



# Amherst College

**Report to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges**

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**

**March 1, 2018**

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AAS</b>	Association of Amherst Students
<b>ABC</b>	Advisory Budget Committee (2008–2009)
<b>CAP</b>	Committee on Academic Priorities (ad hoc committee, 2005–2006)
<b>CHI</b>	Center for Humanistic Inquiry
<b>CCE</b>	Center for Community Engagement
<b>CCO</b>	Chief Communications Officer
<b>CDIO</b>	Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
<b>CEP</b>	Committee on Educational Policy
<b>CIO</b>	Chief Information Officer
<b>COACHE</b>	Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education
<b>COFHE</b>	Consortium on Financing Higher Education
<b>CPR</b>	Committee on Priorities and Resources
<b>CSAO</b>	Chief Student Affairs Officer
<b>CTL</b>	Center for Teaching and Learning
<b>EC</b>	Employee Council
<b>FCAFA</b>	Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid
<b>Five Colleges</b>	Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts
<b>FDIO</b>	Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Officer
<b>FLI</b>	First-generation, low-income
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time equivalent
<b>FYS</b>	First-year seminar
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>IR</b>	Institutional Research
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>JCCR</b>	Job Classification and Compensation Review
<b>JCCP</b>	Job Classification and Compensation Program
<b>MC</b>	Managers' Council
<b>NESCAC</b>	New England Small College Athletic Conference
<b>OD&amp;I</b>	Office of Diversity and Inclusion
<b>OGC</b>	Office of General Counsel
<b>OHR</b>	Office of Human Resources
<b>OIRSS</b>	Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services
<b>RMP</b>	Residential Master Plan
<b>SCAE</b>	Special Committee on the Amherst Education (ad hoc committee, 2002–2003) Special
<b>SMOC</b>	Oversight Committee on Sexual Misconduct
<b>SPAC</b>	<i>Strategic Plan for Amherst College</i>
<b>STEM</b>	At Amherst, natural and physical sciences, computer science, mathematics, statistics
<b>Tenure-line faculty</b>	Assistant and, in some cases, associate professors, on the tenure track and all tenured professors
<b>Tenure-track</b>	Assistant and associate professors on the tenure track

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Institutional Characteristics Form

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**Table of CIHE Actions, Items of Special Attention, or Concerns**

<b>Date of CIHE Letter</b>	<b>Summary of CIHE Actions, Items of Special Attention, or Concerns</b>	<b>CIHE Standards Cited in Letter</b>	<b>Self-Study Page Number(s)</b>
April 2, 2013	Evaluating the effectiveness of the organizational restructuring that created the Office of the Provost to provide greater capacity and better coordination for planning across the campus	5 3.12 3.14 6.20	v, 19, 22, 27, 29, 30
	Addressing the issue of faculty workload, working conditions, and compensation	5.6 5.7	24–26, 32–33, 70–83,
	Addressing the institution’s goals to increase faculty diversity to meet or exceed the pace of peer institutions, with particular attention to the institution’s success with recruitment and creating a supportive environment for faculty from a range of backgrounds	5.4 11.5	14–15, 24, 30, 67–69, 76–81

	Implementing college-wide assessment and reporting including evaluating the effectiveness of new measurement tools and surveys and of the augmented staff support within the Office of Institutional Research	2.2 4.48 4.50 4.54	31 (Ad Hoc Committee on Student Learning) All of standard eight 101–113
	Implementing the strategic planning project	2.3 2.5	Throughout each standard, in particular in standard two 4–18

## INTRODUCTION AND INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Since laying its first cornerstone in 1820, Amherst College has committed itself to the liberal arts, academic rigor, and the widening of educational opportunity. That mission has thrived through broadly shared traditions of self-examination, experimentation, planning, and innovation. As an independent, residential, highly selective liberal arts college, Amherst seeks to “educate 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” and to “[bring] together the most promising students, whatever their financial need.” In meeting the now rapidly changing needs of students, the college holds to the dynamism of that tradition. “The education Amherst offers is grounded in the values of the liberal arts: breadth and depth of knowledge, rigorous analytical ability, and the capacity for creative problem solving,” Amherst President Biddy Martin has noted. “It is the form of education best suited for the demands of an uncertain and changing world. Every initiative we undertake is aimed at renewing these critical features of an outstanding educational experience.”<sup>1</sup>

These initiatives are sustaining one of Amherst’s most significant achievements, the transformation of the make-up of the college’s student body. Over the past fifteen years, recruitment efforts have been focused and creative. The college has also eliminated loans from financial-aid packages for all aided students, adopted a need-blind admission process for international students, extended its outreach to community college transfer candidates, and has become a participant in the Department of Veterans Affairs Yellow Ribbon Program (which allows U.S. institutions of higher learning to enter into an agreement with the Veteran’s Administration to fund tuition and other fees that exceed the amounts payable under the Post-9/11 GI Bill) at the most generous level. In order to enroll a greater number of low-income and international students, Amherst expanded the size of its student body during this period. These and other strategies have enabled the college to meet its goal of assembling a body of students who excel at the highest levels by all academic measures, and who are representative of the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the country.

These ambitious twenty-first century changes to the student body continue the vision of the college’s founders. 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 1825, 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 same year the college adopted its motto, *Terras Irradiant* (“Let them enlighten the lands”). The charter further stipulates that Amherst will exclude neither students nor instructors on the basis of their religious opinions. 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. In 1826, Edward Jones became the first African American student to graduate from the college. When he received his Amherst degree in 1870, Joseph Hardy Neesima became the first Japanese student to graduate from a Western college; he later founded Kyoto’s Doshisha University, Amherst’s sister institution. Beginning in 1962, the college began hiring women as tenure-track professors, and fourteen years later, Amherst’s first-year class included women. Biddy Martin, a first-generation college graduate herself, became the first woman and first openly gay president of Amherst in 2011—another milestone in Amherst’s tradition of valuing access, equity, and diversity.

The new student body brings the responsibility of enabling all students to take full advantage of the education offered, and the opportunity for the college community to take full advantage of the benefits that diversity brings. The college’s student body is inspiring Amherst’s faculty to develop innovative approaches to their teaching, and it also provides all Amherst students with an opportunity to build the friendships that are vital to a flourishing civil society. Cullen Murphy ’74, chairman of Amherst’s board of trustees, has articulated the goal of “...fostering community in an environment of diversity—the kind of community where every member thrives; where topics such as race, class, and gender are addressed openly; where strangers do not stay strangers for long.”<sup>2</sup> This work is being guided by a strategic plan (*Strategic Plan for Amherst College*

[SPAC]) for the next decade that includes the recommendation to “make diversity a source of learning, understanding, and change.”<sup>3</sup> Professor Rhonda Cobham-Sander, chair of the plan’s subcommittee on diversity and community, has described why Amherst is ideally situated to undertake this initiative, and the investment that is needed to move forward. “[The college’s] intimate size, deep-rooted traditions and ample resources make it an ideal crucible for conducting this experiment in precipitating excellence,” she has noted. “...The success of our experiment in precipitating excellence depends on our commitment as faculty, staff and alumni to an institutional culture that supports a diverse learning community. For our students to thrive, intellectually, emotionally and ethically, we must provide them with the resources they need to realize their full academic potential.”<sup>4</sup>

The college has been responding to these needs at every level, from bricks and mortar to instruction and the co-curriculum. A recently completed residence complex was designed to support new models of residential life that aim to break down barriers to realizing the full benefits of living and learning across difference. A new science center<sup>5</sup> will open in the summer of 2018, the most ambitious building project in the college’s history. The goal of building a more inclusive and welcoming community is also driving the recruitment and retention of stellar scholar-teachers who are more demographically representative of Amherst’s student body and the country. Greater variation in our students’ preparation and learning styles is stimulating curricular and pedagogical innovations. Additional resources have been provided, and new administrative structures have been put in place, to promote the arts of teaching and learning, including practices to support student success and enliven intellectual life. Faculty-directors are leading these efforts, which include the Center for Teaching and Learning<sup>6</sup> and Center for Humanistic Inquiry.<sup>7</sup> Work is under way to strengthen Amherst’s system of advising, with the first year of a pilot program just completed and other ideas at the proposal stage.

Significant progress is also being made on another ongoing priority of the past decade, as articulated in the SPAC—ensuring that the core educational mission of the college is being supported through effective financial management, including the allocation of resources, efforts to constrain and manage costs, and planning for the future; the creation and maintenance of state-of-the-art infrastructure, including campus spaces and information technology; and taking a leadership role in the implementation of sustainability practices. Amherst is investing in the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified, professional, and diverse staff that is well-positioned to actualize the vision and priorities of the SPAC and the college’s broader mission. A dedicated effort to replace ad hoc approaches with formal procedures, policies, and practices that are consistent, transparent, and equitable is meeting with success. Toward these goals, the position of chief financial and administrative officer was created at the senior-staff level in 2015, and the finance office was restructured with a staffing model that recognizes the increasingly complex financial and regulatory landscape of higher education. In addition, and with some overlapping purpose, the senior-staff-level position of chief policy officer and general counsel was created in 2013 to focus on the management of legal issues, proactive risk management, and compliance.

### **The Self-Study**

This document is a result of a process of self-study that commenced eighteen months ago. Our work began not long after the conclusion of Amherst’s comprehensive strategic planning exercise, which started in 2013 and ended two years later with the publication of the SPAC. That process drew on studies of the past decade and before, as well as contemporary observations and ideas offered by faculty, staff, students, alumni, and trustees. This self-study was in its infancy as the seven priorities identified in the SPAC, and a set of related recommendations, were shared, and later endorsed by the faculty and board of trustees. Our work continued as strategies and a schedule were developed for implementing the SPAC’s recommendations. The self-study took shape while the faculty was conducting a major review and assessment of Amherst’s curriculum (a SPAC recommendation), a comprehensive campaign to raise funds to support the plan’s priorities was at the planning stage, and significant changes to the campus landscape were unfolding. This document came to fruition amidst anticipation of the celebration of the college’s 2021 bicentennial.

As charged, we have tried to respond to the questions posed by an accreditation review—what is the college’s mission? What is Amherst dedicated to doing? How is the college evaluating its efforts, and how is Amherst using what it learns to make improvements? What are the college’s projections and plans for the future? In this

work, we have relied on the structure of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education's *Standards for Accreditation* as a way of organizing and synthesizing voluminous plans, data, and self-assessments. As will become apparent, the past decade has been a time of significant institutional change, which continues unabated.

Revisiting a decade's worth of internal and external reviews and reports, and initiatives that span Amherst's divisions, departments, offices, and programs—and summarizing and evaluating some of their outcomes—has been a Herculean task. While we can safely say that no nine-headed serpents were slain or wild boars captured in the process, significant feats of strength, facility of mind, and hard work were nonetheless required of those who labored over this document. Pausing and reflecting on what has come before, and continuing to think deeply about how best to move forward, has proven to be a meaningful exercise, and one that will serve the college well.

- President Martin and her senior staff launched the self-study process in the spring of 2016 by appointing the Steering Committee on Reaccreditation<sup>8</sup> and, in consultation with the Committee of Six (the executive committee of the faculty), the Ad Hoc Faculty Advisory Group on Reaccreditation.<sup>9</sup> The steering committee and members of the senior staff were responsible for drafting the standards sections, and the faculty advisory group played an oversight role, reviewing all self-study content.
- In the spring of 2016, the steering committee disseminated a schedule for the accreditation effort, distributed responsibility for preparation of self-study sections, and created a reaccreditation web site.<sup>10</sup>
- In the spring of 2016, the dean of the faculty discussed the reaccreditation effort with the Committee of Six, the Committee on Educational Policy, and the faculty at a regular meeting of the faculty.
- In the spring of 2016, the dean of the faculty requested that all academic departments and programs submit reports focusing on the ways in which they are addressing students' learning within and beyond the major. (By 2012, all of Amherst's department and programs had formulated and 2017–2018 publicized their learning goals and had described their assessment tools and plans. Changes to major programs and curricula that were reported in 2016 reflect an assessment of student learning in the context of these goals, as well as college-wide learning goals that were approved by the faculty in 2012.) Beginning in, as part of a pilot program to support and compensate department and program chairs, the submission of these reports on an annual basis became a requirement. As part of the dean's first annual retreat for heads of administrative departments that report to her, held in June 2017, the heads provided an overview of initiatives in their areas that are intended to reach Amherst students of today.
- In May 2016, Barbara Brittingham, president of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), visited Amherst to discuss the accreditation review with President Martin and her senior staff, the faculty advisory group, and the steering committee.
- Members of the steering committee attended the commission's self-study workshop in the fall of 2016.
- In June 2017, Amherst co-hosted a meeting of the New England Assessment Support Network.
- In August 2017, members of the steering committee attended a NEASC workshop for institutions hosting team visits in 2018.
- The public notification of the comprehensive evaluation visit and invitation for public comment was published in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* on September 6, 7, and 8, 2017, and in the summer 2017 edition of *Amherst Magazine*.
- The director of institutional research and registrar services served on an evaluation team for a peer institution in November of 2017.
- In drafting this report, we have followed an iterative process in the hope of making our consultation as inclusive as possible.



- In the summer of 2017, responses to the commission’s nine standards for accreditation were drafted by the appropriate administrative offices. In October 2017, the first draft of the report was reviewed by the president, the faculty advisory group, and the president’s senior staff.
- On October 16, 2017, the chair of the evaluation team, President Ronald Liebowitz of Brandeis University, with ACE Fellow J. Bart Morrison, came to Amherst for the requisite preliminary visit. The first draft of the self-study was shared with them prior to the visit.
- During November and December of 2017, and January of 2018, the first draft of the report was reviewed by the Committee of Six, the Committee on Educational Policy, the College Council, and the Committee on Priorities and Resources; Barbara Brittingham and Carol Anderson of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education; the Board of Trustees of Amherst College; the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council; the Manager’s Council, and the Employee Council.
- In February, the self-study was made available online to all on-campus constituencies, and feedback was solicited.

A decade ago, we noted that our self-study grew out of and consolidated a succession of campus-wide initiatives in self-appraisal and planning that began in 2000 with the Residential Master Plan and in 2002 with the Special Committee on the Amherst Education. Those initiatives culminated in the recommendations of the Committee on Academic Priorities in 2006, and their endorsement by the faculty and board of trustees. The 2013 self-study reported on the implementation since 2008 of the recommendations that had emerged from that process. During the period since that effort, Amherst has once again undertaken a great deal of self-evaluation. The most recent comprehensive strategic planning process enjoyed the engagement and enthusiasm of all constituencies. A culture of empirically informed decision-making has truly taken root at the college, and our capacity for planning is now deeply embedded and is contributing to significant institutional change.

In addition to completing the comprehensive strategic planning exercise, Amherst has during this decade undertaken, or is in the process of doing so, evaluations of the following: the curriculum, the advising system, the student life function, the place of athletics, the campus framework, the human resources function, information technology, diversity and inclusion, 74 percent of academic departments and programs, policies and procedures surrounding sexual misconduct, and institutional presses. Self-evaluations have included internal surveys of faculty, students, and staff, and the administration of external instruments such as the COFHE (Consortium on Financing Higher Education) and COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) surveys.

A newly adopted college mission statement (2007) served as the basis of the 2008 review. Amherst reaffirmed its commitment to this statement of mission as part of the recent strategic planning process, and it has served as the basis of the 2018 review as well. In addition, the board of trustees reviewed another foundational document, its *Statement on Diversity at Amherst College*, which was voted in 1996. At its retreat in June of 2017, the board approved a revised statement and voted to adopt the new statement at the trustees’ meeting in January of 2018.

### **A Selection of Major Accomplishments of the Past Decade**

- Assembled a body of students who excel at the highest levels by all academic measures and are representative of the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the country, and increased selectivity. The college continued and expanded recruitment and financial aid policies that increase opportunity, including being need-blind for early-decision, regular-decision, wait-listed, transfer, and international applicants, and meeting the full demonstrated need of every accepted student, regardless of citizenship, and not “packaging” loans in financial aid awards. Currently, 44 percent of the college’s 1,836 students identify as domestic persons of color; 9 percent hail from other countries; and more than 24 percent qualify for Pell grants, placing them in the lowest economic quintile in this country. Over the past decade, the college expanded the student body by 6 percent;

- Responding to a transition that occurs once in a generation, hired 40 percent of current Amherst tenure-line faculty over the past decade and strengthened approaches to the identification and recruitment of stellar teachers, scholars, and artists who are more demographically representative of Amherst’s student body and the country. The college’s study of needs and priorities in faculty hiring and the ongoing review and assessment of student course-taking activity, majors, and interests have resulted in a new set of priorities that are informing faculty hiring;
- Agreed to a plan to expand the number of tenure lines in quantitative fields (science, mathematics, statistics, computer science, and economics) to provide all students with the educational experience that Amherst promises—to ensure, amidst growing enrollment pressures, that faculty/departments have the time and resources to adopt a full range of pedagogical approaches, to remove barriers to students’ success, to provide the academic support that all students need to be successful, and to support faculty and student research. One-third of Amherst students major in quantitative fields. Over the past decade, there was a 62 percent increase in enrollments in science and mathematics courses;
- Reaffirmed Amherst’s dedication to the arts and humanities—made a commitment to maintaining tenure lines at the current level in the arts and humanities and established the Center for Humanistic Inquiry (CHI) and the Arts at Amherst Initiative, which includes the Arts House, a collaboration among the Departments of Art and the History of Art, Music, and Theater and Dance, and the Mead Art Museum; placed greater emphasis on incorporating research into some humanities courses; increased the focus on community-based learning and problem-solving in some humanities and social sciences courses. More than 50 percent of Amherst students major in the humanities;
- Successfully completed a comprehensive strategic planning exercise, began the process of operationalizing its recommendations as measurable outcomes, and created an ad hoc committee to undertake a study of the curriculum, as recommended in the plan. With the departure of Amherst’s first provost, and an evaluation of the role, the president decided not to replace the position. A distributed planning model was adopted, with the president and her senior staff assuming responsibility for the plan’s implementation. The reporting line of the Office of Institutional Research was moved from the provost to the dean of the faculty, in recognition of the central role of academic planning and reporting;
- Set fundraising priorities for the upcoming comprehensive campaign, an effort that is grounded in the priorities of the strategic plan and the college’s ongoing work of assessing Amherst’s strengths and weaknesses. As this self-study was under way, plans called for an April 2018 launch of the campaign. This effort will focus on support for the completion of a state-of-the-art science center and an expansion of the faculty to serve surging student interest in STEM courses and majors, while at the same time continuing to serve students’ equally strong interest in the humanities. In addition, Amherst will seek support for the expansion of the mission of the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning; more curricular and pedagogical advances and more opportunities for students to “learn by doing”; and for the transformation of residential and social experiences for students through a more structured set of living-learning programs and major facilities improvements. The intent is to foster connections among these different ways of learning, to enable students to see how their academic, professional, and social lives interconnect.
- Expanded the campus to the east, with the planning and development of the “Greenway Projects,” which include the new state-of-the-art science center, a transformational landscaping strategy, and four new residence halls that are promoting social interaction and a more vibrant campus life;
- As one of President Martin’s priorities, made significant progress on upgrading, modernizing, and professionalizing the college’s administrative functions—through reorganization efforts, new leadership and personnel, and the implementation of more appropriate systems, policies, procedures, and practices. Administrative functions that have been the sites of major improvement include finance, student affairs, legal services, and human resources. The addition of new offices that focus on sustainability, diversity and inclusion, Title IX, legal services and college policies, and a reconception of the career services function,

have been part of this work to support a transformative liberal arts education for a changing population of students in a new era.

- Built a sustainable financial model by preserving the endowment’s strength and promoting a rigorous budgeting process that contains costs and directs Amherst’s resources to core mission activities; improved the effectiveness of the Office of Student Affairs by implementing new structures and better systems, policies, and practices and enhanced and integrated student health and psychological services; established the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, appointed a chief diversity and inclusion officer, and created the position of faculty diversity and inclusion officer; established the Office of General Counsel, appointed a chief policy officer and general counsel and dedicated Title IX officer; developed a campus framework plan to guide decisions about the long-term evolution of the campus’s built environment to respond to changing programmatic needs of the college; established the Office of Environmental Sustainability<sup>11</sup> to promote and increase awareness of environmentally sound actions and to make sustainability part of Amherst’s core values; as part of the evaluation of the human resources function, developed a plan to help hire, retain, and support a highly qualified, diverse staff; improve efficiencies and to utilize the talents of Office of Human Resources staff more effectively;
- Continued and enhanced efforts across the college that support Amherst’s global outlook and commitment to ensuring that students graduate with cross-cultural capabilities. Amherst remains one of the few colleges with a need-blind admission process for international students; admission office recruitment travel has been extended to new parts of the world that include the Middle East and new regions of Latin America; the college’s Koenig Scholar Program is supporting the recruitment of talented low-income students from sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America; efforts are under way to bring more faculty with international backgrounds to the college; Amherst faculty who focus their research and teaching on Africa are preparing a self-study about how the continent could be enhanced within the curriculum, and an external review team will come to campus to consider this question; other areas of the curriculum with an international focus are being strengthened through faculty hiring and the establishment of new academic programs; the college is working to develop select partnerships with institutions across the globe to foster exchanges and collaborations for students and faculty; beyond study-away programs for a semester and a year, campus which remain a priority, other opportunities are being explored and/or expanded to enable students to gain global experiences during Interterm, spring break, or immediately following the end of the spring semester, including funding summer language study abroad, identifying and funding summer internships in other countries, and creating more faculty-led research trips that are connected to classes taught on; the Center for International Student Engagement has been provided with additional resources to support its work with Amherst’s international students; students may live in themed communities, with French, German, Russian, or Spanish speakers; and a portion of the orientation program for new students was expanded to focus on some of the issues that new non-U.S. citizens often experience when making the transition to the college and to a new culture;
- Approved the *Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*,<sup>12</sup> drafted by the Committee of Six, approved by the faculty, and endorsed by the board of trustees in 2016;
- Raised more than \$502 million through the “Lives of Consequence” comprehensive campaign, the largest fundraising effort in the college’s history, exceeding the campaign goal of \$425 million;
- Enhanced academic support services and resources for co-curricular learning opportunities, including the Writing Center,<sup>13</sup> the Moss Quantitative Center,<sup>14</sup> the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE),<sup>15</sup> and the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning.<sup>16</sup> The CCE and Loeb Center are offering complementary activities, with the goal of providing all students with more opportunities to learn by doing throughout the year—and critically, with at least one summer-long co-curricular experience before graduation. The Loeb Center helps students envision career possibilities throughout their entire college experience, and it will work to expand internship opportunities across

employment sectors. The CCE will support independent projects, cultivate problem solving and collaborative skills, and help faculty integrate experiential learning into academic programs of study;

- Completed renovations to Amherst’s Mead Art Museum in 2016 to highlight the college’s distinctive art collection and encourage a different experience for visitors. Art that hasn’t been shown for more than a decade has joined recently acquired contemporary works. “In the spirit of the liberal arts, we want to create a museum that sparks the imagination and inspires debate,” David Little, the Mead’s director and chief curator, has noted;
- Held the first annual Dean’s Retreat on Teaching and Learning for all faculty and instructional staff in 2016. Topics included creating inclusive and engaging classroom environments for all students; talking about race, class, gender, and other difficult topics in the classroom; and incorporating inclusive practices in science, mathematics, and statistics courses. The focus of the second retreat in August 2017 was disability and accessibility; and
- Partnered with Questbridge and other organizations devoted to identifying talented students from lower-income and disadvantaged backgrounds. Between 1994 and 2014, the college saw applications increase by 154 percent from domestic students of color and by 284 percent from non-U.S. citizens. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation awarded a \$1 million prize for Equity in Educational Excellence to Amherst for its excellent record of admitting, supporting, and graduating outstanding low-income students.

These accomplishments and scores of others demonstrate that the values articulated in the commission’s *Standards for Accreditation* are consistent with Amherst’s own mission. As with the 2008 self-study, we have embedded this review in the continuing decision-making structures of the college. This document, together with our strategic plan, form a compelling narrative of the ways in which Amherst is meeting the standards, including the areas of emphasis that the commission identified following our decennial review in 2008 (addressed in detail in the 2013 report) and interim review in 2013. Many of these areas—the outcomes of an Amherst education; the workload of the faculty; the improvement of student learning; the goals and the shape of the curriculum—will remain a focus of the college’s continual efforts to measure success, plan, and seek improvement, now, in Amherst’s third century to come, and beyond.

## MISSION AND PURPOSES

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 the Board of Trustees of Amherst College (May 2007)

### DESCRIPTION

Amherst adopted its first formal mission statement in 2007, following an extensive and scrupulous process of self-examination and planning that involved all constituencies. The statement appears at the beginning of the college catalogue and is displayed prominently on Amherst's website. It is included in the *Faculty Handbook* and *Employee Handbook*, in admission and financial aid literature, and in other official college publications. The statement is consistent with Amherst's charter of 1825 and with the subsequent amendments thereto.

Now embraced fully and woven into the fabric of college life, the mission statement serves as the foundational text for setting priorities, guiding planning, implementing initiatives, and measuring success. A few examples can illustrate this integration of aspiration and practice. Over the past decade, Amherst has been guided by its mission as it reshapes the residential liberal arts experience for “the promising students” whom it brings to campus. In order to “promote diversity of experience and ideas” within a “purposefully small residential community,” Amherst has already made significant changes to its residence halls and continues to create and renovate many academic and social spaces across campus. The newly reorganized Office of Student Affairs now receives additional resources to support students' health and well-being. The mission statement grounds curricular reviews and guides long-range planning, admission initiatives, and fundraising. The statement continues to be seen as a true, flexible, and relevant reflection of what Amherst is—and aspires to be.

### APPRAISAL

At the time of Amherst's last decennial review, the writers of the self-study deemed it too early to know how effectively the mission statement would express Amherst's identity and purposes. They foresaw, however, that the statement would provide a guide to the assessment of the college's practices. The past decade has provided ample opportunity to validate the writers' prescience and to test the consensus that was reached in the formulation and adoption of the statement a decade ago. Over the past ten years, regular efforts to evaluate the goals of an Amherst education in many areas of college life have affirmed that the college's mission is to empower students with the knowledge, capabilities, and habits of mind needed for thoughtful and engaged citizenship in a changing world.

In keeping with the college's stated mission to serve all students of promise, in 2012 the faculty undertook a reexamination of Amherst's articulation of the goals/mission of a liberal education. College-wide learning goals (first established in 1977), were recast to elevate traditional liberal arts capabilities—critical reading, written and oral expression, quantitative reasoning—and proficiency in using information resources. By 2012, all of Amherst's academic departments and programs had formulated and publicized learning goals.<sup>17</sup> Over the past decade, departmental faculty have continued to evaluate the effectiveness of these goals, and to refine them, through approaches that include departmental conversations and classroom interactions, formal assessments of student learning, and reviews of capstone experiences. Concurrent with the writing of this self-study, a faculty committee was engaged in a comprehensive review of the curriculum, considering, among other topics, the intellectual skills and capacities that Amherst should seek to instill in students, the curricular implications of Amherst's commitment to diversity, and the advantages and drawbacks of the open curriculum.

On the administrative and co-curricular side, the adoption of office- and function-specific mission statements across the college has helped foster a rejuvenated culture of mission-based self-study, priority-setting, assessment, and planning (see the chapter on standard two). Examples of offices that have adopted mission statements that are outgrowths of the college's broader statement include the relatively new Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Frost Library, the Center for Community Engagement, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Global Education, the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Human Resources, and the Department of Physical Education and Athletics. Posted on the college's web site are more than twenty such statements. Tellingly, the title of the college's last comprehensive campaign ("Lives of Consequence") owed its moniker to language within the mission statement.

In addition, and from its own assessments and in response to community concerns, the board of trustees has formulated and promulgated a number of statements<sup>18</sup> between 2012 and 2017 that function as extensions of the mission statement, offering specificity about the topic at hand. Through these communications, the board has addressed college policy regarding sustainability, sexual misconduct, the college mascot, and fraternities. The trustees regularly evaluate board statements and, as the trustees deem necessary and appropriate, may revise them. For example, as noted earlier, the board took a fresh look at its 1996 *Statement on Diversity* at Amherst College, made changes to the statement, and voted to adopt the new version in January of 2018. The previous year, the board voted to endorse another statement that addresses a core value of liberal arts education and of the college's mission, *The Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*, which was drafted by the Committee of Six, and approved by the faculty in 2016.

Without a doubt, the most sustained, comprehensive, and mission-driven exercise of the past decade was the strategic planning initiative (2013–2015), through which Amherst reexamined its core identity, commitments, and purposes. This process of self-inquiry affirmed the college's mission—with reinterpretations in some realms to meet the needs of a changing student body and world. The values and aspirations of the mission statement are reflected in the priorities and recommendations that emerged through the planning process and that are articulated in the *Strategic Plan for Amherst College* (SPAC). The implementation plan developed by the president and her senior staff<sup>19</sup> is providing a mechanism for translating the SPAC's priorities and recommendations into specific programs and funding initiatives. Through the SPAC implementation plan, Amherst is also setting measurable benchmarks and assessing progress toward meeting the college's mission-driven goals.

The introduction to the SPAC makes explicit the connection between the mission and the strategic priorities, as follows: "This plan celebrates the liberal arts as our defining mission and a form of education that our society (and the world) increasingly needs. When we reach our bicentennial in 2021, Amherst will be distinguished by bold policies on access and affordability that ensure our net price continues to be one of the lowest among private institutions; high academic standards and a curriculum that cements Amherst's reputation for quality and invention; a global outlook and global capabilities as a dimension every graduate should possess, regardless of career path; a reimagined residential experience that makes our differences in socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and national background a greater educational benefit for all our students; a transformed east

campus that inspires students, faculty, staff, and alumni; new, vibrant and durable connections across generations and across differences in perspective.”<sup>20</sup> The administration provided the board of trustees with a progress report on the implementation of each of the plan’s priorities at the trustees’ retreat in June 2017. A number of recommendations have already been actualized, and significant progress has been made on others. Long- and short-range implementation planning will continue. As noted earlier, the plan’s priorities are also serving as the priorities of the comprehensive campaign.

It is a distinctive feature of the Amherst culture that members of the community hold the college accountable to its mission, and this has certainly been true over the past decade. In November 2015, Amherst students organized a protest against racism and other forms of prejudice and inequality, which included a sit-in in Frost Library. In the event commonly known as *Amherst Uprising*, for three days, students engaged the wider community in their concerns about issues of race on campus. The college, saddened by the pain that so many students feel in college life and in their experiences off campus, determined to do more to address their concerns. *Amherst Uprising*; days of dialogue that the college has organized to focus on issues surrounding race and sexual violence on campus; and other efforts to raise awareness about pressing issues have had a significant impact since the time of the last self-study.

In 2015, President Martin constituted the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion,<sup>21</sup> as well as the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence. In addition, a Diversity and Inclusion Committee contributed to the strategic planning process. These entities were charged with assessing and enhancing the effectiveness of Amherst’s efforts to support the academic excellence, social and emotional well-being, and intercultural competency of the student body. In 2016, the trustees severed the college’s informal ties to Lord Jeffery Amherst, a historical figure who had served as an unofficial mascot for decades. The board judged that any association with this individual would be inconsistent with Amherst’s mission and values. (A year later, after consultation with all constituencies within the college community, Amherst adopted its first official mascot, the mammoth.) Amherst hired its first chief diversity and inclusion officer and established and staffed an Office of Diversity and Inclusion in 2016.<sup>22</sup> The college created a Title IX team in 2012 and established a Title IX office<sup>23</sup> within the Office of General Counsel in 2013 (see the chapter on standard nine). Over the past several years, Amherst has made a substantial investment in its health services function, including the counseling center,<sup>24</sup> in response to student need and national trends. The Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion was constituted in 2017 to undertake a comprehensive review of Amherst’s policies and practices in the area of disability and inclusion (see the chapter on standard nine).

## **PROJECTION**

The mission statement was established with the aim of stimulating conversation about the mission and purposes of the college. In 2007, it was envisioned that the newly articulated statement should not and would not be static, and should instead be seen as a continuing work in progress. It was agreed that dissents and suggestions would be noted, and the possibility of reinterpretation and revision left open. Over the next five years, the process of implementing the recommendations of the *Strategic Plan for Amherst College*, an Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee,<sup>25</sup> and the comprehensive campaign that will fund the priorities identified in the plan, will afford broad and continuing fora for discussion of Amherst’s mission and goals. The senior staff is in the process of operationalizing goals for each of the plan’s priorities, and in turn, these priorities directly reflect the broad vision of the mission.

## PLANNING AND EVALUATION

### DESCRIPTION

The bedrock of this chapter, and across the domains discussed in the self-study, is *The Strategic Plan for Amherst College* (SPAC). This most recent of the college's planning exercises was indebted to nearly two decades of prior self-study and planning. The SPAC process elicited broad participation by the Amherst community, as had its predecessors. As intensive initiatives of short duration, the earlier planning projects were largely focused on specific areas. The Residential Master Plan (2000–2007), which addressed the creation of a first-year quadrangle, helped to reshape the first-year experience. The Special Committee on the Amherst Education (SCAE [2003–2004]) focused on writing, quantitative literacy, global comprehension, experiential learning, the arts, and the importance of academic support for less well-prepared students. The SCAE also identified the need for additional capacity for research and evaluation, leading to the creation of the Office of Institutional Research. A more comprehensive extension of the SCAE's work, the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP [2004–2005]<sup>26</sup>) addressed curricular innovation, expansion of the faculty, research support, and broadening admission access. The 2013 interim report to the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education was concerned with the implementation of plans that resulted from these efforts, most prominently the CAP's recommendations.

The SPAC process was launched shortly after the submission of the 2013 report, with a more comprehensive charge that included updating the recommendations of the CAP. In that year, President Martin added a provost to her senior staff to oversee the strategic planning process (see the chapter on standard three for information about the provost position). Four faculty-led core committees were constituted, each charged to evaluate an area (education, research, student life, diversity, and internationalization). Three support committees, which were chaired by senior staff members, examined the campus framework, the financial outlook, and information technology. A steering committee oversaw the entire process and included the president, provost, dean of the faculty, associate deans of the faculty, senior staff, trustees, and the president. Altogether thirty-four faculty members, twenty-eight staff members, eighteen students, eight senior staff members, and nine trustees served on these committees. Eight of the trustees were alumni.

Each of the four core committees met weekly for a year, consulted with all constituencies, and based its study on substantial data that were made available to the college community. The Office of Institutional Research (now called the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services [OIRRS]) provided support by conducting research and providing qualitative and quantitative data. In the spring of 2014, the recommendations that resulted from these deliberations were posted online to solicit feedback and discussed at faculty meetings. The four committees organized dozens of meetings with students, staff, and faculty to seek their views. The steering committee held a retreat in July of 2014, during which its members synthesized the ideas of the core committees and developed a draft plan and set of recommendations. Another period of broad consultation and discussion ensued. In September of 2014, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), noting that the open curriculum had not fallen within the purview of any one strategic planning committee, sent a letter urging the dean, the president, the provost, and the Committee of Six to charge an ad hoc committee with examining the open curriculum. The draft plan was modified to include this recommendation, and the Committee of Six constituted the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee in the summer of 2015; its work is ongoing. In May 2015, the faculty endorsed the SPAC, and the trustees approved it.

In President Martin's letter of June 23, 2015, to the community, which accompanied the online distribution of the SPAC, she summarized the plan as follows: "The plan does not envision a transformation of the college; instead, it outlines vital incremental changes that will reaffirm our commitment to liberal arts education. In taking these steps, we will emphasize the connections between our academic programs and residential and co-curricular learning offerings to ensure that our graduates are prepared for the world they are entering. Building on Amherst's tradition of academic excellence, the college will exemplify the value of the liberal arts in an era of dramatic change."<sup>27</sup> The final plan identified seven priorities, each with associated recommendations, to be



pursued over the next decade. The priorities focus on reinventing a rigorous liberal arts education; hiring, developing, and retaining outstanding teachers, scholars, and artists; enhancing students' residential experience and sense of belonging; identifying and enrolling the most promising students from all social and economic backgrounds; preparing students for increasing global interdependence by cultivating international programs and perspectives; developing bold approaches to financial, environmental, and institutional sustainability; and involving alumni more fully in the life of the college.

Concurrent with the strategic planning exercise, and often informed by its deliberations and results, a broad culture of planning and evaluation has flourished in academic departments and programs and in administrative offices. Between 2008 and 2017, 74 percent of academic departments and programs underwent external reviews, a process<sup>28</sup> that includes an internal self-study, as well as an evaluation by an external committee made up of four professors, typically from a mix of liberal arts colleges and universities. The self-study includes surveys of alumni and current majors; an in-depth look at curricular requirements and course offerings; and planning for future FTEs, in response to retirements and new student/faculty interests. Over two or three days on campus, the team meets with all department/program members, majors, interested others, the CEP, the dean, and the president. The reviewers' recommendations, which are provided in a final report that is shared with the president and the dean, the department or program, and the CEP, often inform the CEP's consideration of FTE requests. The process of external review also supports efforts to consider how best to strengthen interdisciplinary areas of the curriculum. As noted earlier, as this self-study was under way, the dean of the faculty and a group of Amherst faculty who focus their research and teaching on Africa were preparing a self-study about how the continent could be enhanced within the college's curriculum. Plans call for an external review team to come to campus in the fall of 2018. Attention to this area of the curriculum is expected to support the SPAC priority of cultivating international programs and perspectives.

External reviews of administrative units, following much the same format used for academic departments and programs, have been undertaken for areas that include study abroad (now called global education), information technology, and the Amherst College Press.<sup>29</sup> The college has retained outside consultants to review student life, information technology, communications, and human resources functions; the Center for Community Engagement (CCE); and classrooms and campus facilities. In addition, the Office of Communications, Frost Library, the Mead Art Museum, and the CCE have all adopted their own strategic plans over the past five years. As the functions of the college have grown more complex and new areas of responsibility have been added, efforts toward greater professionalism have fostered a culture of critical self-evaluation. The Offices of the Dean of the Faculty, Admission, Financial Aid, Student Affairs, and Advancement, as well as the senior staff and the board of trustees, hold retreats on a regular basis to plan and evaluate their work.

The CCE offers an example of the ways in which the SPAC's recommendations have led to planning efforts that advance the plan's priorities. Launched in 2007, the center was established to support community service and experiential learning. It created new opportunities, including an immersive experience for new students during orientation week, student leadership programs, and volunteer placements to connect Amherst students with local communities. The CCE also coordinated opportunities for students to participate in paid local, national, and international summer internships. Facing a funding shortfall from a source external to the college, in 2015 the CCE began a period of self-study and reinvention. The center was inspired by the SPAC's call to create more opportunities for project-based learning and entrepreneurship so that students may "learn by doing." The CCE now collaborates closely with the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning,<sup>30</sup> the mission of which has also been expanded (see the chapter on standard five). The SPAC acknowledged that Amherst must do more than liberal arts colleges have done in the past to prepare students for the professional opportunities they seek. The Loeb Center is transforming a traditional career center (which offered a limited number of services, primarily for seniors) into a resource that provides students with opportunities—from the moment they arrive and on through graduation—to connect their academic interests with possible careers, to secure internship opportunities, and to interact with alumni.

An external review conducted of the Office of Study Abroad (now called the Office of Global Education<sup>31</sup>) in the fall of 2016 offers another example of the ways in which such reviews inform planning and the allocation of college resources. After reviewing the office's self-study and meeting with a wide cross-section of the campus, the visiting committee made recommendations in the following key areas: purpose and function of the office within the context of Amherst's strategic planning priorities, program options for students, engagement with faculty on the college's internationalization efforts, and the financial model for study abroad. The Office of Global Education has already moved forward with several of the committee's recommendations. Amherst has identified a list of third-party providers to aid in the management of, and to share liability for, short-term, faculty-led programs off-campus. Additional funds have been made available for faculty to evaluate study-away programs and to make program-specific recommendations for various majors. The scope of the Office of Global Education expanded in the fall of 2017; global partnership initiatives, faculty-led student travel, and risk management of all college-sponsored travel are now within its purview. Staffing was expanded accordingly. Amherst has also made a commitment to changing the financial model for study away to ensure that the experience is available to all students well into the future.

Another outcome of the review took place at the level of governance. In February of 2018, the faculty voted to change the name of the Committee on International Education to the Committee on Global Education and to expand the committee's charge. Given students' interest in participating in domestic "study-away" programs, and—at the time—the lack of a formal process for approving and overseeing such programs, the charge of the committee was revised. The charge now includes as part of the committee's work the evaluation, approval, and academic oversight of domestic study-away programs. For many years, the committee had focused its work on study-abroad programs. This change was also an outgrowth of the college's recognition that, with the arrival at Amherst of a significant number of international students, the term *study abroad* was no longer suitable. Students who come to Amherst from another country are already studying *abroad*, it was agreed. In addition, some international students decide to study in a third country during their time at Amherst, so saying that these students are participating in a study-abroad program was viewed as illogical. International students may also decide to study in their home country. In short, the nomenclature that the college had been using was seen as U.S.-centric, and new language was created in appreciation of the college's multinational student body.

The areas of curriculum, student affairs, diversity and inclusion, Amherst's built and natural campus environment, finance, and the comprehensive campaign have each been the subject of large-scale planning activities that, like the planning exercise of the CCE, represent an outgrowth of the SPAC. The planning initiatives discussed in more detail here are having, or promise to have, the broadest impact.

### **The Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee**

The Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee<sup>32</sup> is charged with exploring whether Amherst's open curriculum continues to offer an outstanding and relevant liberal arts education, one that empowers students with the knowledge, capabilities, and habits of mind to be thoughtful and engaged citizens of a changing world. Three aspects of the Amherst education are the major focus of the committee's ongoing efforts—the intellectual skills and capacities that should be instilled in students, the curricular implications of Amherst's commitment to diversity, and the advantages and drawbacks of the open curriculum in achieving these goals. The committee comprises eight faculty, two staff, and two students; the dean of the faculty and the director of academic projects are serving as *ex officio* members, without vote. To inform and support its work, which is still under way, the committee has explored the practices of other institutions, is consulting broadly, and is relying on reams of data (see the chapter on standard eight). Beyond its weekly meetings, the committee has held seven full-day retreats to engage in deliberations at a holistic level about its evolving ideas and recommendations.

The curriculum committee's initial recommendations emerged as a response to concerns raised by students during *Amherst Uprising* (see the self-study's introduction and the section in this chapter about diversity and inclusion) and at an all-campus meeting on student workload. The goal of the changes that the committee proposed was to enhance the flexibility of some academic policies, to reduce academic pressure on students

and enhance learning without sacrificing rigor. The faculty considered some of these proposals during 2016–2017. Some have been implemented; others are still under consideration (see the chapter on standard four).

In addition, and also before the curriculum committee’s first draft of its report was released in November 2017, two initiatives related to advising were carried out. (More discussion about advising is included in the chapters on standards four and six.) Through research on best practices at peer institutions, the curriculum committee identified two approaches to advising—an “intensive advising” program for first-year students and an advising “hub”<sup>33</sup>—that seemed worthy of further exploration. Inspired by an innovative program at Bowdoin College, Amherst launched an advising pilot in 2016–2017. The goal is to increase the level of support provided to first-year students and to test a new model of advising that might be adopted by the faculty. Students in the college’s two summer “bridge” programs (“Summer Science” and “Summer Humanities”), which served first-year students with less preparation and/or who were the first in their families to attend college (see appraisal), and faculty members, who volunteered to serve as their advisors, participated in the pilot. The hope was to demonstrate the utility of advising that goes beyond simply helping students select courses. Advisors met with their advisees twice a month and focused discussions on a wide range of topics (e.g., how to use faculty office hours, how to develop a schedule for academic work, and how to balance extra-curricular and academic demands). Each advisor worked with two students, in addition to her or his regular advisees. Advisors met monthly as a working group to discuss advising strategies. The curriculum committee also proposed that an online advising hub be created to centralize information related to advising. This tool was developed during 2016–2017 and implemented in the fall of 2017.

As noted earlier, the first draft of the curriculum committee’s report was shared with the faculty, students, and staff in the fall of 2017. Reaffirming the value of educational self-determination for students, the committee addressed the faculty’s responsibilities in advising and in defining college-wide learning goals (as noted earlier, Amherst’s learning goals were last revised in 2012). In addition to proposing a new set of learning goals, the committee recommended three major changes to strengthen advising—requiring all faculty to participate in advising during new student orientation, capping the number of college advisees assigned to each professor, and increasing the frequency of advisor-advisee meetings during the first two years. The committee also debated the open curriculum’s value and considered options for new requirements around the first-year seminar program and gateway courses to expose students to all parts of the curriculum.

As this self-study was under way, as is discussed later in this chapter, the faculty was continuing to engage in conversations about the curriculum committee’s proposals, which were not finalized by the time of the submission of this document.

### **Student Affairs**

Early in her presidency, President Martin recognized the urgent need to reconceive Amherst’s student affairs function, including the importance of creating new structures, policies, processes, and approaches. The counseling center was a particular area of concern, and transforming this important health service became a high priority. Over the past five years, planning and assessment efforts, including processes of self-inquiry and external review, have been intensive. Significant changes have resulted and are enabling Amherst to support the student body in new and significant ways—in service of the mission to “bring together the most promising students, whatever their financial need, in order to promote diversity of experience and ideas within a purposefully small residential community.”

A 2012 external review offered an analysis of the structure of student affairs, recommending that the college “redefine the dean of students office so that it is perceived as a source of co-curricular education, not just a triage or problem-solving unit.” The next year, a college committee charged with reviewing policies and making recommendations aimed at improving Amherst’s capacity to prevent and address incidents of sexual misconduct weighed in. The Special Oversight Committee on Sexual Misconduct (SMOC)<sup>34</sup> noted that the dean of students office “should be reimagined and recast to ensure that it takes a leadership role in co-curricular education and community building.”

In response to the concerns that had been raised and recommendations that had been made, President Martin made a number of structural changes. The dean's office was renamed the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) in 2014, replacing, in more than nomenclature, the Office of the Dean of Students. The president created the position of chief student affairs officer (CSAO) and appointed Suzanne Coffey, then the college's director of athletics, to fill the role. (As this self-study was under way, Ms. Coffey announced that she plans to retire at the conclusion of the 2017–2018 academic year.) Under the previous model, the dean of students had led the office. Under the new structure, the CSAO heads the OSA, which still includes a dean of students (the position is currently vacant). The charge for the new OSA and its leadership was to evaluate the office's structure, including all reporting departments, and to implement recommendations that had been made to enhance the capacity and capabilities of the division's staff. Toward this goal, President Martin engaged the consulting firm of Keeling & Associates (K&A) to assist CSAO Coffey in a strategic review of student affairs.

Soon after the firm began working with the college, K&A noted, "The functions, operations, policies, and human and other resources of the student life portfolio had not been reconsidered or renewed in many years, despite changes in Amherst's student population, transitions in institutional and student life leadership, and significant modifications in federal higher education policies, regulations, and priorities. Similarly, the college had not recently reviewed the organization, structure, and program and service portfolio of student life. Traditional approaches being used at Amherst in residential life, student conduct, counseling, and record-keeping and communication had not been recently questioned or updated." K&A's initial report, which was completed in the spring of 2014, offered a blueprint for significant changes in all of the identified areas. The firm's assessment has resulted in significant improvements (see also the chapter on standard five).

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Since the 2013 interim report, significant attention has been focused on issues of diversity and inclusion at the college. Important progress has been made as a result of planning and evaluation efforts—the establishment of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (OD&I), the introduction of new leadership, the allocation of additional resources, and the creation of new collaborations among campus partners. In 2015, President Martin made a commitment to bring a chief diversity officer to Amherst. Subsequently faculty, students, and staff worked with a search firm to articulate the responsibilities of the position, the title of which was changed to *chief diversity and inclusion officer* to better reflect the more expansive role that was envisioned. The goal for the new role, which was assumed by Norm Jones in July 2016, was to elevate the work of diversity, inclusion, and equity to an institutional level, and to enhance Amherst's participation in discourse that is focused on diversity and inclusion. Upon his arrival, Mr. Jones turned his attention to establishing the OD&I; conducting an informed assessment of diversity programs; and launching comprehensive training for students, faculty and staff. In collaboration with the dean of the faculty, he began working with academic departments that were conducting searches to help create more diverse applicant pools, by expanding outreach. In addition, in recent years, a number of committees and task forces have been charged with considering issues of diversity and inclusion at Amherst. As noted earlier, in 2015, President Martin constituted the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, and the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence. In addition, a Diversity and Inclusion Committee contributed to the strategic planning process. In 2017, the Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion was formed to undertake a review of Amherst's policies and practices in the area of disability and inclusion.

### **Campus/Facilities**

Planning efforts over the past decade have focused on renewing the natural and built environment to better integrate academic, co-curricular, residential, and administrative functions into a unified living and learning campus. This work supports Amherst's mission as a residential liberal arts college and the priorities of the strategic plan. To move beyond a traditional short-term, narrowly focused approach to planning, the college engaged the architecture and campus planning firm of Beyer Blinder Belle (BBB) to develop a campus framework plan, which was completed in 2013. Unlike traditional master plans, which focus on several known and well-defined capital projects, framework plans explore possible future directions and ways in which to

coordinate short-term opportunities with long-term plans and goals that emerge from strategic planning processes. This type of plan does not prescribe certain projects, but rather provides an understanding of the factors that will influence the evolution of the natural and built environment of the campus. Embracing environmental sustainability is an Amherst imperative. The college has reduced the carbon footprint of the campus by approximately 30 percent over the past decade. New initiatives—energy conservation, the use of natural gas instead of oil, power co-generation, high-efficiency building design—have brought Amherst the additional benefit of immense cost savings. The college will expand such efforts significantly with a climate action plan (in development at the time of the writing of this report) that will point the way to a carbon-neutral future for Amherst within a fixed timeframe.

As noted earlier, Amherst is currently undertaking the most ambitious building project in its history, which has required an unprecedented amount of planning and coordination over the past decade. In 2008, recognizing the major deficits in the 1960s-era Merrill Science Center, Amherst began studies to determine how to create facilities that would better support the rigors of modern scientific teaching and research. It became clear that there were inherent complexities associated with Merrill's infrastructure, and that the attendant disruption that renovations would cause to the science program would be significant. The college decided that a new facility was needed. The resulting new science center incorporates sophisticated energy efficiency technologies and promises to be among the most energy efficient science buildings in the world when it is completed. Central to the planning and design for the new science center are robust research spaces. These best-in-class spaces will attract and retain stellar faculty and create optimal environments for students to engage in collaborative research with faculty (see the chapter on standard seven).

### **Finance**

Since the time of the 2013 interim report, planning has been a major area of emphasis within the college's finance function. A number of changes have already been implemented as a result of the goals that emerged through these efforts, including aims that were identified in the strategic planning process. The SPAC's recommendation 6.1 is that Amherst "build a sustainable financial model by preserving the strength of the endowment and promoting a new, rigorous budgeting process that contains costs and directs Amherst's resources to core mission activities." In a reflection of the importance of effective financial planning to the college's long-term success, 20 percent of the SPAC—eight out of forty pages, exclusive of the bibliography and exhibits—is dedicated to a detailed articulation of the college's financial model and strategy. "Amherst's seemingly ample financial resources will always be outpaced by the scale of its ambitions," it is noted in the SPAC. As such, careful financial planning and stewardship of Amherst's financial resources are an important determinant of the college's long-term success.

In 2013, the finance team developed a ten-year, assumption-driven model for financial planning. The model is used to produce financial projections and to assess the potential financial impact of a variety of future scenarios, including economic expansions and recessions, investment market growth and downturns, and significant changes to student financial need. These projections are presented regularly to the president, senior staff, and finance committee of the board of trustees. The resulting conversations influence many aspects of the college's financial plan, including the setting of the comprehensive fee, estimates of endowment returns, spending strategy for the endowment, and the capacity of the operating budget.

