time-consuming problems of student preparation nor should the quantitative and writing centers, invaluable as they are, be expected to address deficiencies in student preparation unless professors take the lead in their classrooms. In our continuing discussions, the rhetoric of remediation has been avoided and the word *skills* is used cautiously to avoid the implication that writing and quantitative reasoning can somehow be developed apart from inquiry. We are often reminded that “writing is always *about* something.” The QSWG prefers “skills and modes of thought.”

¹⁷ Dayton Environmental Science Fund: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/funding/dayton.

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To begin with writing, the SCAE estimated that some 10 to 15 percent of entering classes might have writing skills so weak as to prevent full use of our academic offerings and to lead to avoidance of classes that demand and teach writing most intensely. For these students the WGWI proposed that “writing intensive” courses with substantial disciplinary content be developed in departments. Under the sponsorship of the WGWI, and with the participation of several members of the group, English 01, *Justice*, and Philosophy 01, *Doing the Right Thing*, were offered on an experimental basis, a program now in its fourth year. In addition to the research done by the WGWI on practices at peer institutions, the staff of these courses did intensive research into current writing pedagogies so as to design their own approach. The courses have been able to find their constituency by a combination student self-selection and counseling through academic advisors. A number of students for whom English is not their native language have found these courses particularly helpful. No sense of stigma appears to attach to their fundamental nature.

The QWSG concentrated initially on the challenges faced by first-year students confronted with gateway courses such as Chemistry 11, *Introductory Chemistry*, Mathematics 11, *Introduction to the Calculus*, and Economics 11, *An Introduction to Economics*. After surveying Amherst departments and individual colleagues and studying innovative approaches elsewhere, especially those devised by Uri Treisman at UC Berkeley and the University of Texas at Austin, they devised “intensive sections” for these courses, which offered supplemental instruction within the usual syllabus. These sections provide additional course work to students who are identified as needing it, in the form of an extra class meeting each week taught by the instructor of the course and a student teaching assistant. These courses introduce challenging problem sets and attempt to teach students how to approach problems they have never before encountered. The QSWG also devised a diagnostic exam for entering students, which was determined not to be more predictive than the academic reader ratings used by admission. These courses are now in their fourth year, and have been intensively assessed, as is discussed in the third report of the QSWG. Though the numbers are small, the intensive sections seem to have enabled students to succeed somewhat beyond expectations and to have improved the persistence of students in quantitative courses, both in not exercising their first-year withdrawal option and in proceeding to more advanced work. The CAP recommendation that departments be given permanent staffing to provide a number of such courses is being implemented, and searches are under way. A small experimental program with a fully subsidized post-baccalaureate fifth year in order complete pre-medical requirements has also been initiated to allow selected students to follow a productive pace in science courses.

Since 2005 the Hughes Committee under an HHMI grant has participated in the Diversity in Sciences Collaborative, which brings together faculty and staff from seventy colleges and universities to share data and best practices in fostering achievement for students in the sciences, as for example through required study groups and peer mentoring. With the help of the IR office, the Hughes Committee compiles and shares data on the enrollment of underrepresented students in courses and majors, with attention to GPA and levels of participation in majors, such as research, independent projects, and working as a teaching

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assistant. Several members of the biology department also organize the annual two-week genomics institute for high-school teachers.

Economics, in which more than half of Amherst students take at least one class, has responded to the range of student preparations and intentions by adding an intensive section to Economics 11 (as noted above) for students with weaker preparations, as well as faster-paced and more quantitatively rigorous tracks of the intermediate microeconomic and macroeconomic theory courses, a research seminar course for potential thesis writers, and a summer fellowship program to support rising seniors who work for government agencies or NGOs involved in economic research.

Building on the pre-enrollment summer science program (see under *Students*) is the Phoenix Program, launched in 2001 by one of our chemistry professors to enable first-year students who experience difficulty in Chemistry 11 to spend three weeks in January working with their professor and an instructor from the quantitative center on the concepts they had the most difficulty understanding, with the possibility of raising their semester grade to B-. They were encouraged to continue to study science at Amherst. An assessment in 2004 found that the program appears to improve understanding of chemical concepts, persistence in science courses, and good working relationships with the quantitative center.

In fall 2006, scheduling was altered to keep students from electing both Mathematics 5, *Calculus with Algebra* (the slower track of calculus), and Chemistry 11, *Introductory Chemistry*—a combination that overloaded many less well-prepared students. For Mathematics 5 students waiting to take the smaller class of Chemistry 11 in the spring, an experimental course, Biology/Chemistry 03, *The Chemical Basis of Human Physiology*, has been devised to give these students a rigorously taught science course while they are waiting to begin the normal pre-medical course sequence.

These efforts are supplemented by programs directed by the dean of students office, including the Academic Peer Mentors (see under *Students*).

These are grassroots initiatives, generated by concerned faculty in response to perceived needs. In all cases, they are supported by research into successful practices on peer campuses. In this area, the learning curve has been rapid. Some faculty criticize this pragmatic approach as involving too many small experiments with imperfect coordination. However, our investigation of peer practice and research on learning suggest that top-down programs are unsuccessful in achieving their aims, even if they have the appearance of being a systematic approach to the problems. The prevailing view is that we have to learn by doing and that the positive results for students are worth the messiness of experimentation.

The Major

Departments' review and modification of their majors have proceeded in tandem with the college-wide planning process. Their reports to the SCAE, CAP, and working groups about the inadequate preparation of some students interested in their majors informed the

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CAP recommendations. In turn, departments have made their expectations clearer and, in several cases, made their requirements more rigorous. Since 2005, five of the most popular major programs, serving well over half the class, have increased course or comprehensive requirements. The bare bones of these changes are:

- Economics has added a new upper-level elective requirement.
- English, which raised the major course requirement from eight to ten courses in 1996, has instituted a rigorous comprehensive exam taken online over three days, on a set of works not assigned in any course. Exams are read by the entire department. The department has also organized its courses into four tiers (from Level I, writing-intensive courses, to Level IV, seminars for junior and senior majors emphasizing independent inquiry, critical and theoretical issues, and extensive writing), with a requirement that majors take one course from each level.
- Law, jurisprudence, and social thought has shifted from a nine-course minimum for the major to an eleven-course minimum and added to the two previously required courses an additional requirement of two junior seminars (one analytic, one research), and a two-semester senior independent writing project.
- Political science has raised the course requirement from nine to ten and instituted both a distribution requirement, of courses in at least three of six designated areas, and a concentration requirement, of a minimum of four courses around a theme chosen by the student in consultation with an advisor.
- Psychology has instituted a new requirement to complete before the student's senior year both a laboratory course and an intermediate course emphasizing written and oral skills.

Other departments have made substantial changes in their major programs.

- Black studies has designed a core curriculum of courses with defined pedagogical objectives: Black Studies 11, *Introduction*, which uses classics in the field to teach students at a range of preparations to read and interpret complex texts; Black Studies 12, *Critical Debates*, which concentrates on the rhetorical strategies of argumentation and debate; and Black Studies 64, *Black Studies Seminar*, the junior year capstone course, which introduces students to research methodologies and leads to the writing of a junior paper.
- In the last ten years, geology has gone through a major transformation. Following a self-study and external review in 1996, the department used strategic retirement replacements to move from its traditional "solid earth" focus to a new emphasis on the Earth's surface environment (now two of five appointments). The department is proposing to the CEP a new major: environmental earth science. Through a two-year planning process, the department devised an innovative and now widely-acclaimed plan for its new home, the Earth Sciences Building, which

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integrates instruction, student research, faculty research, and the resources of the museum of natural history.

- To accommodate shifts from the purely literary focus to a wider address to historical context and other arts, the German department has created separate tracks for German literature and German studies.
- Art and art history has changed its name from “fine arts” and established separate tracks in the major: the practice of art; historical and cultural studies; and the “art” of the history of art. These changes clarify expectations as students pick various specializations.
- The environmental studies major has just been approved by the faculty, to begin in 2008-09. A faculty group from the departments of biology, chemistry, economics, geology, history, mathematics, philosophy, and sociology used the sponsorship of the President’s Initiative Fund to investigate models for programs elsewhere in environmental science and environmental studies, and designed an environmental studies major, to be formulated as a program rather than department.

Also under development is a proposal for a program in biophysics and biochemistry, organized by faculty in biology, chemistry, and physics.

In all, equally energetic initiatives within departments have proceeded in concert with the college-wide processes of self-appraisal and planning. The CEP and Committee of Six provide coordination between the two levels.

Advising

As at peer institutions, students express less satisfaction with advising than with courses, and less satisfaction with pre-major advising than advising in the major. Among thirty campuses, Amherst ranks highest in student satisfaction with advising in the major, but right at the median in pre-major advising. The most commonly cited problem with advising in the major is that advisors in particularly popular majors may have unmanageably many advisees.

That a free choice of courses beyond the major puts particular pressures on pre-major advising is a central finding of the SCAE and CAP reports, as well as of the Teagle working group on the open curriculum. A body of specific concerns is now clear: As options expand at Amherst and the Five Colleges—in course work, summer opportunities, study abroad, academic support, instruction in information resources—advisors are hard-pressed to keep up, and especially new faculty advisors. Graduate school provides experience of teaching, but usually not of advising. Some students arrive well versed in liberal arts institutions and Amherst cultures; others, such as international and first-generation students, may be less knowledgeable and confident. There is more demand for advisors with specific competence in some areas (e.g., the sciences and performing/creating arts) than can be supplied overall. As in all advising systems, student

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and advisor may not be a good match, and the student often has less latitude than in choosing instructors. As ever, the distinction between bad advice and unwelcome sound advice is easily overlooked.

In the spring of 2007 the IR office conducted a pilot study of attitudes toward pre-major advising based on interviews with a range of faculty. Even with a small sample, this study revealed a wide range of practices (including time spent) and expectations. Almost all participants emphasized the importance of conveying the ideals of the open curriculum and of a liberal arts education, including breadth of course selection. Most felt that advising undeclared students is important work, a central responsibility of faculty, and deserving of more support from the college. The time needed to do good advising was also generally felt to be a challenge. Reports of students' needs differed widely. Agreeing that the system needs to be improved, the participants offered suggestions, none of them shared. Pointing up how much we do not know about advising, this pilot study suggests the need for more intensive investigation.

With the growing burdens on faculty advisors, there has been increased recognition that students need a range of other resources, such as those that the Career Center provides for international experience, the health professions, and pre-law. The program of Academic Peer Advisors for first-year students, now in its second year, has been well received as a way to supplement the work of faculty advisors; see under *Students*. Getting the word out to students and advisors about these resources is its own challenge.

Various initiatives to understand and address the problems are under way:

To combat information overload, with the conversion to online registration we will organize electronic resources about majors, study abroad, preparation for graduate and professional study, and other areas so that students and advisors can efficiently access online resources.

As mentioned above, we have had a program in orientation advising for the last three years, with a continuing assessment. On the basis of the assessment of the first year, the program was refined in the second so that students remain with their initial orientation advisor through drop-add period to make it easier to assign them to an instructor in one of their courses as their ongoing advisor. The results seem positive.

Advising has been a central theme of faculty conversations led by the Project on Teaching and Learning, now renamed and greatly expanded as the Teaching and Advising Project (TAP) (see below). Programs for training new advisors will be expanded, along with opportunities for experienced advisors to develop skills and keep current with the needs of students.

The First-Year Seminars

As the single course requirement among our system of free electives, the first-year seminars are subject to constant scrutiny, though in recent years the members of the First-Year Seminar Committee, essentially a recruitment committee, have expressed frustration

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that the committee lacks the authority to exercise effective oversight. The range of offerings is determined by who volunteers to teach the seminars, and the committee has little power to screen or shape the offerings.

The most-discussed topic in recent years has been whether to require all seminars to be writing-attentive, as is the case for first-year seminars in some peer institutions. By many definitions, including that of the WGWI, the great majority of current first-year seminars would already qualify as writing-attentive. The First-Year Seminar Committee and the CAP declined to recommend that all seminars become writing-attentive lest the program exclude faculty desiring to introduce liberal learning with an emphasis on quantitative, creative, or other capabilities. Since incoming students rank their preferences for a seminar in the summer before talking to an academic advisor, the First-Year Seminar Committee requested that course descriptions be explicit about the objectives of the course, including the competencies to be developed, the pedagogical approach of the course, and how the course offers an introduction to liberal learning. While this practice appears to have been helpful, some students find that seminars do not always fit their descriptions and some remain under the impression that all seminars should be writing attentive.

In the spring of 2006 the First-Year Seminar Committee, at the behest of the CEP and in collaboration with the IR director, surveyed students to inventory best practices in the seminars.¹⁸ With an 80 percent response rate, this inventory offered some unexpected results. As the number of pages assigned increased, so did the proportion of reading completed. Perceived success of the seminars did not correlate with the grade received. Students responded best to seminars for being challenging and stimulating, not for being undemanding. For seminars with multiple sections, individual section meetings were strongly preferred over plenary sessions; there was a strong consensus that class discussion was where the learning happened. It was possible to assign both too much writing and too little; helpful feedback and discussion of writing in class were considered crucial.

Another continuing issue has been the lack of shared intellectual experience in the programs of first-year students as they pursue electives. First-year students appreciate the choice among a broad array of seminar topics, but regularly wonder why the single non-major required course does not have more cohesion across the program. In Amherst's tradition of team-taught introductory courses, some first-year seminars have had four or five sections, involving as much as one-sixth of the class and addressing broad topics through a cross-departmental teaching staff. Recent examples have included *Nations and Nationhood*, *War*, and *Conflict and Cohesion*. Since organizing such courses involves considerable effort, in 2007 the First-Year Seminar Committee proposed a program to provide support for groups of faculty willing to undertake this task, as well as funds to

¹⁸ The inventory of best practices can be found on the First-Seminar Committee site: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees/fyscommittee

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support the teaching of such courses. The proposal was approved by the CEP and has been implemented by the dean's office.¹⁹

Student research

We have been expanding opportunities for students to do research with Amherst faculty, as well as elsewhere in labs, archives, and fieldwork.²⁰ In a program initially funded for three years by the Mellon Foundation, some 60 to 70 academic interns work with faculty during the semesters, in January, and during the summer both to assist faculty research and to work course development. The program has been increasingly popular. Almost 100 students a year work in science labs in various capacities: as summer fellows (under a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI),²¹ as well as the grants of individual faculty), as honors students during the summer and semesters, and as research assistants. The student researchers present their work in September in a lively and well-attended poster session. On their Web sites, many individual faculty members describe work published with students and current research opportunities. Some academic departments list student research projects, graduates' current positions and research areas, and summer research opportunities.²² There are also endowed funds for independent research. In the CAP process, there were requests for enhanced support for student research from departments across the curriculum, including the sciences and black studies. Since 2006, ten especially talented students with serious research interests and aspirations toward academic careers have been named Schupf Scholars. They are eligible to apply for funding for research projects every summer. Following the CAP recommendations, student research will be a priority in the comprehensive campaign.

Study Abroad

Following the recommendation of the Global Comprehension Working Group, the three-member Faculty Committee on Study Abroad was created on an experimental basis to review the certification of study-abroad programs for Amherst students and to consider ways of coordinating such study into students' on-campus academic programs. Their report is expected in 2007. To provide more support for the approximately 40 percent of students who spend a semester or year abroad, the position of Study Abroad Advisor has been raised from half- to full-time.²³

The Center for Community Engagement (CCE)²⁴

As discussed above, the Experiential Education Working Group proposed an integrated curricular and co-curricular approach to enhancing students' hands-on learning by engagement in communities. Through the generosity of a grant from the Argosy

¹⁹ Collaborative First-Year Seminars:

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/funding/fys_collaborative

²⁰ For the funding opportunities under the dean of the faculty's office, see

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/funding/studentfunding

²¹ For a list of HHMI students and projects, see

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/funding/howard_hughes_fellowship

²² See, for example, the biology Web site: <https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/biology>

²³ On study abroad, see: <http://www.amherst.edu/~careers/abroad/studyabroad.html>

²⁴ CCE Web site: <https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/cce>

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Foundation, the college was able to launch a seven-year trial of a center to coordinate public service, internships, and resources for faculty desiring to develop courses involving community research and community-based learning. In addition to integrating service more closely with the curriculum, the hope is to increase the level of public service by students and to offer broader support for internships in the public sector, with clear provision that all students have equal access to these programs regardless of financial means. The center has been designed from the ground up to incorporate assessment of student learning and of effectiveness for community partners.

Assessing Outcomes

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning was reestablished with a fulltime director (and subsequently, additional staff) in 2004. The director has established a survey agenda that is designed to collect longitudinal and comparative data on issues that require continuous measurement while being flexible enough to react to the needs of faculty committees and senior administrators. Among our survey agenda are:

- The Freshman Survey by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA (commonly referred to as CIRP);
- The COFHE Enrolled Student Survey;
- The Cycles Survey in cooperation with the Five College Consortium;
- The COFHE Senior Survey;
- The COFHE Alumni Survey;
- The COFHE Parents Survey;
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (which will be used for the first time in 2007).

In addition, projects are designed to focus on specific issues in reaction to college planning needs and issues. Representative projects include:

- The First Year Seminar Inventory – designed to identify pedagogical practices and best practices;
- The Amherst Student Athlete Survey – designed to identify areas of conflict and good integration between the academic and intercollegiate athletic programs;
- Level of Intellectual Engagement – a bank of questions designed with an ad hoc group of faculty to assess the level of intellectual engagement. These were included as local questions with the Enrolled Student Survey and the Senior Survey in 2007;

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- The COACHE Survey – designed to assess work satisfaction and issues with pre-tenured faculty. The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education is run by the Harvard Graduate School of Education;
- Pre-major Advising: Faculty Attitudes and Practices – a series of in-depth interviews designed to gauge core issues and the range of variation.

Results from these projects are summarized in a variety of ways and shared with the appropriate or requesting constituencies. An overall summary of Amherst's assessment efforts was presented to the board of trustees at its retreat in late June of 2007. The highlights of that summary include the following:

From the Senior Survey:

Compared to thirty peer institutions on forty-eight aspects of academic and campus life:

Amherst was above the median on twenty-one aspects;

Amherst was at or near the median on another twenty-one aspects;

Amherst was below the median on six aspects:

Internships;

Course availability;

Interdisciplinary courses;

Food services;

Career counseling;

Student government.

Amherst seniors were above the median in overall satisfaction with their undergraduate education, satisfaction with their major, and willingness to recommend Amherst to a high school senior.

From the Alumni Survey:

Compared to thirty peer institutions, Amherst alumni had the highest mean on their willingness to recommend Amherst to a high school student.

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Alumni rated thirteen priorities for Amherst College, the highest being teaching and the lowest being merit aid. The respondents were broken into sub-groups to view how the priorities might change and revealed some surprises, such as that ex-athletes do not think the college should place more emphasis on athletics.

Dashboards were constructed to show how Amherst Alumni compared to two sets of peers (coed colleges and Ivy League schools) on various outcomes including types of advanced degrees earned, impact of high loans on advanced degrees earned, type of occupation, and life achievements.

Some 82 percent of alumni reported earning advanced degrees, surpassed only by one institution in a cohort of eight liberal arts colleges and by none of eight Ivy League universities.

This is an encouraging picture overall, but we should end with a caution. Like most institutions, we know our most successful students best. The 5 percent or so of seniors who do *summa* work are reviewed by the Committee of Six. In larger departments, the almost 50 percent who complete honors projects are better known to their departments than the 50 percent who do not. The approximately 60 percent of alumni who responded to the 2005 survey may well have had a better experience and feel more loyalty than the 40 percent who did not respond. In the last five years we have taken pains to look beyond our most high-achieving students to consider how effectively all students learn. Systematizing and perpetuating this vigorous inquiry remain a work in progress. We have, however, shown a willingness to act on what we learn from assessment: in revising majors, creating new types of courses and academic support programs, enhancing the pre-major advising system, and developing ways of training faculty to address new modes of student learning.

PROJECTIONS

(The creation of new faculty positions to support curricular renewal and to address variable levels of student preparation will be discussed under *Faculty*. The evolving programs in academic support are discussed under *Students*. The new instruction programs in the library and Academic Technology Services are discussed under *Library and Other Information Resources*.)

The central project of the next years will be to fund, implement, and evaluate the CAP recommendations, while developing sustained capacities for self-assessment and planning.

Instruction

- The dean's office, IR office, and CEP will seek to make the complex dynamics of the open curriculum legible to students and faculty and to integrate the college-wide assessments of student learning with those of departments. The IR office

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will help interested departments and individual faculty members to develop mechanisms to assess learning outcomes.

- In 2007-08 the CEP will consider ways of implementing the CAP's recommendations concerning writing instruction and may forward proposals to the faculty.
- The QSWG and, in time, the Committee on Academic Support, with the assistance of a senior advisor to the dean for academic life, will pursue a multifaceted approach to supporting quantitative literacy as a goal for all students and to assisting students to gain the levels of competence needed for gateway courses in scientific and quantitative subjects.
- The First-Year Seminar Committee will continue to seek ways to make the seminars more effective in supporting writing and other fundamental competencies, and to encourage multi-section courses that provide a shared experience to significant portions of the first-year class. The committee will also continue to investigate ways to provide greater cohesion in the academic experience of the first year.
- With the support of the dean of the faculty's office or by the fractional allocation of new FTEs, the intensive sections in writing and in economics, mathematics, and chemistry will be continued and expanded. Their effectiveness will be assessed by the instructors with the assistance of the IR office.
- The CEP, Committee of Six, and administration, with the assistance of a senior advisor to the dean for academic life, will continue to seek a grading system that is fair to students but that clearly distinguishes levels of achievement without shifting student focus from learning to credentialing.
- The administration, with the assistance of a senior advisor to the dean for academic life, will seek to expand the number of opportunities for student research.
- The TAP will provide forums and services for faculty to improve their skills and investigate new pedagogies. The effectiveness of the current programs will be assessed at the end of 2007-08.

Advising

- The IR office will investigate students' experience of advising and the practices and expectations of advisors.
- With the advent of online registration, we will seek to provide students and their advisors with a matrix displaying the number of courses within the six learning areas to encourage discussion of the breadth of the students' program. Online registration will allow students and advisors better access to information on

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academic support, study abroad, summer opportunities, and training in using information resources.

- The TAP will provide training to new and continuing advisors and foster campus-wide discussion of the various dimensions of advising.

Facilities

- The administration will further expand the stock of state-of-the art classroom and studio facilities.
- In 2008 and early 2009 the Academic Facilities Planning Committee will make a comprehensive review of academic facilities and investigate the possibilities for expansion, including a possible new academic building on the east campus, and will coordinate the planning initiatives for the Merrill Science Center and Frost Library.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

As the college's mission statement reflects, the chief focus of our self-evaluation is the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of our academic programs. In the past decade, we have taken steps to make sure that assessment is systematic, sustained, and used for program improvement through new structures of consultation, such as regular meetings of faculty committees with the trustees, through the enhancement of the planning function of the CEP, and through enhanced staff in the IR offices and office of the dean of the faculty. The overall impact of these initiatives is not yet known. All new initiatives have included provision for ongoing assessment.

5 FACULTY

OVERVIEW

At the center of the planning discussions since 2002 has been the question of how the faculty can maintain its sense of a common educational project and continue to oversee that project closely despite the growing demands on its time. The faculty has resolved to retain its traditional responsibilities in instruction, advising, and faculty governance without recourse to an adjunct or second-tier faculty, and to continue working through strong departments, but with new mechanisms of coordination and assessment in order to ensure that college-wide needs are met.

As is discussed under *The Academic Program*, new structures and additional resources will be needed to keep pace with developments in scholarship, the arts, and technology, and with the growing complexity of students' learning needs. To meet these challenges, we have the advantage of an experienced and cohesive faculty, but one that is over-extended and faced with rapid turnover in the next decade due to retirements. To address these challenges, the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) recommended a substantial increase in the size of the faculty, new procedures for allocating positions, and increased support for teaching, advising, and research. Though the evaluation of tenured faculty remains a sensitive issue, we have improved and will continue to strengthen our mechanisms to recruit, mentor, and evaluate new faculty from a range of backgrounds.

DESCRIPTION

Characteristics

Amherst College prides itself on its outstanding and dedicated faculty. In 2006-07 the college employed 212 individuals as instructional faculty, the vast majority of these (195, or 92 percent) in full-time positions. In what was once an all-male institution, the proportion of women faculty, about a third (82), is within the range of peer institutions that have been co-educational since their foundation. Nearly a fifth (40) of the faculty are people of color, and seven are internationals.¹ Most (90 percent, or 191) of the instructional faculty hold doctoral, first professional, or other terminal degrees. Of the remainder, fourteen faculty members have earned a master's degree, and seven hold bachelor degrees as their highest degree. There is currently a cap of 167 full-time equivalent (FTE) tenured and tenure-track positions, ranging by department from a high of 12.5 FTEs in English to one in astronomy and .75 in European studies. There are also a half-dozen "in-residence" positions in the arts (under various titles, such as artist-in-

¹ See the Common Data Set for additional information: https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/glance/common_data_sets. For more specific figures, see "Diversity and Inclusion" under *Integrity*.

Faculty

residence, resident artist, and visiting writer) and eighteen lecturers and senior lecturers, primarily in the arts and foreign languages.² In addition, the faculty currently includes one adjunct faculty member, fourteen fellows (some of whom teach one course), and ten native speakers who serve as language assistants. Graduate students occasionally assume instructional duties such as lab preparation, always under the direction of a professor. Athletic coaches serve under a system of renewable contracts. Unlike the number of tenured and tenure-track FTEs, which remains stable, the number of visiting faculty, Five College fellows, and other faculty on temporary assignment varies by department from year to year in response to leave patterns, resignations, retirements, and other staffing contingencies.

We are entering a period of rapid turnover in the faculty, during which a diminishing number of senior faculty will need to hire, mentor, and evaluate an increasing number of untenured colleagues. Among the assistant, associate, and full professors currently serving, 160 in total, 77 percent (123 individuals) are tenured and 65 percent (104 individuals) are full professors.³ Fifty-six percent are over the age of fifty; 25 percent, over the age of sixty; 16 percent, over the age of sixty-five; and 7 percent, over the age of seventy.⁴ In recent years approximately one-third of those eligible have elected to move to half-time teaching under a program of phased retirement between their sixtieth and sixty-fifth years, with a commitment to retire by age seventy. These faculty can maintain an income level near to that for full-time teaching through a combination of a percentage of salary, a stipend for teaching, and after age sixty-five social security and pension payments.

Faculty members normally teach two courses per semester or the equivalent in lecture/lab combination. All tenured and tenure-track faculty members beyond the first year of service have responsibility for advising, both for first-year students and sophomores who have not declared a major (“college advisees”) and for students within the major (“major advisees”). Subject to the reserve power of control of the trustees, the faculty has responsibility for the curriculum, admission standards, the calendar, and rules of conduct for students (*Faculty Handbook* II.C). Tenured and tenure-track faculty all serve on standing committees after their first year and participate fully in decisions on educational policy, hiring, and priorities and resources. They have an obligation to attend faculty meetings, where they approve the awarding of degrees; changes in academic policies and procedures; and new courses, majors, and Five College certificates.

Each faculty member is asked annually to submit a current *curriculum vitae*. Compliance with this expectation, though not universal, has improved steadily, in part because CVs

² Outside of English, which has two lecturers and 4.4 visiting appointments, the largest concentration of lecturers and visitors is in the language departments and the practicing arts, in response to specialized teaching assignments: Asian languages and civilizations has five lecturers; Spanish has four; French, German, and Russian each have one; art and art history has 3.6 visitors; music has three lecturers and 3.6 visitors; and theater and dance has two lecturers and 3.8 visitors.

³ These figures include the dean and associate deans of the faculty, the dean of new students, and the special assistant to the president for diversity.

⁴ Faculty on phased retirement are excluded from this count.

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are required for application for various forms of funding.⁵ A growing number of faculty—now over half—have profiles on the college Web site.

Codes of Behavior

Like all other members of the college community, faculty members are expected to abide by the ethical standards expressed in the three statements in our academic regulations, which also form the basis of our honor code for students: the Statement on Intellectual Responsibility, the Statement on Freedom of Expression and Dissent, and the Statement on Respect for Persons. These statements are published in the college *Catalog* (2007-08: pp. 59-62), the *Faculty Handbook*,⁶ *Student Handbook* (2007-08: pp. 23-25) and online.⁷ Instructors are expected to read the Statement on Intellectual Responsibility to their classes at the beginning of each semester and to explain the implications of the honor code for the work of the course. The ethical standards embodied in the three statements guide the work of the student affairs staff as well.

Academic Freedom

The college's commitment to academic freedom is affirmed in the mission statement. In addition, the *Faculty Handbook* states: "Amherst College subscribes fully to the AAUP statements of principles on academic freedom published in 1940, and assumes that faculty members know their rights and their responsibilities as members of the academic profession" (Pre-Introduction, C. Academic Freedom). As mentioned above, the academic regulations include the Statement on Freedom of Expression and Dissent. Our commitment to academic freedom applies to all those formally connected with the college, whether faculty or not, and to those who legitimately participate in college activities.

Faculty Compensation

Faculty salaries and benefits undergo annual review by the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR), which compares Amherst's salaries and compensation with those of peer institutions as reported to the AAUP and makes recommendations to the administration.⁸ From 2003 to 2005, the CPR conducted a thoroughgoing review of the benchmarks by which salaries and compensation are assessed on an annual basis. They recommended that the group of twelve comparator institutions used since the 1970s— institutions with which we compete for faculty—be expanded to thirty.⁹ In 2003 the

⁵ Programs requiring submission of a CV: the Faculty Research Assistance Program, the Senior Sabbatical program, the President's Initiative Fund for Interdisciplinary Curricular Projects, the Faculty Initiative Fund, and the Work-in-Progress Seminars.

⁶ *Faculty Handbook* IV.A Academic Regulations

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fachandbook/facresponsibilities/academicregulations

⁷ The Honor Code, including the three statements: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/conduct/rightsrespon.html>

⁸ CPR Annual Faculty Salary and Compensation Reports (2000-06):

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees/cpr

⁹ Traditional group: Dartmouth, Harvard, Indiana U., Mount Holyoke, Smith, UMass-Amherst, U. of Michigan-Ann Arbor, U. of Virginia, Wellesley, Wesleyan, Williams, Yale. Additions: Bowdoin, Brown, Carleton, Columbia, Davidson, Duke, Haverford, MIT, Northwestern, Pomona, Princeton, Stanford, Swarthmore, U. of California-Berkeley, U. of California-Los Angeles, U. of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, U. of Pennsylvania, Washington U.-St. Louis. The CPR's institutional comparison group report is at <https://cms.amherst.edu/media/view/18772/original/reportwtable05.pdf>

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college modified retiree health benefits from a defined benefit program to a defined contribution program for newly hired employees. Upon the recommendation of the CPR and the Advisory Committee on Personnel Policy, the college's grant-in-aid for tuition for children of faculty was increased in 2007 from \$4,000 to \$8,000 per year. The CPR is also currently considering the college's support for childcare for faculty and staff.

Teaching

Faculty members normally teach two courses per semester, with an equivalence adjustment for faculty teaching lab courses. In addition to scheduled courses, many faculty also offer "special topics" courses to individual students, and nearly all faculty mentor honors students engaged in thesis work. Faculty in music and in theater and dance often devote many additional hours to directing, designing, and staging student performance pieces. Science faculty oversee student research projects during the summer.

As part of the re-appointment and tenure process, senior faculty visit the classes of junior faculty within their own department on a regular basis and often invite junior colleagues to observe their own classrooms. Junior faculty receive feedback from all students in their courses, and have an annual conversation with the chair(s) of their department(s) to discuss their effectiveness as teachers and as department members. Continuing Amherst's rich tradition of team-teaching as a primary form of mentoring and career-long renewal of skills, in some departments senior faculty regularly co-teach with junior faculty (especially in introductory level science courses). Faculty also regularly experiment with new teaching areas and techniques and have made a concerted effort over the last decade to accommodate complex material to the range of levels of preparation that students bring from secondary school (see "Curricular Renewal" and "Addressing Variable Levels of Student Preparation" under *The Academic Program*). Over the last five years, through the various metamorphoses of the teaching and learning project, Amherst has widened the conversation about teaching through lively and well-attended lunches and workshops on pedagogy and advising (see "The Teaching and Advising Project" in the appraisal section). The librarians provide instruction to courses and to individual students in the use of information resources. The staff of Academic Technology Services supports the classroom technology required by new teaching methods and assist faculty who wish to experiment with new technology in their teaching (see under *Library and Other Information Resources*).

Supports for course development and for the renewal of department programs have been described under "Curricular Renewal" in *The Academic Program*.

Advising

Advising is considered a central responsibility of the faculty. It is discussed under *The Academic Program*.

Scholarly Research and Creative Work

The college's mission statement emphasizes our commitment "to expanding the realm of knowledge through scholarly research and artistic creation at the highest level." Current

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faculty have received awards from the National Institutes of Health, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Mellon Foundation, the Tinker Foundation, the Luce Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, as well as Fulbright Fellowships. In the five fiscal years (FY) since FY2002, as reported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), Amherst faculty received fifty NSF awards, totaling approximately \$6 million.¹⁰ Review of College data from 1988 to the present shows that 113 Amherst faculty submitted a total of 604 proposals, of which 297 (49 percent) were funded by federal and state agencies, and an impressive range of private foundations, corporations, and professional and scholarly associations. During the same period, Amherst College submitted twenty-two institutional proposals, of which nineteen (86%) were funded, thus further contributing to the teaching, scholarly, and creative activities of the Amherst College community. In the last decade, faculty have received eight Guggenheim Fellowships, the Bancroft Prize in American History and Diplomacy, and two Pulitzer Prizes.

As recommended by the CAP, a director of sponsored research has been appointed in the dean's office to assist faculty with funding research and creative work.¹¹ With the appointment of the director and the expansion of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, we are creating mechanisms to keep systematic records of the scholarly and artistic productivity of the faculty.

Faculty are entitled to one semester of sabbatical leave at 80 percent of salary after six semesters or, after twelve semesters, to two semesters at 80 percent or one semester at 100 percent. A program of competitive Senior Sabbatical Fellowships awards the additional 20 percent for one semester to ten individuals per year. The CAP recommended that these fellowships be expanded to cover two semesters of leave after twelve semesters of service, to accept proposals for projects for contributions to pedagogy, and to support all qualified applicants. The board of trustees is considering the schedule for implementation of these proposals, subject to the availability of funding.

The college also offers approximately \$1 million per year in support of faculty research, including set-ups for new faculty and grants to continuing faculty. The Faculty Research Award Program (FRAP) provides small grants (up to \$6,000) and large grants (up to \$30,000).¹² A recent expansion of this program includes modest grants for work-in-progress faculty seminars so that faculty can share their research and artistic interests with their colleagues. Under a pilot program, the dean's office supports groups of faculty who form works-in-progress seminars for a semester or a year (see on the FRAP Web site). The dean provides an annual travel allowance for faculty to attend conferences of professional organizations, which was increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500 in July of 2007.

¹⁰NSF grants by institution from 1997 to 2006: <http://dellweb.bfa.nsf.gov/AwdLst2/default.asp> .

¹¹ On sponsored research and faculty development, see https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/funding/sponsored_research

¹² The Faculty Research Award Program: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/funding/frap .

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The CAP recommended that all assistant professors be assured of a year of sabbatical leave at full salary after reappointment. Existing fellowships, such as the Trustee-Faculty, Crary, and Wilson Fellowships provide support for two semesters of leave. The dean has been providing funds to make this possible for all assistant professors, and the board of trustees has resolved to seek funding to guarantee the continuation of this initiative.

An institutional review board (IRB), composed of faculty, a community member, and administrators, oversees all research involving human subjects, and ensures that scientific research adheres to acceptable legal, moral, and safety standards. The director of sponsored research, with broad experience in IRBs, has assumed responsibility for ensuring compliance with laws pertaining to work with human subjects.¹³

The faculty institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC) presides over the legal and ethical issues involved with the use of animals in experimentation.

Participation in College Governance

As already noted, attendance at faculty meetings is required except for faculty on leave. Faculty serve on some thirty-three standing committees and five ad hoc committees.¹⁴ Faculty receive no workload reductions for committee work, nor is there a reduction for serving as department chair.

Hiring and Personnel Review of Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty

Academic departments are responsible for proposing new faculty positions to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), conducting searches, and preparing recommendations to the Committee of Six concerning reappointment, tenure, and promotion to full professor. The president and the dean of the faculty must approve searches and concur in hiring decisions, and both are central in decisions on reappointment, tenure, and promotion to full professor, concerning which the president brings his recommendation to the board of trustees for final approval.

Proposals for new faculty positions come from departments, which must provide curricular justification for the requests. These proposals are reviewed by the CEP both in terms of the department's discipline and, under new legislation, in terms of the department's willingness to provide courses on an ongoing basis that develop students' fundamental competencies (see "Faculty Renewal and Growth" below). The president and dean make the final decision about the allocation of FTEs in a given year and communicate the grounds for their decision to the departments.

When a position is authorized, the department or, for joint appointments, departments receive from the dean's office extensive guidance as to search procedures, including information on the role of the special assistant to the president for diversity, who works with departments to attract as diverse a pool of applicants as possible. (The role of the

¹³ IRB policies, procedures, and review guidelines:

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/funding/sponsored_research/irb

¹⁴ Faculty committees: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees

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special assistant is described further under *Integrity*.) The department or departments submit for approval to the dean's office and to the special assistant a draft advertisement and a list of outlets where it is to be placed.¹⁵ A departmental or interdepartmental committee selects from applications a group to interview, usually at meetings of professional organizations. Three to five finalists are brought to campus for interview by all department members, student representatives, the dean, and the president. Usually candidates give a public presentation. Candidates have an exit interview with the special assistant. At all stages of the hiring process, the college makes a vigorous effort to attract qualified candidates from groups presently under-represented on campus.

Procedures for reappointment, tenure, and promotion are described in the *Faculty Handbook*, III A-G.¹⁶ The criteria of judgment, as articulated at *F.H.* III.E.iii, are teaching, scholarship and the creation of works of art, and contributions to the life of the college. The first two are considered primary and are not ranked.

The first appointment for a tenure-track appointee is normally for three years, followed by a four-year appointment, with the tenure decision in fall of the final year. This schedule may be accelerated for candidates who have had academic appointments at other institutions. Formal evaluation takes place annually in conversations with department chairs, who review with the untenured faculty member students' end-of-semester in-class evaluations and classroom observation by tenured members of the department, and discuss current scholarly activities, committee service, and other contributions to the college. Review for reappointment is normally in the spring of the third year and is based on the department's review of in-class evaluations and retrospective letters from students evaluating the candidate's teaching; observation of teaching by members of the department; letters from colleagues in other departments; and a letter from the candidate, seen only by the department. After discussion by the Committee of Six, the decision is made by the president, in consultation with the dean, whether to recommend reappointment to the board of trustees. The grounds for the decision are communicated by the dean in separate conversations with the candidate and with the department, the latter in part to provide the department with feedback about the effectiveness of its procedures in nurturing and evaluating untenured faculty members. A growing emphasis in recent years has been to give candidates timely evaluations that foster development.

Since tenure represents an investment in a faculty member that may last three or four decades, accordingly the review process is thorough and rigorous. The evaluations of teaching both before and since reappointment are submitted, and the candidate's

¹⁵ See *Faculty Handbook* III.A Procedures for Academic Appointments to Tenured or Tenure-Track (Regular) Positions https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fachandbook/facstatus/procedures ; Pre-Introduction, B Diversity and Inclusion https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fachandbook/preintroduction.; and III.C Diversity and Inclusion in Search and Appointment Procedures https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fachandbook/facstatus/diversity . For position currently being searched, see https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/employment

¹⁶ *Faculty Handbook*: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fachandbook .

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scholarship or creative work is reviewed by external reviewers, who are chosen by the department in equal numbers from lists drawn up by the department and by the candidate. The Committee of Six may request an additional reviewer or reviewers, to be chosen in collaboration with the department, if the committee finds that some essential perspective is missing from the evaluations submitted. In addition, letters are solicited from faculty members in other departments and in the Five Colleges with whom the candidate has taught or has served on committees. The candidate is invited to submit a statement. All tenured members of the department(s) are required to participate and to submit individual letters to the Committee of Six. Again, the Committee of Six reviews the dossier, and the president, in consultation with the dean, makes a recommendation to the board.

Promotion to the rank of associate professor is automatic upon the award of tenure. From 1998 to 2007, some 83 percent of tenure decisions were positive (compared to 80 percent from 1998 to 1997). Over the last two decades roughly half of tenure-track hires have eventuated in the award of tenure, through a combination of resignations (often to accommodate the career of a partner) or negative reappointment or tenure decisions.

The review for promotion to full professor is less demanding than that for tenure, but is not automatic. Normally between the sixth and eighth years after the award of tenure, an associate professor and/or his or her department initiate a request for promotion, which involves a review of scholarship or creative work without evaluation by outside reviewers. There is no formal provision for the solicitation and review of students' evaluations of teaching. There are no other procedures for post-tenure review.

(See "Procedures for Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion" in the appraisal section for the extensive review and reform of above procedures within the last ten years.)

In recruiting and retaining faculty at the forefront of their fields, Amherst competes with first-rank research universities and, as a consequence, has in the last decade lost on average one tenured faculty member a year to those institutions (up from a total of four from 1988 to 1997) and must fend off an additional number of hiring raids. This pressure provides external validation of the caliber of the faculty, but does steadily cost us some of our most effective colleagues. A strong consensus supports the policy of not creating a privileged category of distinguished professors with lighter duties in order to counter such offers.

To increase our pool of applicants in emerging fields and from non-traditional categories, we have established a number of post-doctoral fellows to give them an experience of teaching at a liberal arts college in combination with significant time to advance their own projects. These fellowships are supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Keiter Post-Doctoral Fund, and the President's Initiative Fund. We also participate in the Five College Minority Fellows program.

Hiring and Personnel Review of Lecturers and Coaches¹⁷

Lecturers and coaches are trustee-appointed employees and therefore covered by the *Trustee-Appointed Handbook*, which otherwise covers senior administrative appointments. Apart from housing and sabbatical leaves, the level of benefits is roughly equivalent to that of faculty. Service on college committees is generally not expected. New positions are approved by the president and the dean, in consultation with the CPR. Appointments, reappointments, and promotions are made by the board of trustees upon the recommendation of the president.

Lecturers are normally appointed for a three-year contract, which may be renewed once with the approval of the dean and president, in consultation with the Committee of Six. Students' evaluations of teaching and classroom observation by members of the department are reviewed in ways similar to the review of assistant professors. There are no formal expectations of scholarly or creative work. After the second three-year appointment, a lecturer may be considered for the position of senior lecturer, if available in the department. Senior lecturers are reviewed every five years, with continuing reference to evaluations of teaching effectiveness by students and department colleagues. The teaching load is normally six courses per year, or fewer if the appointment entails administrative duties. Lecturers normally do not serve as academic advisors, though department practice varies. They sometimes supervise honors projects. Senior lecturers are eligible for a single semester of leave in their careers and may apply to the dean for additional leaves.

Coaches are normally appointed for a three-year contract, renewable three times, with the approval of the president and the dean, in consultation with the Committee of Six. Reappointment review involves solicitation of evaluations from the students coached. After a fourth contract (i.e., twelve years of service), a coach is eligible for review for promotion to senior coach. Senior coaches receive a four-year "rolling" contract, that is, one renewed annually for another four years unless a clear reason is demonstrated to terminate the contract.

Independent Faculty Initiatives

The Amherst faculty participates in a range of self-initiated activities beyond the range of the committee structure. Since 1996 a group of faculty has met to think about ways of promoting research, scholarship, and professional work. From time to time, with a shifting cast of participants, this group has made proposals to the administration of the college, e.g., 100 percent salary for sabbatical leaves, creating a research institute, and organizing the Copeland Colloquium around a single annual theme. In November, 2001 the group hosted a national conference on research and scholarship in the liberal arts.

Since 1997 the faculty research group has sponsored an annual faculty workshop series in which between four and six colleagues per year have presented their work. Up through 2006-07, fifty-nine colleagues had participated, of whom sixteen were junior colleagues at the time they made their presentation.

¹⁷ Coaches became a category separate from tenure-track faculty in 1983. Currently three members of the department of athletics and physical education serve as tenured full professors.

A faculty dinner series started in the spring of 2005, organized by a group of three faculty members. They invite small groups of colleagues, mixed by age, seniority, and discipline, to two dinners every semester. The purpose is to help faculty get acquainted across the usual divides, and to provide a setting for intellectual interaction among colleagues. For each dinner the organizers choose a topic of general interest for discussion, e.g., "Should Colleges and Universities Abolish Tenure?" and "Reorganizing the Map of Knowledge."

APPRAISAL

Procedures for Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion

The college's procedures for evaluating and promoting tenure-track and tenured faculty have received intensive scrutiny for the last ten years from a series of ad hoc faculty committees whose recommendations have been acted on by the faculty as a whole. A glance at the related articles of the *Faculty Handbook* (III.D through G) shows amendment in some sixteen places since November 1998. In this area, the use of comparative data from peer institutions has played a central role in the reform of the college's practices. A continuing concern has been to balance departmental autonomy with equity and transparency in college-wide procedures.

In 1997, the Committee of Six appointed four faculty members as the Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate Procedures Concerning Reappointment, Tenure, and Untenured Faculty Development. This was done in response to widespread criticisms that procedures varied significantly from department to department, were poorly understood—especially by those being evaluated—and failed to address teaching effectiveness for want of systematic feedback from students and of observation by department colleagues. The exclusive reliance on retrospective letters from students in courses led to response rates too low (from 8-to-33 percent) to inspire confidence or provide timely feedback to instructors so as to allow improvement. The ad hoc committee consulted broadly with tenured and untenured faculty, met individually with all academic departments, and compared Amherst's practices to those of thirteen peer institutions. On the issue of the evaluation of teaching, Amherst proved to be an outlier in the extent to which practices varied from department to department and in the lack of ongoing feedback from students to allow untenured faculty to develop as teachers. The ad hoc committee put forward thirteen recommendations, twelve of which were adopted in various degrees of modification by faculty discussion. Review and reform of the system has now become an ongoing process. To explain procedures and administrative practices more fully, at the end of each academic year, the Committee of Six revises letters to the next year's candidates for reappointment and tenure and to the chairs of their departments. These letters are available to all faculty on-line.¹⁸

¹⁸ Sample letters to chairs and candidates regarding reappointment and tenure:
https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/policiesprocedures/sampleltrs.

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The procedural changes made since 1998 centrally involve transparency in the review processes and full and timely feedback about teaching effectiveness. In-class evaluations in essay format in the last week of classes are now required, in a form to be devised by each department in consultation with its untenured members. These forms, with student names removed, are shown to the candidate in an annual conversation with the chair of the department. Retrospective letters from all students taught are solicited at the time of reappointment and tenure review. Class visitation by department colleagues is also required, as is in-depth review of at least one of the candidate's courses. To give candidates for reappointment more voice in the process, they are asked to submit to their departments a letter addressing their scholarship or creative work, plans for the future, teaching, and college service. After the reappointment decision, the dean meets with the candidate and the chair to discuss the view of the Committee of Six. Departments' letters of evaluation about candidates for both reappointment and tenure must be shared (edited for confidentiality) with the candidates, and candidates have the right to send a letter in confidence to the Committee of Six in response. The letters required of each tenured member of the department may not voice reservations that have not been addressed in the departmental letter, so that candidates may have the opportunity to respond. In tenure cases, the Committee of Six contacts departments in writing about aspects of the case that require clarification, and departments may reply in writing or in person. If the committee is by straw vote tending to a decision at variance with the recommendation of the department(s), the committee meets with them. The tenure candidate has the right to know the vote of the Committee of Six.

Though these changes have significantly increased the burden on departments in the evaluation of untenured faculty members, the departments have lived up to the spirit of these reforms creatively and well. Some larger departments appoint a personnel committee for each assistant professor to provide more continuity than can a succession of chairs, who usually serve for two years. In keeping with Amherst tradition, the requirement for classroom teaching is sometimes fulfilled by co-teaching courses. The use of e-mail has increased student response rates. Assistant professors are manifestly not kept in the dark about their teaching until the time of review, as sometimes happened in the previous system. The use of non-quantitative instruments of evaluation specific to departments, while informative for those departments, prevents assessment of trends across the college.

Recent survey data suggest the need for continuing attention in this area. In the spring of 2006 Amherst participated in a survey of assistant professors by the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE), which ranked Amherst's results against five small colleges and five research universities. The response rate at Amherst was high, with responses from all but one of the thirty-six assistant professors eligible for participation. The respondents strongly affirmed that, if they had it to do over again, they would accept their position at Amherst. In all categories of "global satisfaction" and "climate, culture, and collegiality," Amherst ranked ahead of the universities and in the middle of the college cohort. Within both cohorts, Amherst ranks high in assistant professors' satisfaction with the way they spend their time as faculty members. In satisfaction with the amount of time to conduct research, we rank well within the liberal

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arts cohort, but generally behind the university cohort. Amherst respondents voiced dissatisfaction with the level of professional assistance to improve teaching and to obtaining externally funded grants—deficiencies that we are addressing with the creation of the Teaching and Advising Project (TAP) and the hiring of a director of sponsored research. Of particular concern is that the college ranked low within both cohorts on satisfaction with the clarity and reasonableness of the criteria and expectations for tenure. This may be in part a result of the amount of public discussion and debate that review procedures have received. More work needs to be done to find out what lies behind this dissatisfaction. An independent series of interviews conducted by the dean's office to inform the creation of the TAP echoed several of these concerns, including the desire for more certainty about how activities are weighed in the tenure decision.

In 2005 the Committee of Six appointed four faculty members as the Ad Hoc Promotion Committee to consider procedures for promotion to full professor. In recent decades, the impression had grown that promotion was virtually automatic after six years in rank as an associate professor in a way that deprived promotion of meaning and prevented due acknowledgement of a candidate's accomplishments since tenure. In a balanced and closely-reasoned report, the ad hoc committee cited the arguments against making a change in current procedures: The lack of rigor in review, if such was the case, liberated associate professors to undertake long-term and risky projects and to perform extensive service to the college, if requested. Incentives to be more productive might better be provided on an ongoing basis, such as by a system of merit pay, rather than a one-time review. Acknowledging the force of these arguments, the ad hoc committee nonetheless proposed instituting procedures closer to tenure review, including the use of retrospective letters from students to evaluate teaching. In deliberating on the committee's recommendations in 2007, the faculty voted to affirm that promotion after six years as associate professor should not be regarded as automatic, and adopted some particulars of the committee's recommendations, such as allowing the candidate, as well as the department, to initiate review and to select for the review committee, in consultation with the dean, two faculty members from beyond the candidate's department(s). There is evidence that candidates, departments, and the Committee of Six are beginning to make fuller use of the range of times available for the initiation of review.¹⁹

In 2006, the CAP report recommended that the faculty formally adopt a policy requiring the soliciting of teaching evaluations by all faculty, including those with tenure, from all students in all classes. The faculty as a whole endorsed the goal of putting in place throughout the college a range of mechanisms and resources that will improve teaching, beginning with a new policy of requiring student evaluations of teaching for senior faculty, provided that these evaluations be made available only to the faculty member in question. Subsequently the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Evaluations and the Improvement of Teaching (CEIT) was charged with exploring specific mechanisms to improve teaching at all ranks.²⁰ Acting on their report, the faculty approved the

¹⁹ Report of the Ad Hoc Promotion Committee:
<https://cms.amherst.edu/media/view/18774/original/promotionreport.pdf>

²⁰ Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching:
https://cms.amherst.edu/media/view/25815/original/report_studentevaluation_improvementteaching.pdf

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requirement that each tenured faculty member evaluate his or her teaching in one course each year by a means of his or her choosing for the purposes of improvement and with no obligation to share the content or results of that evaluation. The faculty expressed an interest in exploring a range of ways to evaluate teaching, including videotaping of class, external review, and exchanging classroom observation with colleagues. The TAP will provide assistance in devising ways for instructors to assess their effectiveness.

Faculty Renewal and Growth

From 1987 onward, the number of tenured and tenure-track FTEs was capped at 165, a number that met many (though not all) of the most pressing department needs at that time. However, the rapid proliferation of scholarly and artistic specializations and the demand for faculty to teach in different ways to a much more diversely prepared student body have left departments short-handed in recent years. The board of trustees raised the cap to 167 in 2007. Of those 167 FTEs, 4.5 currently serve as administrators, up from 2.5 in 1987.²¹

In 2001, in response to a request from the faculty to increase the number in the FTE cap, the board of trustees suggested that the college undertake a review of all its priorities. In response the Committee of Six, in collaboration with the president and the dean, appointed first the Special Committee on the Amherst Education (SCAE) and later the CAP to investigate long-term needs and priorities (see under *Planning and Evaluation*). The CAP ultimately recommended expanding the tenured and tenure-track FTE count by eighteen new positions to meet the following needs: intensive writing instruction; quantitative skills instruction; new global initiatives; new interdisciplinary initiatives; target-of-opportunity hires; and the needs of understaffed departments. In endorsing the CAP recommendations, the faculty added the creative and performing arts as a priority for new positions. The board of trustees is currently considering a schedule of implementation for these positions and a fundraising campaign to make this expansion sustainable.²²

There are compelling reasons for increasing the size of the faculty, which include the need to: maintain our faculty-student ratio in light of a proposed increase by approximately 5 percent in the size of the student body, meet the needs of an ever more diversely prepared student body, share the burdens of advising and committee work more widely, make connections among fields and keep pace with rapidly expanding fields, diversify the faculty, and reduce the use of visiting faculty to meet continuing instructional needs.

²¹ The dean of the faculty, one full-time associate dean of the faculty, one half-time associate dean of the faculty, one half-time special assistant to the president for diversity, and one half-time dean of new students.

²² CAP report: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/cap

Faculty

This proposed expansion would address from multiple angles the pressures felt by academic departments, which bear particularly broad responsibilities because of Amherst's tradition of not relying on separate writing or quantitative skills programs or on centers and institutes to support interdisciplinary work. Departments generally lack the staffing to offer multiple gateway courses for demanding scientific and quantitative subjects. We have also become increasingly aware of the incidence of writing problems beyond what can be addressed in mainstream courses. Departments already release their members to teach first-year seminars, for which there have recently been enough volunteers to staff the thirty sections needed annually (equivalent to 7.5 FTEs)—numbers that would be depleted by the competing claims of new courses geared toward writing and quantitative skills. Students and faculty report the seminars to be helpful in developing expressive and analytical capabilities, but by no means sufficient to the needs of all students, especially in respect to quantitative reasoning.