A number of structural changes have made enhancements in the finance area possible. With the goal of placing responsibility for comprehensive financial planning within Amherst's finance function, the president and board of trustees created a new leadership position. They concurred that the traditional title of treasurer had become antiquated and did not reflect the expanded mandate of the reconceived role, and they titled the new position chief financial officer (CFO). A search for the first CFO was launched in 2012. Shortly after his arrival, three positions were created to gain the specific expertise that was needed to improve financial planning and oversight. The director of financial planning and analysis (now called the director of financial planning and assistant treasurer) assumed responsibility for improving and directing the operating budget process, long-range financial planning and modeling, and decision-support analysis. The director of treasury operations and analysis instituted

a new capital budgeting process and enhanced planning and analysis around the college's debt portfolio, cash management, banking relationships, and capital financing strategy. The director of financial systems and projects began a multi-year effort to modernize business processes, systems, and reporting. In 2015, the CFO assumed an expanded set of responsibilities, with the goal of enhancing the coordination of administrative activities across a number of functions, including human resources, information technology, and campus operations. Although no transitions in reporting relationships occurred, the CFO's title changed to chief financial and administrative officer (CFAO) to reflect this change in the position's role. In 2017, the director of treasury operations and analysis was promoted to associate chief financial officer and treasurer, assuming oversight responsibilities for accounting, financial planning, and financial processes and systems.

Amherst has developed a structure and rigorous process for creating the annual budget. Although this process formally begins in December and concludes when the board of trustees approves the next year's operating budget at its May meeting, work on the operating budget occurs year-round. Prior to the launch of the formal process, the finance team gathers data and insights to inform estimates of resource availability for the next annual cycle. Senior leaders submit requests for budgetary allocations, which are evaluated and prioritized in consideration of their contribution to the college's strategic objectives. As part of this process, the Committee on Priorities and Resources reviews these requests and provides advisory input. The president makes final determinations in the creation of a balanced budget proposal. The final operating budget proposal is presented to the budget and finance committee of the board, which recommends the proposal to the full board of trustees for its approval. In 2014, Amherst instituted a formal annual capital budget process, through which the college identifies and prioritizes requests for durable goods and projects with long-term lives, such as new buildings, facility renovations, information technology solutions, and equipment. The process also helps identify available financial resources from a variety of funding sources, including the operating budget, gifts, reserves, and debt proceeds. The process for the capital budget, which is similar to that of the operating budget, considers all requests together to permit an informed prioritization of the most critical needs that align best with the SPAC (see also the chapter on standard seven).

### **The Comprehensive Campaign**

As noted earlier, as this report was under way, it was expected that Amherst would announce the public launch of a comprehensive campaign in April of 2018, after having raised one-third of this effort's tentative working goal. It was also anticipated that the campaign would reach its goal by 2023. With potential donors now identified, the campaign leadership and Amherst's development staff are focusing on cultivating donors' philanthropic interests and giving to support the college's strategic priorities. Specific giving and naming opportunities in a broad range of giving levels were established; in the aggregate, they represent all of the needs identified in the SPAC. The campaign is being planned and implemented with the strong leadership and support of the board of trustees; President Martin, the chair of the board of trustees, and three trustee co-chairs of the campaign represent the core leadership team. The full board participated in the planning and implementation of the campaign during two retreats held in 2015 and 2017, and is continuing to do so during the trustees' regular meetings. All trustees have been generous and active contributors to the campaign. As this document was under way, campaign communication pieces were being developed; a general, broad campaign communication plan was in progress; and the President's Campaign Board, a group of one hundred leading donors and prospective donors, was constituted. Existing class volunteer structures that are involved in the ongoing annual fund effort will also play a role in the campaign (see also the chapter on standard seven).

### **APPRAISAL**

The college noted in the interim report that Amherst's planning and evaluation capacities in various domains had increased substantially, but in ways that called for stronger integration. Areas identified included the curriculum, the new science center, physical and technological resources, the Office of Institutional Research, the CCE, the Loeb Center, and financial planning. The SPAC addressed these areas in the broadly integrative manner envisioned in 2013. The president and senior staff are translating these priorities into detailed, measurable outcomes that will allow the college to gauge its progress in meeting the plan's objectives. It is

expected that, as Amherst continues to move from a period of intense planning to a greater focus on implementation, the need to evaluate progress and impact will grow. The implementation plans developed by the president and her senior staff provide a flexible blueprint for measuring success. Enhanced research, analytic, analysis, and assessment capabilities within the OIRRS will support this work.

The SPAC priorities, and the plan's associated recommendations, have already guided decisions in the years since its completion. The intentionality and speed with which the SPAC priorities are being implemented offer evidence of the efficacy of the planning process. Accomplishments so far, some of which have been discussed in this chapter, affirm that the plan's recommendations are grounded in the mission and culture of the college and have taken root. These achievements include significant progress on the construction of the science center and Greenway Projects; the creation of a more effective Office of Student Affairs; progress on building a more diverse faculty through the use of new processes and structures; hiring a chief diversity and inclusion officer and building the infrastructure of the OD&I; the establishment of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL); the completion of four new residence halls that were designed to build community; the implementation of a rigorous budgeting process that contains costs and directs resources to core activities of the college's mission; the creation of a reimagined CCE; and the expansion of Amherst's environmental sustainability program. In addition, the reorientation of the mission of the Loeb Center is strengthening the link between academic skills and possible careers through coordination of career advising and internship programs, as well as through an emphasis on earlier exploratory and experiential activities that are targeted at first- and second-year students—and therefore more integrated with the entire Amherst academic experience.

The SPAC process further demonstrated the value of data and analysis in the college's planning and evaluation efforts. Both the SPAC and Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee relied heavily on institutional research. In 2017, recognizing the value of the integration of student-level data in measuring educational effectiveness, the dean of the faculty reorganized the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of the Registrar into a combined department, the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services.

The planning exercises conducted by departments, programs, and offices have intersected with the SPAC's goals. For example, internal and external assessments of the CCE revealed that the center was most successful in building relationships with a growing number of faculty who were incorporating experiential learning into courses, engaging in community-based research, and linking summer internships to students' academic goals. The review identified opportunities to expand the CCE's activities, with the goal of serving a wider range of students and faculty in support of the SPAC's priorities. One of the major conclusions of the CCE's review was that many of the center's initiatives, while valuable, were duplicative of work being done elsewhere on campus. The review was helpful in clarifying the areas where the center could have the most impact. Incorporating the review's recommendations, the re-envisioned CCE was launched in the fall of 2016, with the goal of ensuring that students and graduates are engaged, effective, and innovative problem-solvers in their communities and workplaces. The CCE is now part of a college-wide, integrative learning initiative that supports "learning by doing." The center has partnered with the CTL to support academic departments and faculty in their efforts to strengthen teaching and learning. The CCE plans to focus its efforts on developing experiential learning opportunities that are coordinated with the curricular goals of the faculty and of academic departments and programs, including those that enhance students' capacity to solve problems. An example of the CCE's inventive work is its new Design Thinking Challenge Program,<sup>35</sup> which brings together students with diverse interests to think deeply about a complex challenge and to develop solutions together (see the chapter on standard five), a program that is expanding in the 2017–2018 academic year.

### **The Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee**

The curriculum committee's initial recommendations have already had an impact on students' academic experiences. In October of 2016, the committee forwarded to the CEP proposals to revise the course withdrawal policy, the policy covering incompletes, the pass-fail policy, and a recommendation that departments be allowed to offer minors. With the goal of making some academic policies less rigid, without compromising standards, in April of 2017 the faculty voted to approve several proposed policies. The policy

governing course incompleteness was liberalized to allow extension for reasons other than “grave personal emergencies,” the standard prior to the vote. Additionally, students may now graduate with thirty-one courses (rather than thirty-two); they may withdraw without penalty from one course during their first three years. Previously this option was limited to withdrawals in the first year and upon failure of a course in the second year. The deadline for withdrawal requests was extended to the end of the tenth week of the semester, with further exceptions beyond this deadline permitted for disabling medical reasons or for reasons of grave personal emergency. An early proposal by the curriculum committee to add minors is still under consideration.

The committee initially recommended the adoption of three foundational seminars that would address the new learning goals it planned to propose. Conversations with faculty members revealed some concerns about the scope of the proposal and the feasibility of staffing a three-course sequence. In response, the committee began exploring several alternatives to ensure breadth and equity in students’ education. The committee decided to propose that all students be required to take at least two “Opening the Curriculum” courses, courses that would enable non-majors and/or prospective majors to explore the most distinctive and stimulating aspects of a field of study that is relatively new to them.

This fall, the committee continued to discuss the merits of these proposals, as well as alternative approaches to the first-year seminar. To address a need for community and shared experiences that had been identified during the SPAC process, the committee proposed revising the first-year seminar to include the goal of creating shared intellectual experiences, through a common interdisciplinary course for all first-year students or through clusters of first-year seminars. A survey of first-year students revealed interest in a second course that would address research skills. (Currently, all students other than transfer students are required to complete a first-year seminar.)

Before turning to the curriculum committee’s assessment of advising and some of its outcomes, it is informative to consider previous efforts to improve advising at the college. The 2013 interim report pointed to multiple initiatives “of unprecedented scope” that addressed advising, “rais[ing] awareness about our educational values, as well as the logistical problems of giving students sufficient and timely advice for making full use of the open curriculum. Both students and advisors now have more real-time information about registration, transcripts, course goals, and advising procedures.”

Discussions about advising continued following the release of the 2012 report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Advising, which was composed of faculty and administrators. The committee had been given a broad charge, which started from the question of whether advising should “focus more specifically on the articulation and assessment of student learning goals.” The charge went on to address faculty and non-faculty responsibility, equity in workload, orientation advising for new students, and the impact of the new online system. The committee found significant grounds for concern in the following three major areas: unevenness in the advising loads for faculty; frequent reassignment of the pre-major advisor; and widespread student reports of minimal advising time each semester. The ad hoc committee argued that the advisor should function less as just a gatekeeper on course registration and more broadly as a teacher in organizing reflection on students’ attainment of their learning goals, both within and beyond the advisor’s specializations. The committee proposed a shift to a single-advisor system, with no transfer to a major advisor (or two, for double majors). Course selection and career planning within majors would become the responsibility of a director of studies in each major. Advising loads could be capped at sixteen, and faculty could be evaluated by their advisees. For the initial registration of new students, the committee proposed replacing individual advisors by boards of deans and faculty. The committee also recommended appointing an associate-dean level director of advising.

The projection offered in 2013, when the faculty was about to consider the ad hoc advising committee’s report, was prescient. The writers noted, “Initial review by the Committee of Six suggests that the reform of the advising system will be difficult and protracted. Given the centrality of advising to the open curriculum and the demands it makes on faculty, perpetual and intense scrutiny of the system may be necessary and healthy.” After its discussions about the report, the faculty’s sense was that several of the proposals included worthwhile goals—capping the number of advisees, making advisee assignments in ways that would limit discontinuity, and



restructuring advising for first-year students during orientation. The faculty did not support the single-advisor recommendation, shared its unease about incorporating an evaluation of advising into faculty personnel processes, and expressed skepticism about the likelihood that advising would be transformed by having students and faculty focus on statements of students' learning goals. One outcome of this effort was that the dean of the faculty instituted a mentoring program that paired new advisors with senior colleagues.

With this relatively recent history in mind, between 2015 and 2017, the curriculum committee revisited the topic of advising. There was agreement, once again, that advising should be viewed as an essential pedagogical responsibility of every faculty member. The committee recommended that all faculty members be expected to participate fully in the advising program, including during first-year orientation; that the administration make efforts to address the inequity of advising loads across the faculty and not assign new "college" (non-major) advisees to any faculty member who had eighteen or more major advisees (other than by faculty request); and that advisors meet with their college advisees at least three times during the first semester and at least twice per semester in the following three terms. The committee proposed that departments and programs be encouraged to assign a rotating pre-major advisor to guide students interested in the major; information about course offerings for both semesters of the upcoming academic year be made available to students during the spring pre-registration period; more robust training be provided to faculty-advisors; advising-related programming be expanded during orientation; the purpose of advising be explained to assist students who might be traditionally less comfortable with such conversations; the intensive advising pilot be expanded; and reflection during the student's second year be encouraged as part of advising. At the time of the submission of the self-study, the faculty was expected to discuss the committee's advising recommendations in the spring of 2018.

In tandem with an expansion of the college's summer "bridge programs," the intensive advising program is offering an interesting and well-received model. As a result of this expansion, which was launched in the summer of 2017, a larger number of students (forty-two first-year students and twelve transfer students) and faculty are participating in the pilot advising program in 2017–2018. (All participants in the summer bridge programs take part in the intensive advising program, as do all new students who are transferring to Amherst from a community college.) For the summer of 2017, Amherst doubled the number of students (now twenty-four) in the Summer Humanities track and increased the number of participants (now eighteen) in the Summer Science track by 50 percent. In another important change, the criteria for participation in the bridge program were defined and made explicit. Through an evaluation of the experiences of past participants in the bridge program, including outcomes, the college learned that first-generation, low-income (FLI) students had benefited from the program the most, and that the summer bridge group needed to have a stronger sense of community.

Based on these findings, it was decided that the bridge program would be available FLI students exclusively. When deciding which students should participate, efforts are made to identify students who would most benefit for a combination of cultural, social, and academic reasons. In the past, students who were invited to participate in the bridge program may not have known why they were being asked. Beginning with the summer 2017 cohort, the college decided to provide greater clarity on this point. The dean of new students has observed that awareness of why they were participating in the program has helped "bridge" students bond with one another more quickly and effectively around a shared experience. The change in the bridge program also prompted a broader shift in the ways in which the college supports FLI students. To address problems in the past that had centered around students feeling that it was taboo for them to talk about being the first in their families to attend college and/or to be from a low-income background, the college now uses the FLI term with students early on. Doing so seems to be helping them embrace and feel proud of this part of their identity and experience, the dean of new students reports. The intensive advising pilot was assessed with a qualitative measure at the end of the program's first year. Students were extremely positive in their responses to the program. The dean's office will continue to monitor and evaluate the intensive advising pilot and will evaluate the success of the expanded bridge programs. The advising hub will continue to be revised to improve usability. More robust training for new advisors, a recommendation of the curriculum committee, is being initiated in the spring of 2018.

The faculty's feedback led the curriculum committee, in its draft report, to recommend largely incremental changes at a college-wide level. The committee decided that the best approach to effect change would be through the departmental structure. Its review of comprehensive requirements within majors revealed that practices differ substantially among departments and programs. The results of this analysis prompted the committee to recommend to the faculty that the college create greater clarity about pathways into areas of the curriculum, examine the balance between flexibility and structure within course requirements for major, and explore new ways of engaging faculty and students in thinking about the curriculum. The curriculum committee reflected on the faculty's responses to the draft report at a retreat held in January of 2018. Interestingly, the committee learned that some faculty, including most Committee of Six members, are interested in creating a sequence of foundational courses. As the self-study was nearing completion, the curriculum committee was considering whether to recommend some of its initial proposals, to modify others, and not to move forward with some ideas. Discussions with the faculty will continue during the spring of 2018.

### **Student Affairs**

K&A Consultants' recommendations were evaluated during the summer of 2014. In each case, the OSA reviewed and discussed best practices and contemplated how each innovation would be adopted. The CSAO set expectations for monthly reporting by every unit, and she and her staff engaged in planning and implementation meetings on a regular basis. In March of 2015, K&A wrote a report assessing the office's progress toward addressing the firm's 2014 recommendations. The results indicated that a majority of K&A's recommendations had been implemented during the first two years of transition to a new student affairs function.

Moving forward with the recommendation to create living/learning communities has been an iterative process. In the fall of 2014, OSA leaders established the Student Affairs Advisory Committee, which was made up of twelve students. This group worked on proposals for living communities, then called *neighborhoods*, and presented concepts in the spring of 2015. Throughout the next two years, the discussion ebbed and flowed as students, staff, faculty, and trustees continued to deliberate on a residential model. In 2015, plans for four new residence halls were developed, vetted by students, and approved by the board of trustees. Older halls with a similar bed-count were razed in the spring of 2016, while final preparations were being made to open the new halls in time for the start of the fall semester. The timing of the opening of the new Greenway Residence Halls offered an opportunity for experimentation. The office piloted a structure in which students from different class years were housed together, a mixed model that was new to Amherst. OSA leaders spent the winter and spring evaluating the effectiveness of choices made in the design of the new halls, and in the programming. Focus groups were conducted to solicit student feedback. The results revealed a high level of student satisfaction with the mixed-class year living arrangements, the availability of a large variety of collaborative study spaces, and the positioning and outfitting of multiple social spaces.

The committee process leading to the writing of the SPAC began before the major transitions in student affairs. The work accomplished in 2014 and 2015, while the plan was being completed, was influenced by the strategic planning subcommittee on student life. Two years later, several of the major initiatives outlined in the SPAC's priority three are well under way, and in some cases, accomplished. The CSAO established ten working groups in 2016, each with a charge of implementing a component of a more detailed strategic plan for student affairs. All full-time OSA staff members participated on one of the groups. Reports and updates were shared with staff at regular intervals during the year, culminating in a summary of actions and aspirations that was included in a strategic plan implementation report to the board of trustees in May 2017.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity and Inclusion efforts at Amherst focused largely on student-centered work prior to Mr. Jones's arrival. With more emphasis being placed on faculty development and staff engagement, Amherst now has an office that attends to institutional obligations and aspirations around diversity. While there is much work to be done, a good deal of progress, as already noted, has been made, particularly in the areas of creating an office infrastructure (see the chapter on standard three), developing new processes to bring faculty from a broad range of backgrounds to Amherst, and enhancing various forms of staff engagement focused on inclusive

practices. In its first year, the OD&I crafted a three-year strategic plan that had the following overarching goals: recruit and retain a diverse community of first-rate faculty scholars, foster a greater sense of belonging for all students, and help create the conditions for bringing a more diverse staff to the college and supporting them. These goals were identified in response to SPAC priorities related to hiring and retaining outstanding faculty (priority two) and enhancing Amherst's residential experience and sense of belonging (priority three).

The setting and evaluation of goals surrounding diversity and inclusion has also been informed by a period of intensive internal and external review. As noted earlier, in 2015, President Martin constituted the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, made up of faculty, students, and staff, and the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence, composed of leaders within the fields of higher education and diversity and inclusion. In addition, a diversity and inclusion committee contributed to the strategic planning process. These entities were charged with assessing and enhancing the effectiveness of the college's efforts to support the academic excellence, social and emotional well-being, and intercultural competency of the student body. Upon completion of its first visit to campus in November of 2015, the external advisory committee noted that "diversity clutter" was an issue at the college. Though many programs and initiatives were developed, there was a lack of coherence and institutional framing among them, making it difficult to align purpose and goals. The committee asked the college to conduct a self-study of its diversity and inclusion programs, with a focus on the questions and concerns that had been raised. In March of 2017, the presidential task force submitted a self-study of diversity, inclusion and equity practices to the external committee.

After evaluating the self-study and visiting campus for a second time in April 2017, the external review committee's observations shifted slightly. The committee congratulated the college on having addressed many of the concerns related to "diversity clutter" and encouraged the Amherst community to place more emphasis on developing a shared vision around a "next generation liberal arts education." The committee's recommendations focused heavily on student mentoring across the four-year life cycle of the student experience, observing that Amherst has an opportunity to extend the intentionality that shapes the first-year orientation to programs to the second, third, and fourth year. The timing of the committee's recommendations was fortuitous, in that they aligned with the kind of work in which the OD&I had already been engaging.

Organizing the new office's work across faculty, student, and staff domains assures that day-to-day efforts to enhance and support diversity and inclusion are being advanced by an office that is charged with reaching all constituents of the college. On the faculty front, Amherst has made a substantial investment in the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. The efforts of the dean of the faculty and the OD&I have already demonstrated success (see the chapter on standard six). As discussed in the chapter on standard three, two faculty members have been appointed to the newly created position of faculty diversity and inclusion officer. They are developing new systems to advise and support untenured faculty and to support search committees in building academically talented and diverse recruiting strategies (see the chapter on standard six).

The Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion spent most of 2016 preparing its self-study and has now turned its attention to the review committee's recommendations, with a focus on the Amherst student experience. More broadly, the task force is focusing on the college's overall progress on its work surrounding diversity and inclusion and on ensuring that these efforts are integrated into the work of other college-wide committees.

### **Campus/Facilities**

The college has found the campus framework plan to be a highly effective tool for planning. The plan is helping Amherst define options for growth and change over the coming decades and is guiding decisions about how (and how quickly) the campus adapts to shifting needs and external pressures. Based on the framework plan, Amherst made the decision to develop the eastern area of campus around a new landscape concept to accommodate the new science center and the four new residence halls that have been completed since 2013.

Amherst created a new residential area of campus, housing three hundred students in four buildings, via the Greenway Residence Halls project. A vital community, connected to the campus through extensive landscape improvements, now stands in an area that was once home to parking lots and temporary modular

housing. Prototypical in many ways, the new halls encourage students in different classes to mix and enhance socializing through inviting lounge/studies that span building stories. In keeping with the college's environmental commitments, the buildings are very energy efficient, incorporating myriad technologies and design strategies.

The construction of the new science center, which was in its final stages during the writing of this self-study, has occupied a central place in campus planning efforts for a decade. Once Amherst decided to build a science center, numerous alternatives for siting the building were identified and evaluated. The outcome of these efforts was a decision to build the center adjacent to the existing Merrill Science Center. Benefits of this location would be the proximity to the campus core, enabling the building to become a campus resource beyond the college's science programs. Throughout the design process, the architect and construction manager provided strong assurance that the project could be accomplished within budget targets and would not be disruptive to the nearby Merrill Science Center. As the design progressed, cost data and empirical testing revealed that the project was fraught with risks that had not been foreseen originally. These risks revolved around costs and disruption of Amherst's science programs during construction. The administration and trustees made a decision in April 2013 to change course and consider alternative options.

The recognition that an alternative approach to siting a science center was needed prompted an intensive and comprehensive planning process that led Amherst to hire BBB to develop the campus framework plan. The framework plan that the firm created was used to inform the selection of a new site for the science center on the eastern portion of campus. This site was far superior to the original because it allowed for a poorly developed section of the campus to be put to better use, enabled other important projects to proceed, and created an opportunity for a more effective and less costly design solution to be implemented. With the new site selected, Amherst engaged an architectural planner, a landscape architect, and a campus planner to develop a conceptual design. The design was approved by the board of trustees in 2014, and the project has proceeded smoothly through all of the design and construction phases. It is scheduled for completion this summer.

Over the past several years, two evaluations by the chief of campus operations (CCO) have led to changes that are having a significant impact in the areas of emergency preparedness and sustainability. In 2014, the CCO conducted a critical assessment of the organizational capacity and resources available to ensure that Amherst was prepared to address the increasingly complex and frequent risks facing the college. Results of this effort indicated that an Office of Emergency Management was needed to enhance emergency preparedness and better protect students, staff, faculty, and visitors from various hazards that could threaten the community. While the college had focused on the development of an emergency management program over the preceding decade, under the direction of the Department of Environmental Health and Safety,<sup>36</sup> it was clear that the oversight of a dedicated and experienced director was necessary to enhance the program and ensure that it complied with national standards and was consistent with best practices. The office<sup>37</sup> was created in 2015, and a national search that year resulted in the hiring a director of emergency management. The director performed a baseline emergency management assessment that analyzed the current state of the college's program and provided recommendations for improvement. This assessment resulted in an action plan to enhance, among other things, the management structure of the incident command system, notifications systems, communication strategies, policies and procedures, emergency drills, and the education of the campus community. The director, who was highly respected in her field, assumed a higher level position in the private sector after one year at the college. As this self-study was under way, a search was being conducted to fill this position and continue the work of designing and implementing a robust emergency management program.

In 2013, after the CCO's review of the college's sustainability program, Amherst reached the conclusion that it had effectively incorporated environmental stewardship principles into building design, transportation, energy use and production, waste management, food sourcing and production, and materials procurement. Yet despite having achieved high marks from outside agencies such as the Sustainable Endowment Institute for these operational initiatives, the overall sustainability program was seen as fragmented and lacking in cohesion. The assessment revealed that the potential dividends from these efforts had not been fully realized. A subsequent study was conducted to develop a plan to create the dedicated resources and organizational capacity to use

these sustainability initiatives to inform a campus culture in which there is an awareness of the interconnections among the environment, economics, social equity, and aesthetics. This planning study resulted in the creation of the Office of Environmental Sustainability, which was launched in the fall of 2014.

## **Finance**

Over the past decade, Amherst has enhanced its financial planning and assessment activities. These improvements were made in response to growing expectations of the president and board of trustees for strategic financial management. Also contributing to this shift in approach were financial constraints and the demands of a financial model that includes substantial discounting of the comprehensive fee in service of the college's mission, as well as a high reliance on endowment resources to fund the operating budget. Amherst's emphasis on rigorous financial planning has yielded numerous results (see the chapter on standard seven).

With the appointment of the associate chief financial officer and treasurer, the college has improved its planning tools and activities for a number of components of its balance sheet, particularly cash and debt. In 2014, Amherst created and implemented a multi-year cash projection model that forecasts future cash and liquid investment balances. These projections help the college manage its reserves and available debt proceeds, in order to cover operating expenses and significant construction liabilities during the construction of the Greenway Projects, and to remain safely above the self-liquidity requirements related to the Amherst's variable rate demand bonds (VRDBs). In addition, the college has engaged in intensive efforts to plan and reshape its debt portfolio in recent years. The finance team evaluated a number of options to refinance existing debt and issue new debt to meet the institutional need for capital, while also shifting the mix of debt within the portfolio toward longer-term, fixed-rate issuances. This multi-year effort involved planning sessions with individual members of the board, the Committee of Budget and Finance, and the full board of trustees.

In 2014, to expand the ways in which appraisal is used within the annual budget process, the college began holding a summer meeting of the board's budget and finance committee outside the trustees' regular meeting schedule. At this meeting, the committee, the finance team, the president, and the senior staff discuss financial conditions and projections to determine a general plan for the upcoming budget cycle. Throughout the budget process, the finance team gathers requests for funds from across the college. These requests are compiled, reviewed, and discussed in aggregate with the president and senior staff on multiple occasions during the budget process. This process allows for a comparative prioritization of needs that are the most critical and which align best with the strategic priorities of the college, as articulated in the SPAC.

The introduction of a capital budget process has moderated the rate of expenditures on capital needs significantly. The rate of growth in the operating budget has slowed from a peak of more than 6 percent annually from fiscal 2013 through 2015, to about 3.5 percent in fiscal 2017 and 2018. Despite imposing this constraint, Amherst has been able to continue to invest aggressively in its key priorities. Exclusive of the Greenway Projects, annual capital expenditures approved through the capital budget process averaged about \$8 million annually from fiscal 2016 through 2018, a decline of about 50 percent from prior levels. In those years, these expenditures were almost completely funded via an operating budget allocation, which has preserved college reserves and debt proceeds. The debt portfolio is in the midst of a long-term shift from one that was composed of 50 percent variable-rate debt and 50 percent fixed-rate debt, to one that will be 20 percent variable and 80 percent fixed. In addition, the college's self-liquidity requirement has declined significantly in recent years as Amherst has prioritized the retirement or refinancing of variable-rate debt. Amherst has begun to move forward in accordance with its plan to lower its overall debt balance, reducing debt from a high of \$537 million in fiscal 2016 to about \$493 million in fiscal 2018. These actions have occurred while remaining mindful of the need to continue to invest in areas that support the college's mission, to maintain the quality of Amherst's facilities, and to be opportunistic in the use of leverage. As always, Amherst continues to seek to balance financial health and strength with an aggressive deployment of resources in the pursuit of its goals. As a result of the new capital budget process, the college has assembled a list of desired capital projects that extend far into the future. Amherst is now able to engage in multi-year analysis and planning to schedule these

projects and identify the funds necessary to complete them. The advancement office is kept apprised of this process so that individuals are asked to provide support for projects that intersect with their areas of interest.

### **Comprehensive Campaign**

At the highest level, the campaign's programmatic and financial objectives are grounded in the SPAC's goals, the most overarching of which is for Amherst to continue to provide the best liberal arts education available anywhere. As demonstrated by publications such as the campaign case statement, the planning for the campaign, including the setting of priorities, has helped to develop a crisper view of how Amherst will translate the SPAC into focused goals and objectives.

### **PROJECTIONS**

The implementation of the recommendations of the *Strategic Plan for Amherst College* are well under way, with some major goals attained and significant progress made on others. The plan promises to be a very useful guide in the decade to come. It is anticipated that the plan will continue to generate within divisions, departments, programs, and offices other planning efforts that are outgrowths of SPAC priorities and recommendations.

At the time of the writing of the self-study, it was premature to speculate about the outcome of the faculty's deliberations about the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee. Discussions of these recommendations will continue in the spring semester of 2018.

During the next decade, it is hoped that funding will be available for a new student center; accreditation for the counseling center will be secured; and counseling, health services, and health education will be situated under one wellness umbrella and located in a new student center.

The OD&I will focus on making the work of diversity and inclusion more systemic, rather than simply programmatic. Efforts undertaken will intersect with the initiatives of the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion. The task force will work collaboratively with other committees to achieve goals.

The campus framework plan will inform Amherst's strategic planning about building projects that will not come to fruition for some time. The college's commitment to financial and environmental sustainability has guided campus and facilities planning. This approach will continue in the future.

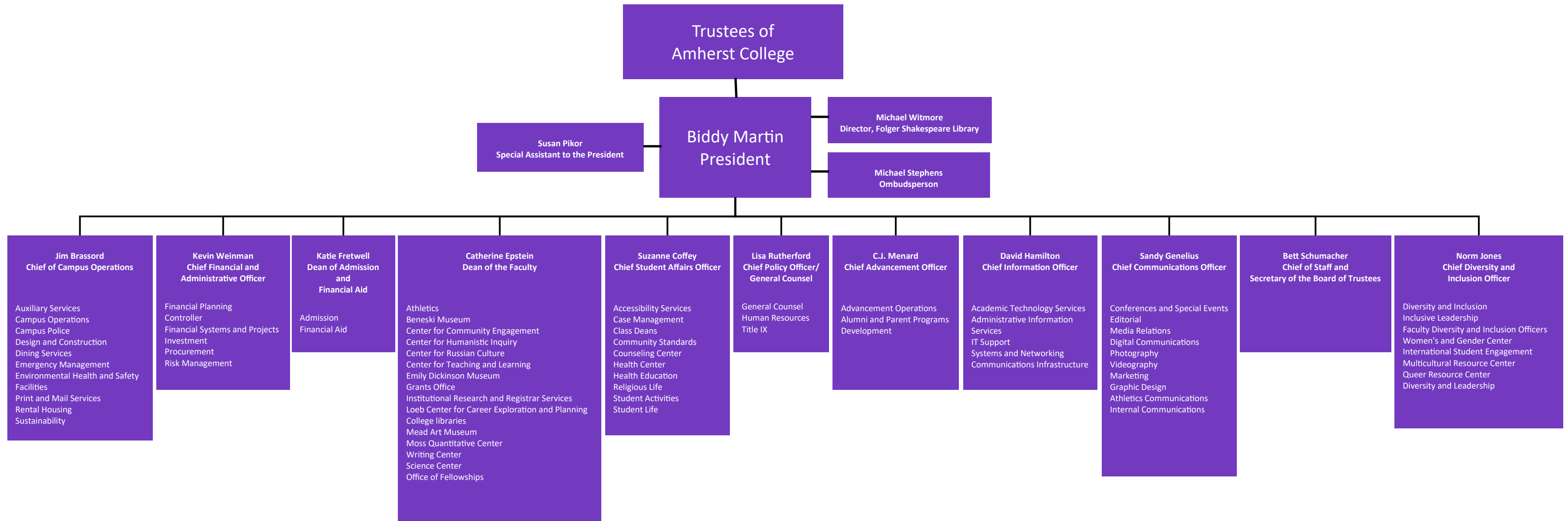
It is expected that the Loeb Center will continue to initiate new programs in service of its expanded mission. Most recently, as part of Interterm 2018, the Loeb Center and the OD&I collaborated to launch as a pilot the Next-Gen Leadership Institute. The intensive four-day program is aimed at supporting and encouraging Amherst students who are the first in their families to attend college, as well as those from low-income backgrounds.<sup>38</sup>

In the summer of 2017, the finance team initiated the process to produce a financial strategic plan for the college. This plan will outline strategies, measurements, benchmarks, and goals across two key institutional objectives, maintaining financial health and strength and mitigating financial risk. The plan will define specific markers of financial health and set goals for each that are sufficient to permit Amherst to fulfill its ambitious mission into the future. It will also define a number of strategies to mitigate risk, with the goal of enabling the college to endure moderate financial downturns, if they occur, and to identify deployable actions, if such downturns happen. It is anticipated that this work will be completed in May of 2018.

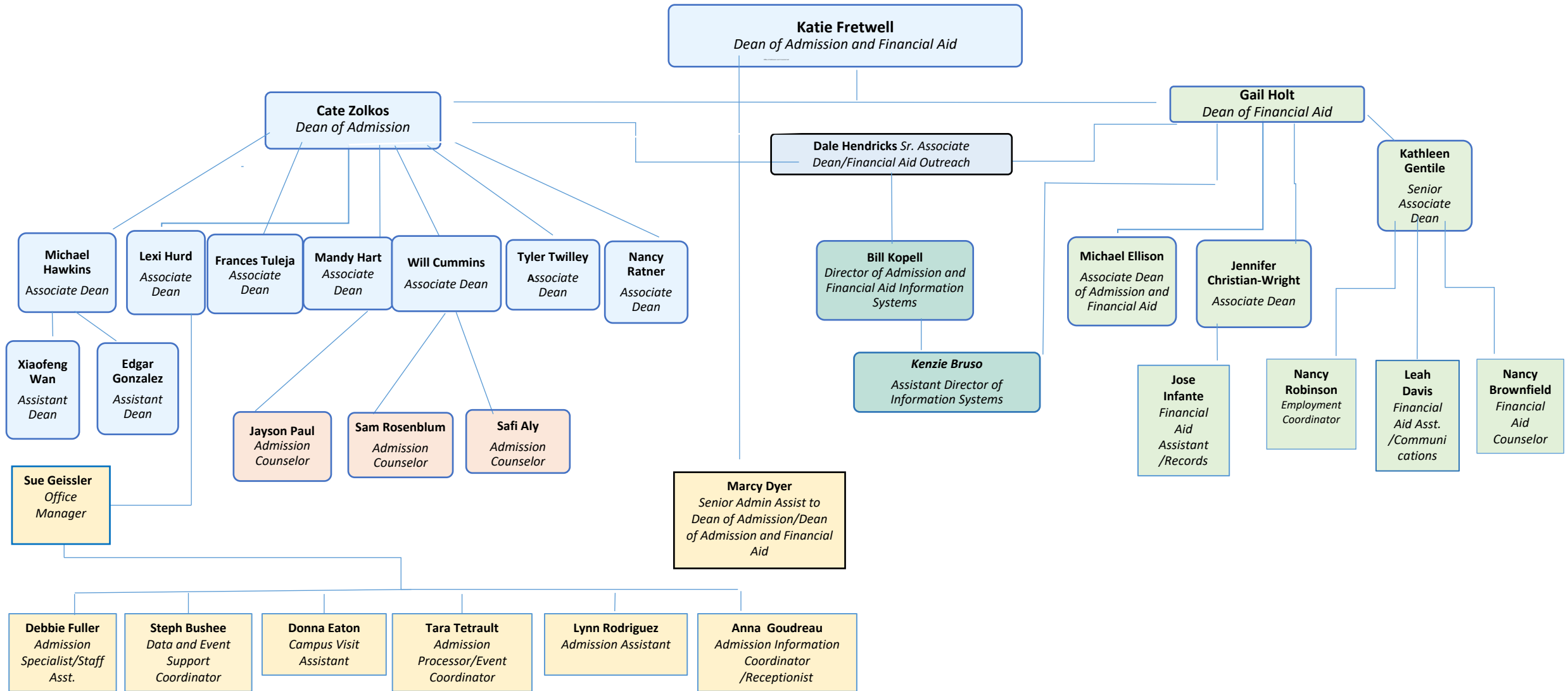
It is expected that the comprehensive campaign will help Amherst realize the goals of the SPAC. The pace of implementation of the strategic plan's recommendations will be contingent on available resources.

The CCE has established short-term and long-term goals. Among the most immediate, to be completed by 2018–2019, is working with academic departments and programs to implement experiential learning strategies, cultivate students' problem-solving skills, and increase the number of courses and research projects that involve "learning by doing."

# Amherst College Organizational Chart

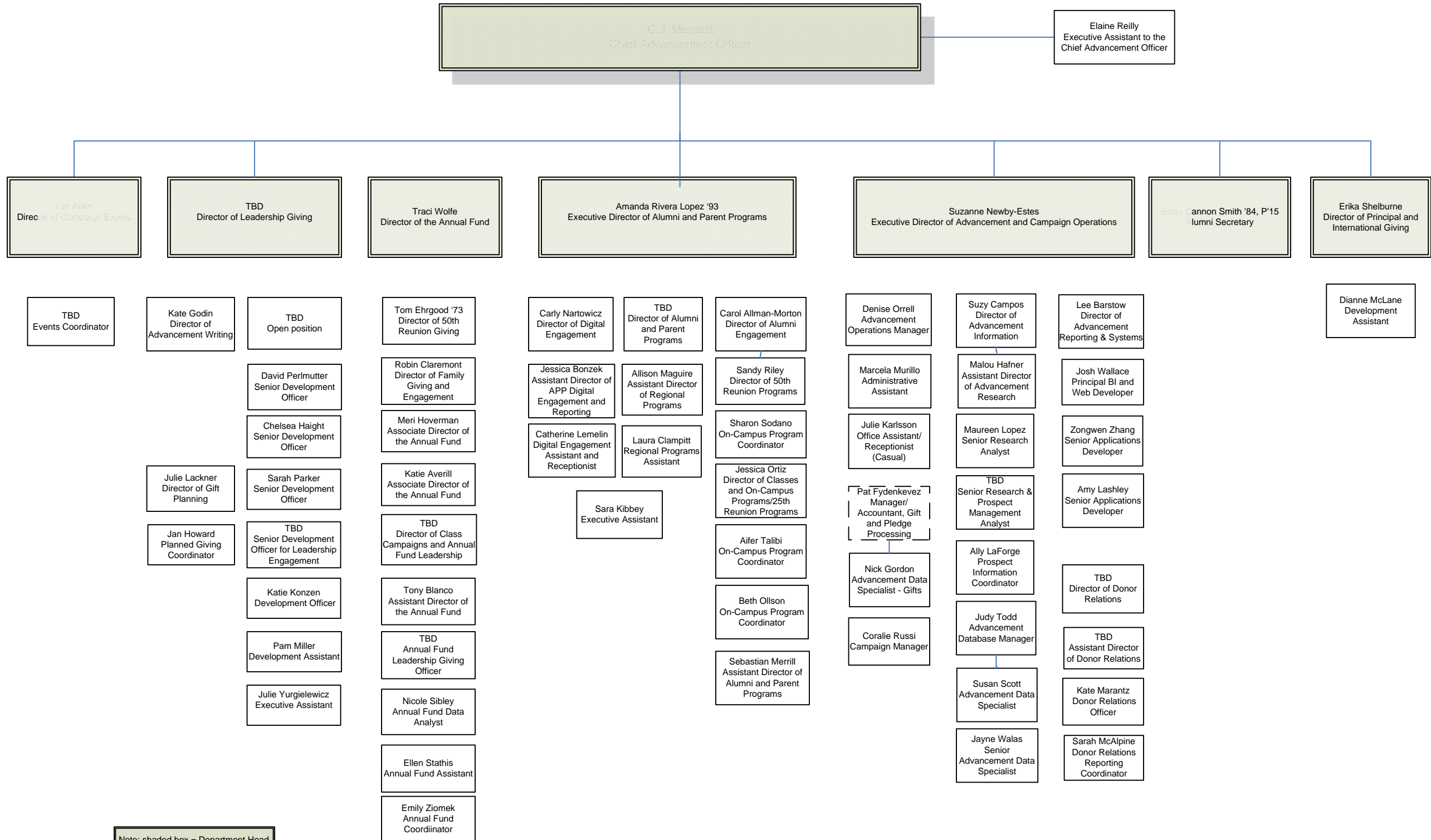


# Admission and Financial Aid



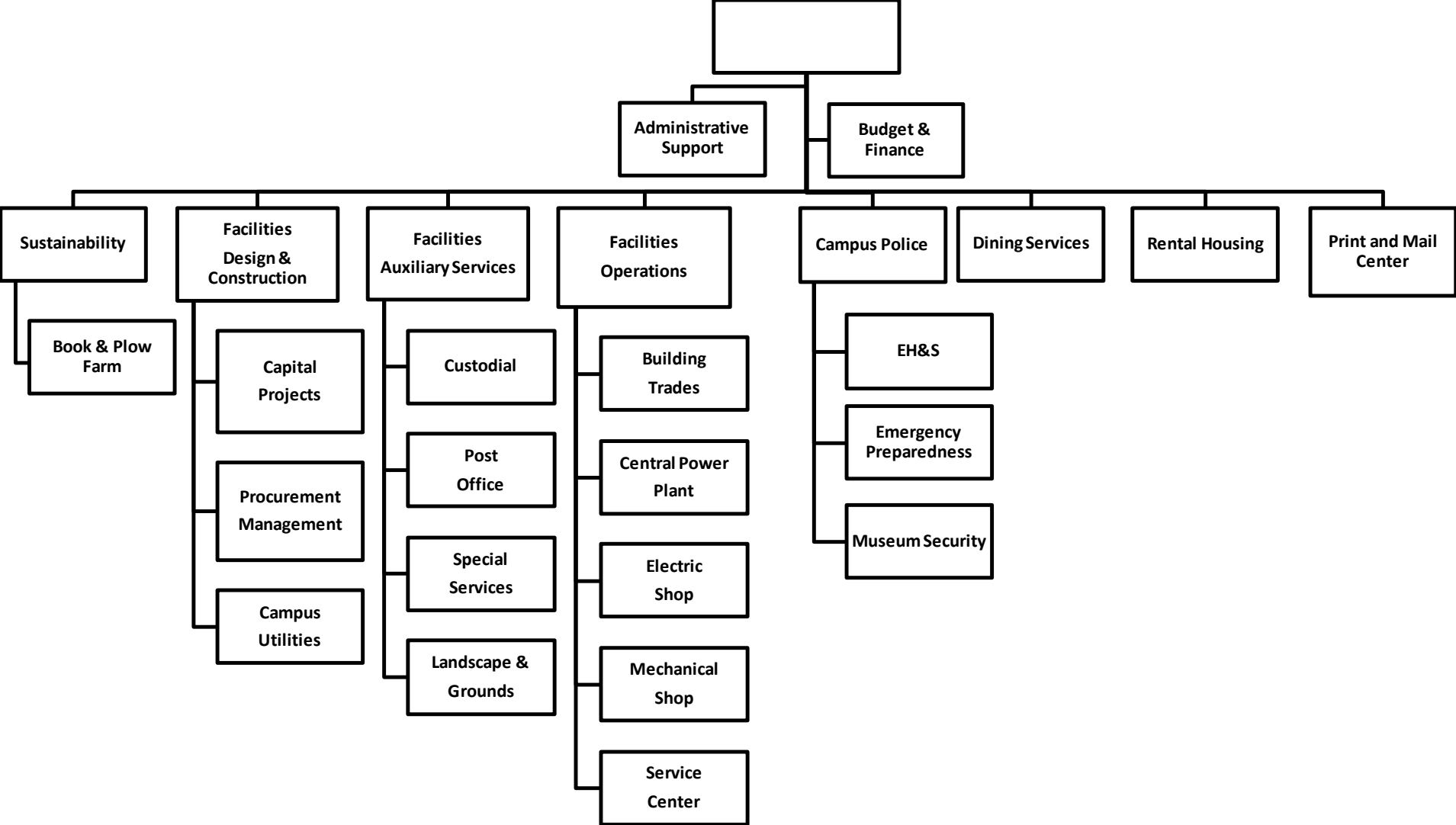


# Advancement

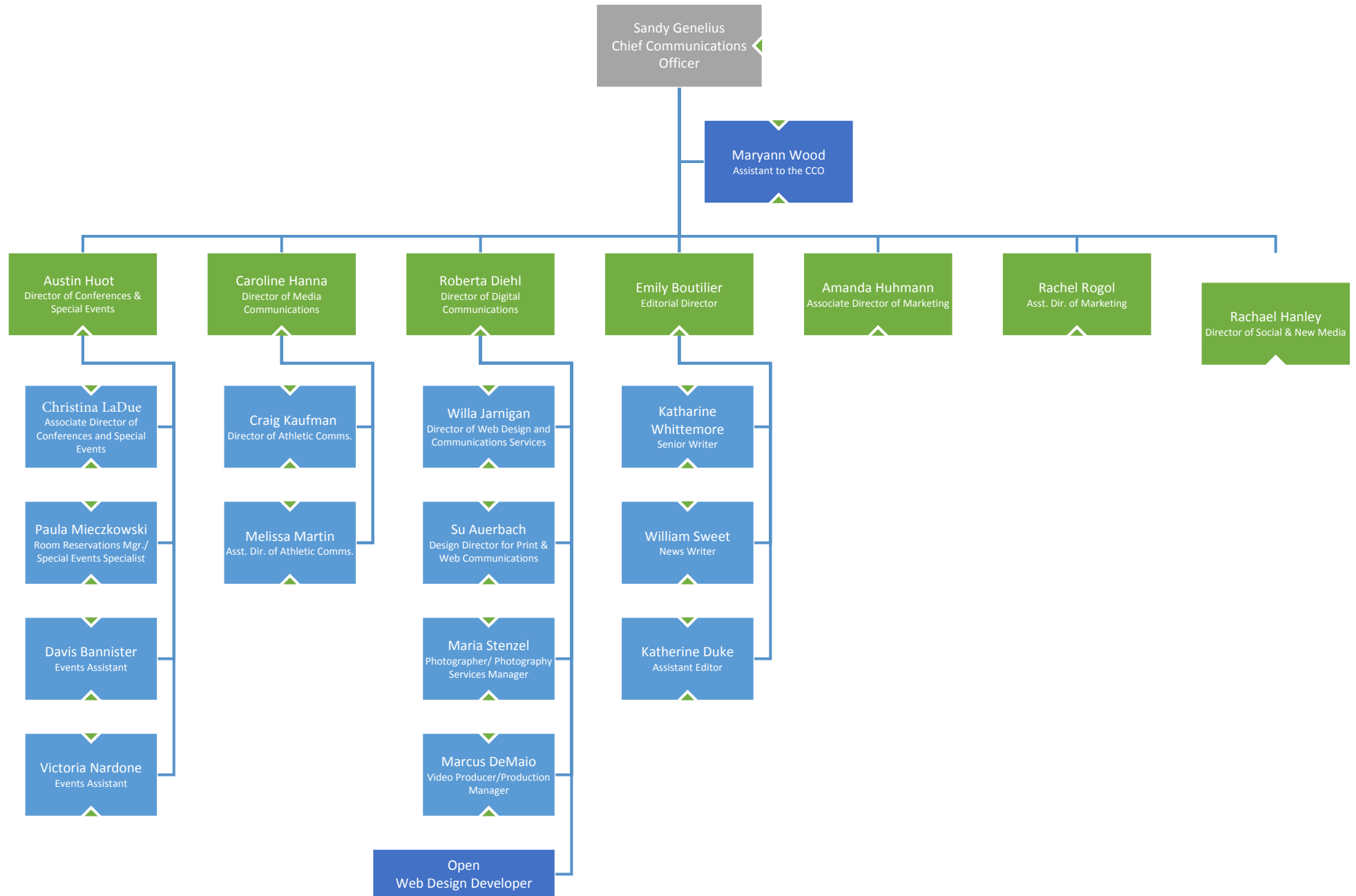


Note: shaded box = Department Head

Campus Operations



# Communications



# Dean of the Faculty

Dean of the Faculty  
Catherine Epstein

Athletics  
Director  
Don Faulstick  
(see separate chart)

Beneski Museum of Natural History  
Director  
Anna Martini  
Museum Educator  
Fred Venne  
Head of Collections and Operations  
Hayley Singleton

Center for Community Engagement  
Director  
Sarah Barr  
Assistant Director  
Zoe Jacobs  
Assistant Director of Innovation/  
Experiential Learning Programs  
Megan Lyster

Center for Humanistic Inquiry  
Director  
Martha Umphrey  
Administrative Assistant  
Heather Grimes

Center for Russian Culture  
Director  
Cathy Ciepiela  
Assistant  
Nadezda Spivak

Center for Teaching and Learning  
Faculty Director  
Jyl Gentzler  
Director  
Riley Caldwell O'Keefe  
Administrative Assistant  
Melissa Lowe

Emily Dickinson Museum  
Executive Director  
Jane Wald  
(see separate chart)

Grants Office  
Director  
Lisa Stoffer  
Associate Director  
Jeanne Weintraub  
Assistant Director  
Mary Strunk  
Administrative Assistant  
Nika Tomasic

Institutional Research and Registrar Services  
Director  
Jesse Barba  
(see separate chart)

Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning  
Director  
Emily Griffen  
(see separate chart)

College Libraries  
Librarian of the College  
Bryn Geffert  
(see separate chart)

Mead Art Museum  
Director and Chief Curator  
David Little  
(see separate chart)

Moss Quantitative Center  
Director  
Adam Honig  
(see separate chart)

Writing Center  
Director  
Jyl Gentzler  
(see separate chart)

Office of the Dean of the Faculty  
Associate Dean of the Faculty  
Jack Cheney

Associate Dean of the Faculty  
Austin Sarat

Associate Dean for Academic Administration  
Janet Tobin  
Academic Administration Policy Specialist  
Pam Korenewsky