Similarly, we currently lack the capacity to support new interdisciplinary connections. Apart from three exceptions, our thirty-six majors are housed fully in departments, which have, with some strains, responded to the growth of interdisciplinarity in higher education.²³ The fifth of the faculty that is jointly appointed create effective networks among humanities and social science departments, but that double duty leaves little margin for new initiatives. Environmental studies, our first new major since 1993, was long overdue. Our departments are far from being non-communicating “silos,” but they lack the capacity to undertake the broader curricular responsibilities that we now recognize as urgent.

The hallmark of the additional FTEs is that they give departments the staffing to address college-wide needs, while at the same time allowing the addition of crucial new specializations. Some of the additional positions would permit the college to act more expeditiously to make target-of-opportunity hires, particularly for individuals who could enrich the racial, cultural, gender, and/or intellectual diversity of the faculty, at a time when a department lacks an open appointment. These would be bridging appointments, allowing departments to make appointments early but not expanding their FTE count. When next a member departed from the department, the FTE would be counted as part of the department's regular FTE-structure and the bridging FTE would become available for another target-of-opportunity hire.

The majority of the new FTEs would address learning needs beyond the responsibility of any single department—such as in writing, quantitative reasoning, and global comprehension—by giving departments new faculty positions contingent upon adding the needed courses to their offerings on a permanent basis (a mechanism called “staffing contracts” at some institutions). These additional FTEs could be allocated on a fractional basis (one quarter FTE is functionally equivalent to one course per year) and be combined with the emergent disciplinary needs of departments to compose a whole

²³ The neuroscience major is housed in the neuroscience program, which has no formal FTEs of its own, but works through collaborative agreements among biology, chemistry, and psychology. With only .75 FTE, European studies is the other program with a major. When fully staffed, environmental studies will be another such program, and the proposed biophysics-biochemistry major would also be housed in a program.

Faculty

faculty position. The department could then hire someone in a needed specialization, while existing faculty undertake the responsibility of offering the new courses to address college-wide needs, for which they may need retraining. The objective is to avoid burdening new colleagues with particularly onerous teaching responsibilities in their probationary period and to avoid creating a new class of learning specialists, since the responsibility needs to be shared broadly by the faculty. Students' needs to develop particular capacities of reasoning and expression would be met by departmental courses "across the curriculum"—that is, writing courses will not just be in the English department and quantitative courses will also be in the humanities and social sciences—with the understanding that the college will provide more support for faculty as they learn new pedagogies and develop their effectiveness as advisors.

The charge of the CEP has been amended to allow that committee to recommend allocation of new FTEs on the basis of college-wide needs, and that committee now continues the planning function of the CAP. The CEP explained that transition in a report to the faculty in May of 2007.²⁴

In 2007 the board of trustees allocated two additional FTEs under this system (bringing the cap to 167). In February of 2007 the CEP informed department chairs of the procedures under which replacement positions and new positions would be considered and invited departments to have a preliminary meeting with the CEP to discuss possible proposals, as eleven departments did. Twenty-one departments put forward requests for, in total, seventeen new positions and eight replacements. (Five departments had reported themselves as fully staffed to the CAP in 2005 and declined to propose new positions.) Where previously fewer than half of departments had typically made requests in any given year, and those requests had tended to be justified on the basis of fields already being offered, this broader representation of departments, invited to think beyond the bounds of their current offerings, allowed the CEP a stronger college-wide perspective. The CEP recommended that the two additional FTEs be allocated fractionally among three new positions (in biology, chemistry, and economics) to establish a program in environmental studies and to maintain and expand intensive sections and other courses to help students with weaker quantitative skills. This first run of the system bodes well for its long-term success in helping Amherst achieve the curricular goals of the CAP.

This system of allocating positions is intended to provide new specializations, while at the same time strengthening the interconnections among fields and the cohesiveness of the faculty as a whole. It will be reviewed after three years by the CEP. Given the rapid turnover in the faculty anticipated within the next years, these new mechanisms will shape the faculty for decades to come.

²⁴CEP report to the faculty (May 2007):
<https://cms.amherst.edu/media/view/17112/original/Report%2Bto%2BFaculty%2BFinal%2Bdraft%2B%25282%2529.pdf>

PROJECTIONS

The board of trustees will consider a schedule for implementation of the CAP recommendations, as amended and endorsed by the faculty, that the number of tenure-track positions increase by two-to-three a year, up to the current estimate of sixteen additional positions. The impact of these positions, including their effectiveness in addressing college-wide needs, will be assessed on a continuing basis as authorizations are made. After three years, the CEP will review the effectiveness of the new FTE allocation system and report back to the faculty and the administration. (Note: Two of the eighteen FTEs recommended by the CAP have already been authorized.)

Within the next two years the dean of the faculty's office will conduct a broader investigation of the working conditions and morale of untenured faculty members.

The board will seek funding to guarantee all assistant professors a year of sabbatical leave after reappointment at full salary, or as close to full salary as can be achieved.

The board will consider the CAP proposal to increase the number of Senior Sabbatical Fellowships and to allow them to cover two semesters of leave after six years of service.

Within 2007-08, the CPR will bring forward a recommendation concerning additional college support for childcare for faculty and staff.

Within 2007-08, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion will be re-organized, with an eye to enhanced attention to faculty and staff diversity and strengthening the culture of diversity and inclusion across campus (see under *Integrity*).

On a continuing basis, we will make vigorous efforts to recruit and retain first-rate scholar-teachers and artist-teachers through initiatives discussed elsewhere in this report: the TAP (see under *The Academic Program*); enhancement of IT and library support (see under *Library and Other Information Resources*), renewal and expansion of academic facilities (see under *Physical and Technological Resources*), and a commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive campus (see under *Integrity*).

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The broad college-wide initiative in self-appraisal and planning from 2002 onward has broadly considered the sufficiency of our faculty resources to fulfill our college mission in a time of rapid change and, with the ongoing monitoring of the CPR, has considered the college's support for faculty. The recommendations of this initiative are being implemented. Procedures for reviewing the effectiveness of faculty in teaching, scholarship, advising, and service have been significantly reformed for untenured faculty, and have been under consideration for tenured faculty.

6 STUDENTS

OVERVIEW

Our mission statement emphasizes the exceptional potential and diversity of our students, and the substantial responsibility that they assume both in their own academic programs and in co-curricular life. That responsibility functions on many levels: in student membership, with vote, on the college committees that preside over educational policy, admission policy, financial priorities, and student life; in an independent student government association; in one hundred self-run student organizations; in the student advisory panels of many academic departments; in student participation in all academic and most administrative hiring searches; and in the student resident counselors in the residence halls.

Over the past decade, Amherst has been successful in increasing both the selectivity of our admission process and the diversity of our student body and has provided the significant increases in financial aid needed to support this progress. We have sought to create a climate of respect and inclusion on campus and to provide academic and co-curricular support for our less well-prepared and less privileged students. To address the problem of aging residence halls and to provide more coherence to the first-year experience, the first phase of the Residential Master Plan (RMP) led to the creation of a first-year quad with new or renovated dormitories. Finally, given the large role that intercollegiate athletics plays in college life, we have reformed admission practices both independently and in collaboration with the other members of the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), and addressed issues of the integration of athletics into student life.

ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID

DESCRIPTION

Shaping the Student Body

Guided by institutional priorities set by the faculty, administration, and trustees, our admission efforts focus on enrolling students of broad and diverse backgrounds who will excel in our classrooms, laboratories, and studios; on our stages and athletic fields; and in the level of their engagement in the life of the college and wider community. Amherst enrolls a first-year, full-time class of approximately 420 to 430 students and a total student body of approximately 1,650 students from fifty states and forty countries. While figures vary from year to year, at present our student body is 9 percent African-American, 13 percent Asian-American, 5 percent multi-racial, 46 percent Caucasian, 7 percent international (non-United States citizens), 7 percent Latina/o, and less than 1 percent Native American. (The remaining students do not self-identify.) We are proud that

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Amherst is not only one of the most selective colleges in this country but also, among selective colleges, one of the most diverse.

To reflect the ever-changing world and to respond to its needs, Amherst regularly refines the priorities that guide the work of the admission office. Admission policy is developed and articulated by the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA), which is composed of four faculty members, four students, the dean of admission and financial aid, the director of financial aid, the director of admission, and the dean of students. Admission policies are also subject to the approval by the board of trustees. In order to assure that admission policy is implemented fully and consistently, each admission cohort and class is reviewed by the College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (CCAFA), which is composed of the FCAFA plus the dean of the faculty and without the student members because individual cases may be discussed.

The FCAFA develops admission policy with the goal that all admitted students may not only persist to graduation, but will also thrive. Because Amherst does not admit students into specific academic programs, it is the expectation that students will explore broadly and have the potential to be successful in any number of majors. As is discussed under *The Academic Program*, we are aware that students arrive with varying levels of preparation. Using academic reader ratings, the admission office attempts to identify among our exceptional admittees relatively less well-prepared students who aspire to pursue medical careers or careers in math or science, whom the dean of students office invites to participate in our intensive three-week Summer Science Program¹ prior to matriculation. Appropriate follow-up and support continue upon matriculation. (See “Academic Support” in this section.)

Looking toward Amherst’s third century and considering the future of the college over the next decade, the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) recommended that Amherst “set the standard for higher education in choosing a student body for talent and potential, without exclusions for race, creed, national origin, or the ability to pay.” To support this goal, the committee recommended that the college recruit more vigorously students from less affluent backgrounds, increase the proportion of non-U.S. students at Amherst, reduce the loan burden for students, and make admission for non-U.S. students need-blind.²

Amherst has been working to meet the CAP’s recommendation, and significant progress has already been made. In recent years, under the leadership of the president, the college has renewed and enhanced its commitment to economic and cultural diversity through increased efforts to seek actively, admit, and support financially (when need is demonstrated) students from less privileged and international backgrounds, while maintaining or increasing the rigor of Amherst’s standards for admission. In 2004-05, the college began a partnership with QuestBridge,³ an organization that works to provide educational opportunities at selective colleges and universities for academically talented

¹ Summer Science Program: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/newstudents.html#science>

² CAP report: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/cap/

³ QuestBridge: <http://www.questbridge.org/>

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and motivated low-income high school students. Over the last three years or so, we have been particularly successful in diversifying our student body in socioeconomic terms. Our most recent entering class had 52 percent of its members on financial aid, with 20 percent of the class eligible for Pell grants.

In addition, Amherst students now provide information and advice about all aspects of the college admission process to students identified by QuestBridge and by other sources in high school communities through a telementoring program⁴ run through the admission office. Many of these young men and women are from families who have had little experience with higher education. The goal of this program is to provide a service to low-income high school communities, rather than to recruit students for Amherst.

The CAP also recommended that Amherst become need-blind for international students and increase the number of such students from approximately 6 percent to approximately 8 percent of the student body. International students at Amherst come from more than forty countries; more than three-quarters receive financial aid, despite our policy of not being need-blind for internationals prior to 2006-2007. In 2007, international students constituted 53 percent of the top 1 percent of students as determined by grade point average (though just 6 percent of the student body). The CAP concluded that the broad perspective of the larger world that they bring to the campus warrants expanding their numbers.

In the fall of 2006, to implement CAP proposals to increase the size of the student body by eighty students, the faculty voted to recommend that the college distribute the increase in the size of the student body over the next six to eight years (approximately ten additional students per year); fill the additional admission slots with excellent international students having financial need and “vibrant” students with strong admission academic credentials in roughly equal numbers; and increase the size of the full-time regular faculty at least in proportion to the increase in the size of the student body, as this plan unfolds. These changes are reflected in the class of 2011, in which the cohort of international students comprises 8 percent of the class. To assist this initiative, in February of 2007, Arthur W. Koenig ’66 made a pledge of \$15 million to bring talented low-income students from Latin America and Africa to Amherst over the next six years, to provide academic support for them at the college, and to sponsor annual recruitment trips to those regions.

In 2006, Amherst joined with the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and seven other colleges and universities to announce an investment to increase opportunities for high-achieving, low-income community college students to earn bachelor’s degrees from selective four-year institutions. The foundation and the institutions of higher learning plan to build model programs to enable academically qualified low-to-moderate income community college students to transfer to selective colleges and universities. Amherst will use its grant of \$585,000 from the foundation to support its ongoing efforts to find and enroll the

⁴ Amherst’s telementoring program: <http://www.amherst.edu/admission/telementoring/>

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best college students in the world.⁵ We have launched an integrated set of recruitment initiatives at all fifteen community colleges across Massachusetts and several others in New York, Connecticut, California, and Florida, with the goal of enrolling ten or more new transfer students in the annual admission cycle. These new outreach initiatives have been designed in collaboration with six community colleges. To support the four-year effort, Amherst has appointed a new admission fellow to work directly with community college students and has recruited a group of current Amherst students, some of whom themselves transferred from community colleges, to work as “telementors” for prospective community college students in the admission process. New residential life programs will also be established at Amherst to ease the social and academic transition to a residential four-year liberal arts college.

Admission Practices

Because of Amherst’s selectivity and our practice of “holistic admission,” it is impossible to publish data that formulaically inform students of their admissibility. We do, however, publish our *Annual Report to Secondary Schools*⁶ and have done so for sixty years. This report contains comprehensive statistics on the academic qualifications (rank in class, distribution of SAT I scores, ACT scores, academic profile) of all applicants, admitted students, and matriculating students; statistics on the number of applicants who are admitted and the number who enroll (over ten years for first-year students and the most recent statistics for fall transfer students); descriptions of matriculating students’ backgrounds, school type, and geographic origin; the distribution of students’ majors from the most recent graduating class; and information about student financial aid awards. It is available in the admission office’s reception area, is mailed to all United States secondary schools, and is featured on the admission office’s Web site.⁷ Admission requirements and procedures are also clearly detailed on the site, and all appropriate links are provided. In addition, requirements and admission procedures are detailed in the college’s catalog (2007-08, pp. 49-56) and the view book (pages 63-67).

We publish a view book⁸ with information about our admission and financial aid practices, academic program, the co-curricular program, the town of Amherst and surrounding area, the Five-College system, accomplished alumni, and post-Amherst career resources, fellowships, and internships. We also publish brochures that focus on applying for financial aid (one pamphlet for domestic applicants and a separate pamphlet for international applicants) and, as mentioned, maintain a Web site for both admission and financial aid. This Web site will soon include a Spanish translation. These publications are updated annually and undergo substantial review and revision on a regular four-to-five year cycle. All online and print publications are coordinated by the admission office and are updated in tandem. During the next year, new publications will

⁵ Amherst’s Community College Transfer Initiative and the Jack Kent Cooke foundation: http://www.amherst.edu/admission/important_info/communitycollege_students.html

⁶ Most recent Annual Report to Secondary Schools: http://www.amherst.edu/admission/important_info/secondaryschoolreport10.pdf

⁷ Admission office: <http://www.amherst.edu/admission/>

⁸ The view book: http://www.amherst.edu/admission/vb_load.html

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include a brochure on the telementoring program, a brochure for community college transfer applicants, and a brochure for international applicants.

Students and admission deans provide additional information through face-to-face encounters in a variety of venues. The admission office conducts hour-long information sessions throughout most of the year in the office. Admission deans also travel extensively to meet students at college fairs and at high schools throughout the country and internationally. Additional outreach occurs through a series of evening chat rooms for prospective students in the autumn and for admitted students in the spring. The admission office also sponsors several days of open house activities for admitted students and prospective transfer students; three diversity open houses for groups of low-income and ethnically diverse high school sophomores in the summer; and diversity weekends in the fall for low-income prospective students and students of color.

Financial Aid

We select our students without regard to their ability to pay for an Amherst education. The college offers a need-based financial aid program that meets the full demonstrated need of all admitted students who qualify for financial aid. Need is determined by using a combination of federal and institutional methodologies. All applicants for financial aid are required to submit the College Scholarship Service Profile form and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). No merit scholarships—whether academic or athletic—are offered. Financial aid is guaranteed for eight semesters, provided that the student continues to show need. The Office of Financial Aid administers the college's financial aid program, which is described in the college's *Catalog* (2007-08, pp. 53-56) and on the financial aid Web site.

To ease the burden on middle-income families and to avoid constraining the career choices of our graduates, in 2007 we replaced loans with grants in financial aid packages for all students beginning in 2008-09. The board of the trustees will seek funding to sustain this large commitment.

Retention and Graduation

To contribute to our understanding of all students' experiences at Amherst and to inform the development of programming, we track retention and graduation rates closely, both for the whole entering cohort each year and for specific population groups such as African-American, Latina/o, and Asian-American students. Our standard measure is the percentage of each entering cohort that graduates within six years of entrance. Our overall six-year graduation rate has stayed at roughly 96 percent for the last decade or more. Graduation rates for students of color vary more widely from year to year, but are generally within a few percentage points (plus or minus) of the overall figure.

We also track GPAs and students placed on academic warning, probation, or dismissal. We believe that our very high retention and graduation rates are testimony to the quality of the decisions made by our admission office, the quality of the teaching done by our faculty, and the quality of the support services offered by the college. We are especially proud that, in surveys conducted and published by the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Amherst has ranked either first or second nationally in the enrollment and

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graduation rates of African-American students for several years in a row among all the colleges responding to the survey.⁹

As already mentioned, the college is dedicated to ensuring the success of all admitted students. The particular needs of each entering cohort are considered on an individual basis even before students arrive at Amherst, as a result of close collaboration between the staffs of the offices of admission and of the dean of students. Once a class has been admitted, the two staffs meet together to identify those students whose specific academic or personal circumstances might require special attention and the kinds of strategies that might be useful to help those students succeed. Those strategies include assignment to an especially strong faculty advisor, an invitation to attend our Summer Science Program, and a recommendation to delay introductory chemistry for one semester and to register for special intensive sections of quantitative courses or for writing-intensive courses directed specifically at first-year students. Members of the admission staff regularly attend meetings of the Committee on Academic Standing, so that future admission decisions can be guided by their knowledge of the characteristics of the students who have academic difficulties at Amherst.

APPRAISAL

As part of the college's regular practices of self-assessment, the FCAFA in 1999 (as earlier, in 1983) responded to the charge by the Committee of Six to explore questions relating to early decision, financial aid, and the role of athletics in the admission process. Their report, "Admission to Amherst: A Report to the Faculty and Administration," came on the heels of the resignation of the dean of admission and the report of a visiting committee charged with examining all aspects of admission. The visiting committee urged Amherst to make structural reforms in the organization of the admission office, improve communication between the admission office and the wider college community, and gather data about admission trends and outcomes more effectively. These recommendations were implemented and the concerns addressed. In its report in 1999, the FCAFA chose to focus on the role of athletics in admission, while noting that the issue of athletic recruitment was interrelated with a variety of broader issues facing the college. The committee made four recommendations that addressed the work and structure of the FCAFA in ways that would expand faculty involvement in the admission process and faculty liaison with admission staff, strengthen the role of institutional research in Amherst's understanding of its applicant pools and matriculation outcomes, and involve faculty more widely in the recruiting process. The office now relies heavily on analytical data, has greatly expanded outreach to low-income and first-generation applicants, and provides much more transparency about its practices to faculty.

Through constant attention, both within our own admission office and conference-wide at the behest of the NESCAC presidents, Amherst and our NESCAC partners have significantly narrowed the gap between the academic credentials of athletes and non-

⁹ *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* survey: <http://www.jbhe.com/preview/winter07preview.html>

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athletes. The NESCAC schools now share information on the credentials of incoming athletes, a practice that has curtailed the most exceptional admission decisions. Similarly, the conference has reduced the size of each school's football squad and thereby reduced athletic pressures on admission. At Amherst, we have seen a general increase in the academic quality of our admitted athletes, which, in combination with initiatives by the athletics department and offices of the dean of faculty and dean of students, have reduced the level of tension between athletes and non-athletes on campus, though current students note that some tension persists. See below under "Athletics" in the appraisal section.

By the fall of 2002, the college had adopted and fully integrated a new database system that joined data from admission with data on academic outcomes. Data analyses that previously had been cumbersome became more manageable, and the dean of admission and financial aid embraced the possibilities. As a consequence, each year at the conclusion of the admission cycle, the dean now reviews and compares data from the admission cycle in relation to a variety of measures: number of applicants, number of admitted students, and number of matriculating students; type of secondary school attended (public vs. private); percentage of students eligible for financial aid; geographic distribution; academic credentials; yield rate; reasons for students choosing to matriculate elsewhere and the colleges and universities they select. On the basis of the Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ), yield data, and other feedback, he then explores together with admission deans and the FCAFA how students view Amherst in relation to peer institutions. Together they discuss changes for the next admission cycle. In recent years these changes have included new application essay prompts, new view book materials, revamping of the Web site, and increased outreach by faculty.

The college's mission has been central to these discussions and activities. Many of the new initiatives stem directly from the college's commitment to enrolling students from diverse backgrounds. Over the last several years, the office has greatly expanded outreach to low-income and first-generation applicants, working with the College Board to identify zip codes in which low-income students are likely to reside and partnering as one of the founding institutions with the QuestBridge Scholars program, as well as partnering with A Better Chance, Venture Scholars, the National Hispanic Institute, and the New England Counselors of Color Bridging Access to College. The admission office also hosts overnight visiting programs for students from College Match, Horizons Upward Bound, Prep for Prep, TEAK Fellowship, Double Discovery Group, and the Fulfillment Fund. Perhaps most importantly, we have changed the Office of Financial Aid Web site to make the financial aid process simpler for low-income families to navigate (introducing the Financial Aid Quick Pass).

Amherst has also been one of the leaders in reducing or eliminating loans and has held the high road as a direct lender institution for federal loans. Seven years ago, the college demonstrated its commitment to making education more accessible to low-income students by eliminating loans for students from families with incomes of less than \$40,000 a year. At the close of the 2006-07, the board of trustees voted to replace loans with scholarships in its financial aid packages beginning in the 2008-09 academic year. Once implemented, the new policy will affect not only incoming students in the class of

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2012, but also current Amherst students. This new initiative significantly broadens our commitment to making an Amherst education accessible by eliminating financial barriers for middle-income families, as well as low-income families.

In addition, the admission office has increased travel, redirecting its efforts from high profile secondary schools to additional low-income high schools domestically and to a far wider range of countries internationally, seeking low-income students abroad as well as at home. Admission deans now travel to Asia, Africa, South America, Europe, and the Middle East. To increase outreach to our best candidates during the yield period, the college now has a number of events: faculty phone and e-mail “early writes”; transportation for low-income students to visit the campus; e-mail from international students, students of color, and low-income students to their counterparts during the yield period; and students and admission deans staff chat rooms for prospective students and admitted students. The result has been a steady increase from the class of 2005 to the class of 2010 in the number of students of color (from 34 percent of the class of 2005 to 39 percent in the class of 2010), first-generation college students (from 14 to 16 percent), and low-income students (from 18 to 23 percent), all achieved at the same time as mean SATs have risen (Verbal 705 to 711, Math 697 to 706).

During this time, the dean of admission and financial aid has provided much greater transparency about admission practices to a faculty that had grown increasingly skeptical of the admission process. The dean regularly invites members of the FCAFA to observe admission committee decisions and shares data about the new class with the wider faculty each year at the beginning of the fall semester. His interest in transparency led to a NESCAC-wide conversation about the role of athletics in admission in January 2004 and again in January 2005, both initiated by members of the FCAFA. These conversations have instigated league-wide changes in athletic admission. In response to concerns about yielding the strongest science students, the admission office developed new tools for identifying and tracking top science applicants, including a new science supplement to the application and a new science research code for tracking students with serious interests in research. The success of these tools is tracked annually.

In addition to tracking applicants, the dean also tracks the way the academic reader rating, the primary rating of a student’s academic potential, correlates with the student’s academic record during the first year at the college and over four years (as measured by GPA, disaggregated by major). Independent regression analyses by the faculty Working Group on Quantitative Skills have also validated the admission office’s use of the reader rating, showing it to be the best predictor of how well a student will perform in introductory level math and science classes.

More recently, as mentioned in the description section of this standard, in the fall of 2006, the FCAFA responded to another charge from the Committee of Six and to the CAP recommendations to increase the size of the entering class and the proportion of non-U.S. students and to make admission for non-U.S. students need-blind. In the latter instance, after reviewing different possibilities, the committee proposed increasing the

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number of excellent international students who have financial need and of U.S. students with the highest reader ratings.

Overall, there has been an increasing emphasis on the ongoing need for the faculty to have a full range of data available to inform admission policy decisions. For example, the success of the QuestBridge program and other recruitment efforts undertaken by the admission office, and publicity surrounding our desire to broaden the economic profile of our student body, had a significant effect on our applicant pool in 2006-07. A greater number than expected of qualified students from lower socioeconomic groups applied to the college and, meeting established standards, were accepted—with a higher yield. The pool has shifted in ways that have been welcome and unexpected, all reflecting the hard work of our admission staff. As a result, we have already with the class of 2011 met the CAP goal for increasing socioeconomic diversity and anticipate that we will be able to meet this goal for future classes. The FCAFA assessed this year's admission results in relation to our current admission policies, goals, and standards, and reported its findings to the faculty and the board of trustees.

With the help of our IR office, the admission office is developing increasingly sophisticated mechanisms for tracking the correlation between specific admission criteria (SAT I scores, high school GPA, admission officers' reader ratings) and academic success at Amherst. Through statistical work done by our IR office, the college attempts to measure the success of its academic support efforts, such as the intensive sections of quantitative courses, and the college plans to base future steps on what is learned. In addition, the registrar's office compiles and publishes six-year graduation rates.

Amherst is also involved in appraisal efforts that focus on special admission initiatives. As part of its commitment to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI), Amherst is participating in an evaluation of the project that is being conducted by the Center for Youth and Communities, Brandeis University.

Amherst developed a telementoring tracking system for the QuestBridge program that will also be used for the Jack Kent Cooke community college outreach effort. It is hoped that this tool can be packaged and used by other schools involved in telementoring projects. The tool allows the Amherst students who are counseling high school students to log in their interactions as well as the results of the high school student's college search. The data are compiled in an easy-to-access and analyze data base.

Financial Aid

For the last twenty years, the college has made a concerted effort to increase the number of students receiving financial aid. In the mid 1980s, the percentage of students in the entering class qualifying for financial aid was as low as 32 or 33 percent; in the class that entered in September 2006, the percentage had risen to 51 percent, and the average scholarship grant per student was \$35,700. Our efforts to enhance our socioeconomic diversity have been aided by the generosity of our financial packages.

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We anticipate that the new initiative to become need-blind for international students and to increase the number of such students from approximately 6 percent to approximately 8 percent of the student body will be about a \$1.6 million addition to the college's overall annual financial aid budget of more than \$20 million.

PROJECTIONS

To permit greater social-economic diversity and broader inclusion of international students, the size of entering classes will increase gradually over the next eight-to-ten years up to as many as twenty students in each entering class (and a total enrollment under 1700). The board of trustees and FCAFA will monitor the impact of this gradual increase.

The college is dedicated to increasing further the diversity of the student body while maintaining and enhancing its academic standards. Amherst will continue to strive to raise the standards in admission for all categories of applicants, through new outreach programs and other strategies, while working toward identified goals. In support of these goals, the FCAFA plans to continue to assess students' performance by tracking the distribution of academic achievement evident in each reader-rating cohort. We anticipate that Amherst will continue to be a national leader in admission and financial aid.

Financial Aid

The board of trustees will seek to fund in perpetuity our policy of replacing loans with grants, starting in 2008-09, and, if possible, to fund the extension of need-blind admission to international students.

STUDENT SERVICES THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

DESCRIPTION

The Office of the Dean of Students, in keeping with Amherst's mission, provides means and support for students to assume responsibility in the realms of inquiry, the co-curriculum, and the self-governance of the college community. Charged with encouraging the personal, ethical, and intellectual growth of students and with their general welfare, the office provides academic, career, and personal counseling; develops and implements support programs; administers the college's student residential and co-curricular resources; participates in the faculty and administrative formulation and

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evaluation of policies; and ensures that students' needs are considered in college decisions. The office maintains a Web site that describes its many services.¹⁰

A primary function of the student affairs staff is to facilitate the academic success of all Amherst students. We do so in a number of ways: by administering a pre-major faculty advising system that helps to guide our students through the open curriculum; by providing informal academic and personal counseling through the class deans; by supplying appropriate support for students in academic difficulty through mechanisms such as the Moss Quantitative Center, the Amherst College Writing Center, and the peer tutoring program; by working with faculty to devise means—such as our summer science program—to enhance the academic experience of students who enter Amherst without sufficient preparation for academic disciplines; and by enforcing academic rules and regulations fairly and consistently across the student body.

Our second major function is to administer the co-curricular and residential resources of the college in ways that complement and enhance the academic experience of our students. We believe firmly that a significant part of the learning that takes place at Amherst occurs in contexts outside the classroom: in residence halls, on athletic fields, in concerts and other performances, and in the leadership that is exercised when students form and run their own clubs and organizations. In keeping with our mission, our practice is to give students a substantial amount of autonomy in administering their own affairs, while providing them with as much support as is necessary to ensure that they do so in keeping with the larger goals of the college. In particular, we have a highly developed residential life system, with trained upper-class resident counselors, live-in professional supervisors, theme housing affiliated with academic departments, and a new program of faculty fellows connected to the first-year residence halls. All of these aspects are intended to promote the learning that occurs when talented students from a wide variety of backgrounds live together in close quarters, and to emphasize the lack of a bright line distinction between the lives students lead within and outside the classroom.

National searches are conducted for all professional positions that fall under the umbrella of the dean of students office. Typical requirements include an advanced degree in a liberal arts or other relevant discipline and several years' previous experience in a similar or relevant position. We believe that the diversity of our student body should be reflected in our student services staff, and we have recruited staff to represent a broad spectrum of this country's population. At present, one-third of the deans in both the dean of students office and the admission office are people of color. Through the normal budgeting process of the college, enhancements to staff or facilities are considered and are ranked in priority order against similar requests from the other administrative areas. The Department of Information Technology (IT) provides full support for the hardware and software needs of the various student affairs offices.

All constituents of the college—students, faculty, administrators, and staff—are expected to abide by the same ethical standards, as expressed by the three statements that form the

¹⁰ Dean of students Web site: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/index.html>

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basis of our Honor Code: The Statement on Intellectual Responsibility, the Statement on Freedom of Expression and Dissent, and the Statement on Respect for Persons. These statements are published in the college *Catalog* (2007-08, pp. 59-62) and the *Student Handbook* (2007-08, pp. 23-25) and online.¹¹ Instructors are expected to read the Statement on Intellectual Responsibility to their students at the first class meeting each semester and to explain the implications of Honor Code for the work of the course. The ethical standards embodied in the three statements guide the work of the student affairs staff as well.

Decisions about the academic standing of Amherst students are made by our Committee on Academic Standing, whose membership includes the four class deans, other members of the student affairs staff, and three faculty members (one each from the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities). The decisions are made according to a set of criteria originally voted by the faculty and published each year in the college *Catalog* (2007-08, p. 66). Requests for exceptions to the standard policies are made by petition and are considered by the full committee.

Grievance procedures for the resolution of complaints against students (whether from fellow students or from faculty and staff) are contained within our Honor Code and are clearly stated in the *Student Handbook*, as are grievance procedures for students against members of the faculty or administration.

The college's policies on the records of students are articulated in the "Student Records" section of the *Student Handbook*. In those policies, we comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Primary responsibility for the administration of this policy rests with the college registrar.

A full description of the nature, extent, and availability of student services is contained in our *Student Handbook*, which is revised yearly and is distributed to all students at the beginning of the academic year. Descriptions of the range of student resources are also provided on the college's Web site and are accessible to prospective students and other interested parties by that means. In addition, during a week-long orientation program,¹² each entering class receives an overview of the college's curricular and co-curricular offerings and services and an introduction to Amherst's rules and regulations. The program is sponsored by the Orientation Committee, which is composed of faculty members, administrators, and students, and is directed by the dean of new students, who is a tenured member of the faculty. Since our last reaccreditation report, in a continuing effort to educate students about cheating and plagiarism, the college added to orientation a session on intellectual property. The focus is on evolving definitions of "intellectual property" in an age of electronic media.

¹¹ The Honor Code, including the three statements:

<http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/conduct/rightsrespon.html>

¹² Orientation information: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/orientation/>
<http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/newstudents.html>

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The dean's office works on the principle that all deans should be available to advise all students, a model premised on having office staff with diversity comparable to that of the student body. The college supports four facilities for cultural groups: the Gerald Penny Cultural Center for African-American students, the Rainbow Room for LGBTQI students, and the offices of the Asian-American Students Association and La Causa in Keefe Campus Center. All of these organizations have advisors on the staff of the dean of students office. Among the theme houses is Charles Drew House for students interested in African-American culture, La Casa for students interested in Latino/a culture, and the Asian Culture House for students interested in Asian culture, all of which have faculty advisors.¹³

Through offices such as the campus police, the health service, the IT department, and the library, the college provides services to ensure students' physical safety as well as access to a full range of information resources. Campus police are available twenty-four hours a day and are reachable through our on-campus dispatcher. As is described under *Library and Other Information Resources*, students have access to a help desk in our IT department, as well as to a full staff of reference librarians. Career services are provided by our career center, which also offers advising for internships and study abroad, as well as preparation for the health and legal professions.¹⁴ In response to the impending retirement of the director, a visiting committee consisting of the directors of Career Services at Princeton and Swarthmore, as well as an Amherst alumnus who is a consultant specializing in non-profit organizations, came to campus to examine the career center and make recommendations for measures to improve it. At this writing, the committee is expected to issue its report in early December.

Students, as well as faculty, administrators, and staff, have access to the campus ombudsperson, who can refer students to the various complaint and appeal mechanisms, as described in the *Student Handbook* (2007-08, pp. 25-44). Staff members of the dean of students office also help to guide students through these procedures. All of these services are fully available to every member of the student community, as specified in the college's statement of non-discrimination.

Academic Support

A major theme of the last several years in student affairs has been enhancing our support services in order to address the needs of the wide variety of students of all backgrounds who enroll at Amherst. As was discussed under *The Academic Program* (see in particular "Addressing Variable Levels of Preparation"), we recognize that meeting the emerging academic and co-curricular needs of all students will be among Amherst's greatest challenges in the years to come and we are committed to this goal. Academic support services are provided by the dean of students office in collaboration with faculty committees and working groups and with the office of the dean of the faculty.¹⁵

¹³ Theme houses: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/reslife/themehouses/>

¹⁴ Career center: <http://www.amherst.edu/~careers/>

¹⁵ Academic support offered through the Office of the Dean of Students: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/acadsupport.html>

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As our admission outreach efforts have expanded to include students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as students of color, varsity athletes, and other constituencies for which we recruit actively, our commitment to ensuring the success of all students has broadened correspondingly, particularly in the form of expanded support services to address the range of learning styles and levels of preparation among students. For example, Amherst made significant progress in diversifying its student body in racial and ethnic terms throughout the 1990s. As we attracted more and more students from high schools that traditionally sent few if any students to colleges like ours, we recognized the need to enhance our academic support services to ensure that all admitted students could succeed across the curriculum. This issue was addressed in our 1998 self-study, which focused specifically on the need to expand our efforts to address questions of under-preparedness in math and science by developing a true quantitative center (within the dean of students office) from what was then still a fledgling effort. The 2003 report of the Special Committee on the Amherst Education (SCAE)¹⁶ also pointed to general needs surrounding writing and quantitative skills, as well as to the specific needs of less well-prepared students.

To meet growing student demand for assistance with writing, we have expanded and will continue to expand the resources available to our writing center (established in 1994),¹⁷ which is within the dean of students' office. This support is provided at no cost to our students. We also established (1997) and are expanding the resources for our quantitative center,¹⁸ which provides (free) tutoring to any student who needs it in quantitative disciplines such as the natural sciences, mathematics, and economics. For some introductory level science courses, we also provide lecture teaching assistants who hold regular evening sessions to assist students.

In 2005, we brought in visiting committees for both the writing and the quantitative centers. As a result of the recommendations of those committees, the college has expanded the staffs of both, though demand continues to increase rapidly as well. At this point, the quantitative center has a full-time director, a full-time quantitative fellow, and a half-time professional math tutor, as well as a wide array of student tutors. The writing center now has a full-time director and two full-time writing fellows, as well as an expanded staff of student tutors.

To investigate and help meet the needs of students from less privileged backgrounds, some of whom are less well-prepared academically, the president created a "green dean" position in his office for a special projects fellow. The first person to hold this position, a recent graduate of the college who is herself a first-generation college student, assumed the position in 2004. In 2007, this position was reconstituted as Student Affairs Officer for Diversity and Academic Support in the dean of students' office. Among the needs uncovered: quicker financial aid distribution, help in opening a checking account,

¹⁶ The SCAE report's discussion and recommendations regarding quantitative skills: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees/scaereport

¹⁷ Information about the Writing Center: <https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/support/writingcenter>

¹⁸ Information about the Moss Quantitative Center: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/support/moss_quantitative_center

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transportation for families to family weekend who could not otherwise afford to come, a meal plan during college breaks, and winter clothing shopping. The student affairs officer created an annual class awareness week, involving students, faculty, staff, and administrators. She organized and created a successful academic peer mentor program to allow first-year students to work with upperclassmen trained to offer advice on study skills, make referrals to academic resources, and provide guidance about finding their way at Amherst. The program offers one-on-one mentoring as well as workshops on time management, reading and writing skills, and strategies for handling the pre-med requirements. Almost half of the class of 2011 attended workshops and information sessions in the first weeks of class. The program is devising tools to monitor how students learn about and use academic support resources.¹⁹

At issue for some time has been how best to provide the support that less well-prepared students need to succeed in Amherst's challenging curriculum in the sciences. We identify entering students with an expressed interest in the sciences and weak high school preparation in early summer, and invite between forty and fifty students to attend our pre-enrollment summer science program for three weeks on our campus at no cost to themselves. Courses and laboratory experiences are taught by Amherst faculty members and student TAs with support from the quantitative center. Since its inception in 1987, the summer science program has served more than 270 students, many of whom are women and students of color. About fifteen students each summer choose to attend the program, which we continue to develop and refine. The goal of this program is to ensure that this broad group of academically at-risk students continues through the entire first year of introductory science courses and gains the confidence to tackle more challenging material in subsequent years.

Student Health and Safety

Our health service²⁰ is run through the University of Massachusetts Health Service. We have an on-campus facility, which is staffed by physicians and nurse practitioners supplied by UMass and is open weekdays, from 8:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. At all other times, our students have access to the UMass infirmary, which operates twenty-four hours a day. After hours, students are transported to UMass by our campus police. Our counseling center²¹ is located on campus and is staffed by clinical psychologists who are Amherst College employees, as well as by two part-time consulting psychiatrists.

Amherst students who have documented disabilities may receive assistance in a variety of ways, depending on the nature and extent of the limitations imposed by the disability, as well as specific course content and testing. Reasonable accommodation is determined after review of documentation, conversations with the student and, in some cases, consultation with the student's instructors. Each support service or academic accommodation provided on the basis of a disability is determined on an individual, case-by-case basis, as supported by the documentation and warranted by the nature of the course, insofar as the service or accommodation does not compromise the fundamental

¹⁹ The Academic Peer Mentoring Program: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/peermentors/>

²⁰ Health service: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/health/index.html>

²¹ Counseling center: <http://www.amherst.edu/~counsectr/>

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academic integrity of the curriculum and is otherwise consistent with college policies. A senior associate dean in the dean of students office oversees disability-based services and accommodations. Detailed information about these services is provided on the office's Web site.²² While the dean of students office provides substantial coordination, supervision, and support, students are expected to take an active role in the collaborative process of identifying, arranging, and monitoring the provision of services and accommodations.

Amherst strives to meet or exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act on all college renovation and construction projects (see under *Physical and Technological Resources*).

Student Activities

The college's student clubs and organizations give students a wide variety of opportunities to learn and practice skills of leadership and self-government. Co-curricular opportunities are supervised by our office of student activities,²³ which has two professional staff members who also run the Keefe Campus Center. We have close to one hundred different recognized student clubs and organizations, including numerous publications; cultural, religious and ethnic clubs; club sports; and a wide variety of miscellaneous groups initiated by the students themselves, according to their own interests. The clubs are self-governing and are recognized by the Student Senate, the governing authority of the Association of Amherst Students (AAS).²⁴ Funding is provided through the Student Senate upon the recommendation of the Budgetary Committee, which allocates money from the college-collected student activities fee to the various organizations. That fee is 1 percent of tuition, currently totaling almost \$700,000 per year. Elected members of the Student Senate serve as members of a variety of faculty policy-making committees, such as the FCAFA, the Committee on Priorities and Resources, the Committee on Educational Policy, the College Council, the Committee on Discipline, the Orientation Committee, the Committee on Education and Athletics, the Library Committee, the Faculty Computer Committee, and the Committee on Health and Safety. In this way, students have a direct role in the overall governance of the college as well as in the governance of their own organizations.

Residential Life

The dean of students office is dedicated to providing a residential environment in which students from a wide variety of backgrounds live together respectfully and productively and to offering a range of co-curricular opportunities that complement and enhance learning in the classroom.²⁵ Our residential life department supervises fifty-nine resident counselors, whose responsibilities include promoting community and providing a wide variety of academic and social programs within the residence halls. Amherst is a truly residential community: fully 97 percent of our student body lives and learns on campus,

²² Disability services: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/disabilities/index.html>

²³ Office of Student Activities: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/activities.html>

²⁴ Association of Amherst Students: <http://www.amherst.edu/~aas/>

²⁵ Residential Life: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/reslife/index.html>

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and all of our students are full-time. In this section, we would like to draw particular attention to our Residential Master Plan (RMP).

As we reported in our interim report to NEASC in 2003, by the late 1990s it had become clear to Amherst that many of the colleges with whom we compete for students had significantly enhanced the quality of their student housing. Our first-year dormitories, in particular, were in substandard physical condition and no longer meeting the objectives of the residential-life program. As a result, we retained a group of architectural consultants and spent nearly two years developing a comprehensive master plan to renovate our entire student housing stock. It was agreed that the RMP should encompass larger programming issues, about which numerous constituencies, including the faculty and students, were consulted during the planning process. Central to the plan was the decision to create a true first-year quad, around which the entire entering class would live, and to provide all residences with social and study spaces to foster a sense of community. The plan involved converting three classroom buildings into dormitories, renovating two older dormitories, and tearing down and rebuilding two other dormitories. We met the targeted date for completion, September of 2007, so that the class of 2011 is the first to be housed entirely in contiguous quarters in their first year. Informal student surveys in dorm meetings reveal that students are exceptionally pleased. Damage has been reduced dramatically in the new residences in comparison with the aging structures that they replace because students respect the structures.

As part of the RMP, we have also renovated several upper-class dormitories and built two new ones. Thirteen of our thirty-three dormitories are former fraternity houses, several of which require major repairs. As a result, we have embarked on a systematic plan to renovate at least two of those buildings each year for the next few years. The first two of these projects were completed in 2006-07, and two more are under way in the current academic year.

Athletics

The college boasts a history of excellence in athletics dating back to 1859, when Amherst became the first college in this country to establish a department of physical training. Today, Amherst offers a full array of recreational and athletic opportunities, ranging from twenty-seven intercollegiate varsity teams to more than a dozen club sports and numerous intramural and recreational activities.²⁶ In addition, non-credit physical education courses are also available to the entire community, including students, faculty, administrators, and staff. All of these programs and activities are administered by the department of physical education and athletics. Thirty-two percent of Amherst's students now participate in NCAA Division III sports, competing primarily in NESCAC, a group of highly selective liberal arts colleges and universities that share a like-minded philosophy of intercollegiate athletics. Academic expectations and opportunities are the same for varsity athletes as they are for all other students.

Amherst has been a regular on the national scene since becoming eligible for NCAA tournament play in 1993-94 and perennially advances deep into the post-season, claiming

²⁶ Amherst athletics: <https://cms.amherst.edu/athletics>

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national championships in women's tennis in 1999, women's lacrosse in 2003, and men's basketball in 2007. The college is one of only four schools to finish in the top twelve for the NACDA Directors' Cup in every year of the competition. The Directors' Cup is the only all-sports trophy given to NCAA institutions. Amherst student-athletes have claimed countless All-Conference, All-America and Academic All-America awards.

With the success of our intercollegiate athletic program over the years has come sustained attention to its role in relation to admission policy and the campus culture. During the period since our last reaccreditation, we have reviewed and assessed (both internally and externally) our athletic program and a substantial strategic planning and implementation process is currently under way. These efforts will be discussed in greater detail in the appraisal section. The department is advised by the Committee on Education and Athletics, composed of coaches, faculty members, and students.

APPRAISAL

The college employs a number of mechanisms to evaluate the curricular and co-curricular elements of the student experience, and we outline them here. The standards for placement on academic warning, probation, or dismissal are well defined and have been enforced consistently for more than twenty years. We do not anticipate changes to our procedures in this regard in the near future.

Although Amherst does not state explicit goals for students' co-curricular learning, we systematically assess the effectiveness of certain aspects of the co-curricular experience, such as residential life, through instruments such as the Five College Cycles Survey and senior and alumni surveys conducted by our IR office. Annual reports demonstrate the heavy usage that students make of offices and departments that are under the umbrella of the dean of students office. We track the usage of services such as the counseling center and health service and make adjustments to staff levels in order to ensure that all students have ready access to those services without resorting to waiting lists or required referrals off-campus. Most recently, in response to a significant increase in the number of our students requesting consultations for psychotropic medications, we increased the number of hours our psychiatrists are available by nearly 50 percent. Our own studies have shown that our arrangement with UMass enables us to provide a full range of health services more cost effectively than do most other schools of comparable size.

In addition to the other mechanisms of evaluation already mentioned, we occasionally invite visiting committees to study various student services and make recommendations for their improvement. In the past, such committees have examined our health service and counseling center.

Academic Support

As described above and under *The Academic Program*, we have made great progress over the past ten years in the area of academic and co-curricular support for less well-prepared students and are committed to doing even more. With faculty leadership, support programs are developed based on institutional research on student performance and need

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and with the continuing oversight of the faculty Committee on Academic Support. As was discussed under *The Academic Program*, all aspects of writing instruction are currently under review by the Committee on Educational Policy.

In formulating and implementing the new initiatives of the past ten years, the academic and student deans have continued their traditionally strong working relationships. Student deans served on curricular working groups in the SCAE and CAP process and continue to support the Teaching and Advising Project. A faculty member serves half time as dean of new students. The various faculty oversight committees work with both offices.

Student Activities

Other bodies under the auspices of the dean of students office also assess their programs or functions regularly and make changes as needed. The Orientation Committee meets several times over the course of the year to plan the following year's program.

Adjustments to the program are made with some frequency, often in response to an annual survey sent to first-year students once orientation has been completed. Most recently, as a result of faculty concerns that there was not enough academic substance in the program, the Orientation Committee added an annual lecture by a visiting dignitary—often an Amherst alumnus—at the very start of the program, along with assigned readings on the topic the speaker plans to address. Survey results indicate that students have in general appreciated the inclusion of this event within the program.

As with most student governments, the effectiveness of our AAS varies considerably from year to year, depending on the abilities of the particular elected officers. At the moment, there is some controversy about the allocation process for the student activities fees, since the AAS has underspent its budget for the last few years and has accumulated a significant surplus in the process. The director of student activities has been working with the treasurer of the AAS to develop mechanisms to eliminate the under spending as well as to ensure equitable distribution of the accumulated surplus over time.

Though the residential planning process has paid close attention to the needs for space for student activities, scarcities have been reported as our hundred clubs and organizations, with their own shifting needs, adapt to the new patterns of available space, as well as the need to take buildings off line during construction. The inadequacy of space in the Keefe Student Center is often noted. As in the RMP process, these space needs will be central to the planning process for the east campus (see under *Physical and Technological Resources*).

Satisfaction with extracurricular opportunities is generally high. In the 2005 Senior Survey, 97 percent of students were generally or very satisfied with those opportunities. Some students feel that some of the hundred clubs and organizations are less active than on peer campuses and that the ten theme houses should do more to enliven campus life and create a sense of community. The perceived lack of school spirit and the longing for more campus traditions have also been recurrent themes in recent years.

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Residential Life

Results from the Five College cycles surveys show that our students' satisfaction with their residential experience has increased significantly over the last ten years, presumably in direct response to our efforts to upgrade the quality of our residence halls. Because 2007-08 is the first year in which all of the first-year students will be living contiguously, we will not know the success of our plan to have the whole class together for several more years. We do anticipate, though, that with the help of our revived IR office, we should have good information on the relative success of this aspect of the Residential Master Plan within the next few years.

While the issue of off-campus fraternities remains, anecdotal evidence suggests that the interest in those organizations among athletes—and especially among football players—has waned. Following on the trustees' 1997 report on this issue, the College Council studied our fraternity policy in 2005-06, and again recommended no change in policy, though it did issue a statement for inclusion in the *Student Handbook* that clarifies the policy and gives specific instances of what activities were prohibited on campus.

Athletics

Twice in the last five years Amherst has commissioned special reports on athletics at the college. In 2002 a trustee-faculty-student committee, chaired by Colin Diver '65, now president of Reed College, issued a report entitled "The Place of Athletics at Amherst College: A Question of Balance" (hereafter: "the Diver Report"), and in 2005 there was an external review of the department. The department is now addressing the recommendations made by these reviews through a comprehensive strategic planning process. Central to this initiative is a multi-faceted approach to assuring that athletic competition is broadly valued on campus for "its contribution to academic performance, personal growth, social cohesion, and community spirit," as the Diver Report recommended.

The Diver Report found that we operate a highly successful varsity athletic program despite the high academic selectivity and small size of the college, considerable expense involved, and increasing competition within NESCAC and NCAA Division III. The report weighed the direct and indirect costs associated with maintaining athletic success against the identifiable benefits, and found those cost to be appropriate but recommended continuous assessment of the pressures on the admission process.

The Diver Report recommended that we support standards for sharing admission data among the eleven-member NESCAC and that, in concert with the closest peer institutions (Wesleyan and Williams), we provide leadership in ensuring that student-athletes' entrance credentials mirror those of their non-athletic peers. Under the direction of the NESCAC presidents, the league has implemented a league-wide policy regarding admission expectations for students with athletic interest. The presidents now review conference data on an annual basis. Additional recommendations of the 2002 committee considered time and energy demands, the stereotyping of athletes, the size of the athletic programs and the numbers of athletically talented students needed to support such programs, and equity and diversity issues as they pertain to students and the coaching

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staff. Finally, the report suggested “periodic stock-taking,” the prescription for which included the appointment of an ad hoc review committee within three to five years of the publication of the 2002 report.

In the fall of 2005, President Marx assembled an external review committee and charged it to evaluate all aspects of the department. That committee’s report, delivered in December 2005, included seventeen distinct recommendations, including the creation of a strategic plan, the evaluation of current and future facility needs, and a review of criteria for admission of student-athletes. The 2005 external review committee report builds on the Diver Report by recommending tangible and practical ways to improve all facets of the physical education and athletics program at Amherst.

Under a new director hired in 2006, the athletics department has addressed the recommendations of the 2002 and 2005 reviews. A strategic planning committee has begun to review program, staff assignments, facility needs, and optimal and equitable financing levels in the context of the college’s and department’s missions. The department will use strategic planning to evaluate its strengths and needs and develop a multi-year plan with strategic benchmarks for measuring progress in all identified areas.

In addition, the following committees were established: the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, the Campus Climate Committee, the Contracts and Evaluation Committee, and the Fundraising and External Communications Committee. To strengthen integration with academic life, the program of faculty liaisons to teams was expanded. The Friends of Amherst Athletics revised its constitution and bylaws, sponsored new programs, built membership, and reinstated the Friends Newsletter and the senior banquet for graduating student-athletes.

Since 2006 the structure of positions in the department has been reformed. The department conducted an audit of hiring practices, staffing levels, workload, job responsibilities, and compensation for fairness and balance across all positions in the department. Five searches, representing head coaching positions that did not originally undergo national search processes and protocols, were conducted during the 2006-07 academic year. In addition, the strategic planning committee is actively assessing the responsibilities assigned to all coaching positions. The assessment includes a review of workload, compensation, and equity issues. A position was created at the assistant athletic director level to advance the department’s goals for diversity and inclusion by working with the admission office, dean of students offices, and Center for Community Engagement, and a senior coach was appointed to this position.

PROJECTIONS

Student Health

We anticipate that the demand for a variety of health services, particularly psychological services, will continue to increase. We are committed to ensuring that resources will be provided to meet these and other student needs.

Residential Life

With the successful completion of the first phase of the RMP, we have now turned our attention to the second phase, which involves what in some ways is our thorniest housing problem: what to do with the social dorms, a group of upper-class dormitories built in the mid-1960s whose useful life is rapidly coming to an end. Due to their peculiar design, they would be especially difficult to renovate. At this writing, a new group of architectural consultants is developing a phased plan to tear down and rebuild each of these dormitories. The board of trustees will consider this plan over the next year or so, and we anticipate that, if it is approved, construction will begin on another major set of projects within the next two to three years. See under *Physical and Technological Resources*.

Academic Support

As Amherst continues to attract students with a wider variety of academic preparation (though not, we believe, of academic potential), we recognize our obligation to ensure their success once they arrive at the college. We are committed to devoting close attention and much energy to the issue of academic support for our most vulnerable students for the foreseeable future through bodies such as our faculty Committee on Academic Support and the Quantitative Skills Working Group; personnel such as the coordinator of academic support programs and the officer for diversity and support; and enhanced resources for and visibility of our IR office. For curricular initiatives in this area, see “Addressing Variable Levels of Student Preparation” under *The Academic Program*.

Athletics

As mentioned in the appraisal section, there has been a great deal of review and assessment in this area over the past ten years, and much is planned for the immediate future, with the oversight of the Committee on Education and Athletics. We anticipate that the current substantial strategic planning and implementation process will address many recommendations made in the 2002 Diver Report and the 2005 External Review Committee Report.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The various functions of admission, financial aid, student affairs, and athletics are overseen by a constellation of active committees: the Student Life Committee of the board of trustees, the FCAFA and CCAFA, the College Council, the Orientation Committee, the Committee on Academic Support, the Committee on Academic Standing, and the Committee on Education and Athletics. In the past decade, there have been six external reviews of units in this area, which have led to substantial changes in policies, practices, and staffing structures. The perceptions of applicants, enrolled students, and graduates are regularly surveyed in order to improve policies and practices.