Director of Academic Finance  
Steven Hegarty

Director of Academic Projects/  
Associate Dean of Admission  
Nancy Ratner

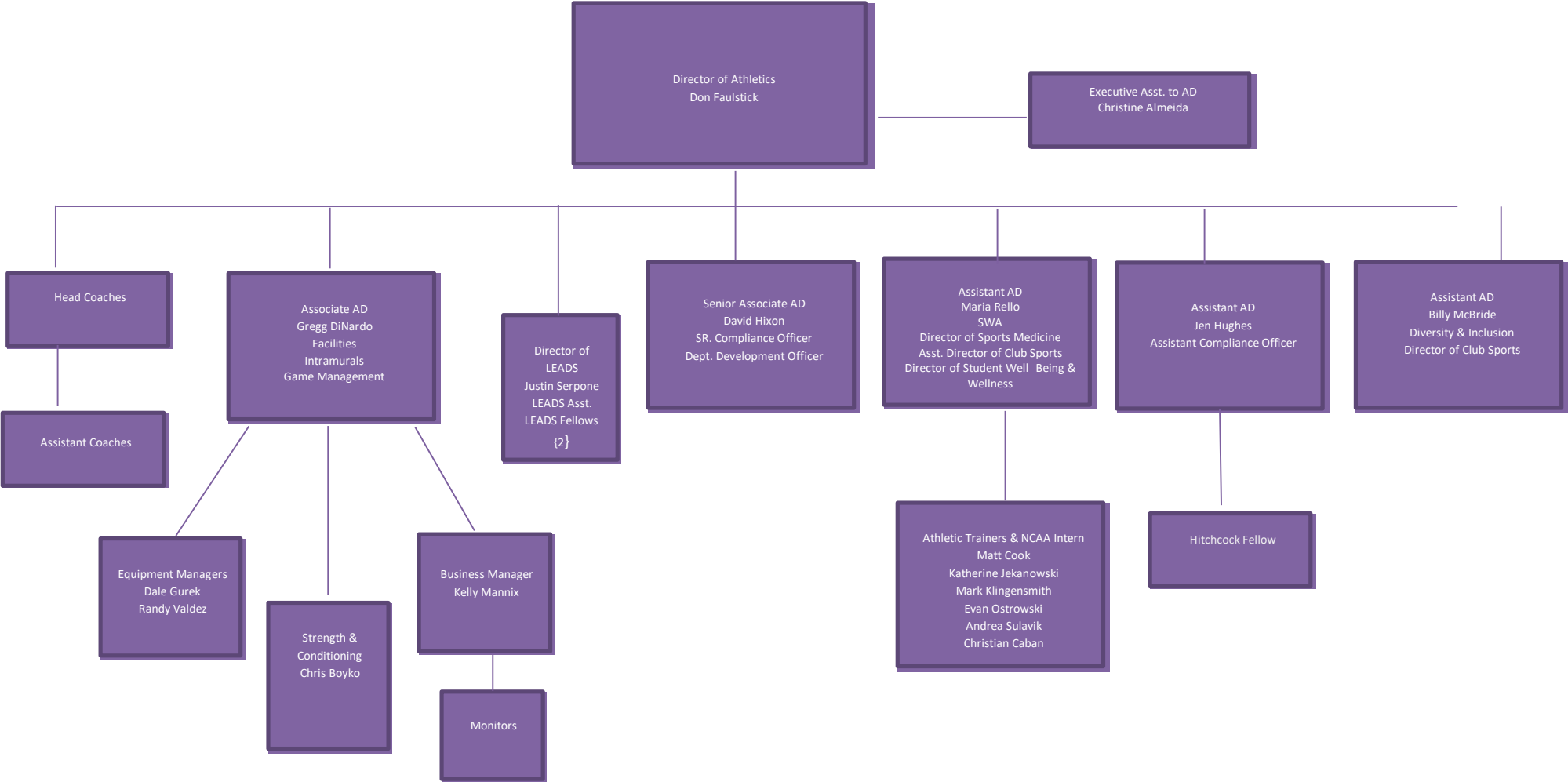
Assistant to the Dean of the Faculty/  
Office Manager  
Marie Fowler  
Administrative Assistant  
Debra Bishop  
Casual Administrative Assistant  
Louise Westhoff

Casual

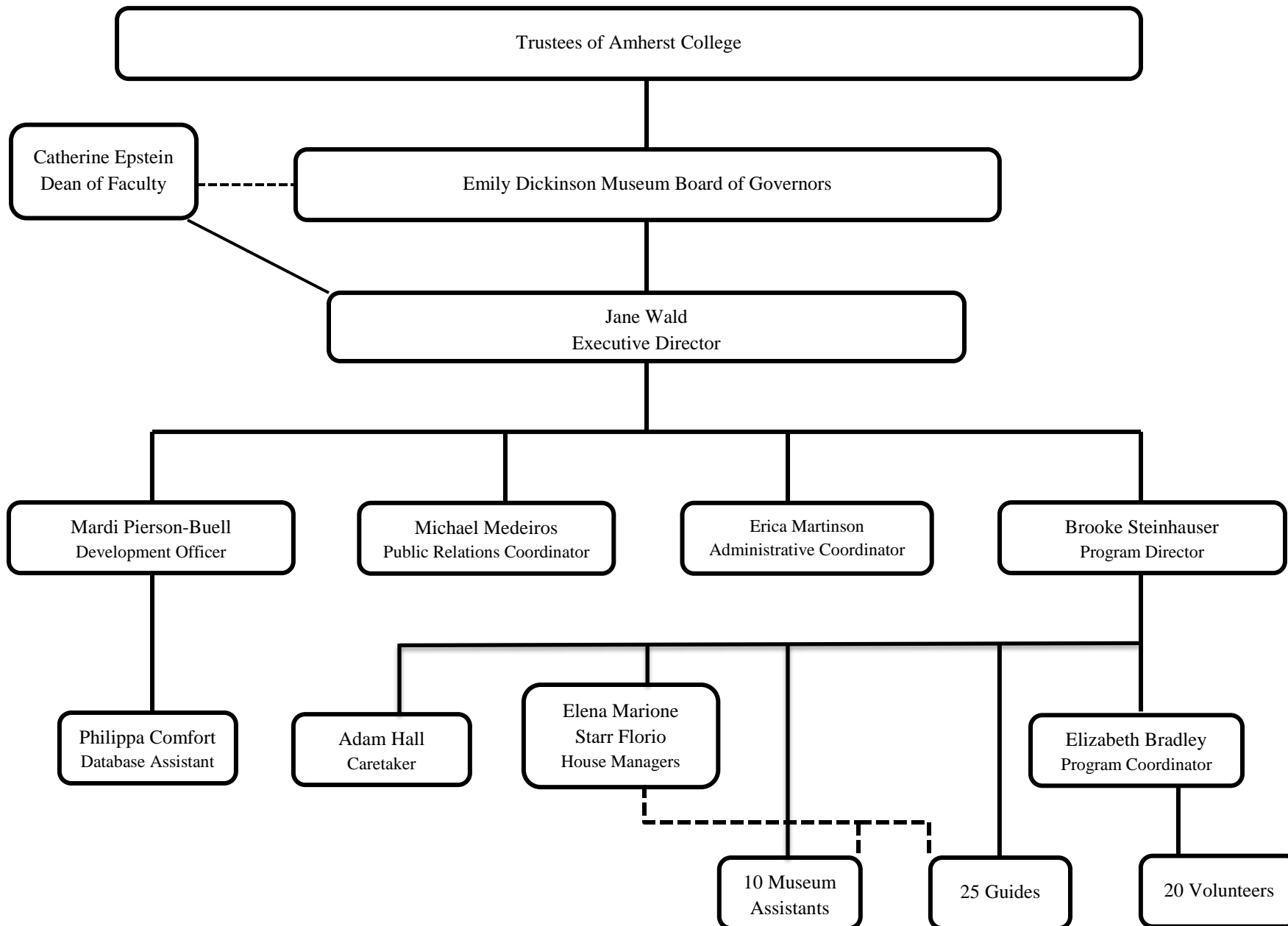
Science Center  
Administrative Director  
Jess Martin

Office of Fellowships  
Director  
Christine Overstreet  
Global Education Office  
Director

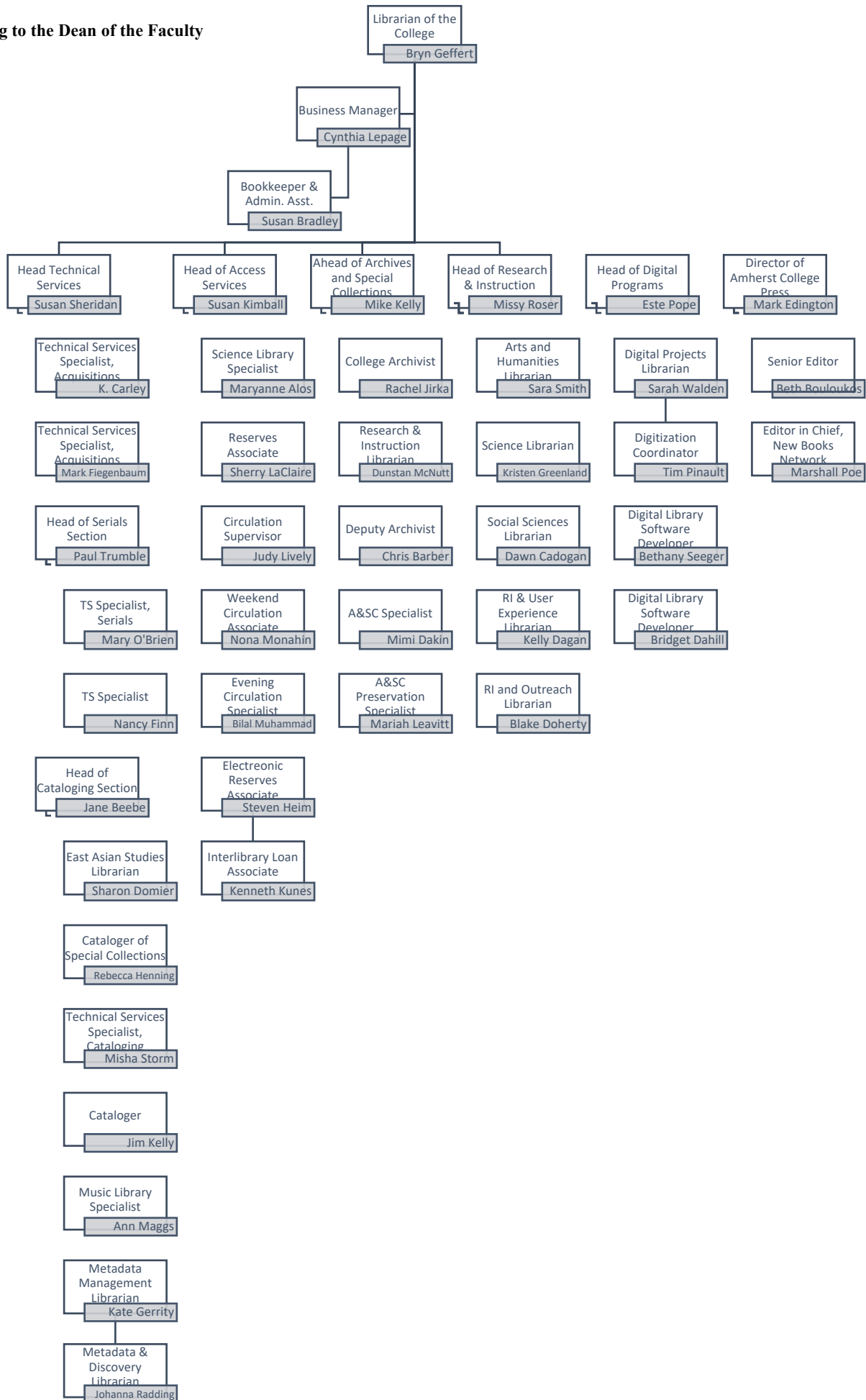
**Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty  
Athletics Department**



Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty Emily Dickinson Museum



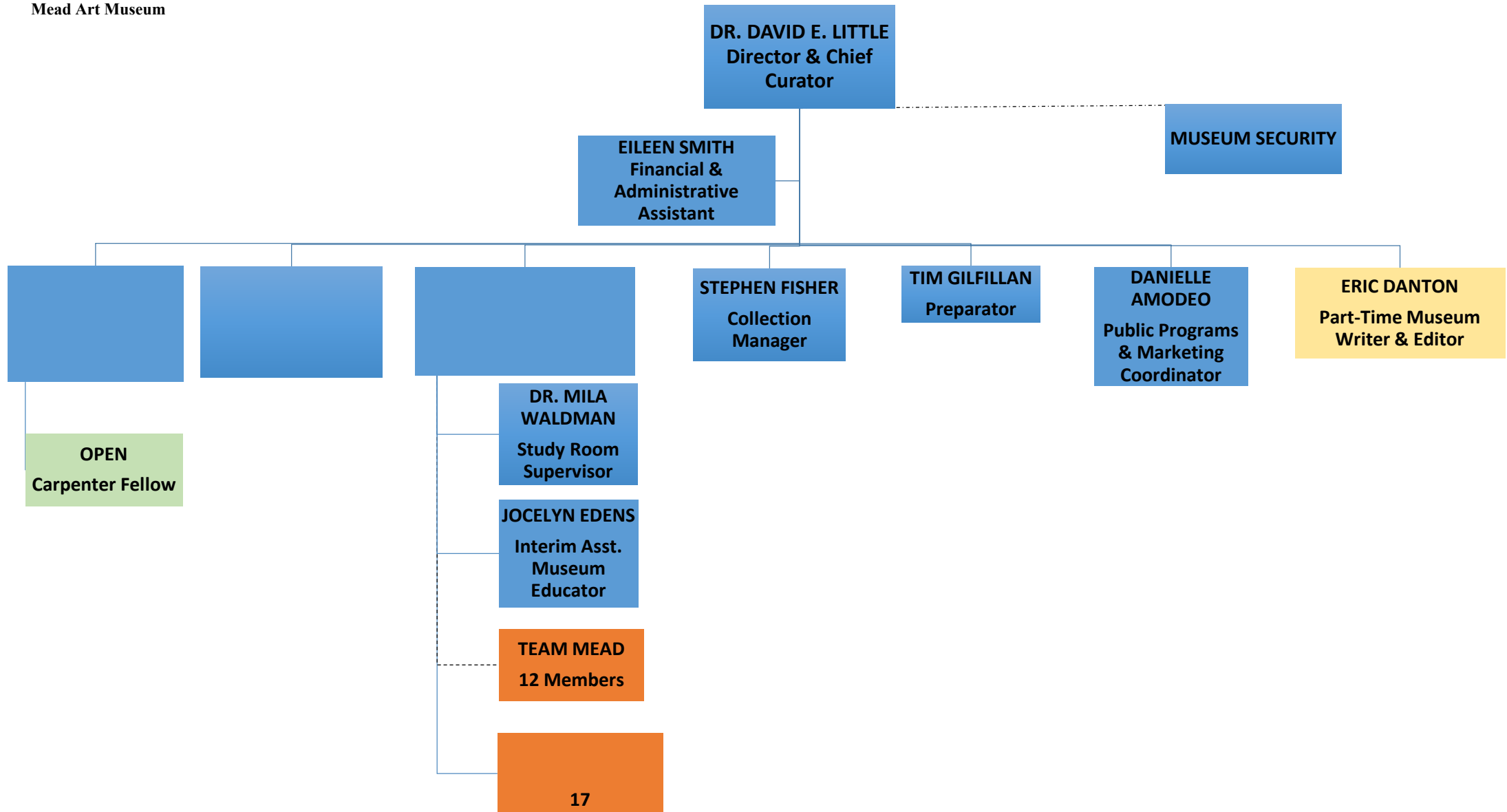
**Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty Library**



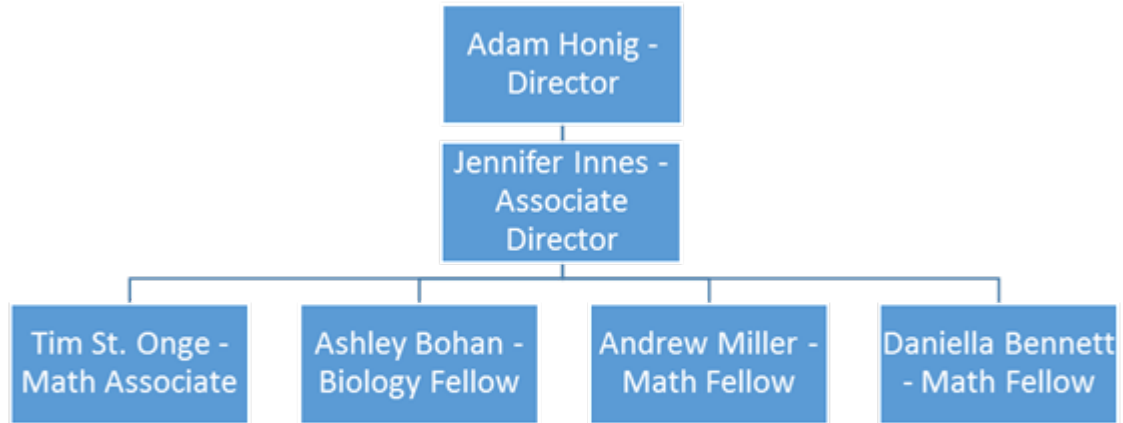




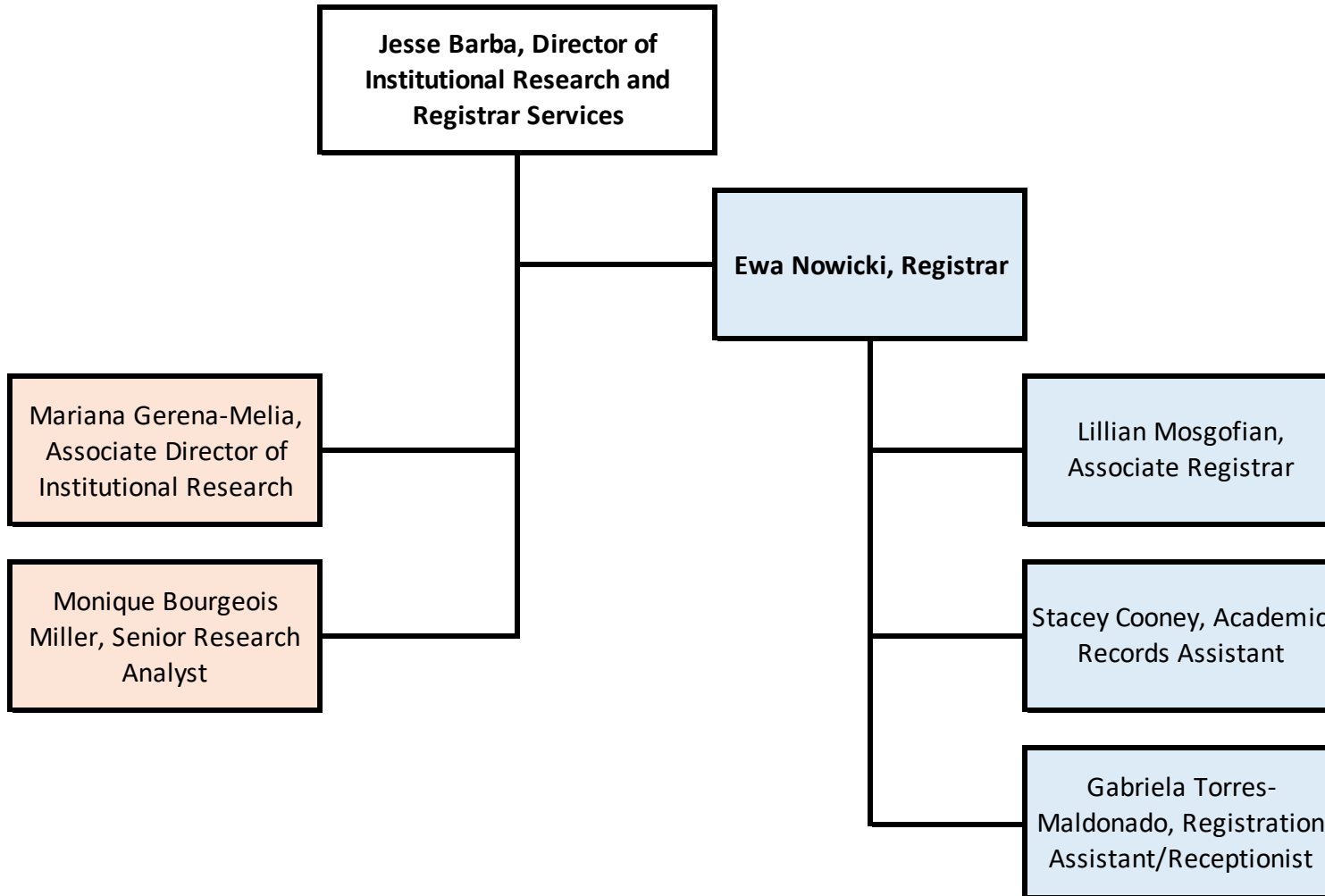
Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty  
Mead Art Museum



**Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty  
Moss Quantitative Center**



**Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty  
Institutional Research and Registrar Services**



**Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty  
The Writing Center**

Director of the Writing Center  
Jyl Gentzler

Associate Director of the Writing Center  
Jessica Kem

Senior Writing Associate  
Kristen Brookes

Senior Writing Associate  
Cassie Sanchez

Senior Associate for Public Speaking  
Susan Daniels

Writing Associate  
Roy Andrews

Writing Associate  
Advisor for Multilingual Students  
Emily Merriman

Writing Associate  
Airlie Rose

Writing Associate  
(Casual)  
Lydia Peterson

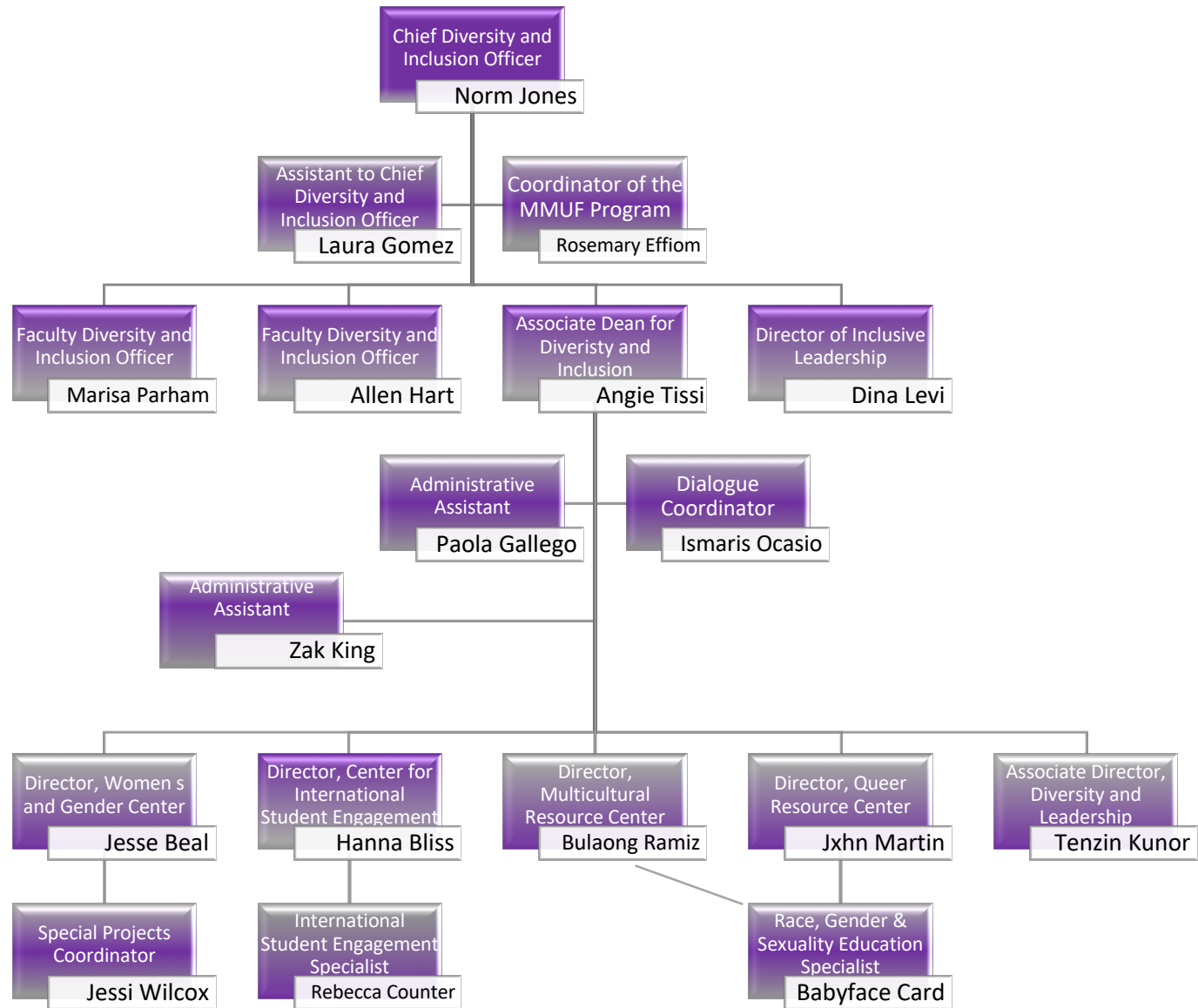
Writing Associate  
(Casual)  
Lauren Silber

Writing Associate  
(Casual)  
Neelofer Qadir

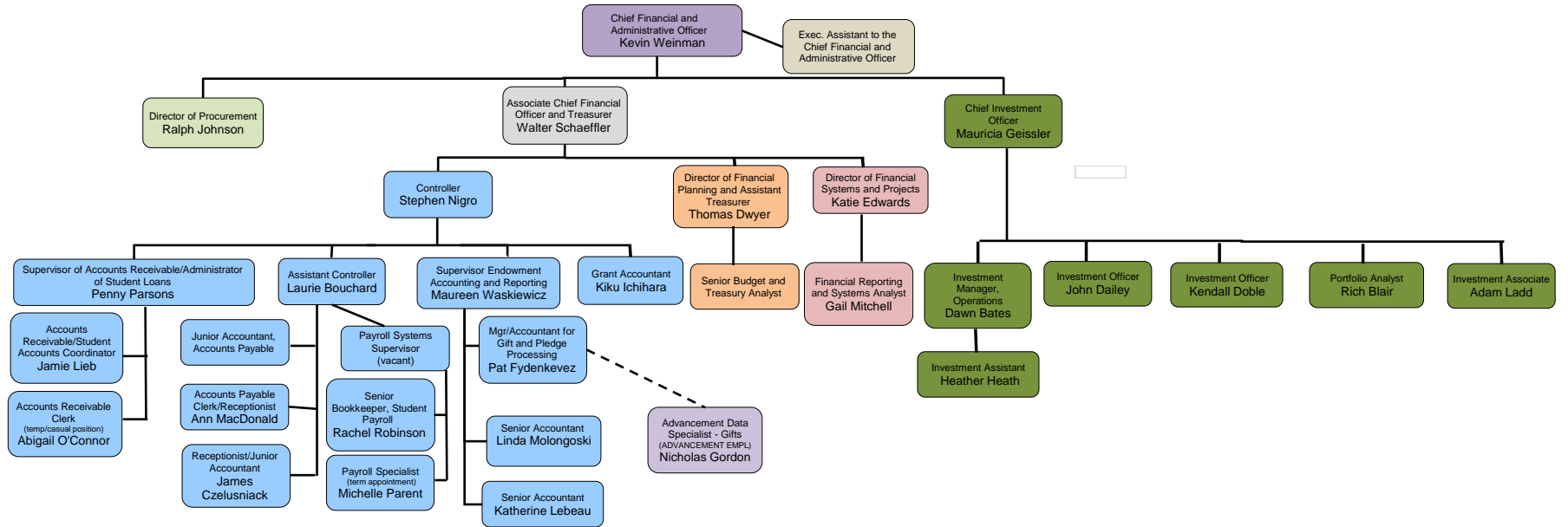
Writing Associate  
(Casual)  
Ethan Meyers

Writing Associate  
(Casual)  
Magda Zapadowska

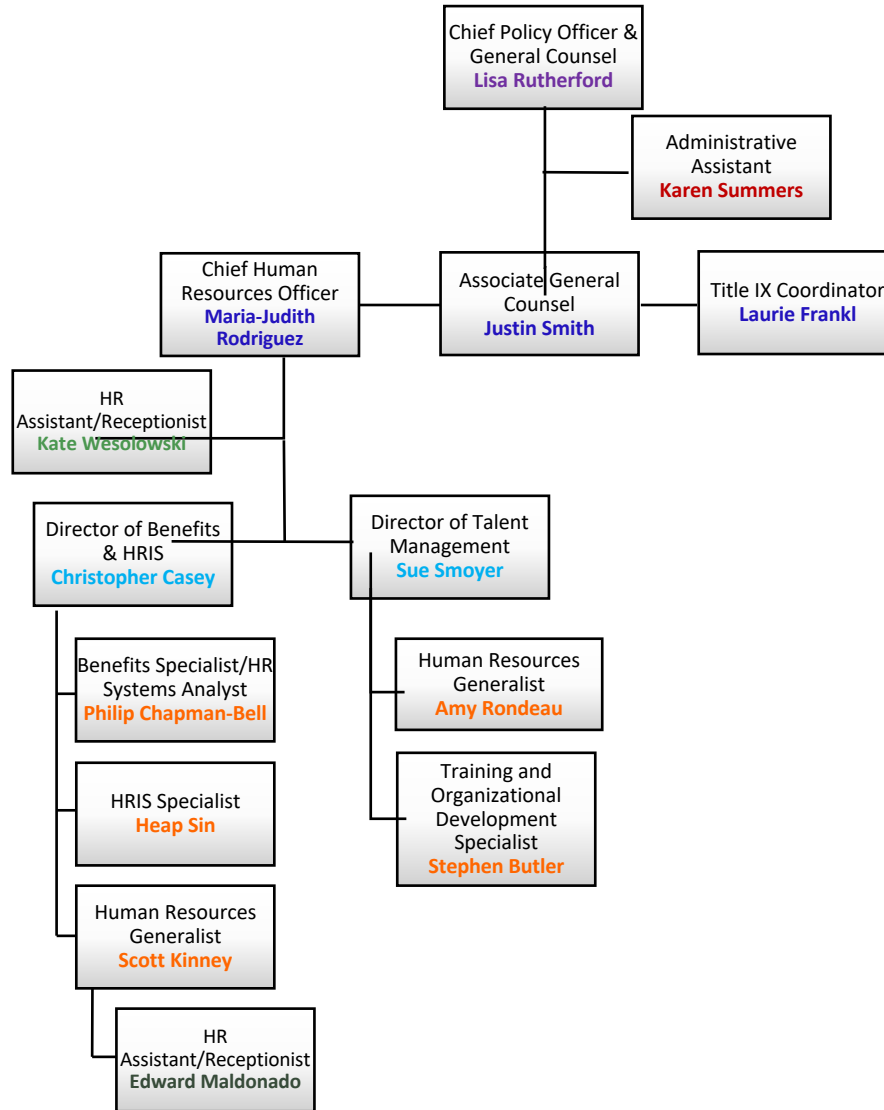
## Diversity and Inclusion



## Chief Financial and Administrative Officer



**Chief Policy Officer  
and General Counsel**

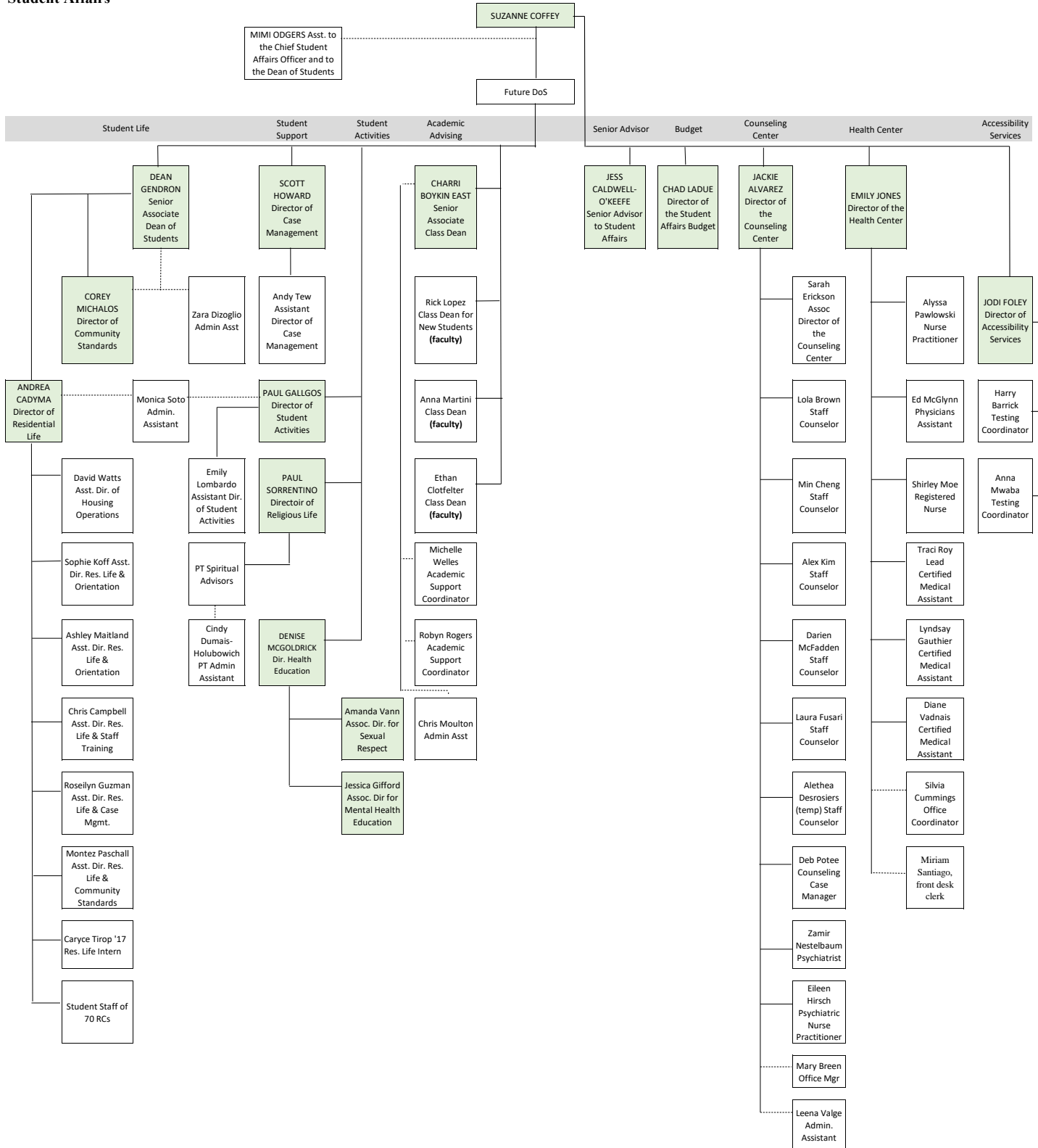


Information Technology





# Student Affairs



## ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

### DESCRIPTION

The comprehensive review of the college's organization and governance called for by this standard reveals a pattern of experimentation, evaluation, evidence-based decision-making, and improvement within the context of a stable and effective organizational structure and governance system. Amherst's structures of organization and governance have remained fundamentally the same over the past decade. Nonetheless, since the time of the interim report (2013), incremental changes, situated at multiple levels of the administrative infrastructure, have had an impact, as will be discussed in this chapter.

A vigorous commitment to shared governance is a hallmark of the college. 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 1825, as amended most recently in 2014. The board elects the president and approves appointments to the faculty and to senior administrative posts. The rights and responsibilities of college employees are articulated in the *Faculty Handbook*<sup>39</sup> and the *Staff Handbook*; both are available online. Students play a significant role on committees, in academic departments, and in academic and administrative searches.

Over the past five years, closer working relationships have developed among all constituencies and have enhanced the effectiveness of governance and administrative functions. Broad participation and a culture of collaboration contributed to the success of the SPAC process, and are a feature of the implementation of the plan's recommendations. The creation of new roles for faculty within the administration has brought faculty and staff together to form new collaborative working relationships that support college initiatives. Examples include the faculty-directors and staffs of the Center for Humanistic Inquiry, the Moss Quantitative Center, the Writing Center, and the Center for Teaching and Learning; the position of faculty diversity and inclusion officer (FDIO) and staff of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (OD&I); and the appointment of faculty members to the position of class deans in the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). At the level of organization, some administrative reporting lines have been reconfigured to facilitate integrated approaches to the work of offices and departments. For example, changes in reporting lines to the dean of the faculty have brought under one umbrella offices and departments that support the academic mission and represent college priorities. Also notable is the involvement of a greater number of staff on committees. The adoption of Amherst's first formal mascot in the spring of 2016 provided a unique moment of shared governance—of mammoth proportions! Alumni, students, faculty, and staff offered 2,046 suggestions for a mascot and cast 9,295 votes, 4,356 in favor of the mammoth.



### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At the time of the interim report, Amherst's leadership was undergoing a transition. Now well established in her seventh year leading the college, President Martin (a member of the board by virtue of her office) was then at the beginning of her presidency. At the time, Cullen Murphy, now in his fifth year as chairman of the board of trustees, was also new to his role. The board is a small "working board" with uniformly high levels of participation.<sup>40</sup> Its operation is governed by Amherst's charter (amended in 2014) and the *By-laws of the Trustees of Amherst College* (amended in 2014 and 2017).<sup>41</sup> The by-laws stipulate that no more than twenty-five individuals, including the president, may serve on the board at any given time. (By amendment to the charter in 2014, the maximum size of the board was expanded from twenty-one to twenty-five and the quorum requirement was changed from nine members of the board to a simple majority of those then in office). The size of the board was increased with the goal of having broader representation across classes, careers, diversity of background, philanthropy, and geography, and the latter was revised because of the increase in the board's size; the quorum rule was changed as a quorum of nine trustees was considered insufficient to represent the expanded board.

Included on the board are eighteen term trustees elected by the current trustees and six alumni trustees elected by alumni. Term limits ensure continual renewal of the membership. Since 2008, twenty-seven members have

served. The selection process pays close attention to the independence and representativeness of board. In 2017–2018, the board consists of sixteen men and seven women, including the president. Two are non-alumni. Three are African American, and two are Hispanic. Five represent the academy; one practices medicine (who is also a poet); one is a psychologist; eight are from various corporate sectors; five are from the field of law; three are writers, including the post-physician; three are homemakers; and one is a member of the clergy. (Some trustees have multiple callings.) The current chair of the board, a writer and editor, succeeded the first African American to occupy the position. The standing committees of the board include Advancement, Audit, Budget and Finance, Buildings and Grounds, Honorary Degrees, Human Resources, Instruction, Investment, Student Life, and Trusteeship.

Although the number is not prescribed, each trustee generally serves on two (or more) standing committees. The trustees form ad hoc committees to study particular issues, (e.g., an ad hoc committee to study ways to strengthen the relationship of the college and the Emily Dickinson Museum (2013) and an hoc committee to study risk compliance at Amherst (2015), and trustees participate in or lead college ad hoc committees (e.g., the Special Oversight Committee on Sexual Misconduct [2013] and the Special Committee on the Place of Athletics at Amherst [2002 and 2016]). A board member served on the steering committee for the SPAC, and a trustee also served on each of the plan's subcommittees. The board endorsed the SPAC in 2015. As noted in standard one, the board of trustees formulated and promulgated a number of statements between 2012 and 2017 (see appraisal), based on its own assessments and in response to community concerns. In 2016, the board voted to endorse a statement, created and approved by the faculty, that addresses a core value of liberal arts education and of the college's mission, *The Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*.

In 2003, the by-laws were amended to eliminate the mandatory trustee age limit of seventy-two. 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, at the invitation of the chair of the board, attend and offer comments in the meetings of the board, without voting privileges. Currently, there are thirteen life trustees and forty-six trustee emeriti. The by-laws were amended to reflect these changes. In 2017, the by-laws were revised again to grant the authority to the board to appoint non-members of the board to serve on the Committee on Investment.

Following individuals' appointment to the board, each new trustee receives a letter of congratulations from the secretary of the board of trustees, which is accompanied by several introductory documents (the current trustee roster, the previous year's committee assignments, a list of officers of the administration, an expense policy statement, a board statement of responsibilities and expectation, and the college charter, and by-laws). New trustees, who begin their terms on July 1, are also provided with links to various online documents (admission material, the *Student Code of Conduct*,<sup>42</sup> the *Faculty Handbook*, and the *Staff Handbook*). They spend the full day on the Thursday of the October board meeting with the president and senior staff. These meetings serve to familiarize new trustees with the institution's strengths, challenges, needs, and priorities. The agenda also covers an overview of finances, enrollment management, academics, staffing patterns, key academic and staff leaders, and physical plant needs. A mentor is assigned to accompany the new trustees throughout the day. Each new trustee also meets with the board chair as part of this program of introduction.

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. In March of 2012 the trustees held a two-day retreat in New York City to discuss “Enrolling and Engaging a Diverse Student Body.” The meetings focused on the outcomes of Amherst's initiatives to widen admission access and to enhance academic support, as well as on the college's options for improving student learning. Board retreats held in June of 2013 and June of 2015, in Watch Hill, Rhode Island,

focused on the strategic plan, including the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE)'s recommendations as a result of this interim review, and in the case of the 2015 retreat, very early planning for the comprehensive campaign. The most recent retreat occurred in Amherst in June of 2017 and focused on translating the priorities of the strategic plan into goals and planning for the comprehensive campaign, including its public launch, and information about a new visual identify for the college. The board also holds meetings in Washington, D.C., about every two years to visit the Folger Shakespeare Library<sup>43</sup> and to meet jointly with the library's board of governors. Binders with materials pertinent to standing committees and to the board as a whole are provided in advance of meetings.

Among its responsibilities, the board annually sets the comprehensive fee and approves the college budget, 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 the 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 its evaluation. At that same meeting, the president reports to the board on her or his annual evaluations of the college's senior staff. A trustee is also designated annually to solicit feedback about the effectiveness of the chair.

The board has 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,<sup>44</sup> which is governed by its own board of governors, subject to the supervision of Amherst's board of trustees. In 2005, the board voted to amend its by-laws to allow greater autonomy to the Folger Shakespeare Library, which was bequeathed to Amherst in 1932 by Henry Clay Folger (class of 1879). 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 each year to report on the status of the library, and Amherst's chief financial and administrative officer serves as a liaison to the Folger's board of governors.

Closer interaction between the board and all campus constituencies, including the central faculty committees, has been a trend for two decades now. Relations between the board and the campus are normally mediated through the Office of the President, but as was true in 2008, there is emphasis placed 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 the 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, individual trustees dine with small groups of faculty to allow informal and candid conversations about the functioning of the college. The board also holds an annual, open-invitation meeting with students, and the Human Resources Committee meets annually with the Employee Council.<sup>45</sup> These closer working relationships have increased communication among the various sectors of the college.

No discussion of the board's work during this period would be complete without mention of the new science center. The largest and most complex building project in Amherst's history, the center has been the focus of a good deal of the board's attention, in a fiduciary and planning role, for almost a decade.

## ***INTERNAL GOVERNANCE***

### **President and Senior Administration**

Amherst's president 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 college officers and has oversight over the directors of the Folger Shakespeare Library and of Emily Dickinson Museum. In addition, the dean of the faculty meets regularly with the director of the Emily Dickinson Museum (EDM), and a faculty representative and the Folger Undergraduate Fellowships Committee serve as liaisons to the Folger Shakespeare Library (see the chapter on standard four for more about the EDM and Folger).

The positions that represent the leadership of the major areas of college life report directly to the president and, as a collective, support and advise her or him. This administrative team, known as the "senior staff," meets weekly with the president to discuss and review topical items, agenda-setting, immediate goals, and long-term planning. The areas of oversight of the senior staff are described in the *Faculty Handbook*.<sup>46</sup>

The composition of the senior staff may change based on the goals and needs of the president.<sup>47</sup> President Martin has reconfigured the senior staff, as areas of need and priorities have taken on greater centrality. The current members are the dean of the faculty (chief academic officer), the chief advancement officer, the chief of campus operations, the chief communications officer (CCO), the chief diversity and inclusion officer (CDIO), the chief financial and administrative officer, the chief information officer (CIO), the chief policy officer, the chief student affairs officer (CSAO), the chief of staff/secretary of the board of trustees, and the dean of admission and financial aid. President Martin added the chief of campus operations to the senior staff in 2012, filling the position with the director of facilities and associate treasurer, who had reported to the treasurer. She established the senior-staff-level position of chief policy officer and general counsel in 2013, and the reporting line for the human resources function was shifted to that position from the treasurer. The president also created the position of CIO at the senior staff level that year. The Department of Information Technology (now called a division) had reported to the dean of the faculty. President Martin added the position of CCO to the senior staff in 2014. The Office of Public Affairs (renamed the Office of Communications) had reported to the position now called the chief of staff. The position of chief financial and administrative officer was created at the senior-staff level in 2015, with the chief financial officer assuming the new position, retaining his former responsibilities and taking on additional duties, particularly in the planning domain. In 2016, the president appointed Amherst's first CDIO, a senior staff position.

After extensive consultation, and with a commitment to retaining the primacy of the position of the dean of the faculty as Amherst's chief academic officer, President Martin added the provost position to the governance structure in 2013. She did so with the imprimatur of the faculty, overcoming the reluctance of a body with a deeply rooted preference for a lean administration and fear of "administrator creep." Key to gaining support for bringing a provost to Amherst was the widespread view that the position of dean of the faculty had become overburdened. Peter Uvin, academic dean of Tufts University's Fletcher School, became the college's inaugural provost in the summer of 2013. At the time, the position's portfolio was not yet fully defined, though expanding Amherst's capacity for integrated planning, including overseeing the nascent SPAC effort, had been identified as one of its central responsibilities.

### **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 college governance through attendance at faculty meetings, which is obligatory, and through service on the following: eighteen faculty standing

committees and, currently, six ad hoc committees including two presidential task forces; continuing committees appointed by the dean of the faculty; Five College committees; and the Committees on Honorary Degrees and Trusteeship of the board of trustees. Committee service is expected of all tenure-line faculty, except for those in their first year. The Committee of Six, the executive committee of the faculty, 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. Faculty meetings, apart from one held at the start of the year, and a degree meeting in May, are held on an as-needed basis, as determined by the Committee of Six. An average of eight faculty meetings per year have taken place since 2008, the time of the last decennial review.

### **Major Faculty Committees**

Particular power is vested in two faculty committees, the Committee of Six and the CEP. The CPR and College Council also serve important governance functions.

#### *The Committee of Six*

Composed of six faculty members, the Committee of Six is chaired by the president, who serves ex officio and without vote, and 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, and 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 candidates for graduation summa cum laude, and reviews exceptions to degree requirements. The committee meets on a weekly basis during the academic year, except during Interterm.

#### *The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP)*

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 process designed to ensure representation of the humanities, 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. Student members are elected by the Association of Amherst Students (AAS),<sup>48</sup> the student senate, from its members, who 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. The CEP also makes recommendations to the administration each year on the allocation of new faculty positions to departments. In 2016–2017, the CEP informed the Committee of Six and the faculty that the CEP would no longer reference the 2006 report of the CAP in its communications to the faculty about the process for submitting FTE requests, as the 2015 strategic plan supersedes the CAP report. The CEP benefits from the support of a dedicated researcher and is also assisted by the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services. The CEP is playing a key role in considering the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee. The CEP has already considered a number of these recommendations (see the chapters on standards two and four) and has forwarded them to the Committee of Six, which brought them before the faculty for approval.

#### *The College Council*

The College Council is composed of three members of the faculty, two or three members of the administration, and five students. The faculty members of the council are nominated by the Committee of Six and elected at large by the faculty, as is the chair, who is one of these faculty members. The CSAO and the dean of students serve on the council ex officio without vote. The president appoints one or two other members of the OSA annually. Of the five students, three are members-at-large from the first year, sophomore and junior class who

are elected. The president of the student government serves *ex officio* without vote. The council makes recommendations concerning issues of common interest to the faculty, administration, and student body.

#### *The Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR)*

The voting members of the CPR are its four faculty-members, one of whom is the chair; three students, two of whom vote; and two staff. The president (as her or his schedule permits), dean of the faculty, chief financial and administrative officer, director of budget and analysis, and chief human resources officer) are present at meetings by virtue of their offices. The faculty membership is elected by the faculty, upon nomination by the Committee of Six; staff-members are elected by the staff. Two of the three student members are elected from the AAS by that body, and the AAS selects the third from its executive branch. The CPR brings a range of faculty, student, and staff opinion to bear on the budget process and the long-term allocation of resources and offers its views to the board of trustees. The committee responds to new large capital requests; reviews capital priorities and deferred maintenance projects; and reviews the financial impact of the relationship between resources and programs, the level of compensation and benefits, and the level and rate of change of the comprehensive fee. The faculty members of the CPR are responsible for representing to the administration the views of the faculty about the budget and reporting to the faculty each year on the status of faculty salaries and compensation. In recent years, benefits have figured prominently in CPR discussions. A study of the college's retirement contribution formula and a proposal to augment it was completed in 2015–2016. The Employee Council (EC) prompted the study by raising concern over retirement support for employees at lower income levels. In 2016–2017, the EC and the college's Benefits Committee collaborated on a revised proposal, which was approved by the board of trustees and took effect on July 1, 2017 (see the chapter on standard seven).

### **Addressing Broader Engagement in Faculty Governance and the Faculty's Workload**

#### *Governance*

Since assuming the position of dean of the faculty in 2014, Catherine Epstein, a professor of history at Amherst, has placed emphasis on engaging faculty at all stages of their careers in the governance of the college. "On Amherst's Plate," a monthly lunch series led by the dean, was launched in 2015 and has now been integrated into college life. The goal of the series is to foster conversation about the central issues on the agendas of faculty committees and other college governance bodies, and about college governance more generally. In addition, a number of steps have been taken to respond to concerns that some tenure-track faculty expressed to the Committee of Six, the dean, and the president, and through their responses to the COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey.<sup>49</sup> The concerns include the format and administration of teaching evaluations; a perceived lack of transparency regarding personnel processes; a dearth of formal channels for untenured faculty to share views with the administration and to have a voice in the governance of the college; and the timing of faculty meetings.

Tenure-track professors make up 30 percent of Amherst's faculty at present, and Amherst has expanded efforts to facilitate newer colleagues' participation in faculty governance. Tenure-track faculty are being assigned to committees earlier in their careers, with the goal of helping them to build relationships beyond their departments and to engage in governance, while not placing considerable burden on them. A session about faculty governance has been added to an enhanced orientation program for new faculty.<sup>50</sup> In addition, the dean is providing support for the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty, which was constituted by the Committee of Six in the spring of 2015 and began work in the next academic year. The consultative group serves as a representative body for tenure-track faculty and as a conduit for communication with the administration. The president and the dean, together, and the Committee of Six, separately, now meet with the consultative group and also hold open meetings for tenure-track faculty annually. Late in 2017, the consultative group submitted a summary of concerns to the Committee of Six, which reviewed the document during the fall 2017 semester.

In the spring of 2016, the Committee of Six, prompted to a great degree by the dissatisfaction with the current faculty meeting time (Tuesdays, 7:30–9:30 P.M.), felt most keenly by some tenure-track faculty members, and the desire of some to create a scheduling period that might foster a spirit of community at Amherst (a

recommendation of a SPAC subcommittee), charged the Ad Hoc Committee on Alternative Faculty Meeting Hours to examine the feasibility of creating a weekly two-hour block during the day that would be set aside for faculty meetings and community scheduling. A letter to the Committee of Six, signed by more than sixty faculty members, requested that an alternative faculty meeting time be explored, with a view also to carving out a community meeting time that might be “filled with faculty workshop programming, community-building events, all-campus book or research discussions, department or committee meetings, student group meetings, or public lectures, to name just a few possibilities.”

### *Faculty Workload*

In response to the interim report, in its letter to the college of April 2, 2013, the commission asked that the self-study in 2018 give emphasis to Amherst’s success in “addressing the issue of faculty workload, working conditions, and compensation.” Some steps, including a new program to support and compensate the chairs of academic departments and programs (to be discussed later in this chapter), are being taken to address this issue. There is growing awareness, however, that the pressures that many members of the faculty face in the areas of enrollments, advising, and college service call for a vigorous response. In 2017, the president indicated support for expanding the size of the faculty by 10 percent. The implementation of this proposal depends on the success of the comprehensive campaign. The board of trustees supports the plan.