7 LIBRARY AND OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES

THE AMHERST COLLEGE LIBRARY

DESCRIPTION

The Amherst College Library is at the center of academic activity on the campus. It links students, faculty, administrators, and staff members with the resources that promote teaching, research, and learning. Its collections, organization, facilities, and services support the undergraduate curriculum and faculty research in ways that enhance free discovery and mutual respect. While the library's commitment and principles have not changed, its collections and services have undergone radical transformation in the last fifteen years. In the past the library needed to own or borrow an item; today the library provides networked access to thousands of databases, electronic journals, e-books, and Web sites, while still preserving and adding to its traditional print and manuscript collections. Librarians now select and organize resources in all formats. They provide guidance and instruction in locating and critically evaluating information in any form.

Staff

A highly qualified professional and support staff with substantial training and experience serve the users of the Amherst College Library. As of October 2007, the staff includes seventeen librarians, archivists, and curators with degrees from American Library Association (ALA)-accredited or equivalent master's programs, seven of whom have additional master's degrees or technical certifications. Additionally, of the twenty-eight support staff members, two have ALA-accredited degrees and six are currently enrolled in such programs. The staff is further augmented by five ALA-accredited librarians who work part-time and by some sixty student workers. Many of the library's staff members participate in national and/or regional professional organizations (library, archival, or visual resources). Additionally, many participate in various Five College library committees, which oversee the Five College integrated library system and other cooperative consortial projects. Library employees are members of campus-wide committees such as the Internet Strategy Group, Content Management System (CMS) Oversight Group, and the Advisory Committee on Personnel Policies committee. Faculty serve on the standing Archives Committee and both faculty and students participate in the Library Committee, which reviews budget allocations, consults about library policies, and provides valuable feedback from constituents to the library. Nearly every member of the staff belongs to the library's committees, task forces, or working groups within the library. Staff vacancies, during the past two years particularly, have provided opportunities to reorganize the library and redefine professional and other positions, to develop or recruit librarians with the skills and knowledge required to meet the current and future needs of our users.

Research Education, Public Services, and Current Collections

Librarians are actively engaged in the educational mission of the college. They are deeply committed to teaching students, faculty, and staff about specialized resources and services. In areas ranging from the online catalog to subject databases to reserve procedures, the library guarantees that the entire campus community benefits from its offerings and its expertise. Librarians and archivists play a key role in identifying essential tools for individual departments and in ensuring that students are able to use them.

Although Amherst College as an institution has never made a formal commitment to “information literacy,” a glance at syllabi for many advanced courses is strong evidence that the faculty is dedicated to fostering in students an increasingly sophisticated ability to gather and critically analyze information in their chosen fields. The college curriculum comes very close to fulfilling the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL’s) standards for information literacy.¹

Some departments—for example, economics, and computer science—have asked librarians to introduce majors to basic research tools in their disciplines. Other departments—history, black studies, and English—have drawn on the rich and rare collections in Archives and Special Collections to enable students to research with primary sources (real as well as virtual). Almost half of Amherst seniors conduct thesis research. Honors students can schedule individual bibliographic tutorials with librarians to learn about library research tools essential to their theses. All these activities provide students the chance to become sophisticated researchers in their disciplines.

In addition, reference librarians and archivists provide nearly seventy course-based instruction sessions to classes each year. Librarians and archivists collaborate with faculty members to develop customized sessions that address the research needs of a particular assignment or course. Most sessions incorporate hands-on experience for students, from searching online databases to handling archival material.

The library maintains excellent research support at two service points in the Frost Library for a total of 91.5 hours per week, assisting nearly three hundred patrons in a typical week. The branch libraries offer specialized research consultations in the academic disciplines they support. Research assistance is also made available via phone, e-mail, and online chat. In the 2006-2007 academic year, 100 students scheduled individual appointments to consult with a reference librarian about their specific research projects. Recently, in a marketing initiative labeled “Instant Librarian” to mirror the new instant messaging service, librarians set up a station once a week for two months in the Keefe Campus Center to promote library services and answer questions from students, staff, and faculty.

Amherst’s age, resources, and scholarly ambitions have meant that holdings are significantly larger and deeper than those of most other college libraries, rivaling many university collections. Special strengths include major nineteenth and twentieth century editions of canonical authors and long runs of scholarly journals, plus areas of special depth in subjects such as railway

¹ ACRL Standards for Information Literacy
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm> [Accessed Nov. 4, 2007]

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history, early American geological investigations, nineteenth century missionary accounts, and older U.S. government documents, among others. With more than 10,500 linear feet of institutional records and publications, biographical materials, personal papers, historical and literary manuscripts and more than 70,000 rare books, Archives and Special Collections is one of the largest and oldest (established in 1851) such departments in an undergraduate institution. It supports courses across the curriculum and original research of students, faculty, and the college and scholarly community, as well as a continuing series of exhibitions and programs in Frost Library and online.

As of January 2007, the collections of the college's libraries included over one million volumes, 12,000+ videos and DVDs, 16,000+ compact discs, 5,000+ online journal subscriptions, and 2,500+ print journal subscriptions. As in so many other academic libraries, in the Amherst College Library the mere concept of "collection" is undergoing a dramatic re-definition. What an academic library once would have owned in physical form, it now licenses online from publishers and database vendors. The Amherst College Library now enriches its traditional holdings with thousands of titles in digital collections. The resources of the other four members of the Five College library consortium, combined with traditional interlibrary loan, further expand the resources available.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) recommends that libraries use a peer group for purposes of comparison.² In 2005, the Committee on Priorities and Resources identified a group of thirty institutions, referred to as the "new group," for use in institutional comparisons, which twenty-five report data to ACRL. In the comparison group, the Amherst College Library ranks third in collection size per student.

Budget

The library receives extremely strong financial support, easily demonstrated by looking at allocations from the college's current operating budget, library-dedicated endowed funds, and one-time special project funding. Total library expenditures in FY 2005 were \$5.1 million, with \$2.4 million spent on collections. The college consistently meets the library's request for an average annual increase in the materials budget of 7 percent, an increment that has helped increase total library spending by 34 percent since FY 1998. With library expenditures per student of \$3,098 and acquisitions expenditures per student of \$1,456, the library ranks first in the comparison group in library support.

Generous funding has allowed the library to increase its collections despite double-digit inflation in the price of scholarly journals and the high cost of electronic resources. The library continues to meet the ever-increasing expectations of faculty, staff, and students for information-rich resources in both print and electronic formats. Additional college funds have allowed the library to expand its resources and services by adopting new products and technologies including: the SFX open-URL resolver, MetaLib federated search engine, and DigiTool digital object management system. Additionally, the library, as a member of the Five Colleges Libraries, recently upgraded its integrated library system/OPAC to ALEPH, a standards-compliant, Oracle-based system. ALEPH facilitates the Five College Delivery service, allowing Amherst users to

² ACRL *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* (2004).
www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standardslibraries.htm [Accessed 5 January 2007]

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request that materials be delivered from any of the other campuses. Five Colleges Libraries cooperative funding arrangements have been particularly instrumental to the acquisition of SFX and ALEPH, as well as for Verde, the electronic resource management system now being implemented. The library is also creative in its use of income. For example, it purchased ILLiad, the interlibrary loan management system, using accrued credits earned at OCLC as an interlibrary loan net-lender.

Other campus departments provide critical services to the library, in addition to financial support. For example, the department of information technology (IT) purchases the library's computers on the campus-wide fixed replacement cycle of four years for staff machines and three for public machines. IT also provides second-line support to these computers (the library itself is first-line), plus system administration of numerous servers used for library services (i.e., ILLiad and DigiTool). Additionally, the Friends of the Library and outside foundations financed the construction of the Lane Room for small group bibliographic instruction, created a half-time reference humanities librarian position, funded project catalogers for general and special collections, and provided funds for the DigiTool pilot project.

Facilities

Open 110 hours in a typical week, the library offers 677 seats and ninety-four public computers for patron use in its facilities located in six different buildings: the Robert Frost Library, the Keefe Science Library (in the Merrill Science Center), the Vincent Morgan Music Library (in the Arms Music Building), the Olds Mathematics Library (in Seeley Mudd Hall), the Visual Resources Collection (in Fayerweather Hall), and the Amherst College Library Depository (six miles from campus).

The library's physical facilities vary in usability and comfort. Frost Library, the main library housing the largest collections, is more than forty years old. While Frost's largely cosmetic interior renovations in 1995 minimally addressed climate control and electrical/network needs related to expanded computer use, recent creative reconfiguration of some Frost spaces has mitigated these deficiencies. The library offers users a variety of spaces that support technology-enhanced as well as traditional modes of learning, study, and research. Such spaces include a fifty-six workstation computer lab on Level A, comfortable seating areas on each floor, computer-equipped group studies, and study seating for individuals and groups.

The Keefe Science Library, a newer, well-lit facility in proximity to many classrooms, has comfortable study and computer work spaces that are in high demand by students. The Olds Mathematics Library is a small, unstaffed reading room housing the current issues and recent back files of currently received mathematics and computer science serials. Although its adjacency to math and computer science faculty is intended to foster faculty and student research, the location and the lack of an on-site photocopier significantly limit access to the materials, particularly for Five College patrons. In 2003, Olds' space was halved to provide more faculty office space, necessitating the transfer of a substantial portion of the collection to the depository. The Morgan Music Library's collections include monographs, periodicals, scores, recorded music, and a three-station computer/MIDI-keyboard equipped music recording lab. Due to space constraints, a portion of the collection is in closed storage, both within the Music Library and at the depository. The Morgan's adjacency to the department fosters faculty

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and student research and teaching, but its location on the second floor of a building lacking an elevator is a serious deficiency. Further, Morgan's small space constrains both collection growth and effective use of the collections and lab assets.

We began moving materials (both monographs and serials) to the depository in 1994 to relieve Frost's need for growth space. Presently, over 10 percent of the general collections are stored there. To minimize impact on users, the library provides 24-hour delivery of paged general materials to campus. Space constraints dictate that 40 percent of the holding of Archives and Special Collections are stored in the depository, despite high demand for some.

Collection Development

Historically, the library relied on faculty for book selection. The result is a rich but sometimes idiosyncratic collection, which is hard to evaluate by conventional means. More recently, as faculty members' teaching, research, and other institutional service responsibilities have increased, their ability to devote time and energy to collection-building has waned, and the librarians have embraced this role. The library prizes title-by-title selection by well-informed librarians as the best way to satisfy the college's curricular and research needs. And librarians have also been more closely in touch with changes in publishing technology and distribution and therefore have been able to make more informed decisions about digital resources, especially about large and interdisciplinary databases. In 1997 the library established a Collection Development Group and appointed a coordinator of collection development to implement this changeover. The librarians involved have strengthened communications with faculty and gathered information about the teaching and research needs of library patrons. The librarians currently order about two-thirds of the approximately 20,000 print titles purchased each year and are largely responsible for the ever-growing electronic "collection." Reference works, serials, monographs, and image collections all have become increasingly electronic collections. The library has purposefully licensed access to collections such as *ebrary* and *Early English Books Online* (EEBO), for example, which would have been prohibitively expensive in print. Because a significant percentage of our library users still prefer to use (and faculty members to assign readings in) print, the library continues to carefully evaluate the quality of newly-available resources regardless of format. The library makes deliberate effort to ensure all academic fields are served equitably, including emergent interdisciplinary programs. Strategies used for acquiring the most expensive materials, frequently digital, include collaborative purchasing with various consortia such as the Five College Libraries, NYLINK, NELINET, and NERL.

The Collection Development Group is vigorously reviewing electronic monograph collections, in order to codify guidelines for future electronic acquisitions, which will address issues such as duplication of the print collection, durability, interface quality, and expense, as well as how the particular resources fulfill the research needs of students and faculty. The recently hired reference/interlibrary loan librarian is currently analyzing interlibrary borrowing, and his report will help fine-tune ordering in highly specialized areas. More granular acquisitions and collection usage reporting from ALEPH will also enhance collection development efforts, as will pending formalization of a process for reviewing faculty requests for expensive purchases. In the broader library community, the library is firmly committed to the open access movement, offering to pay publishers' fees to faculty who publish in open access journals. Our library is a charter member of both the LOCKSS Alliance and PORTICOM strongly supports SPARC.

APPRAISAL

All areas of the library collect statistics to document use of resources and services. Data collection is consistent over time and helps to identify trends and patterns in usage and to determine the adequacy of library resources. Statistics compiled include: acquisitions and cataloging; circulation and reserve of all formats in Frost, Science, Music, and Visual Resources; interlibrary lending and borrowing; door count (number of people coming into the library); reference materials used in-house; reference questions received (in-person, e-mail, phone, chat); individual research appointments; instruction sessions (for students, faculty, staff, and the public); computer station usage; and use of Archives and Special Collections. In 2008, for the first time, the college's institutional research (IR) office will include questions on information gathering, management, and evaluation on its annual NSSE survey.

The library uses qualitative measures such as surveys, usability testing, and focus groups. It also emphasizes informal communication with faculty and students and receives both actively solicited as well as unsolicited feedback through the library-sponsored weekly Community Tea, participation in the college's electronic social networking spaces, regular meetings with faculty and academic departments about the quality of library collections and services, meetings with student groups, and observing the output of student research. A 2006 student focus group report indicated students' desire for more training in library research and recommended several approaches; the library is now working on plans for instruction independent of courses. Library staff members jointly share the responsibility for ensuring the adequacy of the collection through liaison relationships to each academic department and program; liaisons regularly watch for changes in curricular needs, most notably as a result of new course offerings or institution-wide initiatives articulated by such bodies as the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) but also, and just as significantly, through informal communication with faculty.

Analysis of data from 2004-05 (the most recent available) indicates that in the comparison group Amherst ranks behind only Harvard and Yale in both number of volumes per student and number of volumes added per student.³ However, we rank seventeenth in professional staff per student, and eighteenth in library salaries. These comparisons and other peer group data suggest that our dedicated and knowledgeable staff do a remarkable job of managing services and collections.

The library uses the data gathered to analyze trends and usage, and to make comparisons to peer institutions. If a service is underutilized (library instruction, for example), the library liaison meets with faculty to understand the research expectations of each academic department and to discuss how the library can help students meet those expectations. Usage data for library facilities (such as the data documenting very high usage of the library computer lab) prompted a change that opened a previously locked computer instruction room for student use and provided for an IT-library initiative to create two computer-equipped rooms for group study in Frost Library. Usability testing of the library Web site has been on-going and extremely helpful in

³ACRL, *2005 Academic Library Trends & Statistics* (Chicago: ALA, 2006)

redesigning the site to make it more usable and more accessible to people with disabilities. Testing has also been used to improve the public interface of the integrated library system.

PROJECTIONS

Librarians, students, and faculty are now dealing with a library that is both real and virtual. In the immediate future, the library will juggle print and digital collections and try to make the most of both. The library has responded to increasing demand for both individual research appointments and course-based instruction on digital as well as print materials. Greater faculty emphasis on course-related research assignments is one way that faculty foster their students' information-seeking skills. Many of these assignments have been developed in collaboration with librarians, who make particular efforts to use the library's varied and rich collections. The greatest outreach tool for expanding the instruction program has been word-of-mouth between professors and students. Still, the library must work with academic departments in a more deliberate way to define essential student skills as well as the methods for developing those skills. Particular emphasis, from the library's viewpoint, must be placed on technology literacy, information literacy, media creativity, and social competence and responsibility—key twenty-first century fluencies defined at a 2002 Bertelsmann Foundation-AOL Time Warner Foundation conference.⁴

The CAP proposals for increasing the size of the faculty and the student body will have repercussions on the library, including the need for additional professional library staff. Approximately half of the library's current staff will become eligible for retirement in the next five-to-ten years. The likelihood of multiple simultaneous vacancies may occasion organizational changes and provide additional opportunities for adapting positions to meet future needs.

The library has been able to provide a variety of physical and virtual environments that support different modes of learning, study, and research, but cannot surmount the environmental constraints of Frost Library. In 2006, the Library Planning Group determined that there is a strong consensus across campus that the current structure underserves the college, stating that "the profound limitations of the Robert Frost Library building can no longer be overcome by relying upon creative programming and a world-class collection. Even the best programming cannot transcend its architectural deficits."⁵ The planning group concluded that Amherst's commitment to providing a learning atmosphere that engages students and inspires them to transform their lives and their world uniquely positions the institution to contribute to the transformation of the liberal arts college library. In response to the recommendation that the college engage architecture professionals to undertake a comprehensive planning process, the President has appointed the new college-wide Library Planning Committee. A major focus of the library for the next several years will be on significant renovation (or replacement) of Frost Library. At the same time, library operations will continue to keep pace with changing technology, changing patterns of publishing and distribution of information, and changing expectations of our students, faculty, and staff.

⁴ (White Paper: 21st century Literacy in a convergent media world, 7-8 March 2002, Berlin Germany. Bertelsmann Stiftung (Gütersloh, Germany); AOL Time Warner Foundation. 2002, n.p.

⁵ Report of the Library Planning Group, <http://www.amherst.edu/library/info/planning/report.html>

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

DESCRIPTION

We manage a technology environment that supports the teaching, learning, research, administration, and social life of the campus, as well as serving the extended community of alumni, scholarly partners, and others whose work and lives intersect with that of the college.

Over the course of the past ten years we have worked to make technology resources ubiquitous for the college community and, more recently, have begun to move away from viewing technology as merely a utility, like electricity or water, toward engaging the members of the community in the transformative role that technology has in our culture of information. Modern information technology allows users to integrate and share discrete data resources across pre-existing boundaries, such as those between departments, roles, tasks, locations, media types, and presentations. Redrawing, overstepping, or simply flattening boundaries—as can happen when information is digital, networked, and normalized—often alters the cultural and intellectual conventions created when information was conceived, contained, and/or disseminated with older forms of technology.

Between 1997 and 1999 we combined and re-organized into a unified department what had been separate academic and administrative units, each with its own reporting structures, systems, equipment, and servers. By 2007 the IT department consists of 42 FTEs—nearly double the staffing in 1997—and is composed of six divisions:

Academic Technology Services provides support to faculty for the use of computers in teaching and research and maintains computer classrooms, which includes a classroom helpdesk for faculty encountering problems in the classroom.

Database Services maintains our primary administrative database, Datatel, and other department databases.

Desktop Computing Services provides general computing support for faculty, staff, and students.

The **Systems and Network Group** maintains the college's e-mail, Web, file, and other centralized servers and networking equipment.

The **Telecommunications and Networking Group** is responsible for the planning, design, and provisioning of wireline fiber optics, copper, data and telephone cabling, and a broadband coaxial cable network, as well as various wireless frequencies.

The **Web Services Group** implements the Web strategy of the college and creates Web applications for members of the Amherst College community.

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We have also updated the charges and rationalized the roles of certain existing committees, such as the Faculty Computing Committee, the Internet Strategy Group, and the Core Data Team, with the addition of a new Student Computing Committee. We have created a clear path for IT suggestions, strategies, priorities, and budgets to come from all of these committees and from administrative departments to the college's senior staff for approval and the setting of priorities.

Between 1997 and 2003, the widespread availability of technology on campus rose as we worked to establish the staff and budget levels necessary to build out and support our network and server infrastructure, convert its institutional database from a homegrown system to a commercial system, Datatel, and support all desktop and laptop computers, with a three-to-four year replacement cycle. In the fall of 2001, a learning management system, Blackboard, was made available to all faculty members and students.

Closing in on its goal of ubiquity, the college today connects to the Internet through a fiber ring built and owned by the Five Colleges, Incorporated. This ring has the capacity to move one gigabit of data per second between the five colleges and/or between Amherst College and the Internet. In fiscal 2007, we purchased fifty megabits per second capacity for Internet 1 traffic and another forty-five for Internet 2. (Some providers, such as Comcast, Verizon, and Roadrunner may move I1 traffic across the I2 backbone). We maintain 104 terabytes of centralized storage. With support from the National Science Foundation we have also rolled out fifty CPUs of a planned 126 CPU cluster for teaching and research computation across the disciplines.

We have 6,711 data ports available to campus users and 2,235 live cable TV ports. Wireless access is available in all academic buildings, all residence halls, the libraries, selected outdoor spaces, and some administrative buildings. Almost all data ports support one hundred megabits per second to the desktop, while some support gigabit. The wireless access points support fifty-four megabits per second. The campus cable TV plant is a four-hundred MHz, mid-split, broadband coaxial cable system, with programming provided by Comcast Cable as well as by satellite for selected non-English stations. Every residence room has ports for telephone, cable TV, data (one-to-one port-to-pillow ratio), and wireless data access.

There are more than 1,100 college-owned computers in use on campus. All of these computers are replaced on a three-to-four year replacement schedule.

We support our own Siemens PBX for providing digital and, as needed, analog, phone services to the employees and departments of the college. This system runs over a combination of copper and fiber network and includes an automated telephone directory (there is also a print directory and a Web-based directory) as well as the capability of forwarding employee voicemail to their respective e-mail. Student wired telephone service is offered by Verizon, though the number of students making use of this service was down to approximately twenty-eight in the 2006-2007 academic year. Our campus hosts Cingular and Verizon cellular access points and is negotiating with T-Mobile to do the same. Our students and employees are significant beneficiaries of these hosting arrangements.

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We have standardized on the Blackberry PDA for handheld e-mail, calendar, task list, Web, cell phone, and many other services. We maintain our own Blackberry Enterprise Server for integrated e-mail, calendaring, memo, etc. services. Most of the sixty to seventy devices in use have service from Verizon, with the others contracting service from T-Mobile due to regular travel outside of the US or outside of Verizon's service areas. Standardizing on the Blackberry and Verizon has allowed us to take great advantage of service and device discounts through Verizon's contract with the state of Massachusetts. It has also minimized, to the extent possible, the support costs and the procedures in place in the event a PDA is lost or stolen.

All students, faculty, and staff receive detailed information about accounts and network usage policy when accounts are created for them. The terms and conditions of use are clearly articulated,⁶ with links to the Policy on Acceptable Use of the Amherst College Electronic Environment,⁷ and, for students, the Honor Code and the Discipline System. Students must abide by the Honor Code.⁸ Our policies on protecting the privacy of users of its Web site are clearly spelled out.⁹

As needed, we make software such as Dragon's Naturally Speaking available to employees and students with a physical or cognitive need for interacting with a computer orally. We continue to assess JAWS and other screen-reading software used by individuals with visual impairments. As part of our overhaul of the approach and tools used to develop and maintain all institutional Web postings, we have built, to the extent possible, ADA compliance into the tool set.

From 1997 to 2007 our annual budget for Information Technology (operating, salary and benefits, and equipment budgeted to the IT Department) rose from slightly less than two million dollars to slightly less than six million dollars. This represents a change from approximately 2.67 percent to 5 percent of the college's annual budget. At its current level, our spending on IT is very close to the mean spending among similar institutions as reported by Educause in its annual Core Data Survey published in November of 2006. (As with 33.7 percent of other four-year colleges completing the Educause survey, we cannot estimate IT spending outside of the centralized IT organization.)

APPRAISAL

In January of 2003, the dean of the faculty requested an external review of the IT department, which focused on the organizational structure and the effectiveness of the technical staff. The review assessed how well the organization met current expectations and was positioned to meet future critical issues. The visiting committee found much positive to report and indicated support for the progress it saw, especially given Amherst's move to a centralized IT department

⁶ Statement on Terms and Conditions of Use: https://cms.amherst.edu/about/terms_conditions/node/236

⁷ Policy on Acceptable Use of the Amherst College Electronic Environment: <https://cms.amherst.edu/taxonomy/term/301>

⁸ Honor Code: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/conduct/honorcode.html>

⁹ Privacy Statement: <https://cms.amherst.edu/about/privacy/node/233>

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approximately a decade after our peers. The committee also made the following observations and recommendations:

- The practice of having the academic IT staff also cover the IT help desk impeded them from helping faculty with curricular support.
- Locating Media Services in the library caused confusion and duplication of effort with the academic IT group.
- Greater collaboration was needed between academic IT staff and faculty in teaching and research.
- The Systems and Networking area was understaffed and compensation for highly technical staff was too low.
- Staff was needed to support the Web delivery of information and services.
- The IT department and others on campus needed to work toward better communication.

We have acted upon all of these recommendations. Some, such as communication and collaboration, require and receive constant effort.

Concerned that silos of information and technology were no longer serving the needs of the larger community, in 2005 we assessed our approach to the Web. We focused particularly on the ways in which different groups within the college community use the Web to interact with each other as well as to perform the work of the college. We found that community groups, when online, were fragmented and divided by a number of factors: their role, relationship with the college, task, comfort and facility with technology, and, in some instances, age. In addition, the underlying technology, authentication and access systems, and functions used by each group were incompatible with one another. Acting on this assessment, we took steps to remove the boundaries and organizational limitations that isolated each group from the other. We created a new Web services division of the IT department and selected a set of open-source tools for developing all of the Web services in-house. With this new Web strategy we are attempting to reverse the atomization of Amherst's online community and to extend by means of the Web the ubiquity of our technology environment to off-campus as well as on-campus members of the college community.

The Web Service Group (WSG) was staffed in the winter and spring of 2006. The Internet Strategy Group gave the WSG its top priority of overhauling the college Web site so that distributed departments and individuals could manage the content and collaborate online. This effort required a new information architecture as well as information flow, a database, development of software, and integrated authentication. The result is a content management system that facilitates the development and maintenance of Web content by all college community members. With a staggered rollout by areas of a campus and/or constituency, in the first nine months 15 percent of alumni, 90 percent of enrolled students, and more than 80 full-time employees adopted the system. The WSG is also introducing procedures, standards, and supporting tools for such things as content syndication, online surveys, online credit card transaction, online portals, blogging, online collaboration, and much more.

In 2005-2006 we also assessed how the IT organization, staffing, services, and resources were or were not helping the faculty and students to make the cultural transition occurring in teaching

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and learning. We found a fragmented support model that was most likely to help faculty use new technology to simplify tasks that arose in earlier technological contexts, such as the distribution of reserve readings, course handouts, and other discrete textual materials. Few faculty or students were doing anything new or transformative with contemporary technology. Until this time, Curricular Computing Services (CCS) was a five-FTE division of the IT department charged with supporting curricular uses of technology by faculty. In addition to the director, there were curricular specialists in humanities, languages, social sciences, and natural sciences. While being helpful to faculty taking their first steps toward integrating current technologies with their teaching, this four-fold distribution was not based on mastery of specific types of technologies, programs, or programming languages and therefore underserved faculty and students wishing to do more than the basics.

The college also did not have a champion focused on perfecting classroom technology. The CCS staff members were the first line of support for classrooms in specific buildings, again based on the disciplines that tend to use those buildings and not the technology installed in these locations. In practice, however, any call for help from a classroom could go back and forth between the CCS staff, the Media Services staff (3.21 FTEs in the library who supported classroom LCD projectors, TVs, DVD players, and VCR players), and Desktop Computing Services staff for support of the computers. We did not have a budget to purchase, maintain, or improve most classroom technology, other than renovation dollars in the dean of the faculty's budget.

CCS, Media Services, and Desktop Computing loaned a somewhat random collection of equipment to faculty and students. Departments also purchased some equipment, which was then shared by members of the department. There were no consistent standards for the equipment, no set policy on loaning it, and no budget to support it. Media Services also maintained a small digital video editing lab, though the lab was insufficient to support class assignments and could not expand due to HVAC limitations. Media Services did not have a budget to maintain or replace any equipment.

Data on the use of our computer labs showed that the teaching labs supported by IT were very under-utilized, as were some of the general-purpose labs. Computers in all campus labs were designed for individual users and configured with exactly the same general-purpose hardware and software. In this way students would always find the same resources no matter where they worked. On the other hand, students and faculty had little or no access to specialized hardware or software such as GIS, 2D and 3D animation, CAD, software development tools, and the like.

No group or individual on campus was charged with supporting research uses of technology. We did not supply nor support, other than minimally, the forty or so computers used in faculty members' research labs. Similarly, discipline- and research-specific software was purchased, installed, and the licenses maintained by individual faculty members and/or departments. The college had received an NSF grant of approximately \$400,000 and committed staff and dollars from IT for an unspecified number of years to build and maintain a 126-CPU computing cluster, though it made provisions for neither staff nor dollars. Again, the college had committed \$568,000 and received a \$150,000 NSF grant to build the infrastructure to connect to Internet 2 (I2) and will pay an additional \$30,000 annually in fees. However, we had no programmers or systems staff trained or tasked to develop or maintain applications that could utilize the I2

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protocol, known as “Internet Protocol Version Six.” The campus infrastructure was outpacing the academic technology staffing and organization.

After dozens of campus discussions, an ad hoc advisory group, surveys of peer institutions, and the like, in 2006-07 we overhauled our approach to the academic technology needs of students and faculty. We formed an Academic Technology Services (ATS) department within IT to oversee three broad areas of support for teaching and learning:

Classroom and Lab Technology Support for computing in instructional spaces (i.e., classrooms, department computing labs, specialized academic computing labs, teaching labs, and research labs). Staff in this area coordinate hardware and software research, purchasing, installation, maintenance, and faculty training on the use of classroom equipment. They respond to faculty when technology issues arise in the classroom and research new instructional spaces and equipment as well as new uses of equipment, such as cell phones and game consoles, in the classroom.

Academic Software and Media Support for faculty and student curricular and research use of specialized software as well as blogs, wikis, and other communication technologies. Staff in this area support faculty in the development of Web sites, Web-based utilities (e.g. surveys and tests), video projects and lab sections associated with particular courses. Faculty receive assistance in preparing and storing media files, including digitizing analog media, for use in teaching or research.

Teaching and Research Innovation for systems used in academic research, such as Internet 2, cluster and grid computing, high-capacity computational as well as experimental server environments, and alternative operating systems. Staff in this area also develop and/or supervise custom programming projects for faculty teaching and research needs. They collaborate with faculty on grant writing, management of grant-funded projects, development of application prototypes, etc.

By 2006, ATS training included one-on-one instruction and training in lab-like settings for students and/or faculty in the context of courses and specific assignments. In addition, ATS began to facilitate working groups of faculty and ATS staff, who meet throughout a semester to develop specific skills. ATS sponsored day-long visits by scholars to discuss the ways new technology resources have enriched their teaching and research. In 2007 the technology demonstrated and discussed was GIS, and the disciplines represented ranged from genetics and U.S. history to French culture and demography.

In January of 2007 ATS, in collaboration with faculty members, began what will be regular multi-week Interterm courses using new technologies for research and community outreach. In the first pair— Destructive Species and the Quabbin Reservoir: Balancing Ecological Diversity and Recreational Needs and Meeting the Health Care Needs of Under-Privileged Populations in the Holyoke Region—students used digital video hardware and software, software-based mapping tools, and Web sites to gather, analyze, and disseminate information.

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In the summer of 2007, ATS staff, six faculty, and six students explored the educational potential of digital game-based learning from a variety of academic perspectives. Using open-source gaming environments, they developed “serious games.” Other initiatives included ATS staff and numerous foreign language teachers (Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish) to develop resources for introductory language courses that allow students to use instant messaging to help build their verbal skills and also supply the faculty with data about how their students learn. ATS will collaborate with faculty in grant writing and the management of grant-funded research.

In 2006 we began to implement a changed notion of the computer lab needs of students and faculty. We made available eighty-nine general purpose computers for community use, primarily in the Frost, Music, and Science Libraries as well as in the Seeley Mudd Computer Center. These computers are in a mix of individual and group workstation configurations and, when classes are in session, are available, on average, eighteen hours a day and a maximum of twenty-four hours per day. The IT department now tracks when each computer is turned on and/or actively in use. The IT staff routinely reviews this data and adjusts the number and set-up options, location, and the hours that they are available. In addition, we converted three general purpose labs/classrooms to support specialized technical applications: animation/game development, geographic information systems/CAD, and video. Another ten are set up with hardware and software for specialized academic applications.

The hiring of a new IT director as well as new directors of IT departments have been occasions for bringing the campus together to assess the strengths and weakness of the department(s) and to consider future directions. For instance, the college took a year to assess its current and future needs and wants before hiring a new IT director in 2005 and in 2006 when it hired a director of Web services and a new director of curricular IT support. Similarly, requests to fill vacant positions as well as requests for new IT positions have provided occasions for us to evaluate the effectiveness of the department at a task-by-task level.

At a systems and services level, Amherst College uses a variety of data gathering tools to monitor such services or resources as Internet bandwidth utilization, use of computers in labs and classrooms, use of our Web site (both on and off campus use), use of network storage, and the functioning of network equipment. This type of monitoring is done continuously and systematically with software installed on the college network. IT staff can be alerted when problems arise or check Web interfaces to gauge historical or current conditions. We also uses databases to collect and analyze data on IT and IT-related helpdesk requests and resolutions as well as work orders submitted to and completed by physical plant.

IT regularly assesses the mix of proprietary, open-source, and homegrown or home-designed systems and supports and alters its strategy accordingly. Where possible, Amherst College coordinates with other members of the Five Colleges.

In 2006-07 the Department of Human Resources collaborated with IT to create new norms for classifying all non-faculty employees' facility with information technology. All administrative staff received new job descriptions that reflect changed standards and expectations for the role that different types of hardware and software routinely play in the work of the college.

PROJECTIONS

Coming somewhat late to an appreciation of the transformative capacity of technology, we must work to appreciate it not just as a utility, but as a culture and as a powerful enhancement to the close colloquy emphasized in our mission statement and to the extraordinary resources offered by our museums, libraries, archives, and collections. We are not seeking the economies of outsourced learning or of replacing real fieldtrips with virtual fieldtrips but, rather, to give students and faculty state-of-the-art electronic resources as they work together and to make mastery of these evolving resources central to how students learn to learn. We anticipate greater receptivity to the cultural and intellectual changes wrought by new technologies through a combination of various forces: the CAP emphasis on new alignments of academic interest across departments, new areas of specialization in academic disciplines and programs, new faculty lines, new IT initiatives, and the emergent properties of networked environments themselves.

We will work to help members of the community become comfortable with particular tools based on when and how they learned to use them, as new technologies become available every couple of years. The technology used as part of learning requires particular skills to use, but also introduces habits of mind that are distinct. We will struggle to accommodate, value, and support appropriately the different literacies that students and faculty will use in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. This kind of issue is also manifested, for instance, when attempting to facilitate an integrated online community. We need to support those generations whose primary access to the Internet is via e-mail as well as those who use instant messaging, text messaging, and certain social networking Web sites to the exclusion of email.

With the rapid evolution of technology and the changes that it brings, accessing data created during earlier generations of technology becomes extremely difficult. This is largely due to the fact that forecasting the role and impact of future technology with specificity and confidence is very difficult. For instance, at the time of Amherst College's last reaccreditation a significant list of today's culturally defining hardware, software, and services did not exist. This list includes Google, YouTube, PayPal, Facebook, MySpace, blogging, Wikipedia, the iPod, the BlackBerry, the xBox 360, BitTorrent, Moodle, and Linux. On the other hand, much of the culturally and technically significant features of the 1997 landscape are, at least for students, now long dead, such as AOL, Netscape, music videos, mainframe computers, the VCR, cassette tapes, the Walkman, landline phones, broadcast radio, and many others.

Specific projections and steps underway to accommodate them include the following:

Hybrid Cell/Wifi Telephony

Telephony norms are changing. Students at Amherst have already all but ceased to use landlines. A new generation of hybrid phones is just starting to emerge in the US, though it is viewed more as a new type of cell phone and less as the single phone users will have for office, mobile, and home. Some of the issues that we will face include a culture of administrative support staff who assist with professional staff's phone related communications, and IRS rules that govern the financial treatment of cell phones used for work and personal communications. Amherst College has begun to expand and upgrade its network infrastructure with the assumption that the data network will need to handle phone traffic for employees and students, as

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well as, for example, the audience of a football game. The renovation and expansion of the college's outdoor athletic facilities in the summer of 2007 included an extensive underground conduit system that will carry future voice and video, as data, through the college's data network. In addition, the college has begun to formulate plans on how and when to start the conversion from distinct cell and landline phones for employees to a single hybrid phone. Finally, in new and renovated buildings the college is deploying hybrid data/telephony wiring so that it can shift from one to the other as needed without requiring separate, dedicated wiring.

Smart Presence Applications

Now that the majority of all cell phones used in the US have GPS capability, a growing list of companies are moving into the area of facilitating the sharing of location-specific proximity data as well as personal data. We project that micro interactions ranging from payments, building and room access, in-class personal response systems, field-based data access and submission, emergency/mass notification systems, locating items and data about them in libraries and museums, among others will move to a single personal hardware device rather than a range of cards, keys, catalogues, and a multitude of single function devices, readers and tasks.

Mobile & Anytime Access to Learning Materials, Campus Events

While currently dominated by Apple's iPod and Podcasting, these functions are migrating to integrated handheld device such as the iPhone and the Blackberry. In the coming years, we anticipate greater production and dissemination of audio and video for campus events, courses, and athletics events. For the last two years we have prepared for this by facilitating and rigorously assessing experimental uses in courses by early-adopting faculty.

Audio and Video Chat /IP-Based Video Telephony

The college has begun to deploy and support desktop/laptop tools for video conferencing and to phase out expensive room-based conferencing tools. To support this and other bandwidth-intensive applications, in addition to the Five College fiber ring, the college has begun to plan, budget, and in some instances install its next network upgrade which will bring a gigabit to the port and upgrade wireless networks to the 802.11n standard.

Portable Computing

In the last couple of years the college has seen a marked shift toward laptop computers and away from desktops among students, faculty, and administrative staff. In the academic areas, though, this is primarily for general purpose computing needs and not for highly specialized applications or development. To accommodate this shift, the college has already sewn a fabric of 340 wireless networks onto its wired network, and is committed to growing it and keeping it up to date. There has also been a growing reliance on Blackberry PDAs among administrative staff. In addition, the college has shifted to a more balanced offering of computer labs, with specialized offerings more readily available to students and faculty. We expect this shift to continue and are developing strategies for basing replacement budgets in part on laptop norms rather than desktop, for helpdesk support when the campus user is on campus as well as when he/she is far from campus and using a network to which we have no access. With renovations to the Library and the Merrill Science Center beginning, the college will incorporate laptop usage data into plans for classrooms, labs, study areas, and common spaces.

Video Programming via the Internet

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Entertainment TV, movies, music videos, and other popular video is transitioning to the Internet for access and distribution. In 2007 IT staff met with the students to discuss an end to the support of cable TV programming and the students advised the college not to make the shift, yet. On the other hand, to facilitate the shift away from cable, the college has changed to a single year contract for cable TV service. The college is also in the second year of a new effort to distribute all course related video assets over the data network, which is providing important data about usage, network capacity, and bottlenecks.

Serious Games

Experimentation with the use of serious games in teaching and research has been a growing trend across many disciplines. Amherst College is now also beginning to explore the use of serious computer games that include virtual, data-rich versions of real-world spaces, such as medieval cathedrals, ancient civilizations, and non-English speaking cultures as well as significant assessment and collaborative filtering features to facilitate the use of data by and for learning. The college is also experimenting with game consoles, such as the motion-controlled Wii, for teaching, learning, and research.

The college has outfitted an animation/gaming lab with the tools necessary for students and faculty to create animated virtual worlds. In the summer of 2007 the college supported faculty, students, and ATS staff working on a project to introduce game worlds to a variety of areas of the curriculum. The college has also reorganized and expanded the ATS staff to support such initiatives. The new ATS department has submitted collaborative grant proposals to support the development of in-game tools and learning environments to federal and private agencies. These efforts have opened doors to a new level of collaboration with a range of major research universities, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and high schools.

Open Source and Coordination

Over the course of the last two decades the college has swung between building its own software for key college functions all the way to the opposite end of the spectrum: department-by-department purchasing of proprietary software. For the last couple of years and going forward the college will more deliberately assess open source alternatives as well as campus-wide needs. In addition, the Treasurer's office and IT will work together to coordinate and manage budget requests for web application development so that all new work fits this institutional model. All of these efforts are enacted with the intent of reducing spending and increasing the level of service the college supports.

Data Standards and Access

The college has put into place protocols, standards, and support so that departments can share institutional data across areas and functions. The college expanded the role of the CORE Data Team, which had helped coordinate the conversion to Datatel, to include development and oversight of campus data standards. Our goal with this type of data governance is to break data out of department silos, provide greater data security for all sensitive data, assure support for critical functions, and create the data infrastructure and standards so that the college community can itself, where appropriate, create, access, manage, combine, and disseminate data. Examples of the benefits of this approach include: providing alumni direct read/write access to their individual contact, professional, etc. information via the college's web site and, prior to their arrival on campus, allowing the class of 2011 students to upload and manage their own photos in

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the college face book, which, in turn, fed the photo to the college's ID card system and the web-based course roster for each class.

On-Off-Campus Collaborators

We see a growing need for many types of collaboration, which in many cases breaks through campus boundaries. At the hardware level, collaborative processing environments, such as clusters and grids, allow groups to share the processing power of CPUs for high-performance computing by pooling free cycles. Application serving is also emerging and has the potential to shift focus away from applications such as the ubiquitous Microsoft Office and toward web based spreadsheets and word processors. Such a shift may better accommodate the growing need for collaborative online workspaces. The college is actively exploring all of these areas. The challenge facing the IT industry is one of managing the credentials of collaborators in such a way that users can easily provide proper access.

Legislation and Regulations

The country and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are enacting needed laws to protect individuals against identity theft. The IRS is further articulating and enforcing rules that account for the personal use of such things as work-provided cell phones, PDAs, and laptops. Case law is helping to clarify the rights and responsibilities of an online service provider, such as Amherst College, for personal email, IM, and other data that pass through its network and servers. Copyright continues to be a vexing issue as analogue industries engage the courts and Congress in their struggle to control their assets in the new digital world. All of these laws, regulations, and legal precedents will force us to manage data and access to data differently. In 2006, we began to address systematically what we should consider private data, consistent with Amherst's values and in compliance with the law. We also engaged a law firm with expertise in these areas to help us navigate this shifting area, which includes renegotiating numerous contracts, rewriting our policies and procedures, assessing work practices, and educating the community.

Internet Protocol version 6

With access to Internet 2 through the new Five College fiber ring, Amherst College is focusing on the ways in which IPv6 can serve teaching and learning. While appreciating the increased bandwidth available via I2, the college is particularly eager to explore the ways in which the new protocol facilitates the control of data passing through the network. The college has thus far received a grant from the National Science Foundation to support this work and looks forward to greater emphasis and external support in the near future.

IT and Employees

With the rapid cycle of changes in software and services used in the workplace, the college has revisited its categorization and assessment of IT skills needed across campus. As with the challenges facing faculty and students in a changing technology and education landscape, so, too, must the college face the rapid change in the workplace tools employees must master in order to be fully productive. The importance of this effort is all the more acute as the nation does not have a large enough work force able to create and manage all of the new technology resources institutions require (the college is already experiencing delays greater than eight months to fill many IT staff positions).

8 PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

We have adopted systems of integrated planning and management and expended significant resources to enable the campus to serve our mission better by supporting instruction and research, integrating learning and life, and creating a sense of community. This program has kept pace with the life-cycle issues of structures, incorporated new technologies, and emphasized energy conservation. We have enhanced the historic character of the campus, while increasing the comfort and safety of those who live on and use the campus.

DESCRIPTION

The historic Amherst College campus is defined by its sweeping vistas, spare New England architecture, and mixed-use integration of academic, residential, and administrative facilities. The compact central campus of approximately 150 acres, with 75 major buildings (about 2 million square feet), supports the vibrant, but not insular, sense of community central to the college's mission. The "college on the hill" is architecturally and topographically continuous with the historic town center to the north and west, and with forest and farmland on the other sides. In the town, the college owns and maintains the Emily Dickinson Museum and some 46 housing units for faculty and administrative staff, in addition to 15 units on campus. Other housing units near the college have been offered for purchase to faculty and to certain administrators, with a guaranteed buy-back provision; over the last decade some 30 units have been involved in this program. To the south and east of the core campus, we own some 850 acres of open space in preservation status or agricultural use. Within this land, the so-called sanctuary of 150 acres offers ecosystems ranging from wetlands to mature upland forests that serve both academic research and passive recreation. The college also owns the Lord Jeffery Inn and a nine-hole golf course, both adjacent to the main campus and leased to operators.

Our 75 major buildings represent a range of architectural periods, from North and South Halls (1821) to the Earth Sciences Building (2005). In recent decades, we have been committed to maintaining the campus's historic integrity and linkage with the town center through renovation rather than replacement of aging structures. Since 1821 the college has adhered to a strict sense of principles in the placement of buildings. The orthogonal organization and placement of buildings on slopes surrounding flatter green space define a campus of enclosed quadrangles and reinforce a diagonal flow across campus from the town common, half of which is surrounded by college buildings, to the outdoor spaces and the open landscape to the south and east.

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Residence Halls

In keeping with the liberal arts ideal, the 33 residence halls are interspersed among the academic and administrative facilities throughout campus in order to integrate inquiry with co-curricular and social activities and to foster the interaction of students with faculty, staff, and administrators. To promote a sense of community, the residence halls are small, ranging from 12 to approximately 120 students, and all first-year students are housed around the central quadrangle. All residences offer wired and wireless access to the network.

Classrooms and Laboratories

We have an ample number of well equipped classrooms, teaching laboratories, and computer rooms. Approximately 70 percent are media-equipped, and the remainder have portable media as needed. Computers and media equipment are replaced on a three-to-four year cycle. We are experimenting with classrooms in the residence halls and have systematically created informal learning spaces in residence halls and in newly renovated or constructed academic buildings. All new or renovated residence halls include study nooks on every floor and group study rooms/libraries on the main floor. Academic buildings include study areas in alcoves off main corridors. In the time since a comprehensive review of classrooms was completed by the Parsons Consulting Group in 2001, we have allocated approximately \$250,000 per year for classroom upgrades.

Libraries

Frost Library, whose collection currently numbers more than one million volumes, is located at the north end of the main quadrangle. In addition to the main Frost Library, the college also has a music library located in the Arms Music Building and a science library located in the Merrill Science Center. In order to alleviate capacity limitations in the main library, the college purchased a nearby former Strategic Air Command bunker and renovated it to house less-used library materials and institutional records for quick retrieval.

Museums

Amherst is highly regarded for its commitment to its museums, which serve our educational mission, as well as the needs of various regional and scholarly communities. The Mead Art Museum, located at the core of the campus on the main quadrangle, is noted for having one of the most important collections in an undergraduate institution. In 2001 we completed a comprehensive renovation of the Mead to enhance its preservation environment and create a level climate to protect the works of art. The new Earth Sciences Building houses the natural history museum, which prior to 2006 was housed in the Pratt Geology Building. The 50,000-plus object collection contains a world-renowned collection of dinosaur footprints, which draws scholars from far and wide. In 2003 two historic houses, the Dickinson Homestead and the Evergreens, were combined into the Emily Dickinson Museum, which the college owns and maintains, under the operation of its board of governors. These three museums receive some 35,000 visitors a year.

Food Service Facilities

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Central to the purposeful smallness of the college is providing a common dining experience for all students in a single facility, Valentine Hall, which is actively used by faculty, staff, and administrators as well. In addition, a café in the Keefe Campus Center offers lighter fare.

Athletic Facilities

Our athletic facilities consist of a series of single-purpose interconnected buildings totaling more than 194,000 square feet. Other than LeFrak Gymnasium for basketball (1975), these facilities had gone largely untouched since their original construction in the 1920s and were in dire need of updating to today's standards. During the period of 1998 to 2000 each of the facilities received comprehensive renovations, and they now adequately serve the needs of the campus community. In 2007 an artificial turf field was constructed.

Infrastructure and Energy

The past ten years have been a period of unprecedented construction for the campus, with approximately \$200 million expended to address both design life-cycle issues and new needs in instruction, research, and residential life. In preparation for that initiative, in 1999 a utilities master plan study by Syska & Hennessy Group concluded that our systems were undersized, obsolete, unreliable, and unsuited to the demands of new and upgraded facilities. Many of the electrical wires were more than 50 years old, and the electrical distribution system, with a single main transformer, created a risk of outages that could close the college. Some waste lines were more than 100 years old. We devoted approximately \$20 million to upgrading most of the underground utilities, such as the steam, electrical, domestic water, storm and sanitary sewer, and tele-data systems. To increase chiller capacity for air conditioning, a central chilled water plant was constructed, with distribution via an underground network of pipes. The utilities infrastructure should accommodate facilities growth and upgrades for decades to come.

In the past ten years, we have also reinforced and systematized our commitment to energy conservation and environmental stewardship, both to control costs and to meet our civic obligations as an institution. In order to reduce our environmental "footprint," we have invested heavily—approximately \$500,000 in the past three years—in energy conservation projects such as lighting retrofits, occupancy sensor controls, energy-efficient fans and motors, and HVAC controls that have an average payback of approximately 2.5 years. The largest project is the construction of a cogeneration plant to produce the majority of the college's electricity and thermal energy. By producing steam from the heat wasted in generating electricity, cogeneration eliminates the inefficiency of obtaining electricity from the utility grid and producing steam independently. With an estimated cost of \$8 million, this plant will reduce net carbon emissions by over 30 percent and will pay for itself in a few short years through an annual return on investment of approximately 17 percent.

We have developed a document entitled "High Performance Building Guidelines," which we share with our design and construction professionals to serve as a framework for environmentally responsible design and construction techniques. Rather than pursue

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Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification on projects, applying this framework allows us to make value judgments on what design elements have the greatest positive financial and environmental impact.

Parking

The college's parking system has capacity for all campus community members who wish to park on the premises. Despite the fact that there is adequate system capacity, faculty and staff often voice concern that the parking is not conveniently located adjacent to their place of work. While there is little that can be done to distribute the parking according to desires of faculty and staff, we have met the challenge of providing sufficient capacity by actively managing both the supply and demand side of the equation. Due to our desire to preserve the college's bucolic aesthetic and sweeping vistas, we are unwilling to increase capacity by converting green space to parking at or near the core of the campus. We have achieved modest increases in capacity by optimizing parking layouts, by narrowing space widths, and by incrementally expanding lots where expansion would cause no adverse impact.

Because we are limited in our ability to increase supply, it has been critical to manage parking demand by instituting a number of changes, many of which were recommended in a parking master plan study that was completed in 2000 and later endorsed by a campus parking committee in 2005. Specifically, first-year students are not allowed to park cars on campus. Five College students are now required to use public transit or find parking off-campus. We also posted ride share information on our Web page to promote car pooling although the success of this initiative was limited due to the rural nature of the Pioneer Valley. Bike racks have been conveniently located across campus to encourage bike commuting. In addition, we recently introduced a car sharing system, Zip Cars, where members of the campus community are able to rent cars (Toyota Prius hybrids) by the hour. This convenient and money-saving amenity had over 130 members in its first year, many who would have brought a car to campus if not for the Zip Car program.

Facilities Management

The facilities department has approximately 120 staff members, who provide services to operate, maintain, and enhance the facilities. This department includes custodial, grounds, mechanical, electrical, and building services. The working trades in these groups include carpenters, masons, locksmiths, boiler operators, electricians, plumbers, HVAC technicians, and painters.

Capital Planning, Design and Construction

Amherst College is strongly committed to maintaining, preserving, and enhancing its physical assets. In anticipation of the high volume of capital projects mentioned above, in 1999 the Facilities Department created the six-person Design and Construction Department to facilitate the planning of and oversee the design and construction process for all major renovations and new construction projects. Below is a table listing the projects which are too numerous to describe in narrative.

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Project	Type	Year	Square Feet	Cost *
Mead Museum	Comprehensive Renovation	2000	23,700	\$4,800,000
Fayerweather Hall	Comprehensive Renovation	2001	54,000	\$11,900,000
Cooper House	Renovation & Addition	2002	12,500	\$3,400,000
Japanese Garden	New Site Improvement	2002	N/A	\$100,000
Temporary Dorms	New Construction	2002	17,000	\$1,700,000
Campus Center	Exterior Cladding Renovation	2003	N/A	\$2,100,000
Seeley Mudd	Level 1 & 2 Renovation	2003	19,000	\$1,600,000
Bunker Archives	Partial Renovation	2003	18,000	\$1,100,000
Williston Hall	Comprehensive Renovation	2003	13,000	\$4,200,000
Classroom Prototype	Comprehensive Renovation	2003	1500	\$150,000
Infrastructure 1 & 2	New Campus Site Utilities	2003	N/A	\$13,400,000
Central Chiller Plant	New Construction, 3 Phases	2003-5	N/A	\$4,900,000
Dickinson House	Exterior Renovation	2004	N/A	\$250,000
North & South Halls	Comprehensive Renovation	2004	40,000	\$10,700,000
Wieland & King Halls	New Construction	2004	59,000	\$16,600,000
James & Stearns Halls	New Construction	2005	63,000	\$19,000,000
Crosswalks	Site Improvements	2005	N/A	\$175,000
Earth Sciences	New Construction	2006	56,000	\$27,300,000
Pratt & Morrow	Comprehensive Renovation	2006	70,000	\$19,200,000
Charles Pratt	Renovation & Addition	2007	47,000	\$20,500,000
Hamilton & Porter	Comprehensive Renovation	2007	33,000	\$9,100,000
Cogeneration Plant	New Construction	2007	N/A	\$9,100,000
Athletic Fields	New synthetic and natural fields	2007	N/A	\$3,900,000
Wilson Admissions	Office Addition	2007	2,000	\$560,000
Drew & Mayo-Smith	Comprehensive Renovation	2008	34,000	\$10,100,000
			Total	\$175,000,000
(does not include many minor projects)				* not current dollars

Environmental Health and Safety

Prior to 1999, each department on campus had the responsibility for implementing its own program. The lack of a central authority to define performance standards and monitor compliance allowed lapses in respect to safety and regulatory compliance. In 1999 the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) with 2.5 FTEs was established under the director of facilities planning and management to consolidate program implementation and to monitor academic and support departments alike.

APPRAISAL

In the past ten years we have centralized the responsibility for facilities planning under the director of facilities planning and management in order to allow integrated facilities planning in line with the numerous curricular, residential life, and institutional plans. Our commitment to rigorous analysis of our facilities and integrative planning has

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resulted in a substantial improvement in facilities over the past ten years and a dramatic decrease in the backlog of deferred maintenance.

There are several examples of the planning and assessment that we have undertaken:

Capital Planning

We understand the need to manage our facilities portfolio with the same analytical rigor as our financial resources and endowment. We use the services of Sightlines Facility Asset Advisors to measure and model facilities performance over time, establish benchmarking comparisons across institutions, and develop capital spending strategies that guide preservation of facility assets.

This annual assessment by Sightlines has certified the adequacy of our annual capital renewal budget of approximately \$3 million per year, given the continuing series of major investments in facilities that have been addressing significant amounts of deferred maintenance and life-cycle replacements. Should these major projects cease, we would need to provide capital renewal funding in the range of \$7 to \$8 million per year to meet the facilities' long-term needs.