In the spring of 2017, Dean Epstein delivered an oral report to the board about the magnitude of the pressures on some members of the faculty. The data and impressions that the dean provided raised awareness among the trustees and spurred support for the expansion of the faculty, if sufficient resources can be provided to support this effort. The thrust of the dean’s report was that more faculty are needed, particularly in STEM fields (at Amherst, science, mathematics, statistics, and computer science) and economics, to meet the needs of the student body. At the same time, she noted, that the college is mindful of the importance of not shifting away from the humanities in the process—in keeping with Amherst’s commitment to the liberal arts mission. The dean informed the board that, when the college assembled a more diverse student body, with levels of preparation among students that varied significantly, the impact on the faculty had not been expected. Amherst did not anticipate the demands that the new student body would make on faculty time and energy in supporting students and developing new pedagogies, especially in developing capabilities in critical reading, writing, argumentation, dialogue, public speaking, and research. Amherst, like its peers, has experienced growth in interest in STEM<sup>51</sup>, which has led to STEM faculty being disproportionately affected by the trends that the dean shared. While faculty members are taxed, the pedagogical and curricular changes that they are making benefit all students and are contributing to their success. Progress is being made in helping less-well prepared students at Amherst succeed in fields in which achievement gaps often exist. An example are the changes that have taken place within the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, where intensive work by the faculty has resulted in student majors that mirror the racial and socioeconomic make-up of the student body

Despite the challenges that the college faces in the area of faculty workload, Amherst has been taking steps to address this concern. In the fall of 2017, the dean launched a new program to support and compensate chairs of academic departments and programs, as mentioned above. The goal of the program is to strengthen shared governance, which includes providing chairs with the tools that they need to be successful, and, for the first time, additional compensation for their work. Chairing has never been more important, especially because of the growing proportion of untenured faculty at Amherst. The role has also become more burdensome, due to a wave of faculty hiring and growing supervisory responsibilities for staff in instructional and support positions. Leading searches for new faculty has become more complex as the college adopts new procedures to build pools of candidates who are highly qualified and diverse. Chairs are also expected to ensure that effective and continuous department mentoring is being provided.

Prior to the adoption of the chairs’ program, chairs of many departments and programs rotated frequently, which created challenges for chairs to develop necessary administrative expertise. One of the dean’s goals in developing the program was to have chairs serve at least two-year, and ideally three-year terms, to allow time for what is a steep learning curve and to encourage stability. Under the program, as was true before,



departments determine the rotation of chairs; faculty are not permitted to have consecutive terms as chair. To facilitate ongoing communication and to advance institutional priorities, chairs are now required to attend monthly meetings. The meetings address topics such as mentoring new colleagues, developing successful search practices, hiring diverse candidates, administering and interpreting student evaluations, integrating study away into departmental curricula, leading conversations around curricular change, and working with staff. It is hoped that these gatherings will help forge college-wide conversations that lead to regularizing some practices. An important area of focus is working toward greater consistency across departments in the ways that untenured faculty are supported. To further support chairs, two years ago, the dean's office created an online chairs' guide.<sup>52</sup> and calendar of chairs' tasks.<sup>53</sup> Chairs are now required to submit annual reports about their department or program's plans, goals, learning outcomes, and accomplishments.

In the spring of 2017, faculty who would be chairing in the next academic year were offered a menu of compensation options. In developing these choices, the dean had placed emphasis on flexibility, in recognition that faculty may have different needs at different stages of their careers and in their personal lives. Chairs may now choose to receive a salary supplement, additional research funds, one course release per year, or an extra semester of leave after three years of serving as chair. Course release has been a rarity at Amherst, though it has long been extended to faculty who assume part-time roles within the administration. The president granted members of the Committee of Six an annual course release in May of 2012 as a three-year pilot (see the appraisal section). In another effort to address the workload of the faculty, and in anticipation of the opening of the new science center, the college filled the newly created position of administrative director of the science center in the spring of 2017. It is hoped that, through the centralization of some administrative functions of the science departments, and the support of the administrative director, some of the science faculty's administrative burdens will be reduced. The administrative director, for example, will assist with the coordination of student research programs, work closely with campus operations departments, support new initiatives, and help foster a greater sense of a community among the science departments.

Other initiatives are also having an impact on governance and organizational structures. As noted above, the dean has made a commitment to creating new pathways for faculty to assume leadership roles within the administration. In 2014, links between the OSA and the academic mission were strengthened when two faculty members assumed the role of faculty "class deans," half-time administrative appointments. The dean of new students has long been a member of the faculty. Thus there are now three faculty members who serve key roles within the OSA (see the chapter on standard five). Providing new ways for faculty to participate in the administration is in keeping with Amherst's commitment to ensuring that academic values are central to all areas of college life, and has facilitated communication between the faculty and administration.

## **Students**

For governance purposes, the student body is constituted as the Association of Amherst Students, an independent corporation (501c3), of which the elected body is the Student Senate. This body, upon the recommendation of the AAS budgetary committee, disburses the student activity fee (1 percent of current tuition), affording the student government ample opportunities to support the more than 150 active clubs and organizations. The AAS is also responsible for naming students to a variety of committees. Student service on faculty committees is considered to be essential and generally successful. As noted above, students serve on the CEP, CPR, and College Council, as well as the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, Library Committee, and the Committee on Education and Athletics, as well as on search committees for senior administrative appointments, including the presidency, and on planning committees, notably those that were part of the strategic planning process. The officers of the AAS, as well as members serving on some standing faculty 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 Committee on Student Life meets with representatives of the AAS, including the AAS president. The College Council (where students occupy the largest number of seats when compared with other faculty committees) has been particularly active when addressing issues that include the synchronicity of the Five-College calendar,

draft amendments to the honor code,<sup>54</sup> and new student orientation. Students serving on other faculty committees are contributing to the governance structure in presenting the views of students in key areas of policy development.

### **Staff**

Although staff members do not have a formal system of governance, the college has established two councils to represent the staff. The prominent role that the Employee Council (EC) enjoys is in keeping with the acknowledgment of staff in the college's mission statement, in which it is noted that students work with "faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to intellectual freedom and the highest standards of instruction in the liberal arts..." The council's mission statement describes the council as "a representative body of non-faculty employees [that] works to increase staff involvement in the governance of the college by broadening and strengthening lines of communication within the entire college community." The EC has a charge and by-laws that govern its work. Two members of the council sit on the CPR as voting members, and the council is often asked to contribute members to ad hoc committees and administrative search committees. The council organizes regular all-staff meetings at which the president offers state-of-the-college updates. At these gatherings, staff members pose questions to the president and the senior staff. The EC meets with Committee on Human Resources of the board of trustees to discuss college priorities, and collaborates with the numerous campus committees, members of the administration, and students to enhance the role of staff and to advocate for change. Through regular meetings with the chief human resources officer (CHO), the council has a direct channel through which to share its platform and bring its questions and concerns to the senior administration. In the spring of 2017, the chief policy officer and general counsel, the CHRO, and several members of the Employee EC discussed how to better communicate and align priorities. These meetings will continue with the goal of identifying ways to enhance campus-wide communication and issues of mutual interest.

The Managers' Council (MC),<sup>55</sup> an informal staff governance body, was formed in 2009 as a means for directors of administrative departments to work collaboratively; seek efficiencies and cost savings; and serve as an administrative advisory body to the president and senior staff. Senior staff members appoint the members of the MC. The body develops policy recommendations upon request from the president, senior staff, council members, and other campus committees and departments. The MC meets several times during the academic year to develop policy recommendations. The council provides a forum for directors of administrative departments to discuss best practices, consider issues facing the representative departments, and share information about prospective changes that would affect the other departments represented. In this way, the council encourages communication among and between administrative departments and the rest of the college. The Manager's Council often participates in the interview process for senior administrative positions.

### **APPRAISAL**

Amherst's governance structures continue to be stable and flexible, a synergy that has fostered the ability to experiment with new organizational structures, and to respond nimbly to the changing landscape of higher education and the world. President Martin's reconfiguration of the senior staff, including the addition, and subtraction, of a provost, offers an example of Amherst's openness to testing new models that have their foundation in the college's core principles and goals. Also illustrative of this culture is the constitution of task forces and ad hoc committees to address pressing issues facing the college and, in many cases, society at large. Such temporary committees often draw on the membership of standing committees for their make-up. The Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion includes representatives from the CPR, Committee of Six, Managers' Council, College Council, Employee Council, and CEP. In 2016, in response to issues raised by the faculty about the report of the Special Committee on the Place of Athletics at Amherst,<sup>56</sup> the Committee of Six constituted the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics. The charge for the members is to think together about how Amherst might address the opportunities and challenges posed by athletics, by asking questions and obtaining clarification, engaging with the campus community, and participating in problem-solving. The ad hoc faculty committee was poised to release its report as this self-study was concluding.

Expectations of consultation in decision making and communication are high. Following each board meeting, the president provides a summary of the actions of the trustees to the Committee of Six. These summaries are shared with the faculty and administrators through the committee's minutes. Minutes of the meetings of the Committee of Six, CEP, and CPR are made available online to all faculty, and to administrators who attend faculty meetings. Committee chairs are asked to offer reports to the faculty annually. Student members of major faculty committees are permitted to attend faculty meetings, as are reporters from the student newspaper. The minutes of the Employee Council and the Manger's Council are posted online. At all faculty meetings, time is reserved for questions to the administration and for questions arising from the minutes of the Committee of Six's minutes. Students participate at all levels of campus governance.

### ***BOARD OF TRUSTEES***

Under the direction of the previous two board chairs, and with the support of the current chair, 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. The board's periodic self-evaluation, which had been sporadic, was in 2009 regularized to occur roughly every two years. Each trustee submits a written assessment of the board's procedures and effectiveness, and aggregated results are reviewed by the Committee on Trusteeship and the full board. The most recent evaluation occurred in 2017. These assessments reveal a board that is generally satisfied with the composition and structure, effectiveness, mission, and committee work of the board. In 2017, during a period in which planning for a comprehensive campaign was ongoing, the board expressed interest in meeting more frequently with the Committee on Advancement. The meeting schedule was changed to ensure that such a meeting would take place at every meeting of the trustees.

The board's Committee on Trusteeship, charged with recommending candidates for term trustees to the board as vacancies occur, regularly analyzes board composition with respect to gender, diversity, geography, occupation, and representation across the graduating classes. For the integrity of the board, all of these criteria are considered, and the qualifications of individuals under consideration are evaluated. Each year, the Alumni Council's Nominations Committee interviews a 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, the president, and students. This process acts as a critical moment of assessment, aligning board membership with the values and mission of the college.

In keeping with its ongoing self-examination, the board in 2005 instituted a conflict-of-interest policy to be reviewed and signed annually by all trustees and designated administrators. The trustees evaluated the need for a "whistle-blower policy" and adopted one in 2009. When issues of concern are brought to its attention, often by students, the board evaluates whether action should be taken and shares views and decisions with the Amherst community. In 2006, the board voted to divest direct holdings in companies whose activities support the Sudanese government. In 2015, in response to advocacy by students, the board approved a "*Statement on Sustainability and Investment Policy*."<sup>57</sup>

As noted earlier, the board of trustees has responded to significant issues facing the community through its deliberative processes. Over the past decade, the board has continued to provide leadership through actions that are consistent with the trustees' articulation of college commitments and policies. As noted earlier, the trustees regularly issue statements and may revise them. In 2012, the board affirmed its commitment to holding Amherst accountable to the highest possible standard in responding to issues of sexual misconduct, and in January of 2013 issued a statement following the receipt of the report of the Sexual Misconduct Oversight Committee (SMOC). In the statement, the board announced its expectation that the recommendations of the report be considered immediately by the administration and other appropriate bodies at the college. The board noted the importance of the reorganization of the dean of students' office. In the years following, responsibility for student life, now under the umbrella of the Office of Student Affairs, has undergone intensive external review and transformation, as noted in the chapter on standard two (see also the chapter on standard five). The findings of the SMOC added urgency to Amherst's decision to establish the

Office of General Counsel, including a dedicated office and program (see the chapter on standard nine). In response to a request from the SMOC, the board reviewed the issue of underground fraternities at Amherst and voted in 2014 to reaffirm its 1984 *Resolution on Fraternities* and, effective July 1, 2014, to prohibit student participation in fraternities and sororities and fraternity-like and sorority-like organizations, on and off campus.

In 2015, with the board's support, Amherst was among thirty-eight selective liberal arts college signatories of an amicus brief submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the University of Texas in the *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* case. Recent national attention on the consideration of race in the admission process prompted the board to reaffirm its commitment to the value and importance of enrolling a diverse student body. As noted earlier, in 2018, the board adopted a revised version of the 1996 *Statement on Diversity at Amherst College*, reflecting the college's sustained commitment to attracting talent from all quarters to strengthen the academic caliber of the student body and the education that Amherst offers.

With dedication and integrity, the board of trustees carries out its responsibilities in support of Amherst's mission and purposes, with the college's best interests as the foundation of the trustees' work. In addressing pressing issues that affect not only the college, but the world to which this generation of students will offer skills, talents, and leadership, the board provides a model of how to engage with the world beyond the College on the Hill and to lead principled lives of consequence.

## **INTERNAL GOVERNANCE**

### **Senior Staff**

The reconfiguration of the college's senior leadership team is meeting the needs of the president in leading the college and in implementing the college-wide priorities adopted through the strategic planning process. The senior staff positions added since the last decennial review are closely tied to the college's priorities for the next decade, as outlined in the SPAC.

The addition of the chief information officer supports priorities one, four, five, and seven in fostering innovations in teaching and learning, information literacy, data-driven decision making, and campus operations across constituencies. The chief policy and administrative officer is overseeing efforts to ensure equity and compliance with legal requirements in an increasingly complex regulatory landscape and is supporting priorities five and three. The chief communications officer is supporting priority one and priority seven. With more intensive questioning about the value of the liberal arts model and the humanities proliferating, and greater emphasis on the vocational, there is more need than ever before to share Amherst's story more broadly, and to rely on new and old forms of media to reach an array of audiences. The chief of campus operations is supporting priorities five, three, and one. The campus framework plan will guide the evolution of the built environment for decades to come, and the new science center and residence halls will have a major impact on curricular and co-curricular life at the college. Sustainability efforts are contributing to safeguarding the environment and providing a model for those who will be the stewards of the environment in the future.

The addition of the CDIO, and the creation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (OD&I), is furthering priorities two, three, and four of the SPAC. This new administrative structure was created to support diversity and inclusion across constituencies and comprises both new positions and entities and functions that were previously situated within the Office of the Provost or Student Affairs. Launched in 2016 and fully staffed by the fall of 2017, the OD&I is made up of the CDIO, a director of inclusive leadership, two faculty diversity and inclusion officers (Amherst full professors, as noted earlier), an associate dean for diversity and inclusion, an associate director of diversity and leadership, and directors of the Multicultural Resource Center, Queer Resource Center, and Women's and Gender Center. The Center for International Student Engagement (formerly the International Student Office) was renamed and shifted to the OD&I in 2017. The center serves Amherst's international students with immigration and visa advising, programming, and support. The OD&I works in close collaboration with the Office of Human Resources.

In its letter of April 2, 2013, following the fifth-year interim report, the commission asked that the college's next decennial self-study give emphasis to, among other issues surrounding diversity in regard to the faculty,

“...creating a supportive environment for faculty from a range of backgrounds.” Amherst’s commitment to diversity and inclusion is evident in the resources that the college is providing to support goals within this area, in particular, the creation (in 2016) of the position of faculty diversity and inclusion officer, as noted earlier in this document. The two professors who hold this position are aiding in the recruitment and support of faculty from a range of backgrounds and working closely with the CDIO on other initiatives. Their areas of responsibility are described on the website of the OD&I. Plans originally called for having one “faculty advocate,” but it was decided to appoint two faculty members to the position of faculty diversity and inclusion officer (a title that better explains the role beyond advocacy for increasing number of diverse candidates), to address issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity among Amherst’s faculty community. Since December of 2016, the FDIOs have conducted confidential on-campus interviews with more than eighty-five candidates for faculty positions and have also conducted interactive workshops on mitigating bias in the search process. Plans call for the FDIOs to offer workshops on other relevant topics, including mentoring, in the future.

In the commission’s 2013 letter, the college was asked to give emphasis in the 2018 self-study to Amherst’s success in “evaluating the effectiveness of the organizational restructuring that created the Office of the Provost to provide greater capacity and better coordination for planning across the campus.” The effectiveness of the college’s planning efforts was addressed in the chapter on standard two. Since the addition of a provost represented a significant change in organization and governance at Amherst, the effectiveness of this restructuring effort will be covered here. The establishment of a provost position, though the work of the appointee, had a positive impact and laid the groundwork for future efforts in a number of domains. Ultimately, the position proved to be challenging at a structural level and could not be integrated sufficiently into organizational and governance structures to warrant retaining it. When the provost left to assume another position after two years at Amherst, the position was evaluated, and the president decided not to continue it.

As envisioned in 2013, the provost played an important role in the strategic planning effort—establishing core committees, providing them with data, and guiding their efforts as chair of the steering committee that oversaw their work. The position met the president’s goal of allowing greater priority to be given to a number of large issues—diversity, internationalization, planning and institutional research, innovations in learning—and enhanced the college’s efforts to advocate for the liberal arts, link the curricular with the co-curricular, and build intellectual community and campus vitality. The provost earned praise for his accomplishments as the college’s chief diversity officer; for providing an academic bridge to the Center for Community Engagement (CCE); for his success in helping students reap the benefits of student organizations involved in diversity issues; and for his efforts related to international students and global issues.

Over time, however, President Martin concluded that it was not clear that the provost position was the right position for the responsibilities that became associated with it, and felt that the position’s portfolio did not carry sufficient authority across enough domains to attract another good provost candidate. With the provost’s departure, the units, programs, and personnel that he had overseen were redistributed to the members of the senior staff. The new CDI&O, who has extensive experience and expertise, is devoting focused attention to this area and, as noted earlier, the needs of international students. Study abroad and efforts to form international partnerships and other global initiatives are now under the umbrella of the dean’s office, as is the CCE, in order to ensure that these areas are an integral part of the college’s academic offerings. In recognition of the central role of academic planning and reporting, the institutional research function moved to the dean’s office, as well. The dean brought new ideas on how to increase the efficiency of the dean’s office and adopted a more distributed approach to management that has alleviated some pressures on her office.

The Grants Office and the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning, which had been situated within Office of Advancement, now also report to the dean of the faculty. This shift makes sense, given that nearly all the grants the college receives involve support for individual faculty members or academic programs. The Loeb Center is increasingly focused on working with students throughout their Amherst years. In conjunction with the CCE, the center has developed a strategy to expand early and equitable opportunities for student participation in internships, research, and independent work. Meetings are now held with department heads at

least once per semester. The dean of the faculty organized an inaugural half-day retreat with all department heads in June of 2017, requiring all units to provide reports on their progress and goals. These reports will now be collected annually to better integrate the functions of the dean's office. The addition of a new position within the dean's office, the director of academic finance, is supporting at an operational level the dean's work managing that budget and disbursing resources. While continuing to be very busy, the office is no longer overburdened and has earned a campus-wide reputation for effectiveness and responsiveness.

### **Faculty**

The Committee of Six periodically reviews committees' responsibilities, with the goal of allowing them to focus their attention on the most critical policy issues. To ensure that the charges of faculty committees<sup>58</sup> continue to be relevant, the Committee of Six (and the committees themselves) have brought forward revisions to committee charges over the past decade. In addition, during this time, two committees were abolished and another was absorbed into another committee. The process of consideration is thorough. For example, the College Council brought forward a proposal to the Committee of Six to revise the council's charge and the honor code in 2016–2017. The Committee of Six had reservations about the proposed changes to the council's structure and the mechanism for selecting student members. The committee also raised concerns about the balance of faculty in relation to the number of student members; under the proposal, there would be six student members (five with vote), three members from the administration (two with vote), and three voting faculty. Concerns were also raised about aspects of the council's honor code proposal. The council revised both proposals, which were pending review by the Committee of Six when this self-study concluded. In 2016–2017, the charge of the CEP was revised to include oversight of the college calendar, a task that had formerly been the responsibility of the College Council. The council had argued that the mission of the CEP was better aligned with this work. This decade also saw the abolishment, by vote of the faculty, of the Committee on Health and Safety, in 2015, and the Archives Committee, in 2017. The health and safety committee hadn't met in more than ten years, and the Archives Committee had not convened in many years, and it was agreed that the any business concerning archives and special collections at the college could more efficiently be taken up by the Library Committee. This change recognized the importance of having a professional staff to oversee these areas. In 2017, the responsibilities of the Doshisha Committee were incorporated into the Committee on International Education (now called the Committee on Global Education, as discussed earlier), which had an overlapping charge, and the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations. The Doshisha Committee's scope was limited; dissolving it freed up a number of faculty for other committee service. Amherst offers significant administrative support to major faculty committees, and the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services regularly provides data and analytic support to standing and ad hoc committees.

The governance system's flexibility also allows for expansion into new areas, as they become more prominent. For example, to support the faculty and advance curricular, co-curricular, and pedagogical initiatives, the dean proposed to the CEP and the Committee of the Six the creation of an Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Student Learning. The committee, which will begin work in the fall of 2018, will be charged with researching and reviewing best practices, with the purpose of enhancing student learning; helping to identify assessment needs; gathering and interpreting data; and making recommendations. The ad hoc committee will support the work of other faculty committees, most prominently the CEP, and college departments and programs.

There is respect and enthusiasm for faculty governance as central to the college's democratic culture. Faculty members take their responsibilities seriously, and vigorously debate the issues. Faculty meetings reflect debates about issues ranging from the role of athletics and academic freedom to the financial position of the college and the number of books in the stacks of Frost Library. The nature of a small college allows for an unusual degree of familiarity with both colleagues and students. The faculty votes on each proposal for new courses and every degree candidate. The popularity of "On Amherst's Plate" lunches is one indication of the faculty's investment in the governance of the college. More than three hundred faculty members have attended one or more of these lunches over the past two academic years. At the same time, there is also recognition that committee service and other faculty governance obligations place a high demand on faculty time. This issue is

especially concerning as responsibilities for hiring, mentoring, and evaluating untenured colleagues grow. Progress in addressing these long-standing concerns, identified in both the 2009 and 2014 reports of the evaluation teams, is being made.

The faculty's endorsement in 2016–2017 of a three-year pilot program to support the chairs of academic departments and programs represented a significant moment of transformation in the college's governance. Some faculty, largely representing the senior tenured ranks, expressed concern that compensating chairs could change the relationship between chairs and their departments. They argued that the traditional system, which had remained unchanged for years, represented a collective decision to participate in self-governance. Some felt that the proposed change could be divisive. Under the traditional arrangement, there has been a model in which department members participated and chairs implemented, with faculty colleagues assisting the chair where necessary. If chairs received a stipend, departmental colleagues might feel less obligated to provide that assistance, some faculty argued. A majority of faculty agreed that the proposal to support and compensate the chairs of academic departments and programs appeared to be a worthwhile experiment and expressed support for its goals. In the past ten years, there has been a marked increase in administrative support for committees.

In 2014–2015, President Martin, in consultation with the dean of the faculty, evaluated the pilot program of granting course release to the Committee of Six. Due to the workload of the committee, she agreed to extend this release to members of the Committee of Six during the entirety of her presidency. Throughout the past decade, there has been conversation about dividing the committee into two separate committees, one to focus on personnel matters and the other to function as the executive committee of the faculty, focusing on governance. Most members of the Committee of Six, in particular, have seen great value in placing these functions within one committee, noting the insights into the institution that are gained, and have favored retaining its traditional structure. The course release has helped reduce workload pressures on the committee.

In addition to addressing general faculty workload issues, the concerns of tenure-track faculty have also been a priority. The Committee of Six judged that the work that the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty has been doing has been substantial and seems to be of great benefit to tenure-track faculty and to the college. The group is considering whether to recommend that it eventually should become a standing committee of the faculty. As noted earlier, the consultative group has continued its meetings with small groups of untenured faculty and, in 2017–2018, the group provided the Committee of Six with a summary of its concerns, which were discussed by the committee, as well as by chairs of academic departments and programs. Also in response to the concerns of untenured faculty, in 2015–2016 the Committee of Six worked with the college's first instructional designer to develop a standardized teaching evaluation form. The form was piloted with a small group of faculty-volunteers in 2016–2017. The committee also authorized a survey of tenure-track colleagues to learn more about how they wish to have their views conveyed to the administration. The work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Alternative Faculty Meeting Hours further demonstrates the responsiveness of the governance structure of the college to the concerns of the faculty. The committee stimulated considerable analysis and evaluation as it investigated alternative arrangements to better reflect the needs of the faculty and the desire for a common meeting hour to foster campus community. The committee reviewed multiple previous surveys of faculty preferences for meeting times, held open meetings for faculty and staff, and met the full student senate. After an assessment of feasibility of the ad hoc committee's proposals by the Committee of Six and academic departments and programs, it was agreed in fall 2017 that the course schedule should be reexamined from the ground up before moving forward with any changes to the time of faculty meetings. As this self-study was under way, the college was awaiting the arrival of a new registrar, who will play a key role in this effort.

### **Staff**

The work of the Employee Council as a governance organ has become more substantive and has had a greater impact in recent years. The council advocated for a staff climate survey (conducted in fall 2017), brought forward to other college governance structures concerns about long-term “casual” employees, and worked with the benefits committee, the CPR, and the Office of Human Resources to refine Amherst's retirement benefit

policy to enhance equity. The council also played a consultative role in the Job Classification and Compensation Review (JCCR)<sup>59</sup> project, which was completed in the fall of 2017 (see the chapter on standard seven). The Employee Council has enhanced the ways in which it keeps the community informed of its efforts, via webpages and through minutes that are posted publically and updated with greater regularity than in the past.

### **Students**

The 2013 interim report identified student life programming as “an area of urgent concern,” commenting that “planning and organizational reform have not kept pace with the increasing scale and complexity of the responsibilities of the various units.” Such programming involves a partnership between the student activities office, which is staffed by professional student affairs colleagues, and the AAS, particularly with regard to funding clubs, organizations, and social initiatives sponsored by students. In 2014, the Office of Student Affairs reorganized the student activities function, hiring new staff and bringing processes and support for students up to date. The AAS leadership, club leaders, and the professional staff in student affairs work closely on programming. Staff members attend regularly scheduled meetings of the various groups, to provide guidance and continuity. Student service on committees is widely seen as an asset. Broadening participation in the applications process is a goal for the AAS. The body intends to tackle this challenge through a combination of education and solicitation. The student government’s other main charge is the distribution of its annual budget which has grown larger than may be necessary to adequately and responsibly fund all activities.

### **PROJECTIONS**

Amherst does not foresee fundamental changes to its structure and practices of governance, though, as was stated a decade ago, the process of ongoing reform in such a self-analytical and open system is inevitable and welcome.

It is expected that the board of trustees will continue to perform its regular functions, as articulated in the charter and by-laws. The trustees will play a leadership role in the comprehensive campaign, and in the celebration of the college’s bicentennial in 2021. The June 2017 retirement of the board’s secretary of two decades (who is also the president’s chief of staff), may lead to some changes at an operational level. A new chief of staff and secretary began work in July 2017, as this self-study was under way.

It is anticipated that standing committees of the college will continue to advise the administration on the implementation of the recommendations of the SPAC in relevant domains. The implementation of the recommendations will continue, as resources permit, over the next decade.

The envisioned expansion of the faculty, should resources allow it to take place, may help to ease some of the workload of the faculty and staffing pressures on committees.

It is not yet possible to evaluate the new program to support chairs of academic departments and programs. It is anticipated that an assessment of the program at the end of the three-year pilot will help the college evaluate whether the program is meeting the goals of relieving some of the burdens on chairs, and enhancing chairs’ communication with one another and with the dean of the faculty.

Amherst’s student government operates independently as a 501(c)3. Its annual budget is approximately \$1 million at present. Discussion has arisen in recent years regarding amending the amount of funding the AAS receives each year, which is 1 percent of the current comprehensive fee. The College Council is poised to review the history of this funding, including prior allocations and disbursements, in order to consider a proposal for amending the annual budget of the AAS.



## THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

### DESCRIPTION

Academic excellence is a hallmark of an Amherst education, and the college is dedicated to providing a rigorous and rich academic program. As noted earlier in the self-study, Amherst has a fruitful history of curricular planning, which is ongoing in the work of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee. Regular renewal of the curriculum ensures continued fidelity to the core values and emphases of the liberal arts, as well as responsiveness to new directions within and among disciplines, rapid growth of knowledge, and students' changing educational needs and interests. In recent years, Amherst's faculty has been expanding areas of curricular coverage, updating major requirements, and introducing new majors and programs. Also during this period, as noted earlier, the faculty has been reexamining some academic policies, with the goal of making sure that there is sufficient flexibility to meet educational goals and to ensure equity. This review has already led to changes that have been welcomed by students and faculty, and to the promise of additional revisions to regulations that many feel are overly rigid and/or outdated. In recent years, Amherst has also been enhancing the resources of its museums and collections, an effort that has led to unique contributions to the academic program that are enriching teaching and learning.

### *UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM*

Amherst students may pursue a single degree program, the bachelor of arts on a residential campus. The expectation that students take central responsibility in inquiry, emphasized in the college's mission statement, is realized in that the curriculum provides maximum flexibility, while imposing three requirements. All students must complete a minimum of thirty-one full-semester courses, at least sixteen of them at Amherst, take a first-year seminar if they enroll as first-year students, and complete the requirements for a major in at least one discipline or interdisciplinary area. In addition to these requirements is the advisory, updated in 2012 to better reflect the explicit goals of the curriculum as outlined in the mission statement of the college, and articulated in the course catalog (2017–2018, p.77). This section reads as follows: "As student and advisor together plan a student's program, they should discuss whether the student has selected courses that: develop fundamental capabilities such as critical reading, written and oral expression, quantitative reasoning, and proficiency in using information resources; achieve breadth of understanding through study in a range of disciplines and modes of inquiry." The advisory emphasizes the capabilities that students should acquire and areas of knowledge that they should explore.

Amherst offers thirty-eight majors in twenty-six departments.<sup>60</sup> In addition to a major at Amherst, students may pursue Five College certificate programs<sup>61</sup> that have received approval through a rigorous review process that concludes with approval by the faculty. In any given year, Amherst offers approximately 850 courses. The college encourages interdisciplinary study through colloquia (non-departmental courses) and through a system of listing courses jointly between and among departments and programs. Course information is available in the course catalog, both in its annual printed version and in its constantly updated online iteration. Beyond advertised courses, students may, each semester, take up to two tutorial "special topics" classes, which are designed together by the student(s) and faculty member on a subject of interest. The liberal arts offerings of Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts serve to expand Amherst's own curriculum, as students may enroll in up to two Five-College courses each semester, beginning in the second semester of their first year at the college. In 2016–2017, 261 Amherst students enrolled in 376 different Five College classes. Through the Twelve College Exchange, Amherst students may spend their junior year at Dartmouth College studying engineering. After graduating from Amherst, students may return to Dartmouth for an additional year to earn a bachelor of engineering degree from Dartmouth.

### *ASSURING ACADEMIC QUALITY*

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 two associate deans of the faculty, both half-time, and both of whom are senior faculty members, and an associate dean for academic administration. The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) plays a central role in the oversight of the Amherst curriculum (see also the chapter on standard three). The CEP's work encompasses all levels of the curriculum, spanning individual course proposals and departmental and program curricula, and all matters of educational policy.

All proposals for new and revised courses are submitted to the CEP for review. The committee examines all course descriptions with care and rigor and enforces policies set by the faculty, ensuring that courses meet for an appropriate amount of time, include applicable keywords and are described in ways that convey for a general audience the content and goals of the course. The full faculty subsequently reviews and votes to approve the proposals. In a typical year, approximately 175 to 200 course proposals undergo this process. Any course that has not been offered for two years and will not be offered the following year is dropped from the course catalog. To be reinstated, a course must undergo the approval process again.

To encourage academic departments and programs to reflect on their curricula and engage in planning, external reviews are conducted. The expectation is that departments will undergo these informative exercises every ten years. As part of the process, the CEP reviews all self-studies and meets with review teams. The committee also plays a key role in the allocation of tenure lines, decisions that have a significant impact on the academic program. Proposals for faculty positions come from departments, which must provide curricular justification for their requests. The CEP considers the ways in which envisioned positions could contribute to the department and to the college more broadly, and then makes recommendations to the dean and the president (see the chapters on standards two and six).

Amherst has a long history of interdisciplinary undertakings, and the college's academic departments provide both disciplinary specialization and cross-disciplinary integration. Approximately 8 percent of the faculty have joint appointments in two departments; 22 percent of courses are cross-listed between or among departments and programs. Of the new faculty positions allocated since 2007–2008, 9 percent have involved joint appointments. Since Amherst has just one interdisciplinary center (the Center for Humanistic Inquiry, which was established three years ago), departments have evolved as the structure through which interdisciplinary efforts are undertaken, which include forging connections with departments and programs across the Five Colleges. All academic programs and some departments are by nature interdisciplinary and generally include mainly or exclusively faculty who hold joint appointments.

### **GENERAL EDUCATION**

Underlying Amherst's "open curriculum" is a belief that there should be a balance between freedom and responsibility. Students assume substantial responsibility for undertaking inquiry and for shaping their education within and beyond the curriculum. Through the advising process and college policies, it is emphasized that this freedom must be exercised responsibly—in the classroom and beyond—as preparation for connecting learning with leadership and service throughout students' lives. In support of this goal, Amherst strives to offer students broad choice among rigorous alternatives. The expectation is that the freer the choice, the more fruitfully demanding can be the course, major, or independent research project.

Amherst is dedicated to the view 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 is a college hallmark. The ability to reach and inspire beginning students and those at a distance from a faculty member's own discipline is held in particular esteem. Over the past decade, Amherst has made substantial efforts to expand academic support for students, and resources for faculty to make use of inclusive pedagogies, with the goal of providing all students with access to the full academic program (see the chapter on standard six).

### **Advising**

Because of the value that the college places on student self-determination, and on close colloquy with faculty, academic advising plays a larger role at Amherst, perhaps, than in some undergraduate programs. Academic advising is the responsibility of the tenure-line faculty of the college. All faculty serve as advisors, assuming

the role after completing their first year at Amherst. The dean of new students, a senior faculty member who serves half-time in the Office of Student Affairs, and an associate dean of the faculty preside over pre-major advising. As part of the advising process, advisors offer students guidance about paths through the curriculum and choices of majors, distributing their studies across disciplines, balancing their schedules, and selecting courses. Conversations about these and other topics work from the information presented in the print and online course catalog and on the college's website. Included are full descriptions of the courses that are available, departments' expectations and requirements for majors, and the eligibility of individual students for some sequential courses. Departmental websites describe each major in terms of its requirements, theoretical underpinning, and methods of inquiry. These websites also include information about faculty members and their courses, as well as their research interests and the opportunities faculty offer to Amherst students who might wish to participate in their research. Departments also provide information sessions about their offerings, and opportunities to meet faculty, during the orientation program for new students (see the chapters on standards two and six for discussions of advising).

Over the past decade, the adoption of new technology has helped make a number of multifaceted academic processes, including advising, simpler to accomplish and more efficient at a transactional level. Online grading and registration were launched in the spring of 2011. The goal of the project was to create a course registration system that enhanced convenience for students and faculty, while retaining key elements of the old paper system, including access to advisors and an enhanced version of the popular online course scheduler. Prior to this initiative, both processes required paper forms, files, and manual entry by the former registrar and her staff. Online tools have replaced paper files and now offer advisors and students secure, up-to-date, convenient electronic access to registration and student placement information. The system also supports the checking of prerequisites, a feature that helps inform students, faculty, and advisors about the requirements for each course. The system defaults to "instructor permission" when a student has not met a pre-requisite, serving as a prompt to discuss her or his eligibility with the faculty member who is teaching the course.

### ***THE MAJOR***

The period of exploration under the open curriculum provides students latitude to select and prepare for majors carefully. Students must elect a major by the end of their sophomore year and have the option to change or add majors subsequently. Again, there is broad choice among rigorous alternatives. All departments have seen some minor fluctuations in the number of students majoring over the last twenty-five years, with a few experiencing a significant increase. Most dramatically, mathematics has joined economics and English as one of the three most popular majors. Students may currently carry one, two, or (rarely) three majors simultaneously (as noted later in this document, the curriculum committee has proposed eliminating triple majors). Those who elect a major in more than one department must complete the requirements for each, including the comprehensive requirement. Alternatively, students may choose an interdisciplinary major by submitting to the Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors<sup>62</sup> 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. Six students in the class of 2017 graduated with an interdisciplinary major. Students also have the option to participate in the independent scholar program, in which a student, under the guidance of a professor, plans a personal program of study in lieu of courses. In the past five years, three students have participated in this program.

Departmental majors require completion of between eight and fourteen courses, usually divided between core courses and upper-level electives, and successful completion of the department's comprehensive requirement. In the great majority of departments, this requirement is fulfilled, sometimes in combination, by a seminar, an examination, a presentation at a departmental colloquium, or an extensive independent project (often an honors thesis or equivalent). Within the class of 2017, 39 percent of students completed an individual senior honors project. This statistic represents a downturn since the time of the college's last self-study, at which time 51 percent of graduating seniors undertook this capstone experience. Initiatives are under way to encourage more students to pursue senior thesis work, including providing more research opportunities for students earlier in

their careers; building more research assignments into lower-level classes within departments; offering special courses in some departments for seniors who are writing theses; and encouraging more varsity athletes to write senior theses. Academic departments are responsible for certifying that students have completed the requirements for the major prior to degree conferral, including the comprehensive requirement. Each department makes honors recommendations for students who meet the requirements of its honors programs for majors. Calculations for Latin honors are applied according to the criteria set forth in the course catalog. Recommendations for summa cum laude are subject to additional review by the Committee Six. All degree cases, and levels of honors, are voted by both the full faculty and the board of trustees.

### ***INTEGRITY IN THE AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT***

The Amherst College baccalaureate degree program consists of a minimum of thirty-two courses (the equivalent of 128 semester-credit hours). Students may drop one course, without penalty, under certain circumstances. Majors are typically eight to ten courses (thirty-two to forty semester-credit hours), leaving ample room to explore the general curriculum of the college, in consultation with an academic advisor. The college's course system considers all standard full courses to have equal weight toward completing the degree requirements. Courses typically meet for three hours per week, with the expectation that an additional nine hours of academic engagement will be spent in class, lab, discussion, studio, film viewing, and preparatory work. Students may take half-courses, which are equal to two credit hours. A student may combine up to four half-courses toward the degree. Two half courses must be in the same subject area in order to be credited as the equivalent of a full course toward degree requirements. This policy ensures that students taking half-courses have the same depth of academic experience as they do when taking full courses. The CEP reviewed the credit system most recently in 2015–2016 and required that all Amherst courses meet the standard of twelve academic hours of engagement. During the course approval process, faculty who indicate that a course will meet for fewer than three hours per week are expected to indicate how the twelve hours of academic engagement will be accomplished.

The faculty, through the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services, oversees a strict system of awarding credit for courses taken outside the college. With very few exceptions, credit is not awarded for pre-professional courses. No credit is awarded for courses considered remedial (such as mathematics below the level of calculus). No credit is awarded, or advanced standing toward graduation granted, for advanced placement or any exam results or, for entering first-year students, any course taken prior to enrollment as a full-time student at the college. Amherst does not award credit for competency-based programs or prior experiential learning.

Amherst admits approximately twenty-five new transfer students each year, with nearly half coming from community colleges. To be eligible for transfer, a student must have completed the equivalent of at least thirty-two transferable semester-hour credits at an accredited college or university. The registrar reviews all course work in accordance with faculty policy, and works closely with associated academic departments to determine transfer eligibility of courses if uncertainty exists. An associate registrar performs a second review of transfer work to assure accuracy and consistency. Students receive information about their transfer status and corresponding class level prior to accepting admission to the college. The registrar meets with each transfer student at the beginning of the first semester at the college to review transfer credit and college policies. Students must complete a minimum of two years of their coursework in residence at Amherst, and the majority of courses for the major are typically fulfilled with Amherst courses.

### **Study Away**

Amherst encourages students to study away for a semester or year, believing that exposure to and appreciation of a culture other than one's own is a crucial part of a liberal arts education. In the past five years, 41 percent of Amherst students, typically juniors, have studied off campus. Students choose from a list of pre-approved programs that have been vetted by the Committee on Global Education. Students wishing to participate in programs that are not currently pre-approved must petition the committee for permission to do so. The committee and the Office of Global Education monitor programs continually, building strong relationships

with programs in which students participate, and applying standards in the field, to ensure that the experiences offered are of high quality. The office's director, faculty, and, in recent years, the dean of the faculty, also conduct site visits. Amherst does not sponsor study-abroad programs of its own other than faculty-led programs of short duration. The college participates in a small number of official exchanges with foreign universities, in which one or two students per year are guaranteed spots at Amherst and vice-versa. These include a longstanding exchange with the Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, which includes a faculty exchange component, and the University of Göttingen in Göttingen, Germany, as well as new exchanges with Yale-NUS College in Singapore and The American University of Beirut. Students must receive the approval of their major department(s) and the registrar regarding credit for courses taken while away. All such courses must be taken as part of a program approved by the Committee on Global Education. Credit may be awarded for courses taken abroad only after careful scrutiny to ensure that they qualify as liberal arts courses, at a level equivalent to Amherst courses (see the chapter on standards two for more about study away).

### ***MUSEUMS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS***

Amherst is among a small number of liberal arts colleges that include extraordinary museums and collections. Together the college's three renowned museums welcome more than 70,000 visitors each year. These resources provide remarkable learning opportunities for students, both within and beyond the formal academic curriculum, and vital connections to local and regional communities, as well as the international community of scholars. In the past decade, the museums and archives and special collections, described briefly below, have expanded their instructional programs and also host vibrant on-campus summer research and internship programs for the college's students.

#### **The Amherst Center for Russian Culture**

This center<sup>63</sup> opened in 1998 and is administered by the Russian department. It boasts a unique collection of some fifteen thousand books, periodicals, and manuscripts from late-nineteenth and twentieth-century Russia and sponsors a lively series of readings, concerts, and special events. The center includes an art gallery with important pieces of twentieth-century art from the collection of the late Thomas P. Whitney '37. With the creation of an advisory board and the retirement of a longtime faculty director, the center is poised to open its collections more fully and to create more opportunities for researchers and students.

#### **Archives and Special Collections, Frost Library**

Established as a department in the library in 1851, Archives and Special Collections<sup>64</sup> is one of the oldest such entities in an undergraduate institution and one of the largest, with more than 11,000 linear feet of institutional records and publications, biographical materials, personal papers, historical and literary manuscripts, and more than 80,000 rare books. In addition to reams of material on college history, the department houses major collections relating to Emily Dickinson, Richard Wilbur '42, and other poets and writers. These and other resources support courses across the curriculum, as well as the original research of students, faculty, and the wider scholarly community. Archives and Special Collections offers a continuing series of exhibitions and programs in Frost Library and online. With the college's bicentennial approaching in 2021, the department is working with many other departments at Amherst to develop an online bicentennial timeline, to digitize major college collections, and to support several publications on college history (see the chapters on standards six and seven for more about the ways in which the library contributes to teaching and learning).

#### **Beneski Museum of Natural History**

Amherst's natural history museum, one of New England's largest, houses more than 200,000 objects, including one of the largest collections of dinosaur footprints in the world. Administered by Amherst's geology department, the museum, which was renamed the Beneski Museum of Natural History<sup>65</sup> in 2011, has been housed in the college's state-of-the-art earth sciences building since the facility opened in 2006. This is the museum's fifth home on campus since its inception. The earth sciences building was designed to ensure the integration of the museum collections with the building's classrooms and laboratories. For scholars, Amherst College students, and thousands of school-age children who visit annually, the museum is an important

resource for the study of geology and the environment. Every year, some twenty students serve as docents at the museum.

### **The Emily Dickinson Museum**

The Emily Dickinson Museum (EDM) comprises the Dickinson Homestead and Austin Dickinson's house, which is known as the Evergreens. The museum is dedicated to educating diverse audiences about Emily Dickinson's life, family, creative work, and times and to preserving and interpreting the Homestead and the Evergreens as historical resources for the benefit of scholars and the general public. The museum engages in close collaborations with members of the Amherst faculty, some of whom offer Amherst courses at the Dickinson Homestead. The museum also provides opportunities for faculty and students to conduct research with its collections. In addition, Amherst students may serve as docents.

### **The Folger Shakespeare Library**

The Folger Shakespeare Library, which is located in Washington, D.C., is the premier research library in the world dedicated to the study of Shakespeare and the English Renaissance. Founded by Henry Clay Folger (Amherst class of 1879), the museum also houses major collections for research in European arts, culture, and history from the early fifteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. The Amherst-Folger Fellowship program began in 1996 and now awards as many as six student fellowships each year to Amherst students through funds provided by the Friends of the Amherst College Library. In addition to conducting independent research during their time at the library in January, the fellows attend sessions led by Folger scholars that cover a broad range of topics related to the library's collections. Amherst faculty may use the resources of the library to conduct research and may participate in the programs of the Folger Institute, a center for advanced study of which the college is a consortium member. The institute offers seminars, conferences, and colloquia in fields represented in the Folger Library collections and offers funding. In addition, the library offers a limited number of highly competitive residential fellowships for which Amherst faculty may apply. Conversations are ongoing to create additional collaborations between the Amherst College library and the Folger.

### **The Mead Art Museum**

The Mead Art Museum,<sup>66</sup> which is accredited by the Alliance of American Museums, holds a collection of some nineteen thousand objects, with strengths in American, European, Russian, Japanese, African, and Mexican art. The Mead is currently undertaking a major initiative to make the collection more accessible to students from all backgrounds, to increase its support of classroom use and visits, and to present more ambitious, large-scale exhibitions with scholarly catalogs. In 2016, the Mead launched two contemporary artist series, the Rotherwas Project<sup>67</sup> and Hall Walls,<sup>68</sup> to provide students with the opportunity to learn from living artists through collaborations on artworks and curatorial projects. More than seventy students per year gain museum experience working at the Mead, from greeting visitors to researching exhibitions.

Amherst is also the home of *The Common* literary magazine<sup>69</sup>. Founded in 2011, *The Common* is an award-winning literary journal that publishes stories, essays, poems, and images with a strong sense of place. With two print issues per year and a vibrant digital magazine, *The Common* publishes, translates and promotes work by established and emerging writers and artists and contributes to intellectual life on campus. *The Common* offers a Literary Publishing Internship Program, through which twelve students gain hands-on publishing experience each year.

## **APPRAISAL**

There are many general indicators of a strong and well-received academic program. Of students who matriculated in the classes of 2010–2015, some 95 percent were graduated within six years. In the 2017 Enrolled Student Survey, 96 percent of students indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of instruction, and 97 percent were satisfied with the out-of-class availability of faculty. 82 percent of those who responded to the 2017 Alumni Survey indicated that they would encourage a high school student to attend Amherst. Of all living alumni, more than 48 percent contribute to the college in any given year. More than 70 percent of alumni surveyed report having earned graduate degrees; acceptance rates in competitive

areas such as medical school and law school are high. The size and strength of the applicant pool for admission continue to grow, enabling Amherst to increase both selectivity and diversity in a way that few liberal arts institutions can rival (see the chapter on standard five).

Classes are generally small to allow the close faculty-student interaction emphasized in the college's mission statement. The student-to-faculty ratio, based on the Common Data Set method of calculation of 236 instructional FTEs, is currently eight-to-one. In the fall semester of 2017, the mean class size was 17.8 and the median was 14. Close evaluation of these numbers reveals, however, that there are discrepancies in class size among the humanities, social sciences, and science departments. In the fall of 2017, humanities classes had a mean class size of 14.3 and median of 12, social science classes a mean of 23.0 and median of 20, and science classes a mean of 26.0 and median of 22. As will be discussed in the chapter on standard six, science faculty are justifiably concerned about the size of introductory courses and the relative lack of electives for students majoring in their departments, given that professors often need to teach additional introductory classes (see the chapter on standard six).

On a related note, in recent years, the CEP has expressed concern about students' access to all parts of the curriculum. After monitoring data on capped courses and course enrollments over a number of years, the committee has taken several steps to ensure access, including launching a registration pilot program. The first initiative was to tighten the criteria for course caps, a change that began about five years ago. The committee now scrutinizes the rationale for each course cap and determines whether the cap is appropriate to the goals of the course. The purpose of this review is to ensure broad access to classes across all fields. In a related initiative, the CEP, with the approval of the faculty, is piloting a program to address challenges in the pre-registration process for courses that are in high demand and that have enrollment caps. Students on the CEP have raised concerns about the number of students dropped from classes when faculty cut class rosters after the semester has begun. The committee developed new rules to bring clarity to the criteria by which faculty choose to finalize class rosters, when faced with over-enrollments. The hope is that this system will lead to fewer changes and less chaos as students finalize their course schedules at the beginning of each semester. The CEP continues to monitor the registration process and will assess the pilot project at the end of the pilot period.

The Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee also reached consensus that students are not exploring areas across the curriculum consistently, and that their tendency to carry multiple majors has been limiting students' breadth of courses. To address these concerns, as noted earlier, the committee proposed expanding opportunities for pass-fail, relaxing the date for declaring that a course will be taken pass-fail, and possibly allowing a non-recorded option to let students declare a minimum grade for a pass-fail course (in which case the grade, rather than a *P*, would appear on the transcript). The committee also recommended adding the possibility of carrying either one major, two majors, or a major and a minor, and eliminating the possibility of a triple major. Amherst currently does not offer minors. Typically, 32 to 40 percent (175 students in the class of 2017) choose to carry two majors, and a small number (four students in the class of 2017) have three majors. The CEP initiated department conversations about the pass-fail policy and the proposal to permit minors and limit majors during the spring of 2017. After further conversations this fall, the full faculty discussed the proposal to allow half credits for labs at a faculty meeting that took place in February of 2018. Conversations about both proposals will continue this spring. Initial recommendations of the curriculum committee that have been implemented are discussed in the chapter on standard two.

The CEP has also been examining academic policies to determine if revisions are needed to offer greater flexibility, without relaxing standards, as noted at the beginning of this chapter. Following feedback from students and class deans, the CEP recommended that seniors be permitted to participate in commencement without completing all degree requirements, if students meet certain criteria. The faculty approved this proposal in the spring of 2016. In addition, the CEP clarified the rules about end-of-semester work, recommended that students who live far away from academic institutions be allowed to make up courses online, and proposed that the rules for making up deficiencies be relaxed so students can apply courses from two-year colleges. The faculty approved these changes in recent years. In another initiative, the College

Council recommended changing the academic calendar to allow a longer reading period in the spring semester, and the faculty also approved this change. The new calendar was implemented in the spring of 2017. In conjunction with this change, the College Council recommended, as noted in the chapter on standard three, that the CEP oversee the calendar in future years. The faculty agreed that, because the academic calendar has curricular implications, responsibility for its oversight is best situated with the CEP. In the spring of 2017, the faculty voted to revise the charge of the committee to indicate that the CEP would maintain the college calendar, in consultation with the registrar and subject to the ultimate approval of the faculty.

Each year, the CEP reexamines the criteria by which it will judge FTE requests, making adjustments to meet college-wide needs. In its annual letter inviting FTE requests, the CEP communicates those criteria to academic departments. Over the past decade, when considering replacement and expansion FTEs, the committee has weighed positions' possible contributions to departments and to college-wide needs, including instruction in writing and quantitative skills, global issues, interdisciplinary programs, the needs of small departments, and a more diverse faculty. In recent years, the president and dean have followed the CEP's recommendations on tenure-line allocations. To encourage academic departments to reflect on their curricula and engage in planning, all departments are expected to undergo rigorous decennial reviews (see the chapter on standard two). The reviews guide departments in their FTE requests, as a part of curricular planning.

### ***GENERAL EDUCATION***

Since the inception of the open curriculum at Amherst in 1971, this system of broad choice of non-major courses has been shown to have many strengths. It attracts to Amherst independent-minded students who have worked hard to gain admission and welcome a period of exploration and self-definition not scripted by another set of requirements. This phase of self-fashioning allows students latitude 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 study abroad and domestic study as they shape their academic programs. For the past forty-five years, Amherst has functioned under the assumption 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 in the same courses. Amherst expects that students who are discerning and energetic in their commitments should later be capable of filling gaps as they confront the explosions of knowledge, technology, and art forms to be expected in their lifetimes.

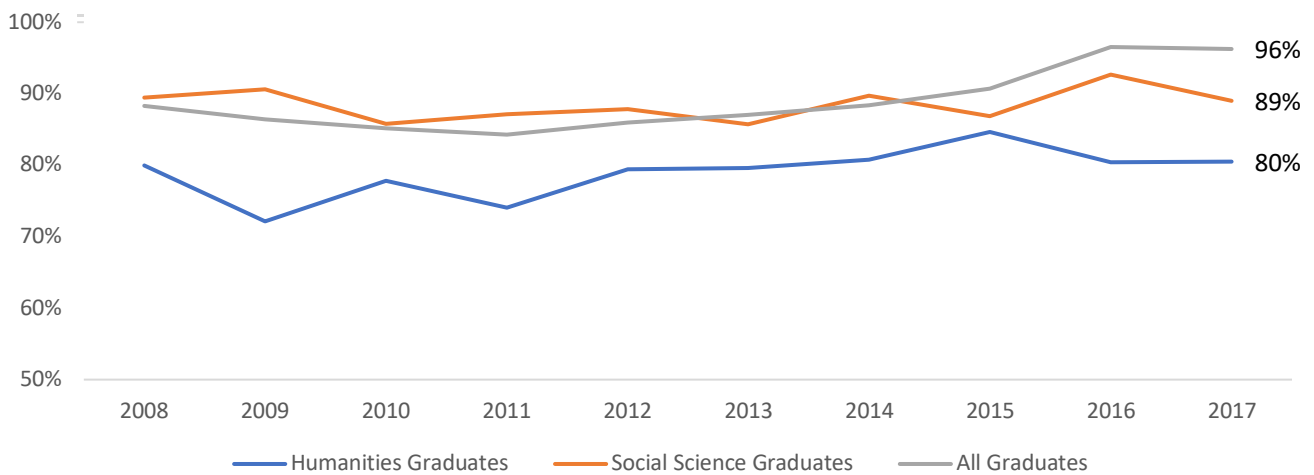
The costs of freedom are, however, never far from view. Amherst is aware of the potential for students to skirt their weak areas, and the role of advisors is particularly central and complex. In its fluidity, adaptability, and complex dynamics, Amherst's open curriculum has the virtue and the liability of being permanently under active review in all quarters and at all levels of the college. Because this curriculum exists within a culture of critical engagement by both students and teachers, rather than as a list of requirements, Amherst runs no risk of assuming, even briefly, that the college has got it right. As noted in the section on the work of the curriculum committee in the chapter on standard two, Amherst has seen a wide-ranging debate about the open curriculum for the past three years. To ensure that all of its students gain the fundamental skills and capacities of a liberal arts education, the curriculum committee agrees that the college should make use of its strong departmental cultures. In accord with this approach, Amherst's pedagogical initiatives are aimed at departments.

Amherst continues to monitor the breadth of students' course-taking patterns (see the chapter on standard eight). For the most part, Amherst students distribute their classes across the traditional divisions. In the classes of 2013 through 2017, 99 percent took three or more courses in the arts and humanities, and 99.9 percent took at least two. Similarly, 74.8 percent took three or more courses in the social sciences; 84.1 percent took at least two. When it comes to STEM fields, 67 percent of graduates took three or more courses; 77 percent took at least two. Enrollments in mathematics and the natural sciences have risen dramatically, and the percentage of Amherst students who have taken classes in STEM fields has risen since



the time of the last self-study, as shown below. The proportion of students who do not take any STEM courses is declining.

Figure 1: Percentage of Graduates Taking STEM Coursework, Classes of 2008–2017



Internal analysis also reveals that fewer students are taking courses in foreign languages and in studio and performing arts. The college is monitoring this trend.

At the same time that interest in STEM fields is expanding rapidly, just about half of Amherst students major in a humanities field. This is a greater proportion than at many peer institutions. The robust number of humanities majors may be a function of the open curriculum and students’ ability to “double major.” Another explanation for the strong interest in the humanities may be the inspiration provided by the college’s stellar faculty in these fields. As part of its commitment to the humanities, the college opened the Center for Humanistic Inquiry (CHI) in 2015 (see the chapter on standard six). In addition, recognizing that writing is the cornerstone of a liberal arts education and is important within all disciplines, the dean of the faculty has launched an initiative called “The Writing College,” in collaboration with the Office of Communications. This effort is underscoring Amherst’s famed literary tradition, as well as opportunities for students to focus on writing beyond the classroom—including through internships at *The Common* and the Emily Dickinson Museum; research opportunities at the Emily Dickinson Museum, Special Collections, and the Folger Shakespeare Library; and literary gatherings such as LitFest, an annual literary celebration, and poetry slams.

On a related note, but in a curricular vein, in 2009, the faculty approved a policy that all first-year seminars should include substantial writing-attentive instruction. The expectation is that the seminars pay close attention to the way students write and focus on close readings of written texts and other materials, as well as on the development of arguments. In the course of its work, the curriculum committee identified some variation among first-year seminars. In the spring of 2017, the committee surveyed the class of 2020 about students’ experiences in their first-year seminars and learned that students were more positive about the attention given to their writing than students had been in 2012, the last time that the survey was administered. At the same time, the committee concluded that, based on the students’ responses, not all first-year seminars were being taught as writing-attentive courses. The curriculum committee considered this finding in its report and recommended that changes be made in the first-year seminar system. The committee also examined the way each department approached the capstone experience or comprehensive exam. Again, the committee found inconsistencies and urged departments to address the issue.

To encourage students in all disciplines to explore the breadth of the Amherst curriculum, a course keyword system was developed in 2009–2010 to make more visible the content and liberal arts capacities emphasized in individual Amherst courses. A goal of the system is to highlight courses intended for non-majors, so as to

inspire more students to experiment with different parts of the curriculum. Examples of keywords include “fine arts for non-majors,” “foreign culture taught in English,” and “science and math for non-majors.” The system also includes keywords for skills taught in the class, for example, “quantitative reasoning,” “community-based learning,” “research attentive,” and “speaking attentive.” After *Amherst Uprising* in 2015, the CEP added keywords to make it easier for students and advisors to highlight courses that address issues of race, class, and gender. While this system provides useful information, it also relies on the good will of faculty to attach the keywords to their courses. In 2016–2017, the CEP made a concerted effort to encourage more faculty to use the keywords. Faculty assigned keywords to 43 percent of fall 2017 courses.

Studying abroad and domestic study provide further opportunities for students to gain personal and intellectual breadth. Interestingly, the number of Amherst students who study away is somewhat lower than that of peers. Anecdotally, this trend can be explained by some students’ unwillingness to miss any of the Amherst experience. It is a fact that student-athletes who participate in winter sports cannot go away either semester. Concerns among science students about whether courses taken while off campus will satisfy pre-medical and other requirements have been a barrier to study abroad as well. The Office of Global Education is working with science faculty to identify more programs abroad that will meet the needs of students interested in pursuing medical and other scientific study. For those unwilling or unable to spend a semester away, the college is exploring other opportunities for students to gain international experiences; these include funding summer language study abroad, identifying and funding summer internships in other countries, and creating more faculty-led research trips that are connected to classes taught on campus. These experiences can take place during Intersession, spring break, or immediately following the end of the spring semester (see standard six for information about classes of this kind that are already taking place).

The Office of Global Education has also made concerted efforts to ensure that study-abroad and domestic study experiences are connected to students’ overall program of study. The office is engaged in a general project of working with academic departments to consider how study away might help students achieve departmental learning goals. Meanwhile, in the advising process for study away, students are asked to be explicit about how the international experience they are considering will enhance their academic program. The office encourages students to reflect on their experiences while on their programs off campus and after they return home. Before leaving for study-abroad programs, students are required to attend a meeting on campus that focuses on health and safety. In recent years, a Moodle “course” has served as the platform for the Office of Global Education’s detailed pre-departure webinar (with quiz).

In addition, the dean of the faculty and the director of the Office of Global Education have been developing a small number of select partnerships with institutions across the globe, meeting a strategic plan priority. By so doing, the college’s goal is to make exchange and collaboration more easily available and enduring for Amherst students and faculty. As noted earlier, the college has new exchanges with Yale-NUS College in Singapore and The American University of Beirut.

### **Advising**

The appraisal of Amherst’s efforts to enhance advising is included in the chapters on standard two and six. Pre-professional and career advising is provided by staff in the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning. Currently, these professional advisors provide advice to students about the fields of arts and communications, business and finance, education, and health professions. Pending successful fundraising, new positions will be added to cover government and nonprofit, law, and science and technology. The faculty health professions committee works closely with the Loeb Center’s health professions advisor.

### **THE MAJOR**

At Amherst, curricular renewal is an ongoing process. The college has established seven new majors since 2008—including environmental studies (2008–2009), film and media studies (2010–2011), biochemistry and biophysics (2010–2011), Five College architectural studies (2012–2013), statistics (2014–2015), classical civilization (2017–2018), and Latinx and Latin American studies (2017–2018). Amherst created a new

Department of Environmental Studies in 2014–2015. The Department of Mathematics and Computer Science split, with computer science becoming a separate department in 2009–2010. Later the Department of Mathematics added the statistics major to create the Department of Mathematics and Statistics in 2014–2015. Also in 2014–2015, the Department of Physics and the Department of Astronomy merged into a single department. In recent years, the CEP also approved new Five College certificates in Middle Eastern studies (2009–2010), ethnomusicology (2010–2011), queer and sexuality studies (2012), sustainability studies (2012–2013), and coastal and marine sciences (2015–2016). Amherst now participates in fourteen of the seventeen Five-College certificate programs. These and other curricular initiatives have responded to the changing intellectual interests of faculty and students, as well as to recommendations from the various external reviews. Since 2008, there have been twenty-eight external reviews of academic departments, appraising most academic majors (some majors are housed in programs). As mentioned earlier, the Office of Global Education also underwent an external review during this period. A transformation of the curriculum and new hiring within the Spanish department provide an example of an external review’s impact. In 2014–2015, following a period of transition, the department undertook a self-study, and an external team came to campus in the fall of 2015. The review validated the department’s commitment to a focus on teaching courses on literature and culture in Spanish, rather than in English. The team recommended hiring a senior scholar of Latin American culture to provide additional departmental leadership, a specialist in Spanish language acquisition at the professorial level, and a new FTE in LatinX cultural studies. Over the last two years, the first two hires have taken place, and the department was searching for the third position as this self-study was under way. The department has applied for and received funding through the “Reimagining the Commons”<sup>70</sup> Mellon grant to revise the pathways that students take through the major.

External reviews are also an effective tool for considering how best to strengthen an interdisciplinary area of the curriculum. It has become clear that, while most areas of the globe are well represented in the Amherst curriculum, this is not true of Africa (see also the chapter on standard two). Recognizing that there is insufficient coverage of the history, politics, and culture of the African continent, the dean of the faculty is working with Amherst faculty who are scholars of Africa to organize an external review of the ways in which the study of Africa is situated in the curriculum. That review will take place in the spring of 2018.

Internally, as well, academic departments and programs are engaged in conversations about their curricula on an ongoing basis. Many have undertaken revisions and innovations, large and small, to strengthen their academic programs in recent years. As noted earlier, in the spring of 2016, the dean of the faculty requested that all academic departments and programs submit summaries of the ways in which they are addressing students’ learning within and beyond the major. A sample of what was reported provides a glimpse of curricular experimentation and curricular changes that are taking place within departments. The Department of American Studies introduced a new requirement that majors complete one course that includes a significant community-engagement component. Field-based courses that complement the long-standing emphasis on laboratory studies are now among the offerings of the biology department. The traditional capstone exam in the English department has been replaced with a day-long capstone symposium in which all senior majors give a conference-style presentation of work produced as a result of thesis research or in an advanced seminar. Workshops on argumentation, presentation, and asking good questions prepare students for the event. In response to feedback offered through an alumni survey, the French department now offers more opportunities for students to develop their oral skills in French at the advanced level, including through enhanced, advanced-level “French-in-practice” courses. The music department has developed multiple tracks through its major. In addition to Western classical music, students may now pursue in-depth study in jazz and ethnomusicology. The Department of Physics and Astronomy has introduced a variety of active-learning methods into its laboratory course for majors.

### ***MUSEUMS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS***

Over the past decade, the college has enhanced the ways in which its museums and special collections enrich teaching and learning at Amherst. With greater emphasis on offering opportunities for student research,

student-curated exhibitions, and on-campus internships, Amherst's museums and special collections have become important sites of "learning by doing." Class visits to Archives and Special Collections have increased markedly, from thirty-five in 2010–2011 to fifty-four in 2016–2017. With support from an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant, the Mead Art Museum endow the position of head of education. One of the position's responsibilities is finding ways to integrate the Mead and its collections into classroom instruction well beyond the Department of Art and the History of Art, which has made use of the museum's collections for years. Class visits to the Mead have soared from twenty-six in 2007–2008 to 154 in 2016–2017, an all-time high. In 2016–2017, 1,800 students, who were enrolled in fifty-six classes, representing twenty-three areas of study, came to the Mead through class visits. Twelve faculty members who brought their classes to the Mead during the last academic year did so for the first time. In the spring of 2017, the museum built a second classroom in its storage area. The construction project doubled the Mead's capacity to host classes, while also demystifying its operations by offering unprecedented access to the museum's collections. The Mead has also transformed its gallery and educational spaces to make them more welcoming to students. The museum has also focused on bringing contemporary artists to the museum, mounting new exhibitions more frequently, acquiring contemporary and non-Western art, and implementing robust docent and internship programs for students.

The other Amherst College museums are also expanding the ways in which they foster student learning. Typically, at least one English class now meets at the Emily Dickinson Museum on a weekly basis. In recent years, several English and American studies classes have incorporated research with the collections of the museum into their class work. Such interactions are not limited to the humanities. A statistics class has worked on analyzing Dickinson's poetry, visiting the museum as part of its efforts. The Emily Dickinson Museum has built closer relationships with the Center for Humanistic Inquiry; *The Common*; and LitFest, and Amherst's other museums.

## **PROJECTIONS**

(Some related projections appear in the chapter on standard six.)

The Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee will make recommendations to ensure that students develop the skills they need to succeed in their courses. The committee will also make recommendations for a more robust advising program and for a continuing examination of the breadth of students' studies at Amherst.

Amherst will expand its exchange programs with a few select international partners and will seek to include direct student and faculty exchanges abroad as part of these programs.

The pre-registration pilot will continue for two more years, with possible additional adjustments during that time. It will be fully reviewed in 2019.

The college's museums and special collections will continue to expand opportunities for internships and research for Amherst students.

In "The Writing College" initiative, Amherst will feature its unique opportunities for engagement with literary traditions.

## STUDENTS

### DESCRIPTION

Amherst College assembles an exceptional student body by setting admission standards high and committing its human and financial resources fully to widening educational opportunity. From across the country and around the world, the college brings together accomplished and talented students of rare promise in an intimate residential setting. At Amherst, citizens and future leaders develop within a community of learners with unlike backgrounds and shared curiosity.

Over the past decade, the college has succeeded in increasing the selectivity of its admission process and strengthening the student body's academic quality and diversity. Generous financial aid policies have played an essential role in supporting these efforts and continue to do so. With impressive acceptance and retention rates (see also the chapter on standard eight), Amherst has a well-earned reputation for its admission selectivity and for providing an outstanding liberal arts education. The college's acceptance rate is 14 percent, the retention rate for first-year students is 96 percent, and the six-year graduation rate is 94 percent. Annually, Amherst enrolls a residential student body of approximately 1,800 students; an additional one hundred Amherst students typically are off campus studying away each year. In 2017–2018, students have come to Amherst from forty-three states, three U.S. territories, and fifty-eight countries. Of the 44 percent of students who have self-identified as students of color, 13 percent are Hispanic/Latino, 14 percent are Asian-American, 11 percent are African-American, and 5 percent are biracial or multiracial; 9 percent are international students. Currently, 14 percent of Amherst students are the first members of their family to attend college. The college achieved a milestone in 2012 when, for the first time in its history, students of color and international students made up the majority of the student body, as has been true in years since.

As noted in the chapters on standards three and four, and as will be discussed in the chapter on standard six, Amherst students play a substantial role in shaping their education, as well as the academic and co-curricular policies of the college. With the guidance and oversight of the faculty, students chart their own paths through the flexible open curriculum. As active and engaged college citizens, students serve as voting members of committees that preside over educational policy, admission policy, financial priorities, student life, and other areas. In addition, they engage actively in the independent government association; approximately one hundred self-run organizations; advisory panels of many academic departments; and as counselors in residence halls. The needs of the current student body have brought renewed attention to fostering a climate of respect and inclusion on campus. Students often assume a leadership role in this work.

### ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID

Amherst's admission efforts are guided by principles and institutional priorities set by the faculty, administration, and trustees, as expressed in a series of foundational statements.<sup>71</sup> An admission statement developed and approved by the faculty in 1983 serves as the foundation of the college's work in seeking "...above all, to enroll students of intellectual promise who have demonstrated qualities of mind and character that will enable them to take full advantage of our curriculum." Also in keeping with the statement, Amherst works to find "qualified applicants from different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds—students whose several perspectives might contribute significantly to a process of mutual education within and beyond the curriculum." As the statement requires, the college aims to "select from among the many qualified applicants those possessing the intellectual talent, discipline and imagination that will allow them most fully to benefit from our curriculum and contribute to the life of the college and society. Grades, standardized test scores, essays, recommendations, independent work, the quality of the secondary school program, and achievements outside the classroom are among the factors used to evaluate this promise, but no one of these measures is considered determinative."<sup>72</sup>

In the fall of 2017, the board of trustees revised its *Statement on Diversity and Community*, which had been in place since 1996, as noted earlier in this self-study. The trustees "reassert[ed] the goal of an Amherst College community that reflects the broadest and deepest possible range of talents that people of all backgrounds can bring to us." These policies and practices have been developed and sustained to support the college's ability to

attract and enroll students with diverse experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives in order to enhance the education of the entire student body. Prospective students can understand Amherst's ambitions for its student body through the website, catalog, and application for admission, as well as the mission statements of the college and admission office. The Supreme Court's 2015 decision to rehear *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* posed a possible threat to Amherst's ability to use race as one of many factors in its holistic admission deliberations. As noted earlier, the college took a leadership role in soliciting signatory support from thirty-six selective liberal arts for a brief submitted to the court in support of the University of Texas.

### **Increasing Access and Equity**

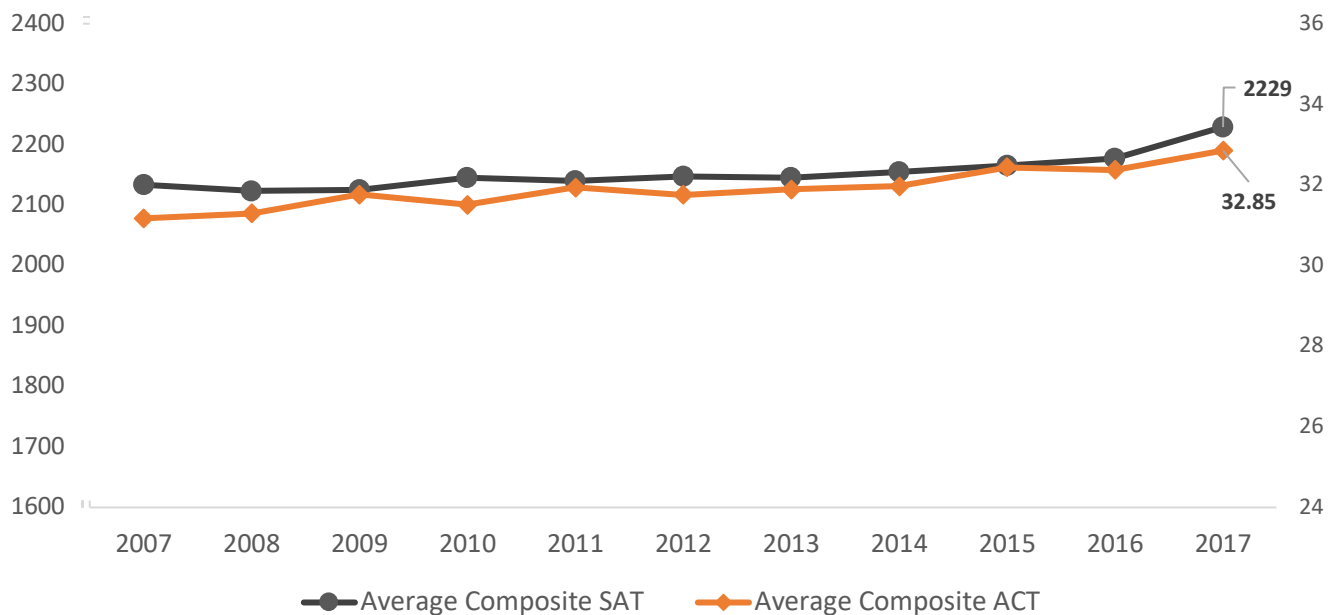
Approximately 58 percent of Amherst students receive financial aid from the college. Amherst is one of only four institutions of higher education in the nation that are need-blind for all candidates, regardless of application status (early and regular decision, transfer, and students who are considered from the wait list) or citizenship, and that meet full demonstrated need for all accepted students without "packaged" loans. Amherst determines need by using a combination of federal and institutional methodologies. All Amherst aid applicants 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 demonstrate need. The Office of Financial Aid administers the college's financial aid program, which is described in Amherst's catalog (pp. 61–63), the *Affording Amherst* publication, and on the pages of the college's web site that are devoted to information about financial aid.

Every student offered financial aid is provided with access to a financial aid disclosure, a one-page document that includes the repayment rate for Amherst students entering repayment, the median borrowing of Amherst students, and links to federal student-aid resources. Each student who borrows through a federal loan for the first time must participate in entrance counseling, an informational tool that provides loan details, including interest rate, repayment terms, and the total cost of borrowing. Students must also complete a *Master Promissory Note*, which discloses the terms and repayment of the loan. Students who choose to borrow through an Amherst College loan are provided with the same information through federally required truth-in-lending documents. (Students may use such a loan to replace their student employment allowance, their family contribution, or other expenses not covered by the Amherst grant.) Disclosure documents are emailed to students after each loan disbursement is posted to their student account at Amherst. The annually published Common Data Set<sup>73</sup> also provides recent borrowing rates by loan type and average amounts borrowed by Amherst graduates.

In 2006, the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) made several recommendations relating to admission and financial aid, which were approved by the faculty and the board of trustees, as noted in the 2013 interim report. Since then, as recommended, the college has increased the size of its student body, from 1,648 to 1,836, to accommodate recommended growth in the population of non-U.S. citizens and those coming from less affluent backgrounds. To support the committee's recommendations, in 2007, Amherst examined the barriers that were limiting access for low-income and first-generation college students. Based on this analysis, Amherst eliminated loans from all financial aid packages, becoming one of the first institutions in the U.S. to do so. In 2008, the college adopted a need-blind admission process for non-U.S. citizens. Amherst has sustained these significant financial commitments, even in the face of the financial crisis of 2007–2008. Since 2008, the percentage of enrolled non-U.S. citizens has grown from 7 to 9 percent, and the percentage of students receiving Pell grants has grown from 17 percent to 24. During this same period, the average SAT composite (critical reading and math combined) of Amherst's entering class has increased by thirty-two points.

## Students

Figure 2: Average Composite SAT and ACT Scores for New Students Entering Fall 2007–Fall 2017



### Recruitment Efforts to Support College Priorities, Including Access

For more than three decades, the Office of Admission has hosted diversity open houses for prospective applicants each year. Talented high school seniors with the potential to contribute to the diversity of the college community spend three days on campus. Programming includes a mock admission committee exercise, a financial aid workshop and faculty panel, and the opportunity to visit classes and to spend the night in an Amherst residence hall. Over the last twenty years, the college has more than doubled the number of students provided with funding to attend the open houses each year. In 2017, a record number of students (more than one thousand) applied to Amherst's two highly selective fall programs, which serve a total of 180 students. In 2014, President Martin was among the college presidents to attend President Obama's White House College Opportunity Summit; she consequently made a commitment to improve college access and the enrollment of Native American students. Amherst offered its first Native Fly-in Program in 2014, a one-night extension—with specialized programming—to one of the open houses. This program is a success and continues to grow.

Supporting the college's CAP recommendation to enroll a more internationally diverse student body, Amherst introduced the Koenig Scholar Program in 2006. This effort supports the recruitment of talented low-income students from sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and includes support to provide them with financial aid. Since the program's inception, Amherst's pool of African and Latin American applicants has grown from 126 to 607, and international applicants, 10 percent of Amherst's applicant pool in 2005, now constitute approximately 27 percent of the applicant pool. In recent years, the admission office has extended its recruitment travel to new parts of the world, including the Middle East and new regions of Latin America. Included among the admission office staff are two non-U.S. citizens and fluent speakers of Spanish and Chinese. With the growth of international students on campus from 118 to 169, the college has dedicated additional resources to meet their needs. A portion of the new student orientation program has been expanded to focus on some of the issues that new non-U.S. citizens often experience when making the transition to college and to a new culture. In addition, as noted in the chapter on standard three, the Center for International Student Engagement is now situated within the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Additional resources have been provided to support its work.

Since 2009, Amherst has established four endowed scholarship funds for veterans of the U.S. armed forces. Subsequently, admission staff have attended conferences and workshops with veteran-recruitment-based

programming, and expanded outreach to veterans. Admission has developed partnerships with organizations that support veterans' transition to higher education such as Service2School, VetLink, and the Leadership Scholar Program. In 2016, the college opened a veterans' lounge on campus. In addition, Amherst's Center for Diversity and Leadership offers support for veterans (all of whom are transfer students and many of whom are first-generation students), first-generation, low-income, transfer, and DACA (deferred action for childhood arrivals) students. The center enjoys a prominent location in the campus center. In 2017, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion hired an associate director of diversity and leadership, who has specific advisory responsibilities for these students. In the summer of 2017, Amherst served as one of the host sites for the Warrior Scholar Project, an intensive residential program that supports veterans' preparations to return to or begin studies in an institution of higher education. As noted earlier, Amherst also participates in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Yellow Ribbon Program, without setting a cap on spaces for qualified enrolling students or our institutional financial contribution per student. In 2015 and 2016, Amherst was named Military Friendly<sup>®</sup>, a designation awarded to the top colleges, universities, community colleges, and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace military students and to dedicate resources to ensure their success in the classroom and after graduation. Amherst aspires to at least triple the current U.S. veteran enrollment of five by 2021 and plans to monitor the veterans' success as the college expands this program.

### **Admission Communications**

All admission inquirers receive a copy of the college's view book and a brochure about financial aid. Members of the admission staff carry a more abbreviated piece for distribution during recruitment travel. The admission office also produces an *Annual Report to Secondary Schools*,<sup>74</sup> which is made public through the college website. The piece contains comprehensive statistics on the academic qualifications of applicants, admitted students, and matriculating students for the entering class and transfer cohort; details about the enrolling student secondary school type, geographic origin, race, and other background information; financial aid award data for the accepted and enrolling group; and the distribution of students' majors from the most recent graduating class. Contact information for admission and financial aid staff is also included. Application requirements for admission and financial aid are detailed online and through links noted in the college's print pieces. "Deans-on-duty" in both the admission and financial aid offices respond promptly to questions submitted to the offices' general email accounts. Beyond print and digital communications, information about on-campus programming and off-campus recruitment events is provided by staff, students, and alumni, as well as via a robust schedule of on-campus group information sessions. In 2016, admission deans conducted an estimated four hundred sessions, including on Saturdays through most of the summer and fall. Although information about applying for financial aid is included in every information session, financial aid deans offer information sessions three times weekly during the office's busiest seasons.

Nearly nine hundred student-led campus tours are offered seven days a week throughout the summer and when school is in session during the academic year. Each year, the Office of Admission also hosts an estimated seventy special groups with pre-arranged visit schedules. A self-guided tour manual is always available, as is a virtual campus tour<sup>75</sup> offered via the website. Admission staff also routinely visit more than thirty states and twenty countries each year, representing sixty- to sixty-five-weeks of travel. Travel includes visits to secondary schools, college nights, and events hosted by community-based organizations. Amherst often partners with peer institutions for group international travel to increase Amherst's exposure and to reduce costs. Each spring, the admission office sponsors programming for accepted students and their families and provides funding for underrepresented students and those from low-income backgrounds to travel to campus. To supplement campus visits and to offer interactive opportunities for those students who are unable to visit, the office runs a series of targeted chat rooms for prospective and accepted students, and provides profiles and contact information for admission tour guides, student interns, and bloggers on the admission website.<sup>76</sup> On an annual basis and in collaboration with its Five College peers, Amherst sponsors a three-day tour for around fifty secondary school guidance counselors and community-based organization advisors. The program offers an introduction to all of the campuses, and to each school's admission and financial aid programs.



### **Financial Aid Communication**

In addition to offering the information sessions mentioned earlier, the Office of Financial Aid is open to the public during normal business hours, and staff are available by phone, email, or on a walk-in basis. The website and all print publications detail Amherst's generous aid policies and emphasize that the college selects students without regard to their ability to pay for an Amherst education. During the early weeks of the fall semester, the financial aid staff hosts group meetings for new students to introduce staff, respond to questions, and review protocol regarding aid application, loan, and campus employment protocol. A job fair for students who are seeking on-campus employment is also held early each fall semester. The Office of Financial Aid will be launching a new financial aid peer mentoring program in the spring of 2018.

### ***STUDENT SERVICES AND CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES***

The mission of the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) is to support the residential liberal arts experience at the college through programs and services that enhance students' holistic development and sense of belonging, and thereby contribute to their overall success. The OSA's work encompasses aspects of academic support (also a charge of entities that report to the Dean of the Faculty), accessibility services, community standards, health and wellness, residential life, and social life, including student activities. Since the time of the interim report, with the goal of serving the student body's changing needs, Amherst has strengthened the effectiveness of the OSA by implementing innovative approaches and new structures, and has improved systems, policies, and practices. There has been a particular focus on enhancing the first-year experience.

Accomplishments in the student affairs area since the time of the interim report include the development of four new residence halls; the reorganization of counseling and health services, with a transition to a twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week, three hundred sixty-five-day-a-year care model; and the establishment of the Offices of Case Management, Accessibility Services, and Budget Management. In carrying out its mission, the OSA has been shifting the balance from an *in loco parentis* model to one in which students take ownership of their college experience by active participation in problem-solving, conflict mediation, and the establishment of community standards. In improving its systems, the OSA has made a transition from paper-based approaches and has adopted an electronic data management system<sup>77</sup> throughout the office—including a medical records system in the health and counseling centers;<sup>78</sup> student advising and well-being records in case management<sup>79</sup>; and a housing database in residential life.<sup>80</sup> As noted earlier, several of the major initiatives outlined in the SPAC's priority three are well under way, and in some cases, already accomplished. The OSA maintains a website that describes its many services.<sup>81</sup> (The chapter on standard two offers a full description of the planning and restructuring efforts that have resulted in significant changes to the student affairs function.)

### **The First Year: Introduction to the College Community and its Standards**

Recognizing the importance of the first year, Amherst has strengthened the ways in which it welcomes and supports new students. The goal of a number of enhancements to traditional programs, as well as new offerings, is to encourage a sense of belonging, provide support, and foster success.

#### ***Move-in***

For the past three years, Amherst has celebrated the arrival of new students with "Move-In Day." Before that, students had arrived on campus with little fanfare or community involvement. Families had turned the first-year quad into a parking lot, helping students move into dorms and then making their way to the central administration building to pick up welcome packets. Under the new program, families arrive by passing through a balloon arch surrounded by students, staff, and faculty. Amid the greeting and dancing, games are under way on the quad. Cars pause in front of dorms, and student-volunteers empty vehicles and move belongings to new students' dorms. Drivers move their cars to a nearby parking lot and return via a shuttle to join the celebrations taking place in the dorms and across the car-free freshman quad.

#### ***Orientation***

In partnership with the faculty, the OSA has been enhancing the orientation program in recent years, with a focus on meeting the needs of all new students and their families and building community. The program is

presided over by the orientation committee, a standing committee of the faculty that comprises the dean of new students (chair), other members of the faculty and the OSA staff, and students. A planning group, chaired by the dean of new students and composed of staff from across the college, meets weekly through much of the year and throughout the summer to develop six days of programming for all first-year and transfer students. Included are sessions on academic expectations and responsibilities and on student services; there are also opportunities for students to engage with one another and with members of the college and local community. During orientation, students are introduced to Amherst's core values and standards for behavior, and they sign the honor code. All members of the college community are expected to abide by the ethical standards articulated in the code, which is administered by the OSA and which comprises the following statements: the *Statement of Intellectual Responsibility*, *Statement on Respect for Persons*, *Statement of Freedom of Expression and Dissent* and the *Statement of Student Rights* (see the chapter on standard nine for more about the honor code). Academic advising takes place during orientation for new students.

As noted in earlier chapters, as this self-study was under way, the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee was discussing with the faculty its proposal that all professors be required to participate in advising during orientation. During orientation, students also learn about academic offerings at departmental information sessions, during which they meet faculty. Four years ago, the college introduced the LEAP (Learn, Explore, Activate, and Participate) program<sup>82</sup>, which now serves as orientation's capstone. All new students participate in this two-and-a-half-day immersive experience, choosing from a variety of programs that include, but are not limited to, the areas of creative arts, social justice, and outdoor adventure. The LEAP program encourages students to meet other first-years with similar interests and to form connections with one another before classes start. Resources are provided so that students do not face any financial barriers when choosing their LEAP.

Recent orientation innovations include a presidential welcome during which President Martin addresses all incoming students and their guests; a presidential reception during which families and guests learn more about the many campus resources that are available to support students; time in the orientation schedule that is set aside for students to say good-bye to their families; longer meeting times for students to meet with their academic advisors as well as designated registration times for each student; a revamped program by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion; a reception for first-generation and low-income students; a reception for transfer students; and a new LEAP Program that allows students to explore the history of the region by land, boat, and plane. Other new features of orientation are discussed in the appraisal section.

### ***Other Programs for New Students***

A number of new programs are functioning as extensions of the orientation program. The OSA launched the First-Year Experience Program (FYE) in the fall of 2017. Underlying the FYE is the office's awareness that students are receptive to conversations about particular topics at different stages of their first year, and that the introduction of a discussion prematurely may have an impact on its success. For example, OSA staff have thought carefully about the most beneficial time to have conversations about managing anxiety or to begin discussions about identity that is based on social class. As part of this new program, discussions of these and other topics will be occurring in small settings, including in residence halls. In addition, Amherst is continuing its Belonging initiative. In this optional program, which began three years ago, incoming students read seven letters from former students about challenges they faced and how they overcame them. The new students then write a letter to themselves. More than 92 percent of new students participated in the 2017 iteration of the program. This initiative was developed based on extensive research that shows that a small, carefully designed intervention can have an enormous impact on a student's success in college. Amherst's program is based on similar initiatives at Stanford and the University of Texas, Austin. Amherst students who have participated in the program have reported that their experience helped enhance their sense of belonging and success.

Building on orientation programming that aids students in forming new bonds, in 2015–2016, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, in partnership with the OSA, launched a pilot program to create first-year seminar teams. This experiment, which is ongoing, is designed to help new students establish connections with adults in the college community. The goal is to enhance the first-years' sense of well-being by helping them achieve

academic success and providing them with further ways to learn about available resources. During the pilot's first year, in response to an invitation to work with students on issues of adjustment to college, more than eighty staff volunteered to serve on a team of three staffs and the instructor of a first-year seminar. Half of the seminars had teams, with which students in the course met five or six times during the first semester. Subjects of discussion ranged from the challenges of balancing academic, social, and co-curricular demands, to questions surrounding academic aspirations and how they shape the kind of college experience that students desire. The college is now in the pilot's third year, and teams have been assigned to all first-year seminars.

### **Residential/Social Life**

Students begin classes the day after orientation concludes with a formal convocation, and settle in to living on campus. Residential and social life are central to college's liberal arts experience, and 97 percent of Amherst students live on campus. The OSA works to promote a safe and responsive residential living-and-learning environment. Amherst boasts an eclectic mix of thirty-four residence halls. Some buildings house as few as ten residents, while others are home to more than one hundred. All new students are housed together on the first-year quad, an arrangement that encourages first-years to forge and sustain close friendships with members of their class. For second-, third-, and fourth-year students, the college offers a range of options to support the deepening of relationships already cultivated, the broadening of friendship networks, and the opportunity to explore new living-and-learning experiences. Students may live in themed communities, with French, German, Russian, or Spanish speakers; on floors for women only; or with students who identify as LGBTQ, to name some of the possibilities. Students may also choose to live in mixed-class year housing, in "quiet" housing, and in halls that do not have themes or affinities. Though varied, Amherst's residence halls are united by proximity and a residential life program that includes adult mentors in residence, each of whom is responsible for one of five areas of campus. The five assistant directors of residential life oversee the student staff in each hall within their area. (See the chapter on standard two for a summary of efforts to develop and appraise a new residential life model at the college, as well as the appraisal section of this chapter).

As will be discussed in the chapter on standard seven, new facilities are contributing to efforts to foster social cohesion within the college community. As was discussed in the chapter on standard two and is addressed in the chapter on standard seven, the Greenway Residence Halls were completed in 2016. Inherent to the design of these new facilities are spaces that encourage social interaction among students. Also contributing to the vibrancy of social and intellectual life on campus is the Powerhouse. This versatile campus-wide social space opened in 2014. A committee of students manages the facility, with the dean of students and director of student activities providing administrative assistance. The Powerhouse has become a late-night study space and a weeknight venue for speakers and performances (see the chapter on standard seven). Around six hundred students regularly turn out for weekend events held in the space. It is anticipated that spaces offered by the new science center for similar events will also significantly enrich Amherst's social and intellectual life.

### **Student Activities**

Amherst's student clubs and organizations<sup>83</sup> offer students a wide variety of opportunities for leadership and self-government. The college has 132 student organizations, all student-run and led, with support from the OSA's Office of Student Activities. Students can obtain information about all student organizations and events through a single web portal, "The Hub."<sup>84</sup> Students also have a direct role in the overall governance of the college (described in depth in the chapter on standard three).

Established in 1860, the college's athletics program is the oldest in the nation and remains a significant student activity and distinctive element of campus culture. More than 30 percent of Amherst students participate in NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Division III intercollegiate athletics. A full 80 percent participate in athletics when intramural and club sports teams are included. The college has twenty-seven intercollegiate varsity teams. The Department of Physical Education and Athletics<sup>85</sup> reports to the dean of the faculty, and through the dean to the president, and is subject to strict institutional control. The department is advised by the Faculty Committee on Education and Athletics, which is composed of faculty members,

students, the director of athletics and other representatives from the Department of Physical Education and Athletics, and the chief student affairs officer.

### **Co-Curricular Learning**

In recent years, Amherst has been building a suite of co-curricular learning opportunities for students that extend beyond the OSA. The college is beginning to integrate these offerings and forms of support with programming in residential life. Many of the changes that have taken place in social and residential learning have emerged from the transformation of the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) and the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning (see the chapters on standards two and eight); the 365-day-a-year-campus, which has allowed the college to add Interterm opportunities, such as public speaking programs and other offerings to provide students with core skills; internships that put students in contact with alumni; field- and project-based learning, which has taken hold; and the programming and support offered by the resource centers within the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (see the chapter on standard three).

The CCE and Loeb Center are part of a cross-campus team that is working toward a more integrated vision of the Amherst student experience. The group is focusing on bringing cohesion, accessibility and equity to a wide range of experiential learning opportunities that will interact with and enhance academic life. The two centers are offering complementary activities, with the goal of providing all students with more opportunities to “learn by doing” throughout the year—and critically, with at least one summer-long co-curricular experience before graduation. The Loeb Center is focusing on helping students envision career possibilities throughout their college experience, and the center is expanding internship opportunities across employment sectors. The CCE is supporting independent projects, cultivating problem-solving and collaborative skills, and helping faculty members integrate experiential learning into academic programs of study. In the summer of 2017, a record-setting 288 Amherst-funded internships and other high-impact summer experiences were provided to students. Enrollments in courses that have a community-based learning component reached 384 in 2015–2016, up by about fifty students over the previous year (see chapter eight for more data about the two centers).

### **Design Thinking Challenge Program**

Established through the “Reimagining the Commons” Mellon grant, which was awarded to Amherst in 2015 (see the chapter on standard six), the Design Thinking Challenge Program brings together teams of students from a range of majors. They research a problem facing the local community, identify a facet of an issue to investigate more deeply, and develop ideas to test with the community to gain a more complex understanding of possible solutions. The issues are identified by local community organizations, which then work closely with the teams to support their work throughout the program. The teams present their findings to their project sponsors and the broader community in a public forum at the end of the spring semester. The director of the Grants Office and the CCE’s assistant director for innovation and experiential learning programs proposed the program to support a key goal of the Mellon grant—expanding co-curricular opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning. The program is grounded in the practice of “design thinking,” a process developed by the design firm IDEO and employed by a range of institutions (most notably the Stanford University D. School), which applies tools and techniques used by designers to develop innovative solutions to a wide range of problems. Students develop skills such as empathy and experimentation that support their academic work and future careers.

Ten students participated in two challenge teams in the pilot year of the program. One team focused on understanding the impact of transportation barriers on access to healthcare for patients at a local pediatric clinic. After learning about significant problems with the most common form of transportation used by patients, that team create a model for a website that would allow parents of patients to share feedback on the quality of transportation options with each other and clinic staff. The other team explored how artists can collaborate more effectively with community members to address needs or goals that the community has identified. In response to community members’ observation that arts-oriented events often feel intimidating, the team developed a questionnaire that would prompt event organizers to think about ways in which they could create events that were more welcoming. Participating students attended a two-week skill-building workshop in January 2017 and worked on their projects during the spring of 2017, presenting their findings in a public forum in April. All ten

students remained actively involved throughout the program and were surveyed regularly to gain insight into their experiences and to solicit feedback to help shape the next iteration of the program. One student from the healthcare transportation team continued to work on the website project over the summer and also collaborated closely with the CCE to use student feedback to update the program for 2018.

### **The Loeb Center and its Career Treks**

The Loeb Center has undergone substantive transformation in the last five years (see the chapter on standard two). A complex effort has begun to focus its practices and program design on first-generation and low-income students and to work collaboratively across campus to build and support experiential learning opportunities. In partnership with the CCE, the Loeb Center has helped design a streamlined cross-departmental approach to supporting experiential learning opportunities concentrated in the summer and Interterm. Those opportunities include internships, research, experiences abroad, and creative projects during summer; and skill-building workshops and “treks” during Interterm.

The Loeb Center’s popular career trek program provides Amherst students with an unmatched “deep dive” into a particular career “ecosystem”; educate career advisors with current, relevant insights into their field; bring to the surface internship and full-time recruiting opportunities; and give Amherst alumni an opportunity to connect with current students and share expertise. Recent treks have included an Entertainment Trek in Los Angeles, a Philanthropy Trek in Boston, and a pair of Finance Treks in Boston and New York City. As part of six treks that took place during the 2016–2017 academic year, Sixty-five students engaged with 219 alumni during sixty-two site visits. In June 2016, the Career Trek Program won the Silver Circle of Excellence Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). The treks are a key way in which the college is creating more equity of opportunity, opening doors and building connections for students who do not arrive at Amherst with access to an existing professional network via their families. Treks draw on the wider Amherst community of alumni to help students develop the contacts they need to thrive after graduation. The trek program is also a valuable part of efforts to engage with alumni. Staff in the Loeb Center and Alumni and Parent Programs collaborate on a regional alumni reception that takes place as part of each trek, which enhances networking opportunities for students and offers a defined purpose and motivation for the alumni who attend. Since its inception, the trek program has served as the driver for more than a dozen regional alumni receptions, providing direct student interaction with more than six hundred alumni in the cities where these Amherst graduates live and work. During 2017–2018, there was an Education Trek in New Orleans, Innovation and Tech Trek in Silicon Valley and Seattle, Government and Nonprofit Trek in Washington, D.C., Arts Administration Trek in New York City, and Finance Treks in New York and Boston.

### **Supporting Students**

A primary function of the OSA is to facilitate the academic success of all students. This work is accomplished through a number of mechanisms, including accessibility services, case management, the counseling center, the health center, and academic advising and support. In the realm of academic support, the OSA partners with the Moss Quantitative Center and the Writing Center, which are overseen by the dean of the faculty (see the chapter on standard six); through the peer tutoring program that it coordinates; and through academic advising by class deans within the office. As noted earlier in this report, a class dean is assigned to each class year to provide supplemental advising and support. Three of the class deans are members of the Amherst faculty, including the dean of new students, as discussed above. With the exception of the faculty member who holds that position, class deans follow their class through sophomore, junior, and senior year. When the college initially began using this model, class deans were responsible for managing a comprehensive list of students’ academic, health, and well-being issues. Over time, their role has evolved such that they now focus largely on academic counseling. A case manager, psychologist, or other healthcare provider can be brought in to provide support for needs outside the portfolio of the class deans, thus ensuring holistic care.

### **Accessibility Services**

Housed within the OSA, the Office of Accessibility Services<sup>86</sup> facilitates equal access for students with disabilities, coordinating and providing accommodations and support services. Students may voluntarily

disclose a disability or disabilities, submit appropriate documentation for verification, and request accommodations through this office. The office collaborates with faculty and staff across campus to address student needs. Staff also support students in advocating for themselves. As noted earlier, the Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion was constituted in the spring of 2017 to undertake a comprehensive review of Amherst's policies and practices in the area of disability and inclusion. More information about the task force is discussed in the appraisal section.

### **Health and Wellness**

Amherst's health and wellness offerings include a student health service, counseling center, and health education department within the OSA. This area has seen important and necessary growth since the 2013 interim report. The Keefe Health Center provides accessible, comprehensive care for Amherst students, with staff who are committed to integrating primary prevention with clinical health services. In addition to treating acute and chronic conditions, the health center coordinates care for students, including the initiation of referrals and collaboration with other departments on campus. A physician leads the health center, the staff of which also includes an R.N., a licensed family nurse practitioner, a certified physician assistant, three certified medical assistants, and a nutritionist. In 2015, Amherst's health services function underwent an external review, and the report that resulted from this examination served as a guide for a series of important changes at the health center. Clinicians are now available twelve months a year, rather than only when classes are in session, as had been the case previously. The center is open during holidays, semester breaks, and the summer, and, for the first time in decades, offers full-time healthcare. An after-hours nurse triage service is available when the health center is closed. This service contacts the provider on call for any issues that arise that need immediate attention. The college also decoupled its health services from the University of Massachusetts system in favor of having in-house clinicians. Since 2013–2014, OSA case managers, who hold master's level credentials as clinicians, have acted as liaisons between the class deans and the counseling and health centers. Case managers are trained in assessing health and well-being and in making connections and referrals. They work directly with students and their families, friends, and others associated with a student in distress.

Transforming the counseling center has been a major focus in recent years, as facilities have been improved and the model for providing care has shifted. In 2015, the college provided additional space to enable all staff members to have private spaces in which to offer clinical services, and the counseling center now has offices in two buildings across the street from one another. The center has changed its service delivery model, moving to a comprehensive counseling center model; all services are provided on a voluntary and confidential basis. Clinical services include individual, group, and couples' counseling; urgent care; psychiatric assessment and medication management; case management; and twenty-four-hour, seven-day-a-week emergency phone counseling. Other services include consultation for those concerned about another person's mental health; presentations and workshops on mental health topics; and training for faculty, staff, and students who wish to develop skills for identifying and supporting students in distress. Led by a licensed clinical psychologist, the center is interdisciplinary. Included on its staff are psychologists, social workers, licensed mental health counselors, case managers, psychiatric nurse practitioners, and psychiatrists; all hold relevant master's, doctoral, or medical degrees. The counseling center is continuing to diversify its staff by bringing in clinicians from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, who reflect the make-up of the student body. Five out of ten of the members of the clinical staff identify as people of color, and clinicians identify as Asian, Asian-American, Latina, African American, and multiracial. Four members of the counseling center staff identify on the queer continuum. There are also first-generation college graduates on the staff, as well as two international members, one from China and another from the Dominican Republic. The counseling center offers counseling in Mandarin and Spanish, as well as English, and can provide some consultation in basic Korean. The counseling center serves about 30 percent of the student body annually, in individual counseling and in providing psychiatric services. The counseling center also offers support groups and group therapy, and these sessions bring students together to discuss a range of issues, including racial identity development, racism,

resilience, and how to thrive at Amherst, as well as clinical issues related to interpersonal functioning, emotional regulation, distress tolerance, and developing resilience.

The Department of Health Education within the OSA supports students' academic success through policy development, provision of educational materials, individual consultation, training, and other educational experiences related to students' physical, emotional, and developmental needs. The department takes a broad view of health education and serves the college's diverse community by addressing intersections of identity such as gender, race, class, and sexual orientation. Other important areas of focus include alcohol and drug education, mental health education, nutrition and eating issues, self-care and stress reduction, and sexual misconduct and respect.

Members of the Amherst College Campus Police (ACPD)<sup>87</sup> and OSA administrators who are on-call are available twenty-four-hours-a-day, throughout the calendar year. Augmenting this coverage, except in the summer months, is the Amherst College Emergency Medical Service (ACEMS), a student-run organization composed of certified medical service providers who are on-call twenty-four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. Members of these groups respond to every call that comes to the college's police dispatch. Through the OSA, students also benefit from a system of more than seventy resident counselors (RCs), student staff within the Office of Residential Life. The RCs are trained to provide low-level behavioral intervention and participate alongside the OSA's professional staff members in an on-call rotation. Resident counselors and administrators on call provide seamless access to health, well-being, and other essential services after hours and during recesses. The ACPD and OSA staff communicate hourly, in strong partnership to provide support at all times.

### **Student Records**

The college maintains, for each student, educational records that are open to inspection by that student in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Section 438 of Public Laws 90–247, Title IV, amended 88 Stat. 571–574, and with federal and state regulations. Directory information includes the student's name; telephone numbers; local, home and email addresses; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates of attendance; degree and awards received; most recent educational institution attended; anticipated degree and degree date; and photo. Information about what is included in the student record and what is considered directory information is available in the *Amherst College Student Code of Conduct* in hard copy and online.<sup>88</sup> Annually, students are required to read and sign off on a number of required notifications, which are managed via the “annual checklist” and accessible via ACDATA. Information about amending documents is readily available via the website under Community Standards, student code of conduct, chapter III, student records, section 19.5 inspection and challenge of records.

## **APPRAISAL**

### ***ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID***

#### **Commitment to Access**

As part of Amherst's commitment to improving all deserving students' access to higher education, the college regularly reviews the experience of Amherst students, notably low-income students and students who transferred from community colleges. Since implementing the CAP recommendations (discussed in the description section of this chapter), Amherst has continued to make access a top priority. The college has taken new steps in support of this goal and has strengthened existing programs. In some cases, Amherst has evaluated initiatives that were piloted with external support, and then has decided to continue these efforts by providing the necessary resources. For example, originally, a grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation enabled the college to expand the scope of Amherst's community college transfer initiative for low-income students. In 2011, when grant funds were exhausted, Amherst extended its commitment to the program with institutional funding, expanding admission and student affairs staffing to continue what has been an important initiative. The college's efforts have allowed Amherst to diversify its student body further, both

socioeconomically and experientially, as many community college students are older than the typical Amherst student. Since receipt of the grant, the college's two-year college transfer pool has grown by 140 percent.

Amherst collaborates with organizations that share its values to expand the college's efforts to provide educational opportunity—continuing relationships of long-standing and creating new partnerships. In 2013, Amherst began a relationship with College Horizons, becoming a member of this national college-access program that serves American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian high school juniors and seniors who are predominantly first-generation, college-bound students. Over the course of summers between 2013 and 2016, five admission staff served as faculty-mentors for College Horizons sessions at other institutions. Amherst was approved as a host site for College Horizons in the summer of 2016 and provided all of the resources to support the program on campus. Since 2013, the applicant pool of Native students has more than doubled, and the enrolled Native population has grown from one to thirteen. Amherst's student body now includes an estimated thirty-three additional students of multi-racial background with Native heritage.

In 2003, Amherst became a founding partner of the non-profit organization Questbridge,<sup>89</sup> a program that connects promising low-income students with educational and scholarship opportunities at leading U.S. colleges and universities. The evidence of this program's success in attracting students from low-income families is that now, approximately 8 percent of Amherst's current student body participated in Questbridge programming. Amherst's student Questbridge chapter is a very active, student-run organization. In 2014, a group of students launched The First Generation Association, a new organization that works to raise awareness about issues of concern to students from families that do not have a tradition of members attending college. In the fall of 2016, this new group and the college's Questbridge chapter co-sponsored an event as part of orientation for new students. New and returning students, first-generation faculty and staff, and allies attended this successful program. In 2015, Amherst became an inaugural member of the Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success, a new application option for first-year and transfer admission. The coalition's member-schools, all of which must meet full financial need for domestic students and have a six-year graduation rate of at least 70 percent, are dedicated to broadening access to a higher education and increasing its affordability. The coalition has developed a platform of free online college research, planning, and financial aid tools that serve students in secondary schools that have limited planning resources.

As noted earlier, financial aid policies play an essential role in Amherst's ability to support access. Office of Financial Aid staff stay informed about changing policies through regular conference attendance, weekly staff meetings, and two annual all-day retreats. Amherst remains an active member of the 568 group, and the dean of financial aid serves as the chair of the College Board College Scholarship Service. As evidence of Amherst's success in admitting and funding low-income students, the college was awarded the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's \$1 million Prize for Equity, Education and Excellence 2016, which recognized Amherst's commitment to attracting, enrolling, and supporting the success of low-income students.

Efforts such as the following led to the college's recognition. With growing awareness about the barriers inherent in the application process for some low-income students, Amherst has responded by developing new tools that are designed to help. In 2006, the college created an online "Quick Pass" option on Amherst's website to facilitate requests for application fee waivers from eligible low-income students. In 2016, eligibility was extended to all first-generation college applicants and students with household incomes below \$65,000. In addition to the Quick Pass option, application fee waivers are available for all Questbridge candidates and applicants to the college's diversity open houses. Since 2010, the percentage of Amherst's applicant pool that utilizes application fee waivers has grown from 26 percent to 37 percent. In a more recent initiative, Amherst supplemented the existing Net Price Calculator on the college's website with *MyinTuition*, a second price calculator, available in both English and Spanish, that helps users estimate a student's family contribution by providing the answers to six financial questions. Upon completion of the survey, users are prompted to use the existing, more comprehensive college cost estimator tool that will shrink the estimated range.



Amherst remains attentive to other challenges faced by low-income and first-generation students. National and Amherst-specific data confirm that candidates seeking admission through binding enrollment plans tend to come from more affluent families and well-resourced secondary schools. By enrolling a significantly smaller portion of the college's entering class from its early-decision applicant pool than its peers, Amherst is able to reserve spaces for students from other backgrounds. The college also chooses not to track "demonstrated interest." It is well-documented that many selective institutions use this indicator as a tool for predicting yield. Doing so tends to offer an advantage to savvy, affluent, well-counseled high school students. By not tracking demonstrated interest, Amherst believes it can avoid putting in place yet another barrier for low-income and first-generation students.

In 2016, Amherst announced modifications to its first-year standardized testing requirements in order to further support access. The college moved from requiring first-year applicants to submit the ACT or the SAT I plus two SAT II subject tests, to requiring, beginning with the class of 2021, the ACT or SAT I. Submission of the results of SAT II subject tests, like the results of Advanced Placement exams, are now optional. Amherst's intent is to reduce the need for an applicant to sit for multiple test administrations, and thereby ideally to eliminate one more application hurdle for low-income students and reducing the "testing hype" among more affluent applicants. Although the data are not yet available, the college anticipates that the sub-scores provided by the redesigned SAT that was introduced in March 2016 can provide a new and comparable set of subject-relevant information for all submitters. Annually, about one-third of the college's off-campus recruitment efforts focus on underserved students, and Amherst continues to provide travel grants to eligible students who are unable to afford travel to campus to attend one of the college's open houses.

### **Faculty Oversight**

In keeping with Amherst's strong system of faculty governance, the dean of admission and financial aid has an especially close working relationship with faculty—within which matters of admission policy and practice are continuously and collaboratively explored and evaluated. A committee structure provides guidance on admission. The Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA), chaired by one of four faculty members, also includes the dean of admission and financial aid, the dean of admission, the dean of financial aid, the chief student affairs officer, and four students. The FCAFA is responsible for formulating the admission priorities and standards that guide the work of the Offices of Admission and Financial Aid, examining trends over time to determine whether admission policies are being implemented and priorities and standards met. The committee reports annually to the faculty. A number of times a year, the faculty and administrative members of FCAFA join the dean of faculty to form the College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (CCAFA), chaired by the dean of admission and financial aid, which reviews the general composition of the group of candidates recommended for admission, and formally endorses their admission. Numerical enrollment targets for the year and each semester are set in the biannual meeting of the Enrollment Management Committee, which includes the dean of admission and financial aid, the dean of admission, the dean of financial aid, the chief student affairs officer, the director of residential life, the registrar, the chief financial and administrative officer, the director of the Office of Global Education, and the director of institutional research and registration services.

### **Support for Low-Income and First-Generation Students**

As the college's student body continues to diversify, Amherst will continue tracking closely the retention and graduation rates of different populations. Mirroring the traditional national metric for graduation rates, the college tracks graduation rates of cohorts by the percentage of students graduating within six years of matriculation. The Office of Institutional Research and Registration Services has supported the admission office's understanding of patterns of success and areas that are in need of further examination. The college has been gratified to note that its cohort of Questbridge students, one of our lowest-income populations on campus, has a higher six-year graduation rate than the overall graduation rate. It has also been noted, however, that Amherst's six-year graduation rate for African American men and first-generation students is slightly lower than the college's overall graduation rate. Goals noted in the *Strategic Plan for Amherst College* (SPAC) and

institutional goals with the American Talent Initiative<sup>90</sup> include identifying sources of these differences and finding ways to shrink these relatively small gaps.

In 2016, Amherst became one of thirty inaugural members of the American Talent Initiative, a group of leading colleges and universities that collaborate to increase the enrollment and retention of high-ability, low-income students. This initiative, which includes a focus on shared best practices, serves a number of other commitments formulated through the strategic planning process, such as closing a graduation gap between low and moderate-income students and the overall graduation rate, and enhancing a culture of belonging for the college's low-income students.

The Offices of Admission and Financial Aid benefit from participation in the bi-semester meetings of the Committee on Academic Standing in which the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) reviews cases of students in serious academic difficulty and recovery (more information about the committee is presented later in this chapter). While Amherst is routinely noted as one of the country's most highly ranked institutions for its retention and graduation rates, the college is not satisfied with these gaps in retention and regularly revisits students' outcomes. The Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services confirms that the best predictor for academic performance for incoming students is the academic reader rating assigned by admission evaluators. While the admission committee's review is entirely holistic, the numerical academic reader rating takes into account the rigor of a student's chosen curriculum, academic performance, standardized testing, and the quality of teacher and guidance counselor recommendations, as well as the intellectuality evident in the candidate's writing, expression, and choice and depth of academic commitments. Amherst will continue to monitor relative retention rates for all sub-populations.

The admission office also actively fosters actions to ensure student success, even before students arrive on campus. Each summer, the Office of Admission and the OSA jointly review the applications of candidates whose secondary school preparation and academic ambitions might suggest that they will benefit from participation in one of the college's summer "bridge" programs (see the chapter on standard two). In addition, the dean of admission and financial aid and the dean of admission meet with senior members of the OSA to discuss incoming students who have known residential, learning, or ability needs so that pairing the students with a specialized advisor and residential assignments can be considered. As noted in the chapter on standard two, reorganization of the OSA between 2013 and 2016 has created additional support mechanisms, including care and case management and a revised class dean structure. As discussed in the chapter on standard six, both the Writing Center and the Moss Quantitative Center have received additional resources to expand both their outreach and services. The admission office also continues to work closely with the Department of Mathematics and Statistics to identify and communicate effectively with students seeking transfer admission who indicate an interest in pursuing quantitative majors.

### **Athletics**

Amherst participates annually in three meetings of the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) admission deans, and the dean of admission and financial aid and director of athletics rotate through the leadership of the executive committee, which joins the presidents during one of their regular annual meetings. Even with significant turnover among institutional and admission leadership across the conference in recent years, the eleven colleges have continued to collaborate to examine and strengthen the academic credentials of the conference's student-athletes and to uphold the conference's mission. As agreed upon more than a decade ago, in order to monitor shared goals and to inspire trust, the institutions share extensive data on each entering cohort of student-athletes. After data across institutions confirmed in 2014 that varsity programs were significantly less racial and socioeconomically diverse than overall student populations, the conference agreed to make diversification of varsity teams a top priority. A number of recruitment restrictions were lifted to encourage coaches to conduct earlier outreach to some of the most challenging populations to recruit, and admission and athletic departments agreed to begin collecting recruitment data on populations historically underrepresented on institutions' teams. Although Amherst perpetually has the most racially diverse varsity programs in the conference, the differential remains a concern because Amherst's

student body is also the most diverse by a considerable margin. The dean of admission and financial aid and director of athletics continue to identify ways to work together to support increasing the representation on teams of a more diverse population of students.

### **Understanding Prospective Students' Views of Amherst**

In the spring of 2015, the Offices of Communications and Admission collaborated on the development of a perceptions study to evaluate how admission prospects view the college. The college hired a research firm to conduct a two-part “double-blind” study that included phone-initiated qualitative phone interviews with campus visitors and an online quantitative survey with high-ability high school juniors and seniors drawn from the Amherst prospect database. The broad results aligned with data collected by the Office of Admission through the annual administration of the College Board’s Admitted Student Questionnaire, which is emailed to all accepted enrolling and non-enrolling first-year students. Results indicate that the top priority of Amherst’s prospects and accepted students is a rigorous learning environment, where they can work closely with dedicated faculty in a close-knit community. Both populations are increasingly interested in career preparation, internships, and outcomes data (see the chapter on standard six). The perceptions study confirmed that students embarking on their college research are particularly interested in anecdotes and traditions that distinguish institutions, and are eager to hear directly from current students about their experiences. The Office of Admission has responded to these conclusions by professionalizing the tour guide program with a training curriculum that now includes speakers from outside the department to work with tour guides on how they present college history, storytelling, public speaking, and issues related to diversity and inclusion. The redesigned website has provided the added opportunity to include more student voices and anecdotes and to create additional ways in which prospective students may contact current students.

Three new admission publications that were printed in 2014 were the first new suite of admission pieces to be produced in nine years. They represent the culmination of two years of work with a market research firm and a creative design group. In creating new materials, the college’s primary objectives were to present in a bolder format, information that is distinctive to Amherst and that tells the college’s story effectively. The design of the new pieces was coordinated with the college’s new website, which launched in 2016. An additional one-sheet piece was developed in-house for use by admission staff who work with non-U.S. citizens and those living abroad. A primary goal for the communications office’s redesign of the website was to make the site an ultimate resource for current information about the college. Amherst used focus groups with accepted students and parents to assess ways in which communication could be improved. The result is a more user-friendly site that is more accessible for prospective students using mobile devices. It is hoped that enhanced dynamic elements will increase the likelihood of return visits; the college will be monitoring this aspect of the redesign.

### **Technology**

In 2014, the division made enhancements to its use of technology to increase efficiencies and effectiveness. In 2015, the Office of Financial Aid concluded its first need-analysis with all aid documents accessed electronically. The transition has improved document access, the office’s response rate to applicants, and the ability to generate reports on missing documents. Since 2014, the admission office has made a significant number of technological advances, including enabling students to submit tuition deposits and responses to offers of admission electronically; implementing paperless application reading; and adopting a new integrated software program, Slate, to bring admission operations up to modern expectations and to improve customer service. Admission has been able to develop online advanced registration tools to enhance on-campus visits and programs, and automated communications to visitors (including requests for completion of new tour, information session and general visit evaluation forms), to develop new data sets for supporting recruitment travel, to run real-time reporting for the first time, and to enhance analytical capacity. Slate has also supported a new online reading system.

### ***STUDENT SERVICES AND CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES***

Amherst’s 2013 interim report projected that “in both the shorter and longer term, student life will be a central institutional focus.” Indeed, since 2013 and certainly since the 2008 self-study, significant changes have been

made to the student affairs area (see the chapter on standard two). The goal of these efforts has been to make student affairs one of a number of sources for co-curricular education and community-building at Amherst, and to adopt in a comprehensive fashion the best practices and policies of the field, enhancing overall effectiveness.

Amherst's student affairs function began to be restructured and modernized in 2014, following the comprehensive evaluation by Keeling & Associates (see the chapter on standard two). While culture change takes time, progress is evident. As noted earlier, two-thirds of the OSA's current staff members were hired between 2014 and 2017. Clear policies have replaced ad hoc decision-making, and the OSA's new electronic systems for records collection and filing across all units are enhancing case management, research, and compliance. In assessing the college's responsiveness to his firm's evaluation, Richard Keeling affirmed that Amherst was on the right track with the "rapid transformation in evolving and adapting both systems and staffing in order to position student affairs to function effectively and transparently."<sup>91</sup> Student affairs services, programming, and support are becoming more closely aligned with Amherst's mission to "bring together the most promising students, whatever their financial need, in order to promote diversity of experience and ideas within a purposefully small residential community."

The nucleus of change described in this chapter and in the chapter on standard two occurred prior to the strategic planning process. Strategic planning committees later successfully engaged the community in conversations that broadened understanding of the vulnerabilities in student life and the need for change. The OSA staff mounted an effort to write new, contemporary guidelines and procedures across all service areas. This effort dovetailed with the move to systematize record-keeping and data management. Richard Keeling assessed the work after seven months of restructuring and noted, "A core principle at the heart of this transformation has been the blending and balancing of caring and accountability; student affairs programs and services will [now] demonstrate both an ethic of care toward students and strong accountability for the quality, effectiveness, and outcomes of its work."<sup>92</sup> The OSA will continue to make improvements moving forward.

### **Orientation**

As noted in this chapter's description section, recent changes to the orientation program are helping to meet the needs of all students and their families and to build community during this important time of introduction to the Amherst community. For example, three years ago, the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) learned that some parents and other family members of new students had hesitated to ask questions during orientation, and may not have understood all discussions, because they were not comfortable with English. The dean of new students, a faculty member, alumnus of the college, and native speaker of Spanish, invited a group of students and staff to host a reception for Spanish-speaking family members and guests during orientation. The Spanish-language session was well-received, helping family members feel better able to support their students, and lifting a burden from entering students who serve as translators for their relatives. The session also helped family members feel more prepared to engage in the other orientation programs, according to feedback received by the office. The session proved to be so successful that the college has continued to incorporate it into orientation. For orientation 2017, the OSA examined the make-up of the cohort of new students to decide whether to extend the program. After finding that Korean and Mandarin are the two other languages that are most commonly spoken in new students' homes, receptions were hosted in Spanish, Korean, and Mandarin. These events included faculty, students, and staff, and a current student led each reception. Information about the receptions was shared with incoming students in advance of their arrival, with the hope that family members who might otherwise have avoided orientation would feel welcome. All three events were successful, drawing between forty and sixty attendees, and will be a part of orientation in the future.

Orientation programming is assessed each year, with a focus on evaluating newly introduced programs, as well as existing programs that the OSA may wish to revise or replace. Annually, LEAP offerings are evaluated; some are retired and others are added, based on this appraisal. The ways in which students are introduced to the honor code have been the subject of evaluation and change in recent years (see the chapter on standard nine). In addition, in the spring of 2017, the first-year seminar team pilot was evaluated. Students found the program to be valuable and appreciated the opportunity to explore various issues that arose during their first

semester at the college. They called attention to various logistical issues, e.g., scheduling and conflicts with other commitments, which are being addressed. The program was featured in an article in the *Boston Globe*.

### **Accessibility Services**

The review by the Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion will be under way for several years. The goal is to develop an understanding of the systems in place to support students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities; to increase awareness of those systems; to identify and, if necessary refine the core principles that guide Amherst's approach to accessibility; to identify systematic barriers to accessibility and inclusion at the college; to recommend changes to address such barriers; and to increase campus-wide awareness of accessibility as a core value. In response to the concerns of students and faculty, in the fall of 2017, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty and the OSA created the position of testing coordinator (hiring two individuals to fill the role), which is now housed within the OSA. The coordinators support faculty by assisting with scheduling and administering exams for students with accommodations. As noted earlier, In August of 2017, the second annual dean's retreat on inclusive pedagogy, attended by more than 120 faculty members and instructional staff, focused on the topic of disability and accessibility.

In 2016–2017, more than 23 percent of Amherst students (423 students) registered documented disabilities with the Office of Accessibility Services, evidence of the need for the office that the college established in 2014 to support students with disabilities. Of these students, 225 are using classroom accommodations that may include extended time for testing, reduced-distraction testing locations, note-takers, assistive technology, and alternative print formats. The Office of Accessibility Services supports faculty in their work with students with disabilities, including offering information about how to make professors' classrooms and courses accessible to all students. More generally, the office has undertaken efforts to increase its capacity and visibility. The college recognizes that resources and systems will need to be enhanced to serve the increasing number of students with accessibility and related needs. To that end, as this self-study was concluding, a search was under way for an additional staff member for the office. The new hire will support the work of the director of accessibility services and the office more generally. While the evaluation of the presidential task force is ongoing, the OSA will continue to make improvements in the area of access.

### **Health and Wellness**

Since 2008, Amherst has reorganized counseling and health services by making a transition to a twenty-four-hour-a-day/seven-day-a-week/three hundred sixty-five-day-a-year care model, and establishing the Office of Case Management, as noted in the description section. To expand coverage, the counseling center implemented an after-hours mental health care system and made this service available to students, faculty, and staff. Community members who call the counseling center after hours are connected to licensed clinical professionals, who respond with complete knowledge of the college's protocols, systems, and resources. Students who call receive counseling, advice, and assessment, as well as next-day follow-up contact from a member of counseling center staff. These changes in care accessibility reflect current best practices and, with regard to mental health services, were specific recommendations of the SMOC. For all services in the counseling center, including outreach and health education programs, Amherst has established systems for assessing client satisfaction, program effectiveness, and clinical outcomes.

### **Dining Services: A Transition to Healthier Choices**

In 1996, the comprehensive renovation of the college's dining hall and the accompanying culinary redesign were widely viewed by the campus community as successful initiatives. Based on these successes, Amherst's dining program remained consistent and unchanged for the next decade; however, during this period, students' dining preferences evolved. By 2008, student feedback signaled disappointment with menu selections, variety, and overall quality. These concerns prompted the college to develop a strategic plan for the dining program, with the assistance of a consultant. This strategic planning process revealed that Amherst should increase leadership expertise, staffing levels, and the food budget to meet the college's goal of providing a compelling menu with quality food that would address the range of dining preferences of the increasingly diverse student body. The strategic plan called for a program featuring healthy, local, and organic choices. Beginning in

2009, in accordance with the strategic plan, the college began to enhance the dining services program by hiring a top-flight executive chef who deemphasized the use of pre-prepared cafeteria-style food and developed a new menu that focused on fresh, local, and organic choices. Action stations in which students could select ingredients to create custom salads and stir-fry dishes were introduced. Regional and international menu items were featured. Feedback from focus groups, meetings with the student dining committee, and surveys has been uniformly positive, indicating that the expansion of resources has enhanced the dining services program. The spirit of continuous improvement now pervades the dining services department. Recent initiatives, such as integrating and featuring the produce from the college's Book and Plow Farm (see the chapter on standard seven), have resulted in continued student satisfaction with the program.

### **Academic Standing**

Students' academic standing at the college is predicated on a set of guidelines overseen by the Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors, which is composed of four class deans, senior members of the student affairs staff, and three faculty members representing the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. The committee meets at least four times each academic year to review the academic standing of students in probationary categories. At the middle and end of each semester, the committee considers the standing of students in serious academic difficulty and decides which students will be placed on, or removed from, academic probation. The members of the committee also determine which students shall be dismissed for reasons of unsatisfactory academic performance and what conditions need be met by such students to be readmitted to Amherst. The committee passes on to the OSA all cases of readmission of students who were dismissed for unsatisfactory academic performance. Student affairs professionals, including the class deans, review all readmission cases. The data utilized in this review have been standardized to take account of the student's transcript, including courses taken while away from the college; the student's personal statement; and a telephone interview with a class dean. All of this information is entered and maintained in the OSA's database. The committee also makes decisions on requests for exceptions to established academic practices and administers the programs of Interdisciplinary Study, Independent Study, and Field Study.

### **Residential Life**

Students have conveyed to the OSA a desire for more control of their residential spaces and their openness to residential clustering with alternative characteristics. In response, Amherst is reconceiving residential life, launching living-and-learning environments—inclusive “neighborhoods” that, it is hoped, will help students build and sustain a stronger sense of community. Students are deeply engaged in the process of defining the neighborhood idea, clarifying the composition of the communities, and planning their critical components. Now in their second year of occupancy, the new Greenway Residence Halls are Amherst's first residential “neighborhood.” With students' support, the college designated these halls as mixed class-year housing. In the Greenway halls are the beginnings of a neighborhood, populated by students who represent varied interests and backgrounds, and who demonstrate a desire for leadership opportunities through student-led hall governance. Plans call for students to meet together with some regularity as a four-building community. The goal will be for them to discuss remedies for issues associated with making a transition to a new home, and talk about self-regulation, safety, and the ways they wish to live as neighbors. The objective of the changes within residential life is to create an environment in which students can become adept at navigating relationships, conversing face-to-face outside of social media, and collaborating with others—all skills that will enhance their professional and personal success. The college is currently developing the concept of hall/neighborhood councils, groups that will work together to help bring more activities (e.g., game nights, talks, salons, workshops) into the dorm spaces.

The evolution of social life that is under way at the college takes advantage of the razing of a cluster of residence halls known as the “social dorms.” Students often chose to live in “the socials” because of the suite-style living and large living rooms and common spaces, where parties could be hosted with little if any supervision or regulation. The elimination of these halls has resulted in a redistribution of social gatherings to various spaces across campus. In addition to providing new space, including the Powerhouse, the college

has clarified the alcohol policy and has made it easier to identify spaces and to register events and parties online, all in an effort to foster more flexibility, opportunity, and student collaboration.

The re-imagining of residential life has not occurred without challenges. Predictably, there were growing pains after the social dorms came down, as students faced a choice among different kinds of gatherings in dispersed locations. There were mixed reactions in several other residence halls across campus where the OSA attempted to create neighborhoods with minimal engineering. Students struggled in a few halls where parties, and the occasional disregard for neighbors within and adjacent to their living spaces, became an imposition.

### **Student Activities and Athletics**

As noted in the chapter on standard two, the 2013 interim report identified student life programming as “an area of urgent concern,” commenting that “planning and organizational reform have not kept pace with the increasing scale and complexity of the responsibilities of the various units.” In 2014, the OSA reorganized the student activities function, hiring new staff and bringing processes and support for students up to date. Efforts to support social cohesion are now under way across the college, including efforts to integrate programming and activities within the Office of Diversity and Inclusion with work being undertaken in this sphere by the student activities function within the OSA (see the chapter on standard seven).

In the fall of 2014, as noted earlier, the Special Committee on the Place of Athletics at Amherst, a committee of trustees, faculty, administrators, and students, was charged with weighing the extent to which Amherst’s athletic programs are consistent with the overall purpose of the college. A report done fifteen years earlier had noted that forces outside Amherst’s control had created a challenging environment in which to maintain the delicate balance between academic and athletic achievement, and the committee recommended that the status of athletics be reviewed every three to five years. With other pressing matters before the college, it was not until the fall of 2015 that the faculty received a summary of this more recent review.

The special committee examined, among other issues, the role that athletic talent plays in admission decisions, the composition of the varsity rosters, the entering credentials and graduation rates of varsity athletes—particularly in comparison to the rates since the last such in-depth analysis of athletics at the college, which took place in 2002. The committee found that, while the number of enrolling students for whom athletic prowess played the most significant role in the admission decision had decreased by design, the number of student-athletes with top academic ratings and who met additional priorities of the college grew disproportionately to the overall growth in the student body. The faculty discussed the findings of the special committee during 2016–2017. Faculty members raised concerns about data that showed a divergence between the population of athletes and the population of the rest of the college, in terms of ethnic and racial background and socioeconomic status, and a pattern of separate housing patterns that seemed to work against a sense of community. Following the faculty’s conversations, President Martin constituted the Ad hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics, which includes members of the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCFA), the Committee on Education and Athletics, the College Council, and a member of the Committee of Six. At the time of the submission of this self-study, the ad hoc committee was poised to release a report.

### **Design Thinking Challenge Program**

In response to student feedback, the second year of the Design Thinking Challenge Program, which began in January of 2018 and will run through the end of the spring semester, is centered on “challenges” based on campus, though topics resonated more broadly. With a focus on the Book and Plow Farm, a team is exploring how campus farms best leverage their resources to support, rather than compete, with local agriculture. With a focus on the new science center, other students are exploring how to use the informal physical spaces of the center to showcase campus research and create a welcoming environment. A third team is working with Academic Technology Services to explore student interest in resources and support for undertaking creative projects. Each team comprises three to six students and one or two staff sponsors. Plans call for increasing the number of challenges and students gradually each year to determine the number of projects that can be

effectively supported, while making the program available to as many students as possible. The CCE will continue to use and refine tools designed for the pilot phase to assess program outcomes.

## **PROJECTIONS**

The SPAC's priority four focuses on Amherst's continuing commitment to "identifying and enrolling the most promising students from all social and economic backgrounds." A primary goal for the upcoming comprehensive campaign is to secure additional financial resources to enable the college to preserve its ability to select the most exceptional students, regardless of their ability to pay, and to meet each student's full demonstrated financial need. Admission and financial aid staff will continue to build relationships with schools and organizations that serve lower-income populations and those without sufficient college guidance resources to ensure that talented students are aware that Amherst is affordable.

The ongoing dialogue at Amherst about a residential liberal arts community places squarely at the center of the conversation the expectation that enhanced and intentional learning will occur outside of the classroom, in ways that are complementary to what happens within the classroom. In the coming years, the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning, the Center for Community Engagement, and the Office of Student Affairs will continue to be among the campus partners that are deeply engaged in fostering co-curricular learning and building an inclusive community. The college's efforts to strengthen connections among its academic programs and residential and co-curricular learning offerings will expand.

The restructuring of the OSA and the enhancement of its resources have had a significant impact, but work remains to fulfill the vision for student affairs. The upcoming transition in leadership will lead to new ideas and opportunities, building on the successes of recent years.

Amherst is committed to redesigning residential life for the next decade and beyond. The work of transforming students' residential and social experience to promote social interaction and a more vibrant campus life will continue. Building on the Greenway model, future neighborhood clusters—linked networks of residence halls and theme houses—will make it possible for students who live in any of Amherst's residence halls to be part of distinctive communities that serve as a campus "home" for residents, and also draw students from other parts of campus to gathering spaces and events. There is currently enthusiasm for a second cluster of residence halls where students from mixed class years will reside and an interest in increasing the numbers of options for quiet residence halls. Plans also call for additional student common spaces to be developed.

Student Affairs is moving forward with a residential community standards program that will convert the college's residential staffing model from resident counselors to something like resident advisors, who will play a prominent role in establishing and maintaining strong, respectful residential communities. The plan also calls for strengthening and better defining the responsibilities of live-in and live-on professional staff, moving from an area coordinator model, to one in which professionals, serving as assistant directors of residential life, carry greater responsibility for mentoring student staff and for upholding community standards. The OSA has been moving steadily toward a residential experience of accountability and ownership that encourages students to practice and hone the skills they will need for life—the ability to engage deeply with a diverse community; to hold themselves and their community to higher standards of social interaction; to become effective leaders and problem-solvers; and to develop personal, lifelong habits of social and interpersonal curiosity.

As the college celebrates the diversity it has assembled, it is equally important to acknowledge the challenges that accompany changes in the student body, and to be strategic in efforts to help students balance the need for familiarity and comfort with the fundamental educational need to explore, risk discomfort, and allow change. Over the next ten years, Amherst aims to continue efforts to create an environment that is not only progressively more inclusive, but also more open to conversations about differences in experience, ideas, and perspectives among community members—an environment that can serve as a model for life after Amherst.

Building community will be an emphasis of Amherst's work in the coming years. In the summer of 2017, the president retained a consultant to guide the college in a two-year-long college-wide community-building



## Students

initiative. With experience in executive coaching, leadership development, and team development, the consultant is working with students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and friends of the college to promote conversations and planning around building relationships based on a shared sense of purpose, and on developing skills to bridge differences.

It is hoped that, depending on financial resources, Amherst will create a wellness center that integrates counseling, health services, health education, accessibility services, and possibly religious life.

The college will work to address the concerns articulated in the report of the Special Committee on the Place of Athletics and the findings of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics. The reasons for the clustering of student-athletes' majors and the consequences for students and departments will be explored. The Department of Physical Education and Athletics will develop recruitment strategies that are even more focused and creative than they are currently, so as to continue to increase the socioeconomic and racial diversity of Amherst's teams in a way that mirrors the student body. Amherst will monitor its success in bringing a more racially and socioeconomically diverse group of athletes to campus, the students' academic success, and housing patterns. The college will also consult experts on concussive and sub-concussive injury to ensure it is following the best possible practices. Amherst hosted a NESCAC symposium on this topic in October of 2017.

## TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP

### DESCRIPTION

#### ***FACULTY AND ACADEMIC STAFF***

Responding to a transition that occurs once in a generation, Amherst has hired 40 percent of its current tenure-line faculty over the past ten years. This period of faculty renewal progressed as the college was transforming the make-up of its student body and is continuing as Amherst is reimagining the liberal arts within a landscape that is shifting—within the college, higher education, and the broader world. Teacher-scholars who had contributed their talents to the Amherst community for decades have been retiring in significant numbers. Their impact on their students is immeasurable, and they will be missed. Yet this exodus presents a singular opportunity—to build a faculty that more closely reflects the make-up of Amherst’s student body and the nation, and to bring new fields into the college’s curriculum. In 2016–2017, for example, a small group of faculty members, most of whom are relatively new to Amherst, some of whom bring diverse backgrounds to the community, led a successful effort to create a program in Latinx and Latin American studies.<sup>93</sup> These professors focus their research on modern Latin American history, Latino/a studies, transnational migration, Latinx youth, and Latin American cinema, and are teaching courses on these and other topics.

#### **Characteristics of the Current Faculty**

With an enviable student-faculty ratio of 8:1, the college is able to realize its commitment to “learning through close colloquy.” In the fall of 2016, 291 individuals served in instructional positions. Nearly three-quarters of instructional staff are full-time employees of the college. In what was what was once an all-male institution, the proportion of women faculty is now a robust 48 percent. In recent years, an interesting twist on faculty gender dynamics has developed. Amherst has appointed more women to tenure-line positions in the sciences and social sciences, and more men to such positions in the humanities. Of the college’s instructional faculty 18 percent identify as persons of color (Asian-American, Black, LatinX, or Native American), and 3 percent are from countries outside the United States. Most (84 percent, or 244) of the instructional faculty hold doctoral, professional, or other terminal degrees. Of the remainder, eighteen faculty members have earned a master’s degree, and five hold a bachelor’s degree as their highest degree.

The college currently has a cap of 188 full-time equivalent (FTE) tenured and tenure-track positions. There are also a handful of “in-residence” positions in the arts (under various titles, such as artist-in-residence, resident artist, senior resident artist, and visiting writer) and twenty-five lecturers and senior lecturers, primarily in the arts, foreign languages, and mathematics and statistics. Lecturers, as well as athletic coaches, serve under a system of renewable contracts. Amherst has approximately ten native speakers who serve as language assistants. On an annual basis, the language departments bring in new individuals to hold these positions for a year. In 2016–2017, the college had thirty-five visiting professors, twenty-eight of whom taught full-time. When Amherst hires visitors to teach single courses, the college tries to “borrow” professors from one of the other Five College institutions. When this approach is not possible, adjunct faculty are hired at reasonably generous rates. In 2016–2017, Amherst borrowed ten professors from neighboring colleges and had another thirty-five individuals teaching courses on an adjunct basis. All of Amherst’s emeritus professors are welcome to teach one or two courses per year at Amherst. Last year, six retired faculty members chose to do so. Amherst values deeply the experience and pedagogical wisdom that emeriti bring to the college’s classrooms.

At present, roughly one-third of the college’s tenure-line faculty FTEs are on the tenure track. Tenured faculty must devote considerable time to mentoring and evaluating colleagues who are at the beginning stages of their careers. Among Amherst’s current assistant, associate, and full professors, 198 individuals in total, 73 percent (146 individuals) are tenured, and 59 percent (117 individuals) are full professors. In regard to age, 51 percent are over fifty; 32 percent, are over sixty; 20 percent, are over sixty-five; and 9 percent are over seventy.

Support for faculty continues throughout their careers. Amherst offers a generous phased retirement program. This program, and an enhanced retirement option for older faculty that was approved by the board of trustees

through July 1, 2018, allows professors who are age sixty and over to receive 50 to 70 percent of their salary (depending on age), as well as a teaching stipend, while teaching half-time at Amherst. Faculty who enter the program between the ages of sixty and seventy must make a commitment to retire by age seventy. If they are older than seventy, they must make a commitment to retire within three years. In all cases, the salary supplement is limited to three years. Once faculty members on phased retirement reach the age of sixty-two (if they entered the program before this age), their FTE lines are returned to the FTE pool.

### **Faculty Recruitment<sup>94</sup>**

Hiring procedures are intended to ensure that both departmental and college-wide needs are taken into account in the allocation of FTE positions. Each fall, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) invites departments to submit requests for FTEs. The dean's office develops a projection of the number of FTEs that are available as a result of retirements, departures, or expansion positions. Once all FTE requests are in hand, the CEP determines which of the requests it will recommend to the president and dean of the faculty for approval. The CEP takes the following factors into account: the significance of the area of specialization for liberal arts education, demonstrated interest from students and faculty, enrollment pressures, the likelihood that the proposed position will attract a diverse candidate pool, and the ways in which the position responds to the needs identified in the SPAC. The five faculty members and three students who are voting members of the CEP share equal voting rights in the allocation process. In recent years, there has been general consensus on the CEP, and the president and the dean have approved all of the CEP's recommendations for FTE allocations.

The college continues to hire most of its professors at the assistant professor rank. In recent years, however, Amherst has also made appointments at the ranks of associate professor (with or without tenure) and full professor (always with tenure). All hires at the senior rank undergo a rigorous tenure review process at Amherst prior to formal appointment. When a department brings forward a request for a position at a senior rank or open rank, the CEP evaluates the requested rank, as well as the position itself. As noted earlier, Amherst has made a commitment to building a more diverse faculty. The CEP has adopted the following approaches to support this goal: "target-of-opportunity hiring," a modified FTE schedule, and a new hiring initiative to bring senior faculty to Amherst. To receive a "targeted" position, a department must have a history of interest in the particular field of the candidate, the scholar must bring intellectual diversity to the department, and there should be a dearth of such candidates in the field. In 2013–2014, the committee moved the deadline for FTE requests to the first week of December, recognizing that departments are better able to target a more diverse pool of candidates if they receive the authorization to hire earlier in the year. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (OD&I) supports departments' recruitment efforts, including identifying institutions with a history of producing candidates of color in the desired field. In 2015–2016, the board of trustees approved five new tenure lines for strategic purposes. Currently these positions are being allocated (one thus far) to broaden the diversity of the faculty. As part of this initiative, the dean is encouraging departments to invite senior scholars to campus for seminars and talks, and she has provided additional resources to make these efforts possible. Candidates for the new positions are already emerging through this approach.

In recent years, Amherst has implemented new approaches to attract qualified candidates from groups presently underrepresented on campus. The dean of the faculty and the chief diversity and inclusion officer (CDIO) meet with all search committees for faculty positions to discuss ways in which the committees can expand their search pools and actively recruit faculty of color. Workshops are held every spring and fall about how to ensure diverse search pools and to mitigate implicit bias in the search process. The dean, CDIO, and associate dean for academic administration review and approve all job advertisements. Once a list of semi-finalists is assembled, it is submitted to the CDIO to ensure that the group reflects the demographic diversity of the candidate pool. The same is true for the list of finalists. Preliminary interviews are often conducted via Skype, which has the benefit of allowing candidates to avoid the hefty expense of interviewing at national conferences. As a part of each search, three to five finalists are brought to campus for interviews that involve all department members, student representatives, and the dean. Candidates have an exit interview with a faculty diversity and inclusion officer.

To increase the pool of competitive applicants in emerging fields and from underrepresented backgrounds, the college has hired a number of postdoctoral fellows. It is hoped that these fellows' experiences at Amherst will encourage an interest in teaching at liberal arts colleges, and that their teaching experience and advanced scholarship will enhance their competitiveness on the national job market. In recent years, Amherst has drawn on the Consortium for Faculty Diversity (CFD) to identify promising fellows, and, in 2017–2018, there are six CFD fellows on campus. The college's participation builds on a program initially funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with endowment support from Mellon and Robert Keiter, a 1959 graduate of Amherst. The college began appointing Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows in 1998, typically for a two-year term. The appointments were structured to include half-time teaching to provide additional time for scholarly work.

### **Lecturers and Coaches**

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 normally 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. 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 departmental 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. Apart from sabbatical leaves, the level of benefits for lecturers is roughly equivalent to that of faculty. While departmental service is required, service on college committees is generally not expected. Departments prepare appointment, reappointment, and promotion materials that are reviewed by the dean. In the case of a potential negative decision, the dean consults with the Committee of Six. The president brings recommendations on appointment, reappointment, and promotion to the board of trustees.

Coaches are normally appointed for a three-year contract, renewable three times, with the approval of the president and the dean, and 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, they are renewed annually for another four years unless a clear reason is demonstrated to terminate the contract.

### **Personnel Review of Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty**

Procedures for reappointment, tenure, and promotion are described in the *Faculty Handbook* (III., A.–G.).<sup>95</sup> The criteria of judgment,<sup>96</sup> as articulated at III,E.,3., are teaching, scholarship and the creation of works of art, and contributions to the life of the college. The first two areas 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 the fall of the final pre-tenure year. This schedule may be accelerated for candidates who have had academic appointments at other institutions.

Formal evaluation takes place annually in conversations with departmental chairs and at least one other senior faculty member of the department. 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; and a letter from the candidate. After discussion of each case, the Committee of Six makes a recommendation to the president, who makes the final decision, in consultation with the dean of the faculty, about 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 evaluate tenure-track faculty members.

The awarding of tenure represents an institutional 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 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. 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. All tenured members of the department(s) are required to participate and to submit confidential individual letters to the Committee of Six. Again, the Committee of Six reviews the dossier and makes a recommendation to the president. The president, in consultation with the dean, makes a recommendation to the board. A member of the faculty appointed initially as an assistant professor and subsequently granted tenure will be promoted to the rank of associate professor, effective the start of the academic year following the tenure decision. The dean meets with all newly tenured faculty members to discuss their future trajectory as scholars and teachers and to offer, by vote of the faculty, a sum and substance of the Committee of Six's discussion of the faculty's member's tenure case.

The review for promotion to full professor is less demanding than that for tenure, but is not pro forma. A member of the faculty appointed initially as an associate professor without tenure and subsequently granted tenure will continue as an associate professor with tenure until promoted to the rank of professor. Promotion to the rank of professor may originate with the department or with the candidate and usually occurs between six and eight years after the tenure decision. A candidate's promotion committee consists of all tenured full professors in his or her department(s) and, at the request of the candidate, may include up to two other tenured full professors from the college faculty, chosen by the candidate in consultation with the dean of the faculty. The Committee of Six reviews all candidates for promotion and makes a recommendation to the president, who makes a recommendation to the board of trustees, in consultation with the dean of the faculty. A letter from the promotion committee that discusses the candidate's scholarly or artistic growth and achievement, teaching performance, and college and professional service, is provided to the Committee of Six. Candidates may provide a letter that comments on these areas as well, though this is not a requirement. Internal or external review of scholarship and teaching evaluations is not a feature of post-tenure review.<sup>97</sup>

### **Scholarly and Creative Work**

The college's mission statement affirms Amherst's commitment "to expanding the realm of knowledge through scholarly research and artistic creation at the highest level." Current faculty members have received fellowships and research funding from a host of foundations and scholarly and professional associations, including the American Council of Learned Societies, American Association of University Women, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Spenser Foundation, the Whiting Foundation, and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. Government sponsors of faculty research include the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, and the United States Fulbright Program.

Turning to internal support for scholarship, it is noteworthy that, in 2009–2010, Amherst instituted a more generous sabbatical leave policy, implementing a recommendation of the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP).<sup>98</sup> Following reappointment, tenure-track faculty members are eligible for two semesters of sabbatical leave at 100 percent of salary, typically in their fourth year at the college, upon approval by the dean of the faculty, in consultation with the Committee of Six, of a proposal of research, study, writing, or other creative work to advance the faculty member's professional growth and effectiveness as a scholar and teacher. In addition, faculty members receive a year of sabbatical, paid at 80 percent salary, with the possibility of 100 percent salary, after receiving tenure. Tenured faculty are entitled to one semester of sabbatical leave at 80 percent of salary after six semesters or, after twelve semesters, to two semesters of leave at 80 percent of salary. Under the college's Senior Sabbatical Fellowship program, tenured faculty, including those who have just received tenure, may receive the sum necessary to raise sabbatical salary support from 80 percent to 100 percent for either one semester or two semesters of leave. To receive 100 percent salary, faculty must submit a

research proposal and current CV. Occasionally, faculty members choose not to submit these two items; in those cases, they receive 80 percent of their salary while on sabbatical. The college has a “topping-up” policy<sup>99</sup> for faculty members who receive outside fellowships. Since such fellowships typically provide salaries lower than those at Amherst, the college will “top-up” to half of a faculty member’s base salary in any given semester. This policy allows faculty members to take advantage of external grants outside their regular leave cycle without suffering serious reductions in salary.

The college also offers more than \$2 million in support of faculty research, including start-up funds for new faculty and grants to continuing faculty. The Faculty Research Award Program (FRAP)<sup>100</sup> provides small grants (up to \$6,000) and large grants (up to \$30,000). In 2014, the dean increased the annual research/travel allowance from \$1,500 to \$2,500 for faculty members. The funds are intended to cover research expenses and/or to attend attendance at professional conferences. Each faculty member is asked annually to submit a current CV. Compliance with this expectation, though not universal, has improved steadily, in part because CVs are required for application for various forms of funding.

Each year, Amherst allocates approximately \$325,000 for faculty to employ Gregory S. Call Academic Interns,<sup>101</sup> students who work up to ten hours per week assisting faculty in their research programs. Through the Gregory S. Call Research Program,<sup>102</sup> funding is also provided for students to conduct research during the academic year and in the summer, on or off campus. By request during 2016–2017, the college supported more than 120 students through this program. Amherst also provided \$334,000 in support for the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program,<sup>103</sup> which in 2017 enabled forty-four students to work with twenty-four faculty members in laboratories and other settings during the summer.

### **Compliance with Legal, Moral, and Safety Standards for Research**

An institutional review board (IRB) oversees all research involving human subjects and ensures that scientific research adheres to acceptable legal, moral, and safety standards. The faculty institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC) presides over the legal and ethical issues involved with the use of animals in experimentation. The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) monitors activities that deal specifically with recombinant DNA and/or infectious agents (infectious to humans, animals, or plants) research, in accordance with the guidelines set by the Department of Health and Human Services in the Federal Register and the town of Amherst’s Board of Health. The Amherst College Radiation Safety Training Program was developed and implemented to comply with the requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Radiation Control Program (MRCP) 105 CMR 120.00 and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), as well as other organizations that regulate the use, transportation, and disposal of radioactive materials and machines that produce ionizing radiation (see also the chapter on standard nine).<sup>104</sup>

### **Code of Behavior**

Like all members of the college community, faculty members are expected to abide by the ethical standards expressed in the three statements in the college’s academic regulations, which also form the basis of student honor code (see the chapter on standard nine for full information, including a discussion of academic freedom, as well as the chapter on standard five). Professors are instructed to explain 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 (see the chapter on standard nine).

### **Intellectual Life**

There are a number of opportunities for faculty to share their scholarly work with the community and to stimulate discussion. During the academic year, faculty members offer presentations about their research each month as part of the annual Faculty Colloquium Series.<sup>105</sup> In 2017–2018, the schedule includes a historian discussing “What is Gender? A View from Nineteenth-Century Transgender Archives,” as well as a biologist giving a presentation titled “Zebrafish. One Word, Many Ways to Examine Sensory Encoding.” Each spring, with support provided through the Max and Etta Lazerowitz Lectureship Fund, an Amherst assistant or

associate professor delivers a lecture to the community about her or his scholarship or creative work. Lazerowitz Lecturers receive a \$1,000 honorarium to encourage their work. Titles of recent lectures include “Confession in the Age of Aggregation: Art, Politics, and the Self of Social Media,” given by an English professor; “Shape,” given by a mathematician; and “Looking back from the Anthropocene: Geological Perspectives on Climate Change,” given by a geologist. In 2015, the college opened the Center for Humanistic Inquiry (CHI) in Robert Frost Library. The CHI provides a supportive intellectual environment for faculty and has rapidly become the focal point for campus-wide conversations around the humanities and social sciences. Every two years, the CHI chooses a theme (thus far “conservation” and “speech/image/spectacle”) and, through a highly competitive process, invites four outside scholars to serve as postdoctoral fellows. The CHI holds weekly “salons,” in a variety of formats, and organizes faculty-staff reading circles around additional themes of interest. The center includes a flexible meeting space that can accommodate more than 150 individuals, ten offices for Amherst faculty and invited fellows, and a nearby state-of-the-art classroom.

### **Participation in College Governance**

See the chapter on standard three.

### **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 American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and makes recommendations to the administration.

### **Teaching Load**

Faculty members normally teach two courses per semester, with an equivalence adjustment for faculty teaching lab courses. In addition to scheduled courses, many faculty members also offer “special topics” courses to individual students, and nearly all faculty members mentor honors students, who are engaged in thesis work.

### **Advising**

Faculty-advisors offer close guidance as students shape their own education. During orientation, advisors meet with students on the incoming students’ second day on campus. The pre-major advisor begins meeting with students shortly thereafter, and continues to do so every semester before the student registers for classes. After declaring a major, students are assigned to a faculty-advisor in the major field. Students with more than one major have an advisor in each field. Advisors must approve course selections before a student can register for courses. At Amherst, advising encompasses much more than advice about course selection. It is both a critically important component of the college’s open curriculum and an essential pedagogical responsibility of every faculty member. Central to Amherst’s approach is the conviction that advising is a form of teaching. Advisors provide guidance beyond the scope of their expertise in a specific subject matter, helping students confront the larger purposes of the educational enterprise and to develop effective approaches to learning (see the chapter on standard two for more about advising).

### ***TEACHING AND LEARNING***

“Reinventing a rigorous liberal arts education that embraces the challenges of the twenty-first century” is one of the college’s seven major priorities for the next decade. Given Amherst’s commitment to the liberal arts mission, it is fitting that this area of focus tops the list of institutional objectives set out in the SPAC. Amherst faces both opportunities and challenges as it works to reimagine the liberal arts.

Faculty and the administrative offices that work closely with Amherst students have observed characteristics and patterns that are associated with the current generation of college students more broadly, including the following trends. First, this is first generation of “digital natives.” Amherst students, like their peers elsewhere, are bringing different approaches to learning, perhaps because they grew up in a digital age. Second, in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, Amherst students, like students at other institutions, are more concerned than ever about their career prospects, leading many to choose STEM fields (at Amherst, science, mathematics, and statistics) and economics as their majors. Finally, this is the most demographically

diverse generation of college students in the history of higher education. Mirroring this trend, a greater proportion of Amherst students than ever before are first generation, low-income, and/or students of color.

Levine and Dean, in *Generation on a Tightrope: A Portrait of Today's College Student*, note that “Higher education lags far behind its students technologically and pedagogically and must transform itself if it is to educate current undergraduates for the world in which they live.” Amherst agrees. In recognition of students’ need for more active forms of teaching and learning, many professors are experimenting with new forms of pedagogy and opportunities for experiential learning are being expanded. In particular, faculty who teach in STEM fields, despite the burdens that larger enrollments in their classes impose, are providing more interactive instruction. The college has also been deliberate in expanding opportunities for students to conduct research, both in collaboration with faculty members and independently, with faculty oversight. The college recognizes that research experiences help students to cultivate a disposition that is characterized by creativity, flexibility of thought, persistence, and inventiveness; to take intellectual responsibility; and to think more like scholars. These capabilities are valuable in a liberal arts context, Amherst believes, and will also position students well for success in their personal lives and careers.

Additionally, Amherst has recently begun to offer support for faculty to offer courses that include an intensive travel and/or research component outside the regular semester. These courses have the additional benefit of providing opportunities for students from different backgrounds to develop bonds through sharing intellectual passions and participating in intensive experiences that require that they solve problems together. One set of courses involves faculty-led research trips abroad during Interterm, spring break, or after the end of the spring semester. In 2016–2017, biology faculty Ethan Clotfelter and Rachel Levin traveled to Costa Rica with students in their tropical biology class to conduct research and study tropical biodiversity, and English professor Amelia Worsley led a trip to Grasmere, England, the home of the Wordsworth family, to conduct research about the poet in his milieu. A second set of courses involves faculty-student research tutorials in the humanities and social sciences that bring small groups of students inside the process of framing research questions, identifying and evaluating sources, and developing and supporting theses. Students who complete the tutorials are eligible for summer support to continue the research work, usually done in teams, with the faculty member who taught the courses (about 65 percent of students take part in the summer component). Two new teaching initiatives were announced in the fall of 2017 and begun this spring. *Universal Design and Beyond: Course Design for Student Inclusion in the Disciplines*, a teaching seminar offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning that is an outgrowth of the 2017 Dean’s Retreat on Inclusive Pedagogy, is offering faculty research, resources, and structured time to work on designing mid-level courses in a discipline—those courses that move students from being novices in a discipline toward expertise. In four interdisciplinary workshops, faculty are unpacking crucial methodologies and epistemologies in their disciplines and utilizing Universal Design principles, along with the principles of “Decoding the Disciplines,” to think about ways to help students become apprentices who are positioned to contribute to a discipline. The second program, a collaboration among the Moss Quantitative Center, Center for Teaching and Learning, and Professor of Statistics Nick Horton, is supporting faculty in less quantitative fields who wish to integrate quantitative or computational analysis into their courses.

While there is enthusiasm for making use of technology in teaching, the faculty’s interest in technology is consistent with Amherst’s commitment to the liberal arts mission. In 2013, the Amherst faculty engaged in intensive conversations about the possibility of joining a consortium of universities and colleges to develop massive online courses (MOOCs). After much debate, the faculty voted to reject the college’s participation in online non-credit instruction. In lieu of developing MOOCs, Amherst opted to become a founding member of The Liberal Arts Consortium for Online Learning (LACOL)<sup>106</sup> in 2014. The LACOL aims to explore “new models of teaching and learning in the service of residential liberal arts education.” These models often involve “blended learning,” online components that allow faculty more flexibility in their teaching methods. The consortium holds a workshop annually and also hosts working groups on active reading, effective teaching and learning, language instruction, and quantitative instruction. Amherst faculty, particularly those involved in



teaching quantitative skills and foreign languages, have been engaged participants in the LACOL. Some faculty have used online technologies to offer upper-level electives or advanced language classes to students at more than one campus. Another promising initiative is the creation of “just-in-time” modules for students who need to learn or brush up on particular quantitative skills. The director of the Moss Quantitative Center is involved in a pilot project to create a few such modules; while the basic video content will come from another LACOL school, Amherst will add its own “envelope” to it (see the chapter on standard seven for more about the LACOL).

Amherst has also increased the resources provided to administrative departments that support teaching and learning, including for instructional staff. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides instructional design support and to help foster cross-departmental conversations about effective and inclusive teaching practice. In recent years, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), which began reporting to the dean of the faculty in 2015, has dedicated its efforts to providing pedagogical support for faculty and for high-quality experiential learning opportunities for students. An emphasis on integrating co-curricular opportunities into students’ academic experiences at the college is also central to the work of the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning, which began reporting to the dean in the spring of 2017. A goal is to build more direct relationships between the CCE, the Loeb Center, and academic departments, so that students have more intentional pathways to explore and reflect on potential career interests. Through the CCE and the Loeb Center, Amherst distributes approximately \$1 million in summer internship monies; in summer 2017, 288 students received funding for internships and other high-impact summer experiences.

The library has become another source for pedagogical support for faculty, particularly through its Department of Research and Instruction. In 2011, five salary lines were repurposed to hire five new instructional librarians. A few years later, the college granted the department two new salary lines, and today seven instructional librarians spend most of their time working with faculty members to prepare research assignments and teach students the skills and methodologies necessary to complete those assignments. Librarians also conduct supplemental sessions and individual research consultations. The results are significant. In 2015–2016, instructional librarians worked with 265 classes, a 280 percent increase since 2010–2011. Librarians conducted an additional 160 research appointments outside of classes. At least as significant as these raw numbers is the growing depth of librarian involvement in classes. Increasingly, “embedded librarians,” participate in multiple sessions, and sometimes every session, of a given course. Research seminars constitute a prominent but not exclusive example of such co-teaching. Each year, more faculty call on librarians to help with the development of research assignments for courses (see the chapter on standard seven).

Faculty members are also aided by the staff of Academic Technology Services (ATS),<sup>107</sup> a unit within the Information Technology division that supports classroom technology. Faculty who wish to integrate technology into their pedagogy work closely with ATS. As a result of restructuring within IT, a search for a director of ATS has been delayed for some time. At the time of submission of this self-study, IT was interviewing candidates for the position.

One of the most significant changes in the realm of support for teaching and learning at a structural level has occurred over the past five years, as the Teaching and Advising Program has been reconceived. A year-long planning grant (2014–2015) from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and a four-year grant (2016–2020) from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provided funding to “seed” the establishment of the CTL. The center provides assistance to faculty in virtually every academic department and program, connecting instructors to effective evidence-based teaching practices, providing resources for the effective assessment of student learning, and offering guidance to faculty who seek to incorporate new technologies and pedagogies into their teaching. The creation of a teaching and learning center emerged as a priority through the SPAC process.

After a period of experimentation during its pilot year in 2016–2017, a structure was established for the CTL and put in place in the fall of 2017. The center is led by a director and faculty director, and includes an educational developer who specializes in STEM. The CTL works collaboratively with other departments on

campus, including ATS, the CCE, the Moss Quantitative Center, the research and instruction librarians, and the Writing Center, to provide support for teaching. The director has broad responsibility for individual and departmental consultations around pedagogical strategy and innovation, as well as for the development of initiatives in this area. This work includes support for course and curricular development, with special attention to articulating learning outcomes and assessment plans; aiding faculty in aligning course activities and assignments with outcomes; developing a voluntary course feedback program that comprises observation, mid-term, and end-of-course assessment and interpretation of course evaluations; teaching assistant training; and enhancing support for active and other learning centered pedagogical and curricular strategies. The faculty director (who, at present, is also the director of the Writing Center) oversees a broad range of workshops, lectures, and reading circles offered to faculty and instructional staff. These include the annual dean's retreat, a day-long event for all faculty and instructional staff that focuses on pressing pedagogical concerns, as well as a retreat that is offered to all instructors who teach first-year seminars. The director of the Writing Center also organizes eight-week workshops on the teaching of writing; recently, at the request of several science departments, these workshops have focused on writing in the sciences.

Another important initiative was launched with the support of a four-year (spring 2016–spring 2020) \$1.5 million grant that the college received from the Mellon Foundation in 2015. This grant, which, as noted earlier, Amherst dubbed “Reimagining the Commons,” is intended to enhance student learning by providing funding and outside expertise to departments that want to reconceive courses central to their major programs of study; introduce new components of the major that link curricular and co-curricular learning; update curriculum to reflect emerging scholarship, evolving student interests, and effective pedagogy; and develop clearer and in some cases new interdisciplinary pathways through the major, to ensure successful learning for all students. The “Commons” departmental grants offer a promising avenue for ensuring that students of all backgrounds can succeed in rigorous and compelling major programs of study.

Beyond offering faculty support for pedagogical development, the college has made significant investments in organizational structures and services to support student learning at the individual level. The Writing Center represents a prominent example of this commitment. Fourteen professional writing specialists, who hold advanced degrees, staff the center; five are full-time during the academic year, and the remaining nine work anywhere from five to twenty hours per week when the college is in session. Recognizing that students who are struggling with writing often need to work through how they are thinking through an argument, Writing Center staff guide students in how to formulate persuasive arguments. The staff generally spends little time helping students with sentence composition or correcting grammatical errors. In 2016–2017, Writing Center staff had 2,474 individual consultations with students. The center also offers general workshops to students on topics such as time management, effective reading strategies, and the use of particular software programs. In the fall of 2016, the Writing Center added an associate for public speaking to its staff, in keeping with the strategic plan's goal of giving all students the oral as well as written skills they will need to convey what they learn and their insights. Like the other associates at the Writing Center, the associate for public speaking works individually with students and offers workshops for students, both in and out of the classroom.

Like the Writing Center, the Quantitative Center provides essential support for students, in this case in the quantitative disciplines. The center plays an important role in helping all students achieve greater success and in bridging the large variations in preparation among Amherst students. In 2016, an ad hoc committee that was formed to evaluate the Quantitative Center concluded that additional resources were needed. Later that year, a faculty-director was appointed to oversee the center. Since then, the staff has expanded to include five full-time staff members, some of whom are recent graduates of the college. The staff members of the Quantitative Center hold drop-in hours and offer individual appointments to tailor tutoring to student needs. In 2016–2017, the professional staff of the center had 2,180 individual consultations with students. In addition to the professional staff, the Quantitative Center relies heavily on student tutors (thirty-six in the fall of 2016) who staff evening drop-in hours and provide individual appointments at a faculty member's request. The faculty-director is currently engaged in strategic planning for the Quantitative Center. Information about the college's

expansion of its two summer “bridge” programs, which is provided within the chapter on standards two, is also relevant to this discussion of support for students.

The efforts of individual faculty and departments are also playing a role in reimagining teaching and learning at the college. In response to concerns voiced by students during the November 2015 *Amherst Uprising*, Sheila Jaswal, a chemistry professor, collaborated with nine students to develop a project-based course called “Being Human in STEM.” The class sought to gain an understanding of issues of diversity in STEM at Amherst by interviewing more than forty students, alumni, staff, and faculty. Professor Jaswal and her students also created an annotated bibliography of peer-reviewed literature that explores the intersection of identity and STEM and its impact on success and experience in classes, labs, departments, and careers. The “Being Human in STEM” initiative aims to foster a more inclusive, supportive STEM community by helping students and faculty collaboratively develop a framework to understand and navigate diverse identities in the classroom and beyond. The initiative is ongoing.

Faculty in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics have created a program of math fellows and stats fellows. While conceived and launched independently of “Being Human in STEM,” the fellow programs draw on insights similar to those of the other initiative. The fellows programs aim to create support networks of near-peer tutors, while also boosting the confidence of students who might not otherwise think of themselves as being successful students. Participating faculty ensure that the fellows are diverse in every possible way, and fellows are chosen not only for their mathematics and statistics skills, but also because they can serve as role models for other students. The mathematics fellows focus largely on tutoring and mentoring less advanced students, while the stats fellows not only tutor and mentor, but also carry out institutional statistical research that the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services does not have time to undertake.

## **APPRAISAL**

### ***FACULTY AND ACADEMIC STAFF***

#### **Faculty Renewal and Growth**

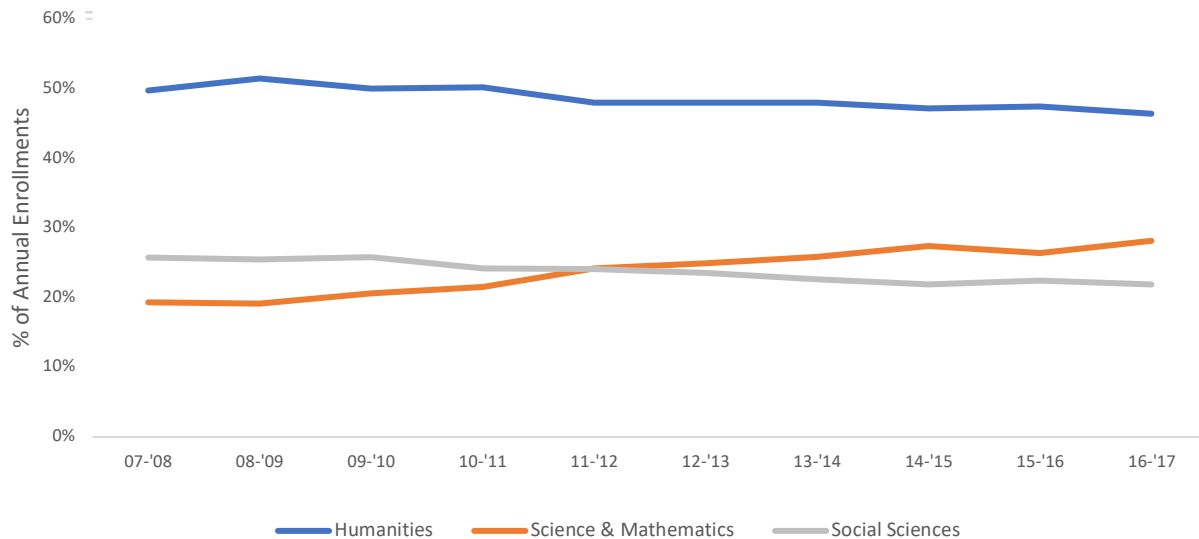
Over the past ten years, the FTE cap has grown from 167 to 188. Hiring associated with the growth in the FTE cap has not yet been completed. Between retirements and new FTE lines already authorized, it is anticipated that the college will hire roughly ten new tenure-line faculty annually for the next few years. Amherst remains a destination of choice for many scholar-teachers. Last year, fourteen national searches for tenure-line searches were undertaken. In thirteen out of fourteen cases, the college hired the department’s first choice. The fourteenth search failed. In addition, three other faculty members were recruited in more targeted searches. In carrying out its mission, the college considers the hiring of new faculty to be one its most important responsibilities. Surveys conducted by Hart Research in 2015 asked alumni what they valued most about Amherst. The top two responses were the critical thinking skills fostered by a liberal arts curriculum and the exceptional faculty of the college.

The present moment of faculty renewal requires a strategic approach to approving tenure lines. Since the allocation of FTEs occurs on an annual basis and faculty members of the CEP serve for three years at most, it is difficult for the CEP to focus on long-range planning strategies around the allocation of faculty resources. This approach has both benefits and drawbacks. The current system is flexible, and the CEP can respond to immediate needs effectively. The CEP evaluates the requests before the committee and is provided with historical information about hiring, but generally does not have the time to examine closely overall trends in the composition of the faculty. The dean of the faculty plays a critical role in taking a bird’s-eye view in this regard. Moving forward, the dean plans to take a more comprehensive approach, drawing on the self-studies of departments and programs that have been completed as part of the process for external reviews, and the reports of external review teams, as well as other data. The time available between approval of FTE requests and the posting of new positions also means that departments have just months, rather than years, to build candidate pools. To address this structural problem, the dean is encouraging departments to be in “permanent

search mode,” that is, to be “on the lookout” for promising faculty on a continual basis. The hope is that departments will be in a position to quickly build diverse candidate pools once an FTE has been allocated.

Over the past decade, many of the new faculty positions were allocated to the social sciences and humanities, addressing much needed shortfalls in economics and psychology, as well as student interest in areas such as LatinX studies and Native American studies. Between 2007 and 2016, humanities and social science enrollments stayed about even, but enrollments in STEM fields shot up by 61 percent (these statistics are possible because the college grew by about two hundred students).

Figure 3: Annual Enrollments by Division: 2007–2008 to 2016–2017

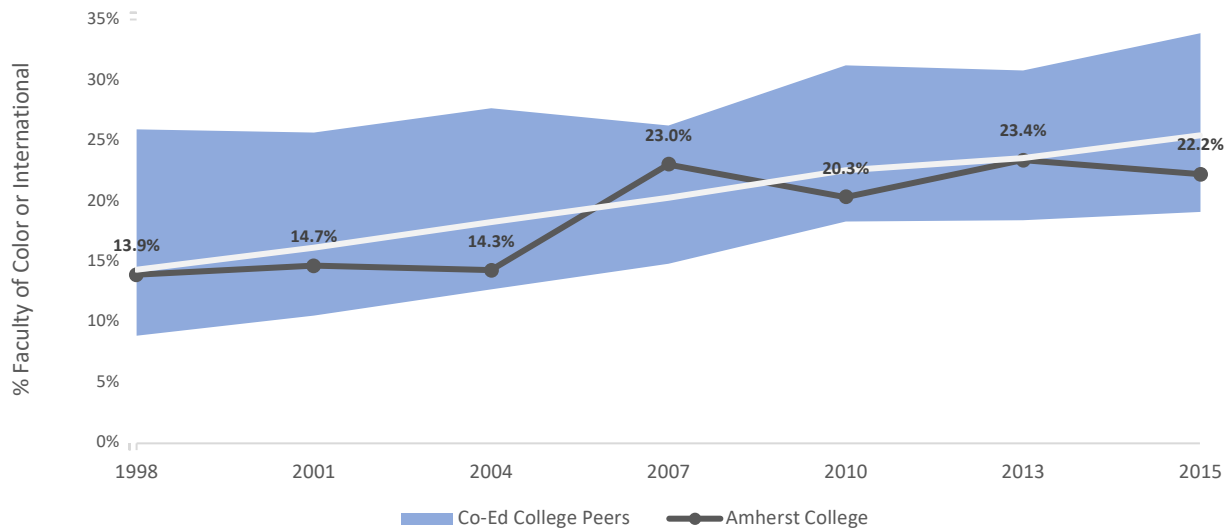


As just one example, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics witnessed extraordinary growth in both its enrollments and number of majors over the past five years. Total enrollments in 2015–2016 equaled 1,291, up from 691 in 2009–2010. There were sixty-three graduating majors in 2016, up from twenty-one in 2010. Other STEM departments have also seen very large growth in enrollments and majors, though not at the level of mathematics and statistics. Amherst’s STEM faculty face not only enormous enrollment pressures, but also pressures to provide electives and research opportunities to students majoring in STEM fields. As a result, students in most introductory courses in STEM fields currently do not have the same learning experience of close colloquy with faculty members as students in humanities and most social science fields. It is now a top priority of the college to hire in the STEM and economics fields. The new science center will have sufficient classroom and laboratory space to accommodate the necessary growth of science faculty. In the meantime, Amherst has sought to provide STEM instructional support in the form of lab instructors, lab technicians and in a few areas, lecturers. Amherst has also had to rely heavily on visiting faculty members, with the Department of Mathematics and Statistics hosting as many as five full-time visitors per year.

### Diversifying the Faculty

Amherst measures its success in recruiting faculty of color against the college’s own performance in this area, as well as the results achieved by peer institutions. As shown in the graphic on the next page, since the time of the last decennial self-study, there has been a decline (with a low of 20.3 percent in 2010) in the percentage of Amherst faculty who identify as persons of color and as citizens of countries other than the U.S., followed by an upward trend in 2013, the time of the interim report, and then another decline in 2015 (22.2 percent).

Figure 4: Percentage of Full-time, Tenure-line Faculty who Identify as Persons of Color or as Citizens of Countries other than the U.S., Compared to Peer Colleges



The college’s strategic recruitment efforts, including the implementation of new recruitment procedures, have already begun to yield results. Approximately 20 percent of Amherst tenure-line FTEs are now persons of color, and an additional 2 percent are international faculty. In 2016–2017, Amherst hired sixteen new tenure-line faculty<sup>108</sup> who began teaching in the fall of 2017, including five U.S. scholars of color and six who are citizens of countries other than the U.S., several of whom are scholars of color. Amherst has now achieved parity with peer colleges and plans to continue its intensive efforts to hire and retain stellar, diverse faculty.

Over time, Amherst recognized that the Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowships offered an excellent opportunity to recruit scholars from underrepresented groups, in anticipation of likely faculty openings in humanities and social science departments. To date, thirty-two individuals have served as Mellon or Keiter Postdoctoral Fellows. Of those, Amherst has hired nine as assistant professors, of whom seven remain at the college. Nine others were appointed to tenure-track faculty positions at other liberal arts colleges, and ten to tenure-track faculty positions at universities. The remaining fellows have accepted positions in academic administration and an independent research center or have taken a second postdoctoral fellowship elsewhere.

The college’s experience with hiring at the senior level has been positive. Some departments have made this choice because they face a demographic shift, as many senior colleagues retire and the middle generation, always small, assumes significant mentoring and other service obligations. The college’s hires at the senior ranks are offering additional leadership and experience and are able to integrate into the community smoothly. For example, a faculty member who was hired as a full professor is currently serving as co-chair of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, and another member of the committee was also hired at a senior rank. The college’s efforts to hire diverse scholar-teachers at the senior level is expanding the mentorship that is provided to younger faculty, and, in particular, faculty of color at Amherst. Those hired at senior ranks have made a significant difference in the leadership, and sometimes also the diversity, of the Departments of American Studies, Black Studies, English, Mathematics and Statistics, and Spanish. Other faculty hired at the senior ranks have played important roles in curricular initiatives; in particular, the creation of the LatinX and Latin American Studies Program, as noted earlier.

At the other end of the spectrum from recruitment are retirements, which have been on the rise during the past decade. The college’s generous phased retirement program has proved to be an effective incentive for faculty to make the decision to enter this phase of their careers. Most faculty members of retirement age make use of the phased retirement option; it is quite rare for a faculty member to retire outright. In the coming years, it is

expected that there will be a good number of retirements. Among the tenured members of the faculty, there are currently twenty-four faculty members between the ages of sixty-three and seventy-five, and twelve who are between the ages of sixty and sixty-two. Since 2010, thirty-one tenure-line faculty have retired.

### **Supporting New Faculty**

Amherst is dedicated to providing support for faculty at all stages of their careers through support for teaching and research. Since Amherst has hired a significant number of new faculty in recent years, the dean of the faculty's office has placed a great deal of attention on strengthening programs that introduce new professors<sup>109</sup> to the community and offer support during their pre-tenure years. The orientation program for new faculty has been expanded over the past five years. A series of lunches on topics such as faculty governance, student affairs, and the role of athletics is offered over the course of the academic year, and attendance is required for new colleagues. After receiving feedback that new faculty would prefer an earlier orientation that focused on "nuts-and-bolts" matters at the college, a new session with this emphasis was added to launch the orientation program in August of 2017. Title IX training for new faculty was held as part of this August introduction to the college. The dean's office anticipates continuing with this structure. In addition to attending a new half-day session titled "What I Wish I had Known When I First Arrived at Amherst," and Title IX training, new faculty participated in the dean's day-long retreat on accessibility and disability during the first days on campus. After learning that some new faculty members felt that they would benefit from having a short guide that highlights some of the more important academic policies, largely implemented by the registrar's office, a guide was created for 2016–2017. The publication was updated for the next academic year.<sup>110</sup> Several years ago, the dean of the faculty launched a program of dinner and lunch conversations for second-year faculty. The dean and her associate deans respond to questions and engage in discussion with faculty at these events.

### **Mentoring**

Amherst believes that strong mentoring and robust faculty development programming are essential to ensure that the strength of the faculty, a hallmark of the college, continues well into the future. The dean's office has strengthened mentoring programs<sup>111</sup> in recent years. New faculty members are now matched with a senior colleague to begin the process of getting to know colleagues outside their departments. Each spring, new members of the faculty are also matched with a seasoned advisor during the advising period (assistant professors do not serve as advisors in their first year at the college). In some cases, this process involves new colleagues "shadowing" senior faculty members during advising sessions; in other cases, there is simply extensive conversation about the advising process. The dean's office also offers modest funding for "mutual mentoring" for faculty at all ranks. Examples include "teaching circles," writing partnerships, and/or participation in local and national professional development networks.

The college also relies on outside sources of mentoring. The dean's office offers an external mentoring program in which all tenure-track members are encouraged to establish and/or advance a formal mentoring relationship with a scholar outside the college. For up to three years, funding of \$1,000 per year is available to provide stipends to a mentor of the Amherst faculty member's choice. An additional \$1,000 is made available during the three-year period to support meetings travel, and/or other activities associated with the mentoring relationship. In addition, the college has an institutional membership with the National Consortium for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD).<sup>112</sup> All colleagues may use the webinars and other general services offered by the NCFDD. Amherst also provides funding for all untenured colleagues who would like to participate in the NCFDD's "boot camps."

One of the most critical mentoring activities was established by formal vote of the faculty. In all departments, the chair, with at least one other tenured member of the department also present and participating, has at least one formal conversation per year with each of the department's tenure-track faculty member(s) to discuss performance and progress in teaching, research or creative work, and other contributions to the life of the college. In advance of that meeting, all senior faculty members in a department review students' end-of-semester in-class evaluations and classroom observations by tenured members of the department, current scholarly activities, committee service, and other contributions to the college. The participation of the entire

department in evaluating the progress of tenure candidates is intended to ensure that assistant professors hear one consistent message from their senior colleagues.

In addition, mentoring takes a variety of forms within departments. Some departments have mentoring committees and/or assigned mentors for each untenured colleague. Other departments prefer a system in which all senior colleagues mentor all untenured colleagues. While senior faculty visit the classes of all untenured faculty on a regular basis, senior colleagues less frequently invite tenure-track colleagues to observe their classrooms. In some departments team-teaching is viewed as an important form of mentoring, and senior faculty regularly co-teach with untenured faculty; in other departments, co-teaching rarely occurs. There is some frustration with the variability of departmental mentoring practices.

Although the college provides these formal and informal opportunities for mentoring, results from the 2017 Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey suggest that there is some discontent among untenured faculty, in particular with departmental leadership. Some untenured faculty members who responded to the survey expressed frustration about the uneven mentoring and communication of standards across departments. In addition, some untenured colleagues feel that some senior faculty members have little awareness of the vulnerability of untenured faculty. Some untenured colleagues also expressed the view that there is a hostile tone within the college's institutional culture that makes them reluctant to speak out at faculty or department meetings. It is hoped that the new system of better supporting (and compensating) chairs will improve the effectiveness of departmental leadership through regular workshops and other opportunities for faculty/chair development. In addition, the college is examining other ways to foster a more positive institutional culture, as noted earlier. The COACHE survey suggests that tenure-track colleagues are pleased with the external mentoring that is provided through the Office of the Dean of the Faculty.

A recent development in the mentoring arena is peer-to-peer mentoring and advocacy among tenure-track faculty. During its first year, the consultative group of tenure-track faculty (see the chapter on standard three for details about this body) was productive. The group held three listening sessions with untenured faculty during 2016–2017; refined a section of the COACHE survey that was later distributed to all faculty members; and attended meetings with the Committee of Six and with the president and the dean of the faculty. At the end of the academic year, the group prepared a “Summary of Untenured Faculty Concerns” that will serve as a useful starting place for conversations around improving the experience of untenured faculty. The consultative group aims to become a standing committee of the faculty, a step that would require a vote of the faculty.

### **Personnel Review of Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty**

Overall, reappointment, tenure, and promotion procedures have remained largely the same over the past decade. The exception is the relatively new requirement that candidates for reappointment submit a letter on their own behalf to their department(s) and the Committee of Six and that candidates for tenure submit a letter to the Committee of Six and, if they choose, to their department(s). This change was approved by the faculty in May 2012. Prior to this vote, candidates had the option of writing the letters, in which they describe their teaching, scholarship and creative work, and service. The changes were made to ensure that the voice of the candidate is a part of these essential personnel processes. Candidates for promotion are not required to submit a letter on their own behalf, but this remains an option that is offered. Many candidates take advantage of the opportunity. Each year, the Committee of Six reviews drafts of letters to candidates and chairs about the procedures for reappointment, tenure, and promotion to full professor and makes minor revisions, largely with the goal of clarity, that do not require faculty votes. These letters are posted on the dean of the faculty's web site on an annual basis.<sup>113</sup>

In an effort to convey personnel procedures with as much clarity as possible, and to answer questions, associate deans in the dean of the faculty's office hold many meetings with chairs, candidates, and academic department coordinators, who assist with assembling reappointment and tenure dossiers. In recent years, the dean's office has created new templates and documents (which are sent electronically in advance and posted on the dean's website) to summarize what are complex procedures. In addition, these meetings now occur earlier

than in the past. These approaches appear to be effective. Candidates and chairs have fewer questions about the formal procedures used in the tenure process. Nonetheless, and much to the college's concern, results of the COACHE survey suggest that untenured colleagues believe that the expectations for achieving tenure lack clarity. As this self-study was concluding, the Committee of Six was reviewing the language in the *Faculty Handbook* (III. E., 3.), about tenure criteria<sup>114</sup>, with the goal of proposing revisions to enhance clarity. Any change will require a vote of the faculty. The dean's office will also continue to work with tenured and untenured colleagues, and their departments, to ensure that tenure expectations are conveyed as clearly and consistently as possible.

In 2014, the faculty voted to have teaching evaluations solicited in every course taught by tenured faculty members at the college, beginning in 2015–2016. For tenured colleagues, this is now done via electronic solicitation to students, unless professors opt out of the electronic system and choose to have the evaluations done otherwise (e.g., in class). Because the response rates are very poor for electronically solicited evaluations for tenured faculty, the CEP is considering other ways to ensure that students evaluate their professors.

Many tenure-track faculty members would like to see the process of evaluating teaching standardized. Amherst currently does not use a common teaching evaluation form. Instead, tenure-track and tenured professors may use any evaluation form they wish; untenured professors seek their chairs' approval prior to using a particular form. At this time, many departments have agreed on the use of a set form, but some faculty feel that these forms may not draw on best evaluative practices and vary too much from one another. In the past several years, a new teaching evaluation form, designed by an instructional designer in the Center for Teaching and Learning who later left the college, was considered by the Committee of Six. The committee refined and then approved the form, along with an associated process for administering it. The committee also authorized a pilot, under which faculty could volunteer to use the form. The project has now lost momentum. It became apparent that the process for administering the form was idiosyncratic and too time-consuming. In addition, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), which reviewed the form in the fall of 2017, expressed concerns about making it the default teaching evaluation form. There are currently no plans to adopt a common teaching evaluation form at the college, though a discussion of this idea may reemerge in the future. Interest among tenure-track colleagues seems to remain.

### **Scholarly and Creative Work**

In the five most recent fiscal years (fiscal year 2013–fiscal year 2017), as reported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), Amherst faculty received twenty NSF awards, totaling approximately \$5.089 million (since 1998 there have been seventy-six NSF awards to faculty, totaling \$19.488 million), and six National Institutes of Health research awards totaling \$2.092 million. Review of college data in the same fiscal year 2013–fiscal year 2017 period shows that eighty-eight Amherst faculty submitted a total of 189 research and fellowship proposals, and forty-seven faculty received seventy awards from federal, state, and private funders. During the same period, Amherst submitted 105 institutional proposals and received sixty-three awards, including a \$1.5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation and a \$1 million award from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. In the last decade, Amherst faculty have received two Andrew Carnegie Fellowships, two Mellon New Directions Fellowships, four NSF CAREER awards, a Gates Grand Challenges award, a Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award, and a Whiting Fellowship for public scholarship. The Grants Office has steadily increased its outreach to and support of faculty grant-seekers. As noted earlier, the office recently moved from the Office of Advancement to the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, a shift that should facilitate closer collaboration between foundation relations and sponsored research staff and the academic core of the college.

Total foundation and federal grant awards (institutional and faculty) at the college have averaged \$2.39 million over the past five years. Amherst's success rate for institutional proposals has averaged 60 percent during the same period. For faculty grants, the rate has averaged around 35 percent, a performance that should be considered successful in an era when most research grant and fellowship opportunities available to Amherst faculty have award rates at or below 10 percent. Amherst currently lacks reliable and consistent benchmarking data from peer institutions for private grants. Institutions vary in how they track and report institutional and



faculty grants, making true apples-to-apples comparisons difficult to achieve. The Grants Office director has joined a working group that represents a network of sixty selective and highly selective private liberal arts colleges to create a shared database of foundation grant-making history for the participants. The design phase is under way in 2017–2018, with implementation by 2019. Once constructed, the database will enable members to see how their institution's totals compare with institutions of similar mission and size, and to track foundation giving to cohorts of colleges over time.

### **Faculty Compensation**

In recent years Amherst has been in the top quartile of its liberal arts peers for salary for assistant, associate, and full professors. In 2016, the Office of Human Resources undertook a survey of benefits at like institutions (the Colgate Group). The survey revealed that Amherst is very competitive in the benefits that it offers, with the exception of tuition assistance for employees seeking professional certificates and/or degrees, and grant-in-aid (assistance in paying college tuition) for college employees' children. Grant-in-aid was raised from \$8,000 to \$10,000 per child per year in fiscal year 2016, but is still not on par with the benefit offered by many of Amherst's peers.

### ***TEACHING AND LEARNING***

Teaching and learning are at the heart of the Amherst enterprise. The dedication of the Amherst faculty is a hallmark of the college, and students benefit from professors' commitment to teaching, including the development of new pedagogical techniques and the faculty's accessibility. In addition to their classroom teaching, all faculty provide individualized help to students during office hours. The additional support offered by instructional staff is essential to the faculty's work.

In the recent COACHE survey, faculty members rated the college's support for teaching highly, and large numbers of faculty members are making use of pedagogical support services. The CTL and its programs have attracted faculty at all career stages, and the center has helped to catalyze college-wide discussions about pedagogy and the assessment of learning. During the 2016–2017 year, staff in the CTL (under an earlier name for the center) held more than one hundred consultations with some sixty faculty members in thirty departments/programs. The annual dean's retreat on inclusive pedagogy has been well attended. In May 2016, some one hundred faculty and instructional staff, including faculty representatives from every academic department, participated in a one-day retreat on inclusive pedagogy. In August 2017, a second retreat was held on the topic of accessibility and disability. Similarly, the CCE has provided significant curricular consultation and support to instructors; in 2016–2017, staff in the center consulted with the instructors of fifty-three different courses (that together enrolled 705 students).

With the "Commons" grant, Amherst departed from long established approaches to curriculum development, which typically asked individual faculty members to experiment with courses that they might or might not elect to offer on a regular basis. This approach led to many excellent one-off courses, but did not result in effective teaching methods or course design throughout a department's curriculum. Accordingly, the "Commons" grant intentionally targets majors rather than courses. To receive funding, departments need to show that they plan to revise two or more courses taken by most students in the major, or to strengthen other activities in the major (comprehensive exams, independent research), or to create multiple pathways that would permit students with a range of interests and learning goals to navigate the major successfully. To date, the Mellon-supported "Commons" project has funded proposals from the Departments of Economics, Geology, Mathematics and Statistics, and Spanish. The CTL is in conversation with the Departments of Russian and Black Studies about developing proposals. The newly approved LatinX and Latin American Studies Program may soon apply for a grant. Across campus, academic departments are holding retreats and other meetings to discuss curricular goals and potential participation in the Mellon grant.

Individual faculty members continue to develop new pedagogical techniques, which are also having a significant impact. Faculty members in the biology department have worked to develop a team-based learning

approach in one of the two main introductory biology classes. Professor of Religion Andrew Dole has experimented with technologies to teach students to become more active and engaged readers. Carmen Granda, a lecturer in the Spanish department, uses virtual reality technology to enable students to “walk” El Camino de Santiago. As part of an animal physiology class taught by neuroscientist Josef Trapani, assistant professor of biology, students don virtual reality headsets to observe the body’s response to a virtual encounter with a tyrannosaurus rex. The use of this technology stimulates a “flight-or-fight” response, and the class takes measurements of students’ physiological functions, such as heart rate and grip strength, both before and after they experience the carnivore heading straight toward them. Students also entered new worlds through courses involving travel and research, which have been well received. The foreign travel significantly influenced research topics and methods that students addressed in course assignments. With the research tutorials, students have reported that the experience of discussing research design and methods alongside faculty has fundamentally changed how they view their own role in learning. Seminar instructors have regularly noted the reinvigorating effect the seminar model has had on their own teaching. The research tutorials have resulted in one book publication, a half dozen peer-reviewed article publications, and a host of digital exhibitions.

Based on its initial success in the spring of 2016, the “Being Human in STEM” course has been offered each subsequent semester. Various iterations of the class have designed and piloted interventions to support inclusion and success, and have developed strategies to sustain and expand the initiative. An advisory coalition with representation from the Department of Biology, the Neuroscience Program, the CTL, the Quantitative Center, and the Grants Office has been formed. In addition to materials being shared with Amherst STEM faculty during the Dean’s Retreat on Inclusive Pedagogy in 2016, resources are freely available through the project website. A successful partnership has already been established at Yale University, where faculty from the Departments of Physics and Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics piloted and adapted the “Being Human in STEM” course model during 2016–2017. A second iteration is occurring this spring. The initiative is actively pursuing possible partnerships with a range of institutions to support the implementation of courses like “Being Human in STEM.”

**PROJECTIONS** (See related projections in standard four)

Pending fundraising, increase the number of faculty in STEM fields and in economics, while continuing to support and enrich the humanities

Further diversify the faculty

Continue to shape the new Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and to enhance the Moss Quantitative Center (Q Center) to offer opportunities and resources for Amherst faculty to develop innovative, inclusive, and supportive pedagogical approaches to support student learning

Try to address the perceived lack of clarity in the college’s expectations for receiving tenure

Continue to strengthen programs that introduce new professors to the community and to offer support to faculty during their pre-tenure years

Increase the number of instructional staff, including additional staff in the CTL and Q Center

Create more on- and off-campus experiential learning opportunities

### ***THE FIVE COLLEGE CONSORTIUM***

Amherst collaborates with Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts Amherst through Five Colleges, Incorporated (FCI). The consortium grew out of successful educational extension collaborations begun in 1914 with nearby colleges and universities and more elaborate collaborations in the 1940s and 1950s among Amherst, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and the University of Massachusetts in areas of library subscriptions, joint faculty appointments, public radio, history of science and astronomy. It was formalized in 1965 as a nonprofit educational corporation, which expanded with the addition of Hampshire College in 1966. Today, cooperative agreements administered by FCI, which has a full-time staff of thirty-eight employees, give students open access to courses, library holdings, and a range of curricular and co-curricular activities. Under FCI's auspices more than a hundred groups of faculty, administrators, and staff plan and implement joint programs and projects. The Five College community has about 30,000 undergraduate students, 5,000 graduate students, 2,200 full-time faculty, 6,000 undergraduate courses, and ten million library volumes and other paper holdings. The consortium has an annual budget of more than \$8.5 million, derived chiefly from institutional assessments which are supplemented by an average of \$1.5 million annually in grants from outside sources and distributions from an endowment of \$11 million.

Programs for faculty include an average of thirty exchanges each year, forty ongoing joint appointments and other joint residencies for scholars and artists; faculty seminars; and lecture funds. Among the shared academic programs in which Amherst participates are cross-registration (students may enroll for courses in arts and sciences at the other campuses on a space-available basis at no additional charge), two Five College departments (the Departments of Astronomy and Dance), two Five College majors (architectural studies, open only to students at Amherst, Hampshire and Mount Holyoke, and film studies), and fourteen of the consortium's seventeen certificate programs. Other shared academic programs include three joint language programs (Arabic, Hebrew, and Korean), interdisciplinary and area studies programs, Five College—UMass Amherst Graduate Program in History, Center for East Asian Studies, Women's Studies Research Center, Crossroads in the Study of the Americas, Early Music Program, Peace and World Security Studies, the Schools Partnership Program, Community Based Learning, and the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages which coordinates offerings of fifty-four less commonly studied languages and dialects through courses approved at the university. The consortium has also coordinated shared initiatives in blended learning and digital humanities.

Joint administrative programs involving some or all of the campuses include purchasing, emergency preparedness and emergency reciprocal facility and equipment arrangements, diversity and equity, management training, print and mail services, IT accessibility initiatives and staffing, a shared library catalog and shared journal subscriptions, a print repository for rarely circulating materials including a shared Library Annex with capacity for 2.5 million volumes, a high speed fiber optic network, compliance and risk management, a captive insurance company for property and liability insurance, a central office for coordinating and managing rental housing, support for job-seeking employee partners and spouses, intercampus transportation in collaboration with the regional transit authority, support for public radio, admission recruiting, and collaborations among campus and neighboring museums.

At the time of the writing of this self-study, a search had recently concluded for a new executive director of Five Colleges, Incorporated (FCI), following a review of the consortium's governance structure. The new director will begin work in April.

A comprehensive external review of FCI took place in 1999, and the current consortium strategic plan was adopted in 2010. All Five College academic programs undertake self-studies every five to seven years. The major Five College academic programs are reviewed with external visiting committees regularly. Other consortial academic and administrative programs and projects are assessed on a regular basis.

## INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

### DESCRIPTION

In supporting its mission, Amherst is well endowed with human, financial, information, physical, and technological resources. In setting priorities and allocating resources for current and foreseeable needs, the college follows rigorous processes that are regularly reviewed and enhanced. The *Strategic Plan for Amherst College* (SPAC) serves as a guide for decision-making about meeting these current and future needs.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

In support of the college’s mission, the Office of Human Resources (OHR)<sup>115</sup> oversees the implementation of Amherst’s policies related to employees, provides direction and support in the management of human resources matters, and administers benefits and employment processes. Through its guidance, support, and services, the OHR assists with recruiting, retaining, and supporting a talented and dedicated staff—work that is a priority of the SPAC. Currently, Amherst’s staff comprises 680 employees.

The OHR is staffed by eleven employees, who bring the necessary expertise to provide and support the office’s services. These services include benefits management (health, retirement, insurance, educational assistance);<sup>116</sup> employee data management and reporting; investigation and resolution of employee relations issues, including those related to Title IX; orientation programs for employees; Workers’ Compensation claim management; compensation and job classification; support for recruitment and hiring; employee recognition/activities;<sup>117</sup> leave management; wellness programs and activities; development and implementation of training programs; HR policy and procedure management; administration of the American with Disabilities Act on campus; diversity and inclusion initiatives; and performance management.<sup>118</sup> Through email, presentations, website updates, and training sessions,<sup>119</sup> the OHR informs the staff about new, revised, and developing policies and procedures, and other issues that may affect Amherst’s employees. The office upholds the institution’s commitment to non-discrimination<sup>120</sup> by equitably administering its policies, procedures, and programs.

### **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

The college continues to deploy sizable financial resources in support of its ambitious mission. All financial decisions are guided by the principle that the pressing needs and strategic aspirations of today must be balanced against the preservation of Amherst’s financial strength far into the future. Much of that financial strength and capability lies in the endowment, which was valued at approximately \$2.25 billion, as of June 30, 2017. At approximately \$1.25 million per student, Amherst’s endowment is one of the ten largest by that measure in higher education. Over the last several decades, the endowment has grown in absolute terms and relative to many other colleges, as a result of donor generosity, prudent and effective investment, and modest annual spending rates. Amherst’s fiscal 2018 budget is \$189 million, or about \$105,000 per student. More than 50 percent of the budget is funded by spending from the endowment, one of the highest rates of budgetary endowment reliance in higher education. This reliance is a result of a large endowment per student, but also a deep commitment to financial access and affordability. That commitment results in the allocation of significant resources to support extensive need-based financial aid. Comprehensive fee collections fund only about one-third of Amherst’s budget—as a result of extensive financial aid policies and practices, including need-blind admission for all students (international and U.S. citizens), a “no-loan” policy, and low student-work expectations.

Responsibility for the prudent deployment and management of Amherst’s substantial financial resources is broadly distributed and held at all levels of the institution. Over many financial actions, including the setting of the annual operating budget and comprehensive fee, as well over endowment spending policy, endowment investment decisions, endowment return assumptions, debt issuances and refinancing decisions, and annual audited financial statements, the board of trustees exercises direct approval authority. Three trustee committees collaborate closely with staff and provide detailed oversight over various aspects of the college’s finances. The Committee on Budget and Finance works with the chief financial and administrative officer

(CFAO) to discuss and determine overall financial strategy, long-range financial planning, contingency planning, operating and capital budget parameters, and debt strategy and financing actions. The Audit Committee selects and oversees the work of the college's independent auditor. The committee also oversees the work of the CFAO and controller on Amherst's business controls, financial risk management, tax filings, and financial statement preparations. As noted earlier, in 2017, Amherst promoted the director of treasury operations and analysis to the position of associate chief financial officer and treasurer. This individual now plays an active role in working with both the Committee on Budget and Finance and Audit Committee. Amherst deploys an endowment investment model that is driven by the board's Committee on Investment. The committee takes responsibility for key decisions about asset allocation targets, manager selection, and investments and liquidations. This work is done in collaboration with an on-campus internal investment office led by a chief investment officer and staffed with several investment officers and individuals providing recommendations and regular reporting and analysis.

Day-to-day financial operations and accounting activities are performed by a team of about fifteen that reports to the associate chief financial officer and treasurer. These staff direct and oversee a variety of financial functions, including student financial services, accounts payable, payroll, grant administration, endowment administration, general accounting, financial reporting, budget, support for financial analysis and decision-making, and financial systems administration. Many dozens of staff across campus maintain some responsibility for financial transactions and management, including the development and oversight of departmental budgets, vendor selection, business expense review and approvals, and restricted fund spending and stewardship. The finance office provides help to assist and train staff in the execution of these responsibilities.

### ***INFORMATION, PHYSICAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES***

Amherst's library, Information Technology division, and Campus Operations division—independently and through joint efforts—support the college's mission, including the SPAC's priorities and recommendations. They foster social cohesion on campus; support teaching and learning; promote research by faculty, students, and visiting scholars; serve as partners in Amherst's efforts to reinvent a rigorous liberal arts education; and create models that enable the college to carry out its work sustainably.

#### **The Library**

The mission of the library is to “foster inquiry, discovery, and creation by teaching the craft of research, organizing information and leading others to it, producing freely available scholarship, curating collections for posterity, and building community.” All of the library's work revolves around a 2015 aspirational statement derived from this mission.<sup>121</sup> The library boasts more librarians per student and per faculty member than nearly any other library in the country. Forty-three staff members work in five departments—Archives and Special Collections, Digital Programs, Research and Instruction, Technical Services, and the Amherst College Press. All departments include staff recognized nationally as leaders in their fields. The library ranks high among Amherst's peers in the amount it invests to acquire, manage, and produce information. It is first among liberal arts colleges in the number of physical books in the library collection (1.1 million); third in its total budget (\$6.9 million); third in the number of librarian FTEs (eighteen); sixth in the number of physical items circulated per year (57,000); eighth in the total number of staff FTEs (fifty-one), and eighth in total acquisitions expenditures (\$2.7 million). Supporting teaching and research requires librarians to engage in research and continuing education. All professional library staff receive \$1,500 to \$2,500 annually for continuing education; additional funds are made available to support classes, service on conference panels, and paper deliveries at professional meetings. The library encourages all of its librarians to apply for a research or educational sabbatical every six years. In 2015, the Association of College and Research Libraries bestowed its “Excellence in Academic Libraries Award” on the Amherst Library.

The library contributes to faculty and student research by teaching research skills, and by collecting, describing, preserving, disseminating, and publishing research. The library's collection is, arguably, the strongest undergraduate library collection in the world. It is supplemented by the collections of the University of Massachusetts, Smith, Mount Holyoke, and Hampshire—from which Amherst faculty and students borrow

18,000 print items per year. The Amherst community also enjoys access to collections across the globe. Amherst's library is in the minority of libraries that borrow items from other libraries without passing on costs that are incurred to its own faculty and students. Last year 1,900 Amherst students and 290 academic staff and faculty borrowed more than 16,000 items from institutions beyond the Five Colleges. Amherst loaned more than 67,000 items to faculty and students at other institutions. Amherst's library is one of the few libraries that does not charge libraries outside its consortia for borrowing its material.

In support of Amherst's goal of taking new approaches to liberal arts education, the library and IT are reimagining the production and dissemination of liberal arts scholarship in ways that make that scholarship universally available. The library created a five-person Department of Digital Programs, which is dedicated to identifying unique material in Amherst's collections, digitizing it, and disseminating it free of charge to all. In addition, the library and the Faculty Library Committee developed a resolution, adopted by a faculty vote,<sup>122</sup> pledging to make all faculty journal publications freely available in an online repository. The library also established the Amherst College Press, the first academic press in the U.S. devoted to publishing open-access, scholarly monographs. The press offers a new model for publishing in the liberal arts, by producing books subject to the same, rigorous, peer-review employed by top university presses, but then making those publications freely available in electronic form (see the chapter on standard nine). With funding from forty-three liberal arts college libraries, the press partnered with the University of Michigan Press to form a second open-access press, the Lever Press, with a focus on issues in the liberal arts. The Amherst College Press became the parent of the New Books Network (NBN), an effort to make the work of liberal arts scholars intellectually accessible to a non-scholarly audience.

### **Campus Operations and Associated Departments and Offices**

Amherst's campus is defined by its bucolic landscape, varied topography, and vistas. It has evolved over the decades to become a mixed-use integration of academic, residential, and administrative buildings. The campus rose from the efforts of townspeople in the early nineteenth century and symbolically blends into the surrounding town. There is college-owned housing in surrounding neighborhoods; Amherst's Lord Jeffery Inn, is located downtown; there is open agricultural and conservation land adjacent to the college's core; and the Emily Dickinson Museum is located just to the north of the campus. Through adaptive reuse renovation strategies, care has been taken to preserve the campus's seventy-six buildings. This approach is favored over new construction whenever possible. The buildings, which total approximately 2.1 million square feet, support broad and varied academic and residential programs.

Campus Operations oversees the stewardship of the campus and its facilities. Over the past decade, prudent capital investment has allowed the overall physical condition of the college's buildings to be maintained through annual capital renewal projects. The division has developed comprehensive plans to respond to the programmatic needs noted in the SPAC, with particular attention to the safety and security of the community and to environmental stewardship that has reduced the campus's impact on the environment. In recent years, Campus Operations has been overseeing the largest design and construction effort in Amherst's history, encompassing the new residence halls, science center, and landscape plan. Campus Operations has 230 staff members, who work in the following six associated departments and offices: Facilities, Police and Public Safety, Dining Services, Sustainability, Rental Housing, and Campus Print and Mail. The 135 FTEs in the Department of Facilities work in the following three units: Design and Construction, which oversees campus planning, design, and project implementation; Facilities Operations, which includes the working trades such as carpenters, painters, power plant operators, electricians, plumbers, and HVAC technicians; and Facilities Auxiliary Services, which includes groundskeepers, custodians, events staff, and mail carriers. The Department of Dining Services is staffed by seventy-three regular employees and approximately 128 employees with casual status, who support student dining, catering, and cash operations. The Department of Campus Police and Public Safety includes twenty FTEs, three FTEs in the Environmental Health and Safety area and a director of emergency preparedness. The Office of Sustainability is led by a director, who is supported by interns and students.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

As noted earlier in the self-study, in 2014 the college created the Office of Environmental Sustainability to bring greater cohesiveness to what were decentralized, operationally focused sustainability initiatives; to foster awareness of threats to the environment; and to enhance the college's environmental stewardship efforts (see the chapter on standard two). The sustainability program has embraced the concept of experiential learning and involves numerous students and student groups in sustainability initiatives. Early projects include the Book and Plow Farm, the on-campus vegetable farm that is staffed in part by student volunteers and provides fresh produce for the campus cafeteria, and the Eco-Rep programs, in which student coordinators promote sustainability programming in the dorms. The office has also created internships for Amherst students to explore and contribute to environmental projects. The college's new climate action plan, which is still at a formative stage, charts a course toward achieving a carbon neutral campus and defines strategies to conserve energy, shift to renewable energy sources, and, if necessary, purchase carbon offsets.

### **Information Technology**

Information Technology (IT) has forty-three employees, who work in the following six units: Academic Technology Services (ATS), Administrative Information Services (ADIS), the Systems and Networking Group (SNG), Information Technology Communications Infrastructure (ITCI), Web Services (WSG), and Information Technology Support Services (ITSS). The division invests heavily in continuing education for staff in all areas. The director of each unit reports to the chief information officer (CIO). These areas support and maintain technology for teaching, research, recreation, and the administration of the college. The division provides students, faculty, and staff with central, single sign-on accounts, which enable access to email, file storage (both locally and in the "Cloud"), web space, learning management system accounts, voicemail, and a range of software and services, including productivity software suites from Microsoft and Apple, various Adobe products, audio and video production tools and facilities, teleconferencing, and foreign language video services. Centrally, Information Technology operates seventy-two host systems, which run more than six hundred virtual servers, and more than four hundred terabytes of storage. Amherst maintains a ten-gigabit connection to the University of Massachusetts and the other Five College institutions, in addition to a one-gigabit connection to the Internet and Internet2. Wi-Fi service is available in all campus residence halls and offices, and in most commonly used outdoor spaces.

Information Technology attends to its responsibilities for security, data integrity, service availability and reliability, and breadth of service offerings. Amherst measures its success in these areas in part through consultations with peers, especially within Five Colleges Inc., and the Five College institutions, and through consultations with other groups such as EDUCAUSE and the Consortium of Liberal Arts Colleges (CLAC). Information from these groups is used by IT to benchmark its offerings and resources against industry and national standards and best practices regarding FTE counts, funding, service "uptime," security and user privacy, and breadth of system and service offerings.

The division and the college promulgate policies and procedures to ensure the privacy of individuals and the reliability of Amherst's systems. The college's *Policy on Acceptable Use of the Amherst College Electronic Environment*<sup>123</sup> outlines expectations the college has for how systems and services may be used and the expectations users should have regarding the confidentiality of their data. Other policies describe more specific governing principles or practices for particular services. Information Technology is currently working with an outside firm to help develop a more comprehensive set of policies to govern information security and regulatory compliance, and is working internally to inventory and document the college's practices and procedures. The Office of Student Affairs usually handles complaints against students. The Office of the Dean of the Faculty normally addresses complaints against members of the faculty. Complaints against staff and administrators are usually handled through supervisors and the Office of Human Resources.

Funding for the division for fiscal year 2016 was \$9.6 million, including \$1.9 million for operating expenses; \$1.4 million of capital appropriation; and \$5.1 million in compensation and benefits for IT staff. Based on data from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the EDUCAUSE Core Data Survey,

Amherst is in the top third of CLAC institutions in terms of IT funding as a percentage of overall institutional budget, and in terms of IT staff FTEs per student. The college is in the top 10 percent of CLAC schools for IT funding per student. The goal of IT is to ensure that its facilities and services are convenient, reliable, and easily understood. The division broadly employs self-service capabilities for users and automation wherever possible. When deploying new systems and services, IT aims to minimize the degree to which users must attend to technology, rather than to the tasks they seek to accomplish. The college makes extensive use of IT in all aspects of planning and uses business intelligence solutions and analytics to support decisions about allocating financial and other resources.

## **APPRAISAL**

### ***HUMAN RESOURCES***

The SPAC called for the Office of Human Resources to modernize policies and programs to support efforts to recruit, retain, and support the staff of the college, and the office has made progress on this front. Over the last decade, and particularly in the past five years, the OHR has substantially improved its recruitment support. A staff member works extensively with each hiring department to develop a position description that best describes the department's need and the experience required for the position. The OHR replaced an antiquated "home-grown" electronic applicant-tracking system with a more effective new system that has many useful features. The new system offers support by allowing search committees to "screen" candidates electronically, send automated status updates to candidates, and create reports about the candidate pool. The OHR has improved its efforts to recruit candidates from diverse backgrounds. The office has contracted with a third-party vendor to distribute job postings across a vaster network and provide analytics on the results. In addition, the OHR collaborates with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to provide training for managers and search committees on how to provide all candidates with equal opportunity and consideration. The office also participates in a Five College initiative that focuses on the recruitment and retention of staff of color for exempt positions. To draw the best candidates, Amherst offers a competitive salary and benefits package. In 2017, the college completed a market study of salaries and benefits, and the results demonstrated that Amherst is competitive and equitable in both areas.

President Martin has emphasized the need to professionalize services and functions across the college, an effort that has required additional staffing. Surveys of peer institutions have highlighted the college's relative understaffing in certain key areas, such as student wellness and learning support. To address these issues, Amherst increased the number of full-time employees by approximately forty individuals between July 1, 2013, and September 1, 2017 (this figure does not include coaches or members of the faculty). The percentage of new hires averaged between 5 percent and 16 percent over this time frame.

Another area that has been enhanced through the modernization of policies, processes, and programs is staff retention. Once recruitment efforts yield results, an OHR benefits expert meets with each new employee to review benefits and the *Employee Handbook*. Those new to Amherst also attend a newly improved and expanded half-day orientation program that focuses on opportunities, programs, and services that the college offers. Title IX training is required for all new employees. The number of terminations at the college between July 1, 2013, and September 1, 2017, averaged between 2 percent and 12 percent during this period. The current length of tenure for a full-time employee is approximately ten years. Through the successful expansion of the college's staff, both the scope and quality of support services all across campus have improved. For example, there is now an expert on the staff who is devoted solely to Title IX issues (see the chapter on standard nine), finance professionals who focus on the budget are embedded in a number of departments (see the chapter on standard seven), and new offices have been established to concentrate on diversity and inclusion and legal work (see the chapter on standard nine). Evidence of the impact of the strengthening of human resources in these and other areas at the college appears across the self-study.

The OHR regularly reviews and updates the benefits offered by the college and brings recommendations for change to a benefits committee. In recent years, Amherst has adopted an improved retirement benefit to



increase college contributions for all employees, with the largest increases going to the lowest paid employees (see the chapter on standard three). In addition, a new vision plan and health benefits for domestic partners were added. In 2017, a benefits survey was conducted to evaluate how the college's benefits compare with those offered by peer institutions. The study revealed that Amherst's benefits are among the best in this cohort and collectively help the college attract and retain talent. Amherst will assess the two areas that are comparatively weaker—which are tuition/development assistance and grant-in-aid—to determine if enhancements are appropriate.

The OHR also evaluates other programs, as well as policies and procedures. In recent years, changes have been made to some policies as a result of new Massachusetts laws. Examples include adding a *Domestic Violence Leave Policy* and providing sick leave for casual employees. In addition, Amherst regularly makes revisions to its HR policies and programs beyond what is required by law. In response to requests for more professional development opportunities, for example, a staff member who specializes in this area, who had been a half-time employee, was shifted to full-time status and now provides a greater variety of training sessions on a year-round basis. New training opportunities continue to be added based on college needs and employee requests. Recent additions include workshops about implicit bias, transgender inclusion, and stress management. A wellness program was added in 2014 and provides opportunities and incentives for employees to maintain and improve their health. An employee recognition program has been expanded to recognize and reward employees for contributions and dedication to the college. In 2015, the OHR instituted a revised performance management process (PMP) to assist employees in establishing and meeting career goals. Employees are now eligible to receive merit increases on top of their annual salary increase. These increases are added to an individual's base salary. Under the new PMP, for the first time, 100 percent of employees and supervisors participated in the performance-review process. Policies, procedures, and programs within the HR domain are found online, communicated periodically through email, and presented at supervisory forums.

For decades, Amherst had two categories of staff employees, staff and “trustee-appointed” staff, with separate compensation programs for each. Guidance and transparency in regard to career progression were insufficient in both categories, and the differentiation among positions was unclear. To address these issues, as noted earlier, a job classification and compensation review (JCCR) of permanent non-faculty positions was launched in 2014. The goals were to develop a common classification and compensation system for non-faculty positions; assure that all positions are classified and compensated within Amherst's employment markets; develop a structure for career growth; streamline the process for approving the classification of jobs; and combine the staff and trustee-appointed categories into a single structure. After an intensive process, a new Job Classification and Compensation Program (JCCP)<sup>124</sup> was introduced in the summer of 2017. Staff and trustee-appointed categories have been combined. All staff positions are now assigned to one of five “job groups,” each of which includes positions that share similar attributes and responsibilities. Within each group are multiple levels based on six job factors. When creating the groups, the OHR, in consultation with supervisors, updated, and in some cases, for the first time, established position descriptions and assigned each position to a group and level most closely matching the position's attributes.

As part of the JCCP, a consultant conducted a market study of salaries to inform the setting of salary ranges for the new groups and the levels within them. The consultant reviewed market data of benchmark jobs from labor markets within which Amherst competes for talent, primarily peer institutions within higher education, the local area, and general industry. The study revealed that close to forty Amherst employees were being paid below the minimum salary of the range (their salaries were raised to the minimum level), and that about eighty employees had salaries that were above the upper end of the range (they continue to be eligible for base and merit salary increases).

Beginning in the summer of 2016, an HR consulting team began a comprehensive review of Amherst's human resources function to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. The firm conducted interviews with approximately seventy faculty and staff to assess the OHR's structures, services, staff, competencies, performance, service levels, processes, policies, and practices. The evaluation indicated that the

OHR staff is perceived as strong and well respected, but that the office is seen as lacking a strategic approach and as operating largely at a transactional level. In the summer of 2017, the OHR initiated a process to make improvements, based on the consultants' findings and recommendations. The office consulted with the senior staff to revise the office's mission statement and vision to ensure that they align with Amherst's needs and expectations. The OHR also restructured the roles of some of its staff and is improving service, with the consultants' support. Morale issues among the staff were revealed during the review. To better understand what underlies the concerns raised, the OHR and partners across campus designed a survey tool. To inform the creation of that instrument, the consultants held focus groups with more than one hundred staff members in the spring of 2017, and the survey was conducted in the fall of 2017. More than seven hundred staff members participated in the survey, and the college expressed its thanks by providing an additional paid holiday in January of 2018. The survey revealed that overall job satisfaction at the college is high and that many staff members take pride in working at Amherst. Staff who responded to the survey also expressed a desire for clearer and increased levels of communication; more opportunities for collaboration and involvement in decision-making; more recognition of the value of their work; and more intentional, direct engagement throughout the college. In response to these findings, the OHR is assisting in the development of action plans to address these and other areas of concern.

## ***FINANCIAL RESOURCES***

### **Annual Operating Budget and Long-range Financial Planning**

The operating budget proposal to the board of trustees is the most significant and broadly participatory financial activity each year. Every department may submit budget requests to the leader of its division, who decides which proposals should be brought forward for consideration as part of the institutional budget process. With few exceptions, all new and recurring requests for funds to support college priorities occur during this annual process. In this way, and in competition for limited resources, proposals/needs can be weighed against one another. Requests are evaluated based on a number of factors, including the following: the ways in which the proposal, if funded, would support the mission of the college and meet SPAC objectives; the request's merits relative to competing priorities; the likelihood of identifying alternative funding sources for the request, for example, donor gifts; the possibility of more economical means to achieve the objective; the availability of financial resources, and so on. Throughout the budget process, the Committee on Priorities and Resources (see the chapter on standard three) plays an important role. The committee meets with financial and administrative leaders to evaluate their budgetary priorities, as well as to develop and offer views on budgetary needs. The president and senior staff consider these inputs when preparing the final budget proposal to the trustees. Each year, the committee issues a report to the faculty and to the trustees and may address each body, summarizing its work and engaging in dialogue on important matters.

At regular board meetings throughout the year, the Committee on Budget and Finance, the board chair, the finance leadership team, senior staff, and the president meet to review the current status of financial projections and preliminary expense needs and estimates. Near the end of the budget process, the CFAO works closely with the president to consider and review all budget requests in light of input from all sources, and of weighing anticipated resources. The president makes the final decisions about budgetary allocations in the college's budget proposal to the board. The trustees consider the proposal at their May meeting. Since the last reaccreditation review, the college has submitted balanced budget proposals each year, including during the financial downturn from 2008 to 2010, and the board has approved each annual operating budget proposal.

As noted earlier, to enhance budgeting and long-range financial planning, the college created a new position, director of financial planning and budget (now titled director of financial planning and assistant treasurer), in 2013. A year later, the director hired a financial analyst to assist in this work and to formulate a small but skilled budget office. Under the direction of the CFAO and with the support of the senior staff, president, and board of trustees, the budget office has made many structural enhancements to the budget process. Electronic submission tools have been created for budget requests that require detailed assessments of how each idea supports the mission and strategic plan. Consideration is given to alternative means to achieve the objective

without the allocation of new funds. The office works closely with leaders of divisions to prioritize needs and ensure that only the most significant priorities emerge as budget requests. The CFAO and director of financial planning meet with the president and senior staff throughout the budget process to reconcile requests with available resources. As a result of these measures and the effective partnership with the senior team, the rate of budgetary growth has slowed significantly in recent years, even as the college has continued to invest in core priorities in student services, instruction, facilities, and administrative professionalization. From fiscal year 2010 through fiscal year 2016, the college's operating expenditures grew at an average rate of 5 percent annually. Over the fiscal year 2017–2018 budget cycles, the rate of budgetary growth slowed to 3.6 percent.

Amherst has enhanced its capacity for long-range financial planning significantly in recent years (see the chapter on standard two). In 2013, the CFAO and the director of financial planning created and have since maintained a new ten-year financial projection model using a detailed set of current planning assumptions and estimates for key factors that drive both internal and external financial outcomes. These include investment returns over the short and long term, comprehensive fee increase estimates, philanthropic prospects, enrollment patterns, student financial need profiles, general inflation, wage inflation, market trends in important markets such as medical insurance and energy, and estimated needs and wishes for new faculty and staff positions. These assumptions are discussed with the senior team, the president, and the Committee on Budget and Finance of the board, and they are frequently revised in light of new information, emerging trends, and consensus views of the future.

Financial management is being strengthened across the college. In recent years, the dean of the faculty, student affairs, IT, and campus operations have created positions to enhance finance and administrative oversight within their areas. These new hires have brought a deep set of skills and experiences to the management of budgets, deployment of restricted funds, and identification of efficiencies and cost savings. Another benefit of this development is closer collaborations among financial professionals across campus, both in divisions and central financial offices. To create a comprehensive forum that supplements the many individual discussions and collaborations that occur daily, a collaborative working group was established in 2017. It is composed of about thirty individuals from the controller's office, central finance office, and divisions and larger departments across campus. It meets regularly to discuss Amherst's financial condition, plans for upcoming activities such as operating and capital budgets, and ways to enhance business operations.

### **Financial Reporting and Transparency**

The college continues to produce two sets of financial statements annually. The first follows generally accepted accounting procedures (GAAP) applicable to not-for-profit institutions. These statements are audited each year by PriceWaterhouse Coopers (PwC) and are finalized and approved annually at the trustees' October meeting, and made public immediately thereafter on the college's website. Amherst also generates an "operating statement" that better reflects how the college is run. It is produced on a modified cash-basis of accounting that highlights cash receipts and expenditures more precisely than does the GAAP report. Budgets, mid-year financial projections, and year-end operating results are presented to the board in operating statement format. Both sets of reports are incorporated into a comprehensive annual report that also includes commentaries about the financial results of the college by the president, CFAO, chief investment officer, and the director of the Folger Shakespeare Library. The Folger's results are presented separately from those of the college. This annual report is posted on the website around the end of the calendar year. It is also distributed in printed format to a number of members of the college community.

In 2014, operating statement methodology was revised to provide better visibility to institutional financial performance. Previously, all allocation to fund reserve balances, including discretionary allocations of surplus funds at the end of the year, were treated as expenditures in the operating statement. As a result, the statement balanced to zero every year, making it unclear whether the college experienced a surplus or deficit and to what extent. Amherst continues to direct funds from each operating budget to various reserves and spends from those reserves throughout the year. At the end of the year, however, operating revenues and expenditures are highlighted on the operating statement, with the net amount between the two representing the college's surplus

or deficit. Year-end decisions to direct surplus funds to reserves are delineated “below the line” on the operating statement, so that there is full transparency about the discretionary disposition of surplus funds. To the extent that funds still remain after boosting designated reserve balances, the bottom-line figure on the statement represents the increase in Amherst’s undesignated central reserve. This is a new reserve account. The college plans to increase this reserve over time through the allocation of unspent budgetary contingency funds and other contributors to operating surpluses. This balance will provide a level of protection against unforeseen events or a significant institutional downturn. It has grown from \$0 in 2014, the year that this methodology was created, to about \$9 million as of the end of fiscal 2017. As Amherst creates a financial strategic plan, a target will be set for this balance relative to some market factors (e.g., operating budget or months of endowment distribution as a core element of its financial risk mitigation strategy).

### **Endowment Spending**

In the fiscal 2018 budget, Amherst plans to spend \$98 million from its endowment, or 52 percent of its total operating budget. This represents an endowment spending rate of approximately 4.4 percent of beginning market value of \$2.2 billion on July 1, 2017, and 4.6 percent of average market value over the prior twelve quarters. Since the mid-1990s, the board of trustees has established a permissible endowment spending range of 3.5 percent to 5 percent. Since 1997, the college’s spending rate has been below 5 percent each year. It has generally been about one-half of one percent below that of other large-school endowments, according to data compiled by Cambridge Associates. While modest spending rates contribute greatly to overall financial health and are a core component of financial risk mitigation, the board, president, and CFAO all recognize the importance of balancing preservation of the endowment with the need to deploy endowment resources to achieve the college’s priorities. In 2014, the CFAO instituted a new methodology to determine the endowment spending rate in the operating budget. Since then, Amherst has calculated its budgeted endowment spending amount using a “smoothing formula.” Under this formula, 70 percent of budgeted endowment spending is based on prior-year spending plus an inflation factor, and 30 percent is based on applying a long-term spending rate target (currently 4.8 percent) to average market values over the last twelve quarters. This approach instills financial discipline during periods of strong endowment returns by delaying the availability of recent market appreciation to fund the budget. During these periods, the endowment spending rate decreases. Conversely, the operating budget is insulated from the immediate effects of market downturns. During these periods, the endowment spending rate increases. This approach also insulates the budget from large changes in available resources from year-to-year, an important objective for a college with high budgetary reliance upon its endowment.

### **Endowment Investment**

As noted earlier, Amherst’s investment committee of the board makes key decisions about investment mix across a number of factors, including duration, liquidity, geography, and asset class, and makes manager selection and fund allocation decisions to specific investments (subject to full board approval). This work is supported by a variety of financial reports and recommendations from the investment office. Four investment professionals, including the chief investment officer, make dozens of visits annually to current and prospective managers and create detailed written “manager reports” that document key findings from these meetings for use by other members of the team and the investment committee. These visits are an important business control. They help the college to assess the skills of the management team and the strategies deployed to deliver returns and remain true to environmental, social, and governance ethics and principles. These insights support informed decision-making by the investment committee. Monthly performance reports provide the president, board chair, finance office, and investment committee with detailed investment results by manager and by asset class.

Over the long term, the performance of Amherst’s investments has been very strong. For the ten years ending June 30, 2017, the college’s endowment returns have averaged 5.6 percent annually. Excluding the first year of this decade, fiscal year 2008, which was the most challenging year for investments during the “financial crisis,” Amherst’s annual endowment returns averaged closer to 9 percent over this period. The college’s investment returns compare closely to Amherst’s two core benchmarks, a widely-utilized “simple benchmark” made up of 60 percent United States large-cap equities and 40 percent corporate bonds, and the college’s

“strategic benchmark,” which assesses how the Amherst’s specific investments fared against the respective market index for their asset class. These benchmarks grew 6.4 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively, over the last decade. Finally, the college’s returns have exceeded that of the average large endowment for the ten years ending June 30, 2016, the last date for which comparative information is currently available, by 0.7 percentage points, as reported by Cambridge Associates. Long-term averages mask short-term volatility. For the year ending June 30, 2016, for example, the college’s endowment fell 3.5 percent. While fiscal 2016 was a difficult year for all endowments and investment markets generally, the college’s results were showed a smaller loss than its benchmarks and the average large endowment. The experience served as an important reminder of the importance of Amherst’s smoothing formula, which insulated the budget from the short-term effects of these returns and allowed time for a strong recovery in fiscal 2017. What transpired also reinforced the importance of maintaining spending rates below the upper end of the college’s desired range after several years of strong returns, such as those experienced during the years prior to fiscal year 2016.

Amherst currently uses an endowment return assumption of 6 percent for planning purposes. The college estimates that it can maintain purchasing power parity across the years, if returns continue at this level and other variables remain constant: the continuation of the low inflationary environment that has characterized the United States economy since the financial downturn of 2007–2009 (1.5 to 2 percent); endowment gifts receipts that approximate recent history (1 to 1.5 percent of endowment market value); and the current spending rate (4.5 percent). If any of these factors change in an unfavorable direction for a prolonged period of time, the college will experience difficulties funding its core priorities to the extent desired, and the maintenance of intergenerational equity of endowment utilization will be challenged. College leaders at all levels are mindful of this possibility. As a result of Amherst’s budgetary endowment reliance and the relatively fixed nature of the college’s cost structure, particularly in the short run, decisions to increase the unrestricted budget are made thoughtfully and cautiously. In recent years, the college has intensified its efforts to seek donor funds and grant monies to launch new priorities.

### **Capital Budget and Project Planning**

As noted earlier, in 2014, the CFAO created a new position, director of treasury operations and analysis (now titled the associate chief financial officer and treasurer [ACFO]), to bring new approaches and expertise to balance-sheet management, especially debt, and to capital project planning and financing. The ACFO led the effort to institute the college’s first formal annual institutional capital budget process, beginning in 2015. Previously, projects were authorized independently, and funding was assigned from unspent proceeds from periodic debt issuances, unrestricted reserves, and the allocation of unrestricted gifts. As part of this process, an annual call is issued across campus for proposals for capital project needs, both discrete new projects such as building renovations and information technology systems, and routine capital maintenance and renewal. The ACFO, with the assistance of the senior financial analyst, compiles these requests and oversees a collaborative prioritization exercise, which includes several meetings with the president and many members of senior staff with capital needs. In parallel with this effort, the ACFO works with the CFAO to evaluate available funding sources, including annual allocations from the operating budget, restricted reserves, existing debt proceeds, and potential fundraising revenues. Final capital budget approvals occur each spring. Over the last three years, this process has reduced capital spending significantly in comparison to prior years. Exclusive of the Greenway Projects, which were planned and authorized years ago, capital spending has been under \$10 million annually, an amount that was funded almost exclusively from operating budget allotments. This has allowed the college to preserve capital reserves and to focus on its successful efforts to fund the Greenway Projects fully. Over the long-term, the Amherst will need to increase its funding of capital maintenance and renewal via the annual operating budget.

### **Debt and Lines of Credit**

As of June 30, 2017, the Amherst had \$504 million of debt outstanding. This figure represents a significant increase over the last ten years, nearly tripling from \$174 million in 2007. The college has taken advantage of a prolonged low-interest rate environment and its top-rated credit to strengthen its liquidity and working capital

balances and to finance significant new building construction and renovations. In 2009, Amherst issued \$100 million in debt in the taxable markets to provide flexible liquidity in the midst of the severe economic recession then under way. This issuance allowed the college to preserve endowment assets, which benefitted from the rapid and strong investment market recovery that ensued. In 2012 and 2015, Amherst issued \$100 million and \$150 million of long-term, fixed-rate debt, respectively. These issuances financed a variety of projects, including the Greenway Projects, a major renovation of the college-owned Inn, several residence hall renovations, and several renovations of administrative and academic buildings. Amherst's debt peaked at \$537 million in 2016. At the time that the board of trustees approved the \$150 million issuance in 2015, it established a priority of paying down \$80 million of debt principal with Greenway Projects gift receipts and other sources. With fundraising for the Greenway Projects still under way, the college was able to eliminate a \$25 million variable-rate issuance in 2017 with a combination of unrestricted gift receipts and Greenway Projects budget savings. Despite these debt issuances, Amherst's credit and access to low-cost capital remain strong. As of June 30, 2017, Amherst maintained a very healthy endowment-to-debt ratio of about 4.5-to-1. Independent rating agencies have assigned Amherst credit ratings of AAA (Moody's) and AA+ (Standard and Poor's), the highest and second-highest ratings, respectively, on each firm's rating chart.

Over the last few years, Amherst has undertaken efforts, directed by the DTOA in collaboration with the CFAO and the budget and finance committee, to shift the mix of Amherst's outstanding debt portfolio toward a higher proportion of fixed-rate issuances for budget certainty, and to guard against the potential for future increases in interest rates. In 2013, the portfolio included roughly 50 percent variable-rate issuances and 50 percent fixed-rate issuances. As of June 30, 2017, 92 percent of the portfolio is now fixed-rate for four years or longer. This shift has occurred through the issuance of new fixed-rate debt, the \$25 million pay-down of a variable rate issuance in 2017, and the refinancing of several short-term fixed-rate issuances into longer-term fixed-rate products. These efforts have significantly reduced Amherst's exposure to increases in interest rates and reduced the amount of liquidity that the college is required to have on hand as collateral for its variable-rate demand bonds, or VRDBs. This self-liquidity hurdle, which is 1.75 times the outstanding VRDB balance, has decreased from \$190 million at the end of fiscal 2015 to \$132 million at the end of fiscal 2017, due to the elimination of the \$25 million variable-rate issuance in 2017 and regular annual principal amortization. Amherst generally has comfortably exceeded its self-liquidity hurdle through a combination of maintaining ample cash and highly liquid investments as well as a \$50 million dedicated line of credit that is usable only for this purpose.

In addition to the line of credit held for VRDB liquidity, Amherst maintains \$100 million in working capital lines of credit, which are held with three separate financial institutions to minimize counterparty risk and to increase the chances that the lines will be accessible when needed. The college has not drawn from these lines, with one exception, a \$5 million draw of short duration to "bridge finance" a portion of the Lord Jeffery Inn's renovation. The lines are primarily intended to mitigate financial risk and bridge-finance capital project financing needs, not to supplement cash and working capital or to pay operating expenses. As a result of financial industry reform after the 2007–2009 financial downturn, and trends within the banking industry, the reliability of lines of credit during periods of severe market dislocation has diminished in recent years. While Amherst intends to continue to maintain lines of credit as one aspect of its financial risk mitigation strategy, the maintenance of ample liquidity in and out of the endowment remains the best source of financial protection.

### **Fundraising and Grants**

Amherst directs its fundraising efforts toward the fulfillment of institutional purposes, conducting them in accordance with policies that stipulate the conditions and terms under which gifts are solicited and accepted. Amherst accurately represents itself and its capacities and needs to prospective donors and accurately portrays the impact that their gifts can reasonably be expected to have. Gifts are promptly directed toward donors' intentions. A gift acceptance policy (GAP), last updated in 2015, articulates the principles, parameters, and processes by which the college evaluates proposed gifts. A gift acceptance committee made up of the president, CFAO, and chief advancement officer, collaborates on an ad hoc basis to consider the acceptance

and use of proposed gifts that are large, or that might not meet the college's gift acceptance principles as proposed. In general, the college is most desirous of gifts with no donor-imposed restrictions. Such gifts allow support to be directed to Amherst's highest priorities, and make it possible for the allocation of these resources to be a part of regular budgeting and financial planning. Donors, however, increasingly wish to direct their gifts to a particular purpose that is important to them. The Advancement division works with leaders at Amherst and with donors to structure gifts in ways that are in close alignment with priorities.

Legal, ethical, and reputational factors are core elements of the GAP. If any concerns arise from an initial gift proposal, the college will first work with the donor to make modifications. If a proposal doesn't align with core priorities and modifications are not possible, the proposal will not be accepted. Instances of this situation are rare. As discussed in the chapter on standard two, as this self-study was under way, the college was in the planning stages of a comprehensive campaign, with a public launch expected in 2018. The CFAO is working closely with the president, board of trustees, senior staff, and advancement team to set fundraising targets and priorities and to estimate the future financial impact of campaign gifts. It is anticipated that the campaign will be successful, and will secure substantial funds for institutional priorities as outlined in the SPAC.

### **Business Processes**

Amherst's financial systems and procedures have been in need of modernization for some time. Many procedures remain paper-based, with manual approvals, routing, and archiving, and the college maintains the same core financial system that has been in place for more than a decade. In recent years, the finance team, in collaboration with IT and the OHR, has taken steps to modernize and improve business processes across campus, including automating steps and leveraging technology where possible. In 2013, Amherst created a new position, currently titled director of financial systems and processes, to oversee such efforts. To date, the college has either completed or is nearing the completion of a variety of projects that have been undertaken to improve business processes. These include electronic comprehensive fee remission, expense reimbursement, time keeping and leave tracking, and paystub delivery. In addition, the finance team has upgraded the quality, accessibility, and usefulness of financial reporting. This work has improved internal and external customer service, increased speed-of-completion, and improved online visibility of key information. There remains much to do, with many improvements and modernization efforts to follow (see projections).

### ***INFORMATION, PHYSICAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES***

Independently and through the work that they do together, the library, IT, and Campus Operations are supporting the mission of the college, including the priorities of the SPAC. For example, to meet the needs of an economically, racially, and ethnically diverse community of learners, the library has changed its collection-building practices to serve students' interests and backgrounds and the evolving foci of Amherst courses. Classes such as *The Black Experience at Amherst College* and *Jews at Amherst* have worked with—and are now creating and curating—new and overlooked collections in Amherst's archives. To support the college's efforts to attract and serve more Native American students, the library secured a major gift to acquire the Younghee Kim-Wait Eisenberg collection, arguably the best private collection in the U.S. of books authored by Native Americans, around which Amherst faculty are structuring student seminars. This collection will also serve as a resource for the Digital Atlas of Native American Traditions, a project led by Amherst librarians, tribal librarians, and research librarians at R1 institutions to create an electronic research and reference tool, with entries authored by scholars of Native American history and literature from across the U.S. and from Native American nations. The IT department has also made changes to better support students who may have different needs, including increasing the number and types of equipment (e.g., laptops, tablets, and mobile devices) that it loans to students who may not have their own. In addition, the library and IT have made a commitment to diversifying their staffs and have adopted new procedures to meet this goal. The library is preparing to measure all of its work against the Association of College and Research Libraries' *Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries*.<sup>125</sup>

### **Social Cohesion**

With the goal of strengthening social cohesion on campus, a SPAC priority, a number of efforts are under way.

For example, the head of ATS within IT and the library's head of research and instruction participated in two years of planning to unite the work of instructional designers with the efforts of ATS, the library, the Writing Center, and the Center for Community Engagement—work that is enhancing the coordination of academic support. Amherst achieved a milestone in August 2017 with the formation of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which will serve as the nexus of coordination for future collaborations (see the chapter on standard six). Examples of past partnerships include sessions given jointly by librarians and Writing Center staff on planning and managing thesis research and writing “boot camps” and intensive research sessions. The new head of ATS will work closely with Writing Center and library staff to support research. The library and IT together train student workers, and IT furnishes some forty students to work in the library. In addition, with the goal of enhancing communication to further social cohesion, IT partnered with the communications office to create the Message Center, which is enhancing the coordination and consistency of campus communications. A campus-wide system of digital signs was launched in the summer of 2017 to offer an additional vehicle for publicizing community events. Student affairs and IT collaborated to measure student engagement and to support student clubs and affinity groups. Streamlining its own communications with the campus, IT has centralized most of its external communications within ITSS.

New facilities are also contributing to efforts to build greater social cohesion. In response to a 2012 report noting a lack of facilities for healthy social activities (referenced in the chapter on standard five as well), the facilities department identified an underused former steam plant on campus and commissioned award-winning architects to convert it into a student life building. Since the completion of the project, students have gravitated toward the space as a new venue for social activities (see the chapter on standard five). The new science center, which will remain open around the clock, will also provide additional social spaces. Its classrooms will be available all night for use by clubs, interest groups, and all comers, and its café will stay open for extended evening hours. In addition, shared spaces in the Greenway Residence Halls have enhanced social life. The halls constitute a piece of a larger plan devised by the facilities department and the Office of Student Affairs (responding to two studies about Amherst's social life) to combat social fragmentation on campus. Student affairs will continue to monitor the impact of the new dormitories on room draw and student life. The greenway, which will function as a connective landscape that defines the eastern part of campus and provide siting for the science center and Greenway Residence Halls, has been designed with student life as a focus. It will offer program and social spaces to linger, play, relax, and enjoy the campus.

To improve classrooms and other existing spaces that support teaching and learning, the registrar and staff from the facilities department and IT work regularly with a consultant to evaluate whether the size, configuration, and equipment of classrooms are adequate for the use classrooms receive. The new science building will replace the classroom inventory in the current Merrill Science Center building with classrooms that are designed to meet current and future pedagogical needs and that are outfitted with the latest technology. A future renovation of the McGuire Life Sciences Building will also create more classroom and academic space and much-needed faculty offices. In the spring of 2017, IT piloted a survey to gather feedback from faculty about teaching spaces on campus. The results informed a number of initiatives in the summer of 2017 to improve classrooms. The assessment led IT to document for faculty which equipment resides in which classrooms (and how to use that equipment); to inform professors when equipment in given rooms changes; to evaluate networked AV equipment to improve support; to consider replacing bulb-based projectors with laser-based ones; and to create tracking processes to address systemic problems. These improvements built on earlier classroom enhancements, including the installation of video-conferencing capabilities.

Within the next decade serious planning for a new library will begin, a project that will depend on the availability of financial resources. For now, the college has reconfigured the current library to the extent possible to accommodate some group work, facilitate discussions over coffee, and support some public aspects of research. A new librarian for user experience oversees current work to align spaces with expectations raised by new approaches to research and learning. Plans for a new library will develop from this work and from conversations that are under way about constructing better social spaces on campus. Discussions also continue



about uniting academic support under one roof by bringing together staff and programs from the CTL, the Writing Center, and some IT staff within a new library. The creation of a new library is seen as an opportunity to integrate students' intellectual and social lives in spaces that move beyond traditional confines.

### **Assessing Informational Services**

A new Library Assessment Committee coordinates all library assessment. This work includes efforts to measure student research skills (see the chapter on standard eight), the collection's support of teaching and research, purchasing decisions, students' use of the physical plant, and student navigation of the library's website—work that has led to similar efforts by IT and the communications office to measure the use of the entire college website. The library hopes to measure its success in part by whether students graduate knowing how to conduct good research. Over the last seven years, the library has mounted an all-out campaign on this front, partnering with faculty to teach students to pose researchable questions; decide what constitutes good information; find that information; evaluate, jettison, and synthesize what they find; draw conclusions; and produce new theses and arguments in compelling writing, speech, and other media. The library's Department of Research and Instruction plays a vital role in this work (see the chapter on standard six). Librarians consult on student theses; run the Digital Scholarship Summer Internship Program (in which students conduct research under the tutelage of librarians and ATS staff); hire and mentor interns; and support faculty-student research projects. These projects draw on expertise and equipment provided by IT, including new audio new AV production facilities and virtual reality capabilities. Instructional librarians and staff in ATS also work with instructional designers, offering workshops and one-on-one support for faculty courses. The head of Research and Instruction serves on both the curriculum committee and on the planning group that created the CTL.

### **Sustainability for Information Resources**

While Amherst exceeds nearly all its peers in providing access to scholarly information, it does so in the face of an unsustainable system of scholarly publishing. Over the past decade, the library's collections budget held steady, averaging increases of just under 0.1 percent per year. This same period saw prices of serials increase 5 to 7 percent annually, and book prices increase 4 to 5 percent per year. In support of the liberal arts mission, Amherst is taking a leadership role among its peers in developing new ways to disseminate scholarship. The creation of the Amherst College Press and the Lever Press are prominent examples of these efforts.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to IT's sustainability is the breadth and pace of technological change—especially changes in how Amherst manages electronic data and in how faculty, staff, and other constituencies expect the college to manage data. In 1999, Amherst employed a model that called for a single system to manage most of its data. Such centralization and uniformity served Amherst well in some respects, forcing standards and assurances of interoperability across campus. On the other hand, a single, standard system did not serve all units equally well, and some offices and departments lobbied for narrower, purpose-built applications—applications that became cheaper and more readily available with the rise of “Cloud” computing. As more areas of the college moved to independent, isolated systems, IT found it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to deliver data in a unified manner and to produce reports that required data from multiple, incompatible systems. The resultant tensions are not unique to the college, but they are especially acute at Amherst. The college engaged Gartner Consulting in 2017 to conduct a business process review. The firm's recommendations are resulting in changes in business processes that will continue for several years.

### **Sustaining the Campus Physical Plant**

The college works with Sightlines facility advisors to evaluate the condition of the campus. The firm, which has been producing reports for Amherst on an annual basis for the past fifteen years, reconciles its findings with the allocation of capital resources that are necessary to maintain the campus and to modernize buildings to serve programmatic needs. In its most recent evaluation in 2016, Sightlines concluded that, through a series of major and mid-sized capital projects, Amherst has on average devoted more total annual capital resources to the stewardship of the institution's buildings than its peers have to their facilities. This robust commitment of capital resources has resulted in a steady improvement of the aggregate net asset value (NAV) index for all campus buildings to 91 percent. This net asset value indicates that the value of required building renewal

projects is less than 10 percent of the buildings' replacement value, which is indicative of buildings that are well maintained. It should be noted that, in 2000, the NAV for the college stood at 71 percent, an indication that many systems and components were well beyond their design life.

Amherst's major and mid-sized capital projects, which focused on adaptive reuse of historic buildings rather than on new construction are the main reason that the NAV has increased substantially to a level well above that of its peers. Based on its extensive benchmarking, Sightlines determined that, despite an enviable record of commitment of capital funding for major capital renovation projects, the college has devoted less funding to its ongoing annual capital renewal budget than its peers. The firm suggested that the college reduce its reliance on one-time major projects to preserve the condition of its buildings and ensure that they meet their design life. Sightlines recommended that Amherst dedicate more annual funding to capital renewal, on a consistent basis, to ensure that the college keeps up with the incremental needs of its facilities. Based on this recommendation, and in collaboration with the CFAO, the college has moved toward increasing the annual funding for annual capital renewal. Since 2013, the annual funding has increased from approximately \$3 million to \$6 million per year, which has improved Amherst's ability to keep pace with the annual capital needs of its facilities. The Sightlines' study also revealed that Amherst ranks favorably in comparison to peer institutions in regard to the cost of operating and maintaining the campus. Furthermore, Amherst ranks highly on the physical condition and appearance of its buildings and grounds, despite a relatively lean staffing model.

### **Safety**

A critical assessment of Amherst's emergency management practices in 2015 resulted in the hiring of a director of emergency management to enhance the emergency management program and develop associated training programs and regular emergency drills (see the chapter on standard two). Amherst recognizes that it must improve its cybersecurity. Amherst joined its counterpart IT departments at Vassar, Williams, and Mount Holyoke in a joint contract for services with a professional cybersecurity firm. All four institutions agreed that an outside firm can better assess the risks at hand, offer the necessary breadth of security coverage, and navigate an increasingly complex environment than can any of the institutions alone. None of the institutions has the staff resources to mitigate all risks. Together, with professional support, it is possible to do so.

### **PROJECTIONS**

In the HR area, the new JCCP and revised PMP will be assessed to determine if these systems are meeting their stated goals; the college will take active steps to diversify candidate pools and to hire a highly skilled, diverse staff; and survey results will drive efforts that will focus on improving the campus culture and climate.

Amherst will complete a financial strategic plan, a project begun in the summer of 2017. The plan will reevaluate and update existing financial goals and parameters and establish new ones as needed to accomplish the primary objective of maintaining financial health commensurate with the very best liberal arts colleges, while mitigating financial risks. Once ratified by the board of trustees, the plan will support data-driven decision making, permit the evaluation of progress against key goals, and highlight areas to address. One goal, already identified, will be to strengthen unrestricted reserve balances and develop a working capital investment pool to derive low-risk financial return on investment of these assets.

The college will support a successful capital campaign by establishing fundraising targets and priorities that are in alignment with the institution's highest priorities. A goal will be to ensure that new gifts fund the full cost of new initiatives, including indirect support costs.

Business processes will continue to be improved through the elimination of manual steps, better use of technology, implementation of Gartner's recommendations, and improved emphasis on customer service. The college will move away from outmoded, personnel-intensive systems and processes and adopt modern ones grounded in best practices. Processes still in need of such improvement include fringe benefits administration; staff and administrative position tracking, reporting, and analysis; a fully-paperless payroll function; and an electronic procure-to-pay system. These aims will probably lead to the implementation of a new comprehensive enterprise resource planning (ERP) system sometime in the next few years.

Amherst's tradition of decentralized decision-making has imbued departments and divisions with authority and responsibility for procurement activities. The college is moving to a center-led procurement model in order to strengthen business controls, provide strategic sourcing support and expertise, and to develop a coherent procure-to-pay process. A director of procurement, a new role at the college, was hired in the fall of 2017. This individual is now building a comprehensive procurement function.

Within IT, major changes will be made to email, voice communications, and file storage and backup, and a new "Cloud-first" approach will be taken to delivering software applications, tools, and services. There will be less investment in on-premises systems and services, while IT staff will be shifted toward work outlined in the SPAC. Staff in IT will be retrained and responsibilities will be reorganized to support strategic priorities. Greater attention will be given to ensuring adherence to standard policies and procedures, to project management, and to identifying and remediating problems proactively.

A director of IT infrastructure will spearhead efforts to introduce infrastructure efficiencies and lay the groundwork for migrating the bulk of Amherst's data and services to the "Cloud" over the next several years. In the meantime, to protect the college's data from threats such as tornados that could damage or destroy multiple campus buildings at once, IT has recently constructed an off-site data center in its former Strategic Air Command bunker under a nearby mountain. Most college data are now regularly copied to storage systems housed in this facility, and an increasing number of IT services are now delivered from servers housed there as well. This facility provides Amherst with substantial flexibility in determining which data and services should be pushed to the "Cloud," and on what schedule. The facility will also allow IT to be more deliberate in its choices, without concern for the physical vulnerability of those services still running locally.

In 2014, the library created a new strategic plan,<sup>126</sup> and it is now in the process of implementing the organizing goals of that plan: pursuing a holistic approach to building its collection; improving outreach, communication, and engagement; ensuring long-term digital preservation and access; moving research instruction into an integrated and sustainable model; generating and collaborating on digital scholarship projects; building seamless academic support across campus; ensuring that the library staff is diverse and well-educated; creating, promoting, and modeling effective and sustainable practices in scholarly communication; creating a culture and practices that focus on the user experience and employ a variety of assessment methods to inform decisions; and planning for a new facility that supports these goals.

Using the campus framework plan as the guide to addressing space needs of the campus, Amherst will embark on planning for a series of projects to address program needs discussed within this and other chapters, including adaptive reuse of the Merrill Science Center building, a comprehensive renovation of the McGuire Life Sciences building; renovation or replacement of Frost Library; enhancement of dormitories through renovations that organize residence halls into groupings that promote living/learning, a sense of belonging and a vibrant social life; and enhancement of classrooms to create optimal spaces for teaching and learning. In carrying out its climate action plan, Amherst will engage in new efforts to conserve energy, build necessary infrastructure, transition to renewable energy sources, and, if necessary, purchase carbon offsets.

Amherst will continue to improve access, safety, and security on campus. The Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion will lead efforts to ensure that the major capital projects expected over the next decade resolve many of these issues. Policies and procedures in the emergency management plan will be enhanced to place stronger emphasis on responses to events such as campus protests and incidents caused by violence, infrastructure loss, weather, and fire, and loss. Information Technology will implement the roadmap produced in response to the risk assessment conducted by its cybersecurity consortium.

## EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### DESCRIPTION

By all traditional metrics of success in higher education, Amherst students are among the most academically accomplished in the U.S. (see the chapter on standard five). The college also stands out for its exceptional achievements as an educational institution. Amherst's six-year graduation rate is typically 94 percent, and the first-year retention rate has been 98 percent in recent years. Not content to rest on past success, Amherst has devoted substantial resources to developing the fullest possible understanding of how students navigate the curriculum and succeed in meeting learning goals (see the chapters on standards one, two, four, and six). An empirical focus has been central to these assessment efforts, most prominently through the strategic planning process, the work of standing faculty committees and task forces, and the ongoing review of the curriculum. Assessment efforts since 2013 have also helped Amherst learn more about co-curricular learning and the academic program and have, in some cases, led to refinement and innovations in a number of college domains.

The Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services (OIRRS) tracks strategic metrics such as retention, graduation rate, course selection and majors by key demographics. Studying students' persistence in STEM courses and majors has been a recent focus. The National Student Clearinghouse is used to track the graduate school enrollment of Amherst alumni and to learn about the destinations of the small number of students who choose to transfer from the college. Through a combination of dashboards and on-demand, flexible reporting, the OIRRS shares data with senior academic officers, chairs of academic departments and programs, with governance and planning committees. The college has invested in a reporting framework (Business Objects) that allows the seamless integration of Amherst's demographic and academic data. Under Amherst's open curriculum, students are not required to complete a set of core courses or distribution requirements. As a result, analysis of course distribution patterns and academic transcripts has been a focus, though efforts to assess educational effectiveness have largely taken place at the level of the academic department and academic program. This approach reflects a belief that assessment is best accomplished by teacher-scholars who have expertise in their fields of study and form the closest academic relationships with Amherst's students.

As noted earlier, by 2012, all Amherst departments and programs had formulated and publicized learning goals and had described their assessment tools and plans. That year, each chair was asked to document the process used to evaluate whether majors had attained the learning objectives set by the department or program. In the spring of 2016, the dean of the faculty requested that chairs submit reports on how they address students' learning within and beyond the major. Changes to major programs and curricula reported that year reflect an assessment of student learning in the context of the goals for majors, as well as college-wide learning goals that were approved by the faculty in 2012. Amherst's learning goals are frequently reflected in the objectives articulated by academic departments and programs. For example, more than 80 percent of departments and programs explicitly cite the development of written and oral communication skills as a core learning goal for their majors. Roughly one-third include expectations that students will graduate with significant quantitative skills. As noted earlier, at the time of the writing of this self-study, a new and more substantial set of college-wide learning goals, proposed by the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, was under discussion.

All Amherst majors require the completion of a capstone learning experience—typically a comprehensive examination, senior seminar, or thesis requirement—that is summative of the material covered and that seeks to measure students' success in achieving learning goals. Comprehensive exams have increasingly taken the form of department-wide workshops in which students present original, substantive research; hone presentation skills; and receive constructive feedback from both professors and peers. The assignment of reflective essays that integrate learning throughout the courses in the major is also now common practice. In addition to enabling faculty members to evaluate the learning of individual students, capstone experiences provide a critical opportunity for departments and programs to assess their major program. The reports of departments and programs reveal a widespread (though perhaps not self-consciously named) culture of learning assessment within Amherst's academic departments and programs. Please see the chapter covering standard four for examples of the changes made to academic programs based on departmental self-study and assessments. Most

of these entities are small, and the intimacy of the learning environment allows for the discussion of students' work in detail. When crafting self-studies for external reviews, many departments and programs make use of surveys that measure students' understanding of core concepts and other quantitative measures of student success. The OIRRS works with departments and programs to develop these tools.

Amherst's general learning goals are presented in the college catalog. As student and advisor together plan a student's program, they are asked to discuss whether the student has selected courses that develop fundamental capabilities such as critical reading, written and oral expression, quantitative reasoning, and proficiency in using information resources, and that achieve breadth of understanding through study in a range of disciplines and modes of inquiry. To aid students and advisors in selecting courses that meet each student's educational goals, and the goals of a liberal arts education more broadly, Amherst developed a robust system for "coding" courses (see the chapter on standard four). This system of "keywords" has evolved to intersect with college-wide goals and values. As noted earlier, for example, after *Amherst Uprising* in 2015, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) added keywords to make it easier for students and advisors to highlight courses that address issues of race, class, and gender. While Amherst does not require a specific general education distribution, advisors encourage students to explore areas that are new to them and to take a breadth of courses. Students' course-taking patterns across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences is a subject of interest. Most recently, as part of the strategic planning process and the work of the curriculum committee, substantial data on the distribution of the coursework of the student body have been reviewed—by academic major, demographic, and by student activities (such as athletics).

Amherst is now focused on ensuring that all its students have access to the benefits of the education it provides and are able to thrive at the college. The strategic planning process addressed this question, a topic that is also a focus of the work of the curriculum committee and the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion. In response to the efforts of these and other groups, and greater awareness of the need to enhance support for students, the college has been establishing programs and making curricular and pedagogical changes. This work is aimed at serving the needs of a student body with ever-more-varied backgrounds and levels of academic preparation. As noted earlier, the establishment of a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) represents a significant development in efforts to integrate what had been a disparate group of academic and pedagogical support services. In support of student learning, Amherst has also increased the professional staff in the Writing Center and bolstered the Moss Quantitative Center. As noted earlier (see the chapter on standard six), faculty in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics have created a program of math fellows and stats fellows. These programs aim to create support networks of near-peer tutors. These efforts are evaluated regularly using a survey that was designed by members of the mathematics and statistics department, in consultation with the OIRRS. The college carefully monitors the demographic composition of its course enrollments and majors to ensure that all students have access to the full breadth of the Amherst curriculum. Growing representation in fields where women and students of color are traditionally underrepresented provides some evidence that these efforts are meeting success.

In addition, Amherst has piloted three direct learning assessment activities that are designed to evaluate students' progress in meeting Amherst's general education learning goals. In 2009, Amherst began participating in the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) program. The college's initial implementation of the CLA was to test a group of first-years and seniors. Unsatisfied with the comparison of these two cohorts, in 2012, the Office of Institutional Research (as it was known then) designed a longitudinal study that tested the initial first-year cohort as seniors. Roughly one hundred students participated both as first-year students and as seniors. In the fall of 2013 through 2015, the office collaborated with staff from the Writing Center on a writing portfolio and speaking assessment within the first-year seminar program. As noted earlier, that program, the only required course within Amherst's curriculum, offers an introduction to the study of the liberal arts. In the fall of 2016, the OIRRS, in collaboration with Amherst's instructional librarians, conducted a direct assessment of library and research skills using a prompt based on research conducted at DePaul.

Amherst participates in a wide range of indirect learning assessment activities through a robust survey program. As a member of COFHE (Consortium on Financing Higher Education), the college has access to a rich cycle of surveys that evaluate students' satisfaction with numerous issues surrounding the campus climate and academics. Amherst is also a long-time participant in the CIRP Freshman Survey. The table below summarizes the core survey agenda of the college, including the target population and focus of each instrument.

*Table 1: Amherst Survey Instruments*

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Focus</b>
CIRP	Incoming first-year students	High school experiences and activities, college search, social and political views, self- assessment
New Student Survey	Incoming first-year Students	Entering student survey with peer comparisons through the COFHE consortium
Enrolled Student Survey	First-year students, sophomores and juniors in the spring	Academic engagement, advising resources, time diary, academic self-assessment.
Senior Survey	Graduating seniors in the spring	Satisfaction with academics, services and campus life, academic self- assessment, future, evaluation of career services, assessment of experience in the major, time diary
Alumni Survey	Alumni ten years after graduation, and additional classes based on survey year	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 and philanthropic activities, connection to alma mater, political and social values
Parents' Survey	Parents of current students	Assessment of their student's Amherst experience, information shared with parents by the college, concerns about student well-being, and financing

### **Co-Curricular Learning Assessment**

As documented in previous chapters, Amherst offers a broad array of co-curricular opportunities and has arranged its academic schedule to ensure that all students have full access to the range of activities. Most credit-bearing academic activities of the college end by 4:30 P.M., leaving ample evening hours for participation in athletics, the performing arts, and clubs. As noted earlier, the Association of Amherst Students (the student government) controls a substantial budget that funds more than 150 campus clubs and publications, offering students an unusual degree of autonomy in setting funding priorities. Increased attention to programming in residential life and through the college's student resource centers (the Multicultural Resource Center, Queer Resource Center, and Women's and Gender Center, and Center for International Student Engagement) has provided ample opportunity for assessment. New partnerships among the directors of these programs and the OIRRS should strengthen in the coming years.

The Loeb Center for Career Exploration and the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), as noted earlier, have undergone substantive change in the last five years. This transformation began with the establishment in 2012 of the "Careers In" model, which greatly modernized the Loeb Center's advising model. Most recently, a redesign of the collaborative summer internship program made a broader range of experiences available to more students. Among the programs developed by the Loeb Center are an alumni-student mentoring program (Pathways), the career exploration "trek" program (see the chapter on standard five), and an improved alumni internship portfolio ("Amherst Select"). Major gifts to the Loeb Center and CCE in 2016 have enabled Amherst to increase funding for students to participate in internships and other experiential learning opportunities. A focus has been on providing vehicles for first-generation and low-income students to take advantage of these

opportunities. The goal of one of the gifts was to enhance educational equity and social mobility. Measuring the educational and career impact of these changes will be an area of focus in coming years.

The college has also taken steps to provide greater support to first-year students. In 2014, as noted earlier, the college launched a team-based network to support students in first-year seminars (see the chapter on standard six). The program pairs two staff members with each seminar. Students and staff meet several times during the fall semester to discuss issues relating to the transition to college life. The staff members serving on these teams can also help students navigate the systems and policies of the college.

## **APPRAISAL**

The college's use of empirical data in the assessment of student learning has improved over the past decade. Standing and ad hoc committees that review curricular matters have increasing access to data on Amherst students' academic achievement. Amherst's survey program makes available a robust, peer benchmarked set of indirect measurements of student success. The college is also proactive in tracking outcomes for the 5 percent of students who do not successfully reach graduation. As noted earlier in this chapter, the OIRRS tracks transfer destinations for non-graduates through the National Student Clearing House. Analysis of non-graduate students in the entering cohorts of 2006 through 2010 reveals that 62 percent of departing students have completed a degree or are actively enrolled at a transfer destination college or university. Non-graduate alumni of the college are still considered a part of the Amherst alumni community, and their success (even if not at Amherst) is monitored carefully.

While Amherst's overall retention and graduation rates remain very high, the college monitors the success of students across demographic groups and levels of academic preparation. Both the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee and the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion are paying close attention to the issue of student success as a central part of their work. The college has increasingly focused on its four-year graduation rate—the proportion of the student cohort that remains intact as it moves through the college's curriculum—as an indicator of campus climate. While the graduation rate for all students is considerably above the national average, concern has emerged about the lower four-year graduation rate for black students compared to other Amherst students. Research conducted as a part of the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion's self-study process shows that, for students in the first year, race has no independent effect on academic performance, when controlling for academic preparation prior to matriculation. A similar analysis of students' final, cumulative GPA at the time of graduation revealed a small level of underperformance among students from black and Hispanic backgrounds, independent of factors such as gender and academic preparation. The committee discussed this result as a possible outcome of issues surrounding campus climate.

In addition, Amherst has devoted attention to understanding how students navigate the STEM course pipeline. The college's commitment to providing access for all students to all parts of its curriculum, coupled with strong growth in both STEM majors and enrollments, has brought attention to the assessment of access to the STEM curriculum at Amherst. Working with an associate dean of the faculty, the OIRRS has developed measures of persistence through the STEM curriculum, from the time that interest in STEM is first expressed, through the time of degree completion. Students who indicate an interest in a STEM field are assigned a code and tracked. The OIRRS also "codes" students based on their course choices in their first-year, with thresholds of STEM engagement set at two, three, and four-or-more STEM courses attempted. This behavioral definition of interest in STEM provides a cross-check against interest at the time of admission. An