Residential Master Plan

As described under *Students*, in 2000 we undertook an integrated review of physical condition of all our residence halls and of how well they support programming. By 2007 the Residential Master Plan submitted in 2002 had led, in the first phase of its execution, to the creation of a first-year quad, two new residences to the south-east of the campus, and the beginning of the renovation of all our remaining residences. Responses to the new and renovated residences have been strongly positive. The sequential nature of the construction allowed lessons learned to be applied to the later residences, for example in creating a residential feel by using open staircases, lounges, studies open to the corridors, and warm interior finishes.

Classrooms

As a result of a comprehensive classroom study conducted in 2002 by the Parsons Consulting Group, a comprehensive and systematic classroom upgrade project was initiated. This study concluded that there were abundant classrooms, but that instructors were dissatisfied because the size and the design of the classrooms did not meet today's pedagogy. The study indicated that seminars and discussion-based classes were displacing the traditional lecture format, such that more mid-sized and small seminar style classrooms were required. Based on the recommendations of the study, physical plant and the dean of the faculty's office worked with faculty from across all disciplines to design prototype seminar-style classrooms with full media and computer capabilities. On the basis of this experience, second and third generations of classrooms have been constructed, with increasing sophistication about the variations in pedagogical style among disciplines and instructors, the limits of particular buildings (especially in respect to acoustics), and the need to build in flexibility for future instructional technologies. Currently we install media and computer capability in three-to-four classrooms a year through a collaborative effort by the offices of the registrar and dean of the faculty and

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Academic Technology Services. We have an adequate number of all types of classrooms if course meeting times are broadly distributed. The problem in achieving that distribution is discussed under *The Academic Program*.

Facilities Staffing

To assure staffing sufficient to maintain and operate facilities properly and safely, we objectively evaluate staffing coverage and operational objectives each year in consultation with Sightlines Facility Advisors. The company considers staffing ratios, rates the condition of facilities, and benchmarks staffing against comparable institutions. These yearly evaluations have resulted in increases in staffing in the mechanical and electrical trades to accommodate the increasingly complex and maintenance-intensive facilities.

Similarly, we periodically engage a custodial services consultant to review staffing adequacy, whose recommendations have resulted in a net increase of 3 FTE positions over the past few years to account for the increase in the college's footprint and the more detailed cleaning required in newer buildings.

Access, Safety, Security, and Healthful Environment

Departmental committees in dining services, physical plant, and the natural science departments meet to monitor safety and health issues. We work in collaboration with the regulatory agencies and in 2000 undertook a voluntary audit conducted by Mabbott Associates to assess compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) program. The minor areas of noncompliance that were found were below the threshold for disclosure to EPA and were voluntarily corrected. We conduct numerous checks and balances to identify safety issues and assess regulatory compliance. All construction projects are regularly inspected by EH&S staff. All buildings are subject to an annual inspection by the Town of Amherst building inspector, and a certificate of use is issued only if a building is in compliance. Furthermore, the EH&S program monitors compliance across campus by conducting periodic reviews of all facilities. Departmental safety committees identify areas of concern and recommend ways to enhance safety.

A prime example of this is crosswalk safety. The college is bordered by two highly trafficked roads with frequent pedestrian crossings. A study requested by the Physical Plant Safety Committee resulted in the installation of elevated crosswalks with in-pavement imbedded signal lights to slow traffic. This project, which cost roughly \$1 million, has substantially improved pedestrian safety.

On-going safety appraisals have resulted in numerous upgrades, such as installation of safety screens on all first-floor residence hall windows, installation of a proximity card access system for residence halls, and publicly located defibrillators.

With regard to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we strive to meet or exceed the requirements on all renovation and new construction projects. More than 50 percent of the beds in the residential-life system are handicapped accessible, which far exceeds ADA's 5 percent standard. Achieving full accessibility across our facilities continues to

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be a challenge, given the age, configuration, and complexity of our historic buildings. We make all “readily achievable” enhancements to buildings to promote accessibility and provide reasonable accommodations to individuals in the spirit of ADA. However, work still remains to be done, and, as comprehensive renovations are performed, accessibility will continue to improve.

We assessed our readiness to cope with major disaster scenarios in the late 1990s and determined that a formalized program that defined management structures and responsibilities was required. A collaborative approach involving multiple departments yielded a comprehensive emergency preparedness system that defined roles, responsibilities, and protocol for dealing with all aspects of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. This system is designed to address specific responses to credible disaster scenarios that are likely to occur or have occurred in the past, e.g., utility outage, major weather event, and the like. The system also provides for flexibility to ensure that the college’s key leaders can make informed decisions about how we respond to those scenarios or combination of scenarios that cannot be reasonably anticipated. We periodically conduct drills of the emergency management system and enhance the system based on lessons learned during the drills.

PROJECTION

Despite the extensive resource commitment to facilities enhancement over the past ten years, there are still major issues that we the college face in the years ahead.

OPERATIONS AND DEPRECIATION

As we modernize our buildings and reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance, the complexity of the buildings increases. Buildings that previously had simple mechanical systems such as steam radiators are now outfitted with complex mechanical systems that heat, cool, and balance air flows for occupants’ comfort and safety. Despite the reduction in deferred maintenance, these more complicated buildings put increased demand on operation and maintenance staff and will require more capital maintenance due to the increase in their value and the accelerated replacement cycles on their high-tech systems. As the value of the facilities portfolio increases over time due to renovation and new construction, reinvestment in the buildings in the form of capital maintenance will increase accordingly. We will continue to work annually with Sightlines, Inc. to evaluate operational effectiveness and identify the equilibrium funding requirement for capital maintenance and renewal.

Academic Facilities Planning Framework

Despite the major commitment of resources over the past decade, we anticipate that a number of major academic buildings will need major renovation and modernization for reasons of life cycle and the evolution of programs. Furthermore, the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) has proposed a number of initiatives that will create the need

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for faculty offices, laboratories, classrooms, studios, rehearsal and performance spaces, and student support services. In order for the CAP initiatives to be properly supported, they must be considered in the context of the multitude of other academic facilities needs. Therefore, over the next year a comprehensive planning process for academic facilities will be undertaken by the Office of Facilities Planning and Management in collaboration with the dean of the faculty's office and the IR office. This planning process will need to be broadly inclusive and solicit input from a wide array of members of the campus community, including the Committee on Educational Policy, the Committee on Priorities and Resources, and the College Council. This planning process will establish a framework that sets priorities and develops a long-term implementation plan in the context of institutional needs.

CAPITAL SPENDING PLANNING

In order to create a context for the trustees to make decisions about where to invest in the physical plant, the treasurer and director of facilities planning and management will continue to periodically submit to the trustees a 15-year projection on the capital needs and the potential source of funds. This projection will allow the trustees to make informed decisions in assigning priority to projects and understand the inherent tradeoffs in funding each project either through issuance of debt, fundraising, or draw on the endowment. In the latest 15-year projection a number of major projects and their financial impact were considered, including the Merrill Science Center renovation, Social Dorms replacement, Frost Library renovation, and a new academic building.

Academic Facilities

In a process parallel and complementary to the Residential Master Plan, the Academic Facilities Planning Group, comprised of the Committee on Priorities and Resources and representatives of physical plant and the dean of faculty's office is working with Shepley Bulfinch Richardson & Abbott to survey academic facilities, current needs, and what is needed to implement the CAP recommendations. This review, tentatively scheduled to be completed in 2008 or early 2009, will provide coordination for the projects to follow, as well as guidance about a possible new academic building in the east campus.

Merrill Science Center

The Merrill Science Center building, built in 1968, while robust and structurally sound, is at the end of the design life of its utilities infrastructure and therefore can no longer adequately support teaching and research activities. The building has difficulty maintaining a steady-state climate and air balance between the labs and common spaces because the systems are so unreliable and are not designed to perform at the levels now required. Merrill's laboratories and teaching spaces were also designed around pedagogies that have dramatically changed over the decades. The configuration of these spaces is outmoded and requires modernization to today's standards.

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We are now engaged in a process to define a future vision for the natural sciences and determine the necessary programmatic requirements to achieve that vision. The Ad Hoc Science Planning Committee has been appointed, with representatives of all the natural science departments, as well as mathematics and computer science. When a clear vision emerges, the Department of Facilities Planning and Management will engage an architect/engineer to help define potential design options.

Frost Library

In 2006 the Library Planning Group participated in a visioning process to imagine the future of Frost Library and determine if a comprehensive renovation of Frost was necessary or desired. The planning group concluded that the library, which was designed in the 1960s with the primary goal of housing the collection, underserves the campus community in its current form. For many, the building itself is a barrier to the types of teaching and learning that embody the college's academic mission. For example, there is a dearth of space for innovative programming to integrate mastery and use of specialized information resources into classroom experience. Designed for print media, Frost cannot perform adequately in the information age.

Based on the Library Planning Group's vision document, the Library Planning Committee, has been appointed to work with a consultant to assess the programmatic needs that might be addressed through the renovation of Frost Library.

Residence Halls

It is anticipated that within the next ten years we will have fully addressed each of its 33 residence halls.

The aforementioned RMP in 2001 indicated that replacement of the Social Dorms (approximately 320 beds) is warranted, based on the physical condition of the buildings and their design, which reinforces small sub-groups within the suites rather than building a wider community. Replacing the Social Dorms would afford us the opportunity to redefine the east portion of our campus by siting the replacement dorms in order to create spaces and structures more compatible with the rest of the campus. The Office of Facilities Planning and Management is currently performing a study to define the campus planning issues, dorm designs, budget, and cost.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

We have coordinated on an ongoing basis the efforts of the Department of Facilities Planning and Management, the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the board of trustees, and the Offices of Institutional Research and Planning, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Dean of Students so as to provide campus-wide and broadly consultative assessment and planning of physical and technological resources.

9 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

Our mission requires substantial financial resources, which we have thanks to the size and performance of our endowment; the generosity of alumni, parents, and friends; and our ability to attract grant support from foundations and governments. Our overall financial condition is strong, as is evidenced by our favorable credit rating, successful management of investments, high per-student endowment, and record of operating within a balanced budget and providing sufficient capital to address the physical needs of our buildings.

DESCRIPTION

The financial resources of the college fall under the purview of the Office of the Treasurer. The treasurer works closely with various trustee committees, including the Budget and Finance, Audit, Investment, Institutional Advancement, and Human Resources Committee. The treasurer also works extensively with the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR), whose membership consists of three student members elected from the student senate and three faculty members, one of whom chairs, elected by the faculty upon nomination by the Committee of Six. The dean of the faculty, treasurer, director of the budget, and director of human resources are present at CPR meetings. Under a charge revised by the faculty in 2005, the committee brings a range of faculty and student opinion to bear on the college's annual budgeting and long-term allocation of resources. The CPR presents to the board of trustees its views on the annual budget and on long-term financial concerns, including capital priorities and deferred maintenance projects, and reports to the faculty each year the status of faculty salaries and compensation relative to a comparison group of peer institutions. The treasurer's annual report is available on-line.¹

As of June 30, 2007, the college had available unrestricted net assets of \$679 million, temporarily restricted net assets of \$974 million, and permanently restricted net assets of \$259 million. The unrestricted net assets are available for any use deemed appropriate by the college or may be designated for a specific purpose by the board of trustees. The temporarily restricted net assets must meet certain donor-imposed stipulations, typically related to the educational mission of the college, or are restricted under the college's spending rule related to temporary or permanently restricted investments. The permanently restricted net assets consist primarily of the permanent endowment funds of the college, which are to be maintained by the institution in perpetuity.

¹ Annual Report 2006: http://www.amherst.edu/~treasurer/Treasurer_percent20Rpt%202006.pdf.

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Amherst's endowment provides a significant amount of operating support and has been the primary reason for the college's financial success. The endowment is managed by the Investment Committee of the board of trustees with the support of the treasurer and the Investment Office staff, which consists of a director, two fund analysts, and a support staff member. Over the past ten years the endowment has grown from \$474 million at June 30, 1997, to \$1.7 billion at June 30, 2007. This represented \$1,003,851 of endowment per student. During this same period, the endowment achieved an average annual return of 15.9 percent. The investment portfolio consisted of a broad mix of assets, including domestic, foreign, and private equities and fixed income, absolute return, natural resources, and other investments.

The Investment Committee meets at least five times annually, with additional conference calls and e-mail exchanges scheduled as needed, in order to manage the portfolio actively.

The college's operating budget totals \$138 million and is supported on an annual basis through various revenue sources. The largest source is tuition, room, and board receipts (52.2 percent). The next largest is distribution from the endowment (32.5 percent). Annual gifts and grants to the college account for approximately 11.8 percent, including the Alumni Fund, which is annually supported by over 60 percent of the alumni body (see below). The remaining revenue is primarily from rental housing and from summer conferences using the college's facilities.

In 1993, the board of trustees adopted the principles of financial and institutional equilibrium as articulated in the Amherst College Financial Framework Statement, which was included in the report of the Priorities Planning Committee.² These principles require that the college maintain a balanced budget, ensure that significant funding is available for technology and facilities renewal, control the growth of tuition charges, and ensure that the spending rate is maintained within a range of 3-5 percent of the three-year average endowment value.

The board of trustees as a whole reviews the operating budget of the institution at least three times annually: first to set the parameters for the coming year, then to review actual allocations, and finally to review the actual results compared to budget. When reviewing the parameters, the board looks at the sources of revenues and the large expense items in order to make appropriate adjustments.

In coordination with the formulation of the budget, the board reviews projections that include the ten years following the budget year. These fully integrated projections include rate-increase assumptions for the comprehensive fee and for the return on endowment assets. These projections also include a calculation of the spending from endowment, debt service, and inflationary expenditure growth factors for all

² Financial Framework Statement: <http://www.amherst.edu/~treasurer/financial/index.html>. Update (2001): http://www.amherst.edu/~treasurer/financial/framework_2001/framework_2001.htm.

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expenditures, with specific calculations for financial aid, salary pools, and employee fringe benefits. A similar set of projections that integrates sources and specific uses of funds for capital expenditures was developed in 2004.

Embedded into these financial projections are the costs associated with a need-blind admission policy, which is reaffirmed annually when the budget is set. The Office of Admission and Financial Aid continuously adheres to this policy in admitting the first-year and transfer students.

The college budget includes an annual allocation to be used for deferred maintenance and campus renewal. Over the past ten years, this allocation and funding from debt and gifts have resulted in the complete renovation of all first-year dormitories and most other dormitories, significantly reducing the amount of deferred maintenance on campus (see under *Physical and Technological Resources*).

The budget formulation begins in January, when all departments are asked to submit a budget request for discretionary spending and any need for new non-faculty full-time equivalents (FTEs). The number of tenured and tenure-track faculty is capped by the board of trustees at 167 FTEs. Adequate funding is allocated to the operating budget for all of these positions whether filled or vacant. The president and dean of the faculty, in consultation with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), decide which departments and/or programs are awarded new or replacement faculty positions. During the same time period, discussions with the board take place to set the comprehensive fee, salary pool increases, and the endowment distribution rate. Throughout the spring, the budget office accumulates requests and meets with senior staff members and the CPR. Final approval of budget awards and FTE allocations are made by the president. Budget allocations and salary increases are all set in advance of the end of the fiscal year. Throughout the budget year, departments receive budget-to-actual reports on a monthly basis. The financial administrative staff of the college also reviews budget-to-actual reports on a monthly basis and follows up on any unusual items.

Due to the size of the endowment and conservative spending rate policy, the college is afforded much flexibility in budgeting and contingency planning. The college is also highly disciplined in setting aside operating surpluses and significant endowment growth in order to have contingency funds for needs that may arise. The college budgets a .75 percent contingency into the annual operating budget in order to meet any unforeseen expenditures or emergencies.

A review of Amherst's financial statements shows that substantially all of the revenues are devoted to the academic purposes and mission of the institution. The majority of new income sources available to the college come from gifts and grants. The gift acceptance policy sets forth guidelines for all fundraising activities at the college. In addition, the board of trustees approves specific fundraising priorities.

Spending on the endowment is measured against the three-year average of endowment market value and is expected to fall within a range of 3.5 – 5.0 percent. Currently the

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rate is 4.2 percent. Each year as budgets are formulated, the spending rate on the endowment is analyzed against the needs of the college.

Currently, annual growth areas of the budget are financial aid, since 52 percent of the student body receive aid (a deliberate effort to increase this percentage has been a priority), continued focus on increasing the competitive level of faculty salaries, maintaining competitive salaries for staff and administrative employees, providing a competitive benefits package for all employees as health care costs continue to rise, and addressing significant increases in utility costs. In 2002, a full review of post-retirement health insurance was undertaken. This review was performed by an ad hoc committee that represented all campus constituencies. After two years of review of plan design, comparative data from other institutions, and campus-wide discussion the decision was made to grandfather current employees into the existing defined benefit plan and to design a new defined contribution plan for new employees. It is expected that this change will result in significant savings over time and control the growth of health expenditures by the college.

The college's participation in Five Colleges, Incorporated has become an increasingly important component of our financial and administrative services. A number of joint programs have evolved, both within and outside of the Five College structure, that provide cost-effective approaches to needed services. Some examples include: the Five College Library Depository shared by all five members; the risk management, recycling, and employee training programs shared by the four private colleges; and the energy manager and rental housing programs shared by Smith, Mount Holyoke, and Amherst. Further particulars are listed in the *Overview*.

The comptroller's office has in place financial controls to reduce the risk of fraud or misstatements of financial information. An annual audit of the college's financial statements and records is performed in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and a report to management is prepared to alert the administration and the board of any weaknesses in the control environment. The results of this audit are presented to the Audit Committee of the board of trustees on a timely basis. Policies and procedures are established in order to ensure that high ethical standards are maintained in all situations.

With the issuance of the Sarbanes Oxley Report, the Audit Committee and the administration have taken steps to implement certain recommendations in the report. The Audit Committee has become much more active, meeting two-to-four times per year to review major business cycles (i.e., capital projects and alternative investments) and to meet regularly with the external audit firm. Two years ago, the college adopted a more formal conflict-of-interest policy, which requires a formal sign-off by individual trustees and key administrative staff. A whistle-blower policy is under review by the board of trustees.

The college participates in numerous surveys in order to compare itself with its peers. In addition, the college is reviewed annually by Moody's Investor Services and Standard &

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Poor's, two bond rating agencies. Amherst enjoys the highest ratings available from each agency, Aaa and AAA, respectively.

It is vital that the college sustain a robust stream of annual income and increase our endowment through fundraising activity. The work of institutional advancement is undertaken by three departments overseen by the chief advancement officer: development, advancement operations, and alumni and parent programs. The development office is primarily responsible for securing gifts and pledges from the college's alumni, parents, and friends in support of our mission and identified programmatic priorities. The office works closely with the Society of Alumni, which also supervises the election of alumni trustees (see under *Organization and Governance*).

The goal of the 1996-2001 Amherst College Campaign was to raise \$200 million—we raised \$279 million—and, more important, to double the college's annual gift income from roughly \$15 million to a sustainable level around \$30 million. Fundraising dipped sharply in the year following the campaign, in part because of an economic downturn, but has since risen to a consistent range of \$28-33 million, while sustaining participation at an impressive 62 percent of all alumni. This growth is part of advancement's long-term planning for its next fundraising campaign, which is expected to set an ambitious goal in the range of \$350-to-400 million in support of the priorities outlined by the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP). Anticipating the need to increase the annual fund to at least \$10 million by 2009, the annual fund team in 2004 was moved from its longtime home in alumni and parent programs to the development office. The move had several benefits in focusing annual fund staff's time exclusively on fundraising, shifting class management activities to remaining alumni and parent programs staff, and strengthening the connection between annual fund giving and major and principal gifts. The annual fund's strong network of more than 1,200 volunteers also broadened the pool of talent for potential campaign volunteer leadership in other development programs. As a result, in 2007 the annual fund topped \$9.5 million and is likely to exceed \$10 million this year, ahead of schedule.

APPRAISAL

Due to the size and complexity of the investment portfolio, performance is monitored closely, with monthly reports provided to the administration and the Investment Committee. The portfolio has consistently outperformed benchmarks. The Investment Office was significantly enhanced in 2003 with the addition of a director of investments and a full-time fund analyst. These positions were necessary to monitor investment managers, performance, and reporting, as well as to support the work of the Investment Committee. Staffing of the Investment Office is reviewed on an ongoing basis in order to ensure appropriate levels are in place to support the underlying investments.

Periodically, the trustees review and discuss the history of the college's budget and the expense drivers over the past twenty years so that they can use that history in their planning process.

Financial Resources

The preparation of projections has helped to identify timing of major projects and the funding available for them. Projections are typically prepared using conservative assumptions that help to keep the budget growing at a predictable and steady pace, rather than growing and declining as revenue sources fluctuate. The result is that priorities are discussed and funded as needed. The .75 percent contingency in the budget has stabilized the budget in periods of unexpected cost increases, such as the recent rise in utility costs and the significant increase in property insurance rates following the events of September 11, 2001.

An important aspect of the projections is a review of the spending rate on the endowment. Ten years ago the spending rate was 5.2 percent, trending down to an average of 4.2 percent for the period (range 3.5-to-5.2 percent). The college's spending policy states that spending should not exceed 5.0 percent of the three-year average endowment value. By maintaining the spending rate at a prudent level and allowing it to fluctuate within a range of 3.0-to-5.0 percent of the three-year average endowment value, the college has been able to control the allocation of funds to the budget without significantly increasing or reducing the distribution based on single-year changes in value.

Two important aspects of the budgetary process are discussions with the CPR and meeting with the individual senior staff members responsible for significant budgetary areas. These meetings give the staff members the ability to balance the overall needs of the various departments that they administer and establish priorities for their own areas. For example, the dean of students can review all of the requests from the individual student life and academic support departments and set priorities for those requests within the available funding limits. This process gives the budget office much-needed guidance in setting the budget and also gives the dean of students an overall picture of funding levels for all student service departments. The CPR's review of the budget generally includes meeting with department heads responsible for large amounts of college resources. These meetings allow the faculty members to hear how money is expected to be spent and how that spending contributes to the academic mission and priorities of the institution. Faculty feedback is also helpful as the budget office allocates limited budget increases.

Amherst is very active in the bond market and uses its ability to borrow at highly attractive rates to fund capital projects when appropriate. The capital projections, which were developed in 2004, help to plan the timing of new debt borrowings, as well as to incorporate the debt service for those borrowings into the financial projections and ultimately into the budget.

As the college prepared to build the priorities of the CAP into the budget, the board of trustees established the Special Innovations Reserve Fund, making a one-time allocation from the excess earnings on the endowment in 2005. Excess earnings were defined as market appreciation that the endowment achieved in that year over and above what was earned by a peer group. This reserve fund may be used to provide the necessary funding for projects that are initiated before targeted fundraising begins.

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Amherst maintains a gift acceptance policy that governs the gifts that the institution will accept. In addition, significant gifts (such as the gift to establish the Center for Community Engagement) are discussed with the Committee of Six and the board to assure that the resources available from the gift are sufficient to cover the expenditures associated with the purpose intended. Any gifts that fall outside of stated priorities must be reviewed and approved by the Gift Acceptance Committee, which comprises the chief advancement officer, the dean of the faculty, the treasurer, and the chair of the Institutional Advancement Committee of the board of trustees. The college regularly sends communications to donors and potential donors outlining the current priorities and sharing the impact of past and current gifts on the institution.

In 2001, the college implemented a new financial accounting system, which has made reporting to end users simpler and more user-friendly. In addition, within the past two years, users are able to access online reports so that they may track their budgets regularly at a time convenient for them. These reporting tools, put into users' hands in an easy-to-use format, encourage them to follow up on open questions in a timely and efficient manner.

With the new accounting system, the college has begun to improve the documentation of the financial controls that are in place. As a result, many policies have been set down in writing, especially in the areas of risk management and fundraising. One of our goals for the coming years is to ensure that all policies are documented and readily available to those who need to review them.

Amherst's fundraising program has historically maintained a strong emphasis on the five-year reunion cycle of its alumni, but also continues to adapt its programs, approaches and staffing to align with national best practices and the shifting demographics of our graduates as greater numbers of women and alumni of color enter their peak earning years. In recent years, the advancement departments have collaborated to develop and begin to implement a diversity plan that addresses both the staffing of the departments and a comprehensive strategy to offer the full range of Amherst graduates meaningful opportunities to engage in the life of the college. In terms of fundraising, staff are employing several different approaches, including the creation of new volunteer opportunities prior to the 25th Reunion, new prospect research methods that incorporate ways to identify and cultivate women working in the home, and new donor relations strategies. A special fundraising initiative designed as part of a Kresge Foundation challenge grant created an ad hoc committee of staff, alumnae, and trustees to test a range of strategies to better engage alumnae as donors to programmatic initiatives at Amherst. This committee both met its fundraising goals and commissioned a focus group study that continues to inform campaign planning efforts. When the opportunity arose to reconfigure the major gifts team, officers representing a much broader range of ethnic, geographic, and gender diversity were appointed, a change that has revitalized the program and has better equipped the college to meet the challenge of its upcoming fundraising campaign. In terms of broader alumni engagement, the alumni and parent programs office hosts weekends during the school year for African American, Asian and

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Pacific American, Latino, and LGBTQ graduates. The college is also employing new technologies, such as the content management system, to build affinity groups of alumni in a range of professions, for example, the Alumni Educators Network for graduates who teach.

PROJECTIONS

The Investment Committee and Investment Office will continue to monitor the portfolio and the markets for opportunities. The Investment Office will grow as needed, as additional complex investment vehicles are added to the portfolio.

The board will continue to be involved in budget review and decision making. The administration plans to provide presentations related to specific financial practices on a more frequent basis, since membership on the board and its committees can rotate frequently.

In current projections, it is expected that the spending rate on the endowment will stay within the applicable range. Projections are reviewed regularly and are modified as needed to maintain a reasonable spending rate.

We will continue to budget a contingency in annual operating budgets in order to maintain flexibility for unforeseen events.

As we prepare for a comprehensive fundraising campaign, priorities recommended by the CAP report and endorsed by the faculty will be further refined collaboratively by the board and the campus community. This process will serve to ensure that priorities are vetted prior to approval and funding. With the CAP recommendations will come new initiatives in the area of admission and academic support. Financial aid costs will increase as we endeavor to expand need-blind admission to international applicants, to continue our efforts to offer admission to applicants in the lowest family income brackets, and to continue our policy of eliminating loans from financial aid packages, with particular impact on families in the middle quartiles of income distribution. In addition, new support services will be necessary to serve these students, as well as additional faculty FTEs to expand the curriculum to fit the needs of future generations of students.

We will continue to review large gifts and grants to ensure that they support expenditures that help to achieve our mission. As we work to finalize our vision for the future through the CAP process, new fundraising priorities will be approved and fundraising activity will presumably increase significantly. A continuing focus will be to broaden the college's stewardship of our most generous donors, connecting them more quickly and effectively with information about the actual impact of their gifts and, most important, with the people on campus most affected by their gifts. In addition, the college continues to review the written communications sent to donors to ensure that they are receiving information that is helpful and informative.

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In the coming years, the Audit Committee expects to move forward with a review of accounting standards that are becoming more stringent. As these new standards arise, the administration and the Audit Committee will be proactive in ensuring that they are implemented in a timely and accurate manner. They will also continue to review significant operating areas in order to ensure that appropriate control procedures and high ethical standards are in place.

Both the Audit Committee and the auditors are committed to ensuring that they fulfill their roles. The Audit Committee has been working to ensure that they are aware of issues affecting higher education generally and increasing their knowledge of the college's procedures.

Overall we expect to spend the next decade using our significant financial resources to improve access to an Amherst education for students from all backgrounds and to support the highest standards in instruction and in the advancement of knowledge and artistic creation.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Having established a model of financial equilibrium in the 1990s, we have continued to perfect that model and to strengthen management systems for investments. These financial models are used to estimate and plan for the academic initiatives recommended in the CAP documents and the associated capital needs. These models will serve as the basis for discussion with donors as we move into campaign planning and fundraising.

10 PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

OVERVIEW

Amherst College presents itself fully and accurately to key constituencies, including: prospective students; alumni, parents, and friends; faculty, students, and staff; and the general public. We do so through both print and electronic media. We maintain a comprehensive program of print communications that provide an overview of Amherst, including: the *Catalog*, the admission view book and other admission publications, the college magazine, and the *Student Handbook*. In the past five-to-ten years the type and amount of information available to key constituents online has increased considerably. Information on the college's history, mission, and demographics is available in the "About Amherst" section of our Web site; other important information is available in other sections of the site.

DESCRIPTION

Print Publications

All major institutional publications are produced through a centralized source, the Office of Public Affairs, which works collaboratively with offices across campus to ensure that information is presented consistently and accurately in various publications and media. A committee comprised of faculty, alumni, and administrators advises the editor of the quarterly college magazine, *Amherst*. The public affairs office works with the admission office on recruitment materials, manages development materials for the advancement office, manages sports information, publishes the quarterly college magazine, and works with the registrar, dean of the faculty, and offices across campus to produce the *Catalog* and *Student Handbook*. The office also publishes the annual report for the treasurer's office.

Online Resources

On the external site (Amherst.edu): Ownership of Web content is distributed such that many offices and departments on campus have responsibility for various sections of the site. However, ownership of content on the "most official" pages of the site lies with public affairs and/or admission. These two offices are largely responsible for content on all pages in sections dealing with admission, alumni, athletics, news, and people, as well in the top-tier pages of the remaining sections. Beyond that, ownership becomes more departmental. Individual academic and administrative departments are responsible for maintaining and updating lower-tier pages.

On the internal site (Amherst.edu/intranet): A dynamic announcements feed allows individuals and academic and administrative departments to post announcements

Public Disclosure

(including announcements about courses, co-curricular events, study abroad, career sessions, and the like). Announcements are reviewed for accuracy by public affairs and posted at least once daily. They are also automatically e-mailed weekly to all faculty, students, and staff, as well as interested retirees.

Amherst College has no branch campuses or alternate instructional locations.

The chart below points to print and electronic sources of specific information requested in this standard.

Topics for Public Disclosure	Print Location	Electronic Location
Information so students and prospective students can make informed decisions	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> ; 2007-08 View book	www.amherst.edu ; www.amherst.edu/intranet ; https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/glance/secondary_school_reports
Audited financial statement	Mailed to all parents, key volunteers, most donors, and anyone who makes a request	http://www.amherst.edu/~treasurer/Treasurer%20Rpt%202006.pdf
College's mission statement	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 5	https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/mission ;
Information about admission and attendance for first-year and transfer students	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 49-51; View book; Report to Secondary Schools	www.amherst.edu ; http://www.amherst.edu/admission/ ; https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/glance/secondary_school_reports
Institutional goals for students' education	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 69	https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/tap/advising
Obligations and responsibilities of students and institution; rules and regulations for student conduct	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 59-73; Student Handbook	http://www.amherst.edu/intranet/ ; http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/conduct/index.html
Range of co-curricular and nonacademic opportunities available to students	2007-08 View book; Wall Calendar; Student-athlete recruitment brochure	https://cms.amherst.edu/campuslife
List of current faculty, departmental affiliations	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 12-28	https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments
Names and principal	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 29-	https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/trus

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affiliations of governing board	37	tees
Names and positions of administrative officers	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 29-37	https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/trusteas
Programs available at Amherst, at the Five Colleges, and through study abroad	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 41-46, 77-381	https://catalog.amherst.edu/amherst/frmstudentsdefaults.aspx ; http://www.fivecolleges.edu/sites/courses/ ; http://www.amherst.edu/~careers/abroad/abroad.html
Size and characteristics of the student body, campus setting	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 41-46; View book; Student-athlete recruitment brochure	https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/glaance ; http://www.amherst.edu/sitemap/ ; http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/ ; https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/glaance/secondary_school_reports
Availability of academic support services	Student Handbook	http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/acadsupport.html ; https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/tap/advisingforstudents
Retention and graduation rates		http://www.amherst.edu/~oir/ ; http://www.amherst.edu/%7EEinstdata/
Success of students in achieving institutional goals	Annual Report to Secondary Schools	http://www.amherst.edu/~oir/ ; https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/glaance/common_data_sets ; https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/glaance/secondary_school_reports
Cost of education and availability of financial aid	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 52-56; View book	http://www.amherst.edu/admission/affordamherst/index.html ; http://www.amherst.edu/admission/important_info/financialaid_tuition.html
Information about NEASC accreditation status	2007-08 <i>Catalog</i> , 420	https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/reaccreditation

APPRAISAL

In the ten years since our last reaccreditation review, we have done much to consolidate, clarify, and centralize our communications efforts in order to present a stronger, clearer image of Amherst to our primary audiences. While still respecting the array of individual voices and opinions at the college, we have brought most of our communications—and especially our communications for external audiences—under a single umbrella in having the Office of Public Affairs coordinate and oversee all communications to mass audiences, including: prospective students; alumni, parents and friends; on-campus constituencies; and the general public. Reporting to the president’s office, public affairs

Public Disclosure

works closely with other offices on campus (especially the admission office, the dean of the faculty's office, information technology, athletics, and advancement) to ensure a consistent message and a consistent look and feel in all of Amherst's key communications. In addition, interdepartmental groups (such as the Internet Strategy Group, the Campaign Steering Committee, and the president's senior staff) meet regularly to bring a high level of consistency and strategy to the college's communications.

In addition to developing a more consistent public presentation, we have also developed new ways of communicating with important constituents in the past ten years. A decade ago, the college's stance toward the news media was largely reactive; today, we reach out to the news media assertively and energetically. In respect to electronic media we have moved from being a strategic follower to being a leader in the field. We have undertaken three structural and aesthetic redesigns of the Web site in the past ten years. We are now comprehensively retooling our use of the Web and moving toward Web 2.0 tools that support increased interactivity. The implications of this initiative are discussed elsewhere in "Information Technology" under *Library and Other Information Resources*. From the perspective of public disclosure, it is important to note that the college's new content-management system (CMS) will make it easier for academic and administrative departments to present users with accurate, up-to-the-minute information in a consistent format by allowing centralized presentation of information that is managed in various locations.¹

We regularly review our communications to ensure that the information presented is accurate. In addition, in all formats, decisions about communications are increasingly data-driven. We have significantly expanded the resources available to support research, both in-house (through the IR office) and externally (through funding for research for special projects). Focus groups and other forms of "market research" have supported recent redesign of major admission and alumni materials, and we regularly rely on usability tests and other research to guide electronic communication efforts. For example, the admission office annually uses the Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ), which is made available to all accepted students online, to evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of all its publications and its Web site, and makes revisions and updates accordingly. The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey of first-year students provides additional information about our communications with students and families. In addition, before undertaking any major redesign of our family of publications and Web site, which occurs every four or five years, we conduct extensive focus group work with the college's "hot prospects," that is, prospective students who have academic backgrounds that indicate that they will become promising applicants for the college. In 2004 the offices of admission and public affairs conducted six focus groups with prospective students and alumni in Boston and Washington, D.C., as part of comprehensive Web and view book redesign. Amherst's site consistently tested better than the other three Web sites in these focus groups; students especially praised its navigability and the fact that they could find the information for which they were searching.

¹ On the CMS, see <https://cms.amherst.edu/offices/it/about/news/node/2916>.

Since the Web is a dynamic medium, the site is evaluated constantly by site administrators and by users. Information is updated immediately as needed.

PROJECTIONS

In an era of rapidly evolving technology, when an increased number of print and electronic media are competing for a decreasing amount of constituents' time and attention, it is vital that colleges present clear, consistent information to key recipients. We are poised to do this through a comprehensive, integrated program of communications aimed at well-defined audiences and supported strategically with high levels of research, resources, and technology.

Amherst's reliance on the Web will increase, as will the amount of content created for the Web. In addition, that content will become increasingly diverse, encompassing not only text but growing amounts of audio, video, and images. In an era of immediate information and increased market fragmentation, centralization of message is increasingly important. We recognize the key role of communications and are giving increased attention to that vital function. The number of staff dedicated to communications has increased. And we are dedicating significant resources to the electronic management and presentation of information. The CMS will be key to allowing our traditionally decentralized campus to maintain a distributed approach to managing information while presenting a consistent, unified face on the Web.

We are currently moving our Web site to a blog-based CMS built on Drupal, which will be built in-house by the IT staff over the next few years. This new Web site may eventually encompass all of our Web-based transactions (including course descriptions, syllabi, and the like), as well as social networking tools, such as discussion boards and blogs. Because search engines such as Google love content, this approach is likely to make our academic life far more transparent to external audiences, including prospective students and alumni.

Course descriptions are currently posted in three different places on the Web site: academic department pages, an Amherst online course guide, and in the Five College Online Catalog. Efforts are underway to streamline this process to ensure that all online course listings will be housed in a database and automatically fed from a single source to multiple presentations on the Web site. Updating information in the database will instantly update information on the Web.

As we have intensified our efforts to attract and enroll students from a broader range of socio-economic backgrounds, we have worked hard to elucidate the complicated issues associated with college cost. We want people to know that Amherst is affordable, and we don't want people to "not apply" to Amherst simply because they think they can't afford it. This is a key message for Amherst, and we will continue to push hard at it.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The accuracy and effectiveness of the college's communication are reviewed regularly by the president's office and by the board of trustees. The quarterly magazine has an advisory committee of faculty, alumni, and administrators. The ASQ and CIRP surveys provide information about our communications with prospective and new students and with families. Print publications and Web content are regularly reviewed by the offices of public affairs, advancement, and admission and financial aid.

11 INTEGRITY

OVERVIEW

Amherst is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in managing its affairs and to fostering principled behavior on the part of all members of the campus community. The college has set forth in writing and diligently reviews and updates the policies and codes that guide its activities, about which it systematically makes efforts to educate the community. Maintaining an atmosphere of respect and support for people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds is central to our mission, and we single out that issue for special attention below. We are vigorously pursuing new organizational structures and sources of leadership to realize our potential as a diverse and inclusive community.

DESCRIPTION

In our mission statement, we declare that living a principled life of consequence is a central goal of the Amherst education. We affirm that we have an obligation to offer educational opportunity equitably to the most promising students of all backgrounds and to promote intellectual freedom and diversity of ideas. The trust invested in students and the responsibility that they take through academic and personal self-direction are central to our educational philosophy. In our small community, students, faculty, staff, and administrators participate knowingly and actively in this compact, of which the service and leadership of our graduates are an outgrowth.

The college has set out principles of behavior, as adopted by the faculty and the board of trustees, in the Statements of Intellectual Responsibility, on Freedom of Expression and Dissent, and on Respect for Persons.¹ These statements appear in the several college *Handbooks* and in the *Catalog*. The *Faculty*, *Student*, *Trustee-Appointed Employee*, and *Staff Handbooks* are regularly revised to achieve clarity and equity in policies and procedures.² The applicability of these statements to the college's electronic environment

¹ Statements of Intellectual Responsibility, on Freedom of Expression, and Dissent, and on Respect for Persons: https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/policiesprocedures

² Faculty Handbook (updated continuously):

https://cms.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fachandbook;

Trustee-Appointed Employee Handbook (2005): <http://www.amherst.edu/~hr/tahdbook/index.html>;

Staff Handbook (2003): <http://www.amherst.edu/~hr/staffhdbook/index.html>;

the Student Handbook is updated annually and made available in hardcopy to all faculty and incoming students; most of its content is available in a continuously updated format at the Web site of the Office of the Dean of Students: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/>

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is explained in the Policy on Acceptable Use of the Amherst College Electronic Environment.³

As throughout our culture, privacy has become a growing concern. The privacy of student records is protected in accordance with the requirement of the law by the registrar's office, dean of students office, admission and financial aid office, health services, and counseling center. The dean of the faculty's office and human resources office maintain the privacy of discussions and communications regarding personnel decisions and disciplinary proceedings, as does the dean of students office regarding matters of discipline. The Amherst College Library endorses the American Library Association's Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records.⁴ The IT department has formulated and made readily available policies protecting the privacy of users of the college's Web site.⁵

Amherst College is committed to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and to free artistic expression, as is affirmed in the mission statement, the Statement on Freedom of Expression and Dissent, and in our declared adherence to the American Association of University Professors' (AAUP's) 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.⁶

The Institutional Review Board (Human Subjects), composed of faculty and administrators, monitors legal compliance and ethical standards in research involving human subjects. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee oversees compliance with and reporting on federal animal care and use regulations.

The dean of the faculty's office, working with faculty committees, has developed and routinely ensures compliance with a range of policies, including grants policy, patent policy, policies and procedures on the protection of human subjects, financial disclosure policy, scientific misconduct policy, and copyright law. The position of director of sponsored research was created in 2007 to coordinate this compliance.

The Statements on Intellectual Responsibility and on Freedom of Expression and Dissent are the basis for administrative and adjudicative decisions in cases concerning the expression of ideas, the pursuit of knowledge, and artistic expression. In such cases, the college relies chiefly on its own grievance and disciplinary system. The college has an active chapter of the AAUP, which has monitored and provided public programs on a range of issues, including conditions of employment and equity of compensation.

Disciplinary codes and grievance procedures for students, faculty, staff, and trustee-appointed employees are described in their respective handbooks. Each faculty member is

³ Policy on Acceptable use of the Amherst College Electronic Environment: <https://cms.amherst.edu/taxonomy/term/301>.

⁴ Policy on privacy/confidentiality of library records: <http://www.amherst.edu/library/info/privacy.html>.

⁵ Policy on privacy for users of the college Web site: <https://cms.amherst.edu/about/privacy/node/233>.

⁶ *Faculty Handbook*, pre-introduction (B): <http://www.amherst.edu/~deanfac/handbook/preintroduction.html>.

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expected to explain to students in each course the Statement of Intellectual Responsibility as it relates to the work of that course. As on most campuses, cheating and plagiarism on the part of the students have become of increasing concern, as is explained under *Students*. Various steps have been taken: In 2004, the college, upon votes of the faculty and the student body, instituted an Honor Code, including a statement that students sign upon matriculation.⁷ Ways of addressing infractions of intellectual honesty were a recurrent topic of the conversations of the Teaching and Learning Project, leading in 2002 to the creation of a panel on intellectual property in new student orientation. Orientation for new faculty includes discussion of ways of handling these problems, including ways of creating assignments that can help to minimize problems of academic dishonesty. A Web site entitled “Intellectual Honesty and Plagiarism” has been organized to make clear to students regulations and procedures, and to give access to explanation of the issues involved.⁸

In 2005 the board of trustees adopted a stringent conflict of interest policy for trustees and senior administrators.⁹ A “whistle-blower” policy is currently under discussion by the board. In 2007 a formal code of ethics for the Mead Art Museum was approved by the board of trustees.

As is explained under *Physical and Technological Resources*, the college’s sense of ethical obligation has come to include sustainability and respect for the environment, including guidelines for “green” construction.¹⁰ The environmental health and safety office has been enhanced to assure high standards of protection for the welfare of those on campus.¹¹

The ombudsperson, an independent officer of the college reporting directly to the president, works in strict confidentiality and provides resources for handling complaints, conflicts, and disputes outside of the normal channels of management.¹² In the dean of students office there is a full-time position of sexual assault counselor in the office of health education.

Diversity and Inclusion

In 1996 the board of trustees approved a statement on diversity that reads in part:

Amherst is a community that draws its strength from the intelligence and experience of those who come here to learn, to teach, to work. We reaffirm our goal of fashioning the Amherst College community from the broadest and deepest possible range of talents that people of many different backgrounds can bring to us.

⁷ Honor Code: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/conduct/honorcode.html> .

⁸ “Intellectual Honesty and Plagiarism” Web site: <http://www.amherst.edu/~dos/plagiarism/index.html> .

⁹ Conflict of interest policy: <http://www.amherst.edu/~hr/policies/conflictinterestpolicy.html>.

¹⁰ Green Amherst: <https://cms.amherst.edu/campuslife/greenamherst>.

¹¹ Office of Environmental Health and Safety: <http://www.amherst.edu/~ehs/>.

¹² Office of the Ombudsperson: <http://www.amherst.edu/ombuds/>

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We reaffirm our commitment to equality of opportunity, and to affirmative action under the law as a means of achieving that goal. We will continue to give special importance to the inclusion within our student body, our faculty and our staff of talented persons from groups that have experienced prejudice and disadvantage. We do so for the simplest, but most urgent, of reasons: because the best and the brightest people are found in many places, not few; because our classrooms and residence halls are places of dialogue, not monologue; because teaching and learning at their best are conversations with persons other than ourselves about ideas other than our own.

In our conversation about the college's mission statement, "a community diverse in background and outlook living in a climate of civility and mutual concern" figured among the eleven principles, alongside equal access. Our mission statement commits us to bringing together students from all backgrounds, regardless of financial need, to create "diversity of experience and ideas within a purposefully small residential community." Broadening access and strengthening the campus community has been a central commitment of the current administration. Our progress in enrolling students from many backgrounds, and their success in forging a vibrant and pluralistic community, intensify the urgency of creating a culture among faculty, administrators, and staff that responds to the needs of our evolving student body.

We have made steady progress in diversifying the ranks of faculty, administrators, and staff.

To look first at instructional personnel, among tenured and tenure track faculty, there is modest growth in the numbers of individuals identifying themselves as belonging to minorities from 13.3 percent in 1997 to 14.8 percent in 2007; among visiting faculty, from 23.5 percent in 1997 to 28.0 percent in 2007; and for lecturers and coaches (trustee appointees), from 29.2 percent in 1997 to 34.9 percent in 2007. For all instructional personnel, the growth is from 15.9 percent in 1997 to 19.8 percent in 2007. In those ten years, the number of women in the tenured and tenure-track ranks has grown from 30.1 percent to 37.2 percent. Among tenured and tenure track faculty in the natural sciences and mathematics, the number of women has grown from 13.8 percent in 1997 to 24.3 percent in 2007.

For senior administrators (trustee appointees) the growth in minority percentages is from 10.0 percent in 1997 to 11.8 percent in 2007 (the number of women held steady at around 57 percent), with a significant increase in the number of women directing important units: Advancement, the Department of Athletics and Physical Education, the Amherst College Library, and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning. Roughly a third of the staffs of the offices that have most contact with prospective and current students, those of admission and the dean of students, identify themselves as belonging to minorities. Advancement offices are also diversifying staff to be able to serve our shifting alumni demographics.

The growth in minority percentages among the staff—from 4.8 percent in 1997 to 8.9 percent in 2007—is proportionately larger, though slower than hoped, in part because of the constraints of our geographical location.

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The ability and willingness to teach or work with a diverse student body and to support a climate of inclusion and respect in the community at large have become important considerations in all searches, as is indicated in language in all advertisements: “Amherst College is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women, persons of color, and persons with disabilities to apply. The administration, faculty, and student body are committed to attracting qualified candidates from groups currently underrepresented on campus.”

APPRAISAL

The consultations undertaken by the Special Committee on the Amherst Education, the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP), and the Ad Hoc Faculty Advisory Group on Reaccreditation have addressed questions of integrity. As is explained in *Mission and Purposes*, we have engaged in frank and productive discussions about what a college can and should do in its institutional practices and in fostering ethical behavior on the part of community members. The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) is an outgrowth of the larger conversation about our responsibilities to the larger society.

These conversations since 2002 have generally elicited a shared sense that our current processes of revising and promulgating the rules and regulations of the college are responsive to current needs and sufficiently consultative. There are regular processes of revision for the codes governing all campus constituencies: The *Trustee-Appointed Employee Handbook* was thoroughly revised in a process with broad participation in 2004-05. A glance at the *Faculty Handbook*, in which amendments are dated, shows that the faculty is in perpetual session on its own procedures and regulations. A broad deliberative process among students and faculty led to the adoption of an honor code in 2004, including the provision that it must be re-voted every four years. The monthly meetings of the Advisory Committee on Personnel Policies provide a forum to express concerns and pose questions about rules and regulations for staff, with minutes distributed to all members of the staff.

Issues of intellectual honesty continue to be a concern for students and faculty. The numbers and types of disciplinary cases for students are reported to the campus annually by the dean of students. An increase in cases involving intellectual dishonesty was one of the events that prompted the adoption of the Honor Code and a more vigorous program of education for students and faculty. The number of cases has diminished, but no level is satisfactory, and this will continue to be an area of focus for the administration.

Diversity and Inclusion

The goal of creating a culturally and intellectually diverse community has guided our strategic planning process from 2002 onward. We have become aware of the many levels on which we must proceed simultaneously in transforming our culture: in vigorous and innovative recruitment of students from non-traditional backgrounds, here and abroad; in financial aid packages that address the range of family income levels; in renewing and expanding the curriculum and enhancing academic support; in more active recruitment of faculty, administrators, and staff from a range of backgrounds and with a range of

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outlooks; in the creation of administrative positions to investigate needs and create experimental programs to create a more inclusive community; in fostering dialogue within and across the various sectors of the college; in facilitating students' engagement in local, national, and international communities; and in developing instruments for evaluation sensitive to the interconnectedness of these many initiatives. That this overriding goal must frame all discussions is not controversial, but we should also note a widely shared disinclination to press the conversation on diversity and inclusion to the point where it becomes uncomfortable.

The problem of maintaining and extending the diversity of the faculty was addressed by the CAP. Like other institutions with highly autonomous academic departments and largely decentralized hiring, Amherst has been seeking ways to translate institutional goals into particular hires. In incorporating college-wide priorities into the justification of additional faculty positions, the CAP recommendations open one avenue for creative hiring. The CAP recommended that two faculty positions be added to allow "bridge" appointments when opportunities should present themselves to hire faculty in underrepresented categories at a time when a position in a department is not yet available. The proposed expansion of the faculty by as many as sixteen further positions presents an opportunity to hire faculty from a range of backgrounds. Under the newly instituted program of justifying new positions fractionally by college-wide needs, academic departments have shown creativity in broadening their missions in ways that accommodate recruitment from underrepresented groups.

Our survey data indicate overall satisfaction with the campus climate. In the enrolled student survey of 2006, students expressed "generally satisfied" or "very satisfied" about the following areas: climate for minority students on campus, 78 percent; sense of community on campus, 76 percent; sense of community where you live, 84 percent; ethnic/racial diversity of campus, 85 percent; feeling of security on campus, 97 percent. Getting deeper into the shifting social dynamics behind these numbers is a formidable job, especially when one goes beyond reported satisfaction with the campus climate to the question of what students learn from a diverse community. Elizabeth Aries of the psychology department has completed an innovative study of students' experience in their first year at Amherst, *Race and Class Matters at an Elite College* (forthcoming). Professor Aries used intensive interviews and surveys to investigate the entering expectations and first-year experience of fifty-eight students in four groups in the class of 2009: two cohorts of black students (affluent and lower-income) and two of white students (affluent and lower-income). Her investigation confirms the general sense of satisfaction reflected in the above statistics, especially in relationship to class differences. However, the nature of experience and perception differed significantly cohort by cohort, as did the ways that students interacted with and learned from students outside their cohort. In using highly sensitive interview techniques, Professor Aries found that students often did not have, and for the most part were not given by the college, the analytical terms to understand the race and class dynamics that they were experiencing and enrolled in courses to investigate those dynamics to quite different degrees by cohort. The comparison of black and white students of course tracks only one part of the racial, ethnic, and cultural range of the student. Her work suggests both the need for further

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studies and the large institutional investment that would be needed to pursue them. Professor Aries demonstrates how we can evaluate what and how students learn from diversity and poses for institutional consideration the concern that first-year students may profit from this learning to significantly different degrees.

Concurrent with the larger planning process has been the creation of flexible administrative positions with a mandate to innovate and experiment. In 2004, upon the retirement of the affirmative action officer/ombudsperson, an external review was commissioned, following whose general recommendations two separate positions were created: ombudsperson and special assistant to the president for diversity. The special assistant position was filled by a tenured faculty member for a three-year term, reporting directly to the president, with a charge to investigate needs and potentials at Amherst and the practices of peer institutions. Early in her tenure, she saw the importance of including administrators (i.e., trustee appointees) as well as faculty under the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. She has advised and monitored all hiring searches, worked closely with academic and administrative departments in defining positions and formulating searches so as to generate a broad and diverse pool of applicants, interviewed all finalists for positions, and co-facilitated workshops on creating a climate of respect and inclusion both for new faculty, staff, and administrators and for supervisors. She also investigated how effectively our advertisements for positions were reaching underrepresented groups and suggested ways of eliciting broader interest, for example by indicating “bilingual candidates welcome.” The special assistant for diversity has also collaborated with the human resources office to help administrative departments create diversity plans and was instrumental in the creation and staffing of the CCE. For three years she has convened a working group of faculty and administrators to investigate the needs of the institution. Upon the end of her term, the structure of the office is now being reconsidered in light of her recommendations. Guidelines for hiring searches, the college’s regulations concerning sexual harassment, and a description of the functions of the office are available at the Web site of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.¹³

Other administrative positions have recently been created with an exploratory dimension:

- The Student Affairs Officer for Diversity and Academic Support in the dean of students office has assessed the needs of students from non-traditional backgrounds and devised programs, such as the Academic Peer Mentors for first-year students and the annual Class Awareness Week. See under *Students*.
- A “green dean” position was created to assist with the recruitment of community college students under a grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and to develop programs to support and mentor those students and to maintain communication with regional community colleges.
- The library has created a program to increase diversity for academic librarianship through a three-year fellowship at the trustee-appointed level for an individual

¹³ Office of Diversity and Inclusion: <http://www.amherst.edu/diversityoffice/>

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with a recent Master of Library Science. The library fellow works on various projects, which include expanding the library's programs of outreach and instruction.

- Physical education and athletics has added a new position at the assistant director level with a portfolio relating to the recruitment and support of diverse students in collaboration with the admission and dean of students offices and the Center for Community Engagement.

Among the faculty, the program of Five College Minority Fellows has come to encompass a wider range of departments, such as classics and German, and a visiting position in Asian Pacific American studies, shared among the Five Colleges and housed at Amherst, has been made tenure track.

In tandem with the implementation of the CAP recommendations, we are in an exploratory phase in developing the structures of leadership and communication we need to achieve our potential as an inclusive community.

PROJECTIONS

We will continue to reassess policies and procedures that support institutional integrity, with particular attention to:

- Intellectual responsibility;
- The climate of respect for all persons;
- The climate of achievement for all students;
- Protection of individual records and institutional security;
- Protection of free speech and free inquiry.

We will continue to seek the structures and leadership that facilitate the hiring and development of diverse faculty, administrators, and staff. Within AY 2007-08 the Office of Diversity and Inclusion will be reviewed and an appointment will be made to continue the functions of the special assistant to the president for diversity.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Amherst pursues institutional integrity by regular assessment of our policies and practices and of conditions on our campus. In the past decade we have addressed particular areas by instituting an honor code for students, a conflict of interest policy for trustees and senior administrators, Web resources and orientation programs on intellectual honesty for students, a new position of director of sponsored research, constant revamping of our provisions for campus safety and emergency preparedness, new positions to administer policies and foster improvement in diversity and inclusion, and a continuing campus-wide dialogue on the ethical obligations of the college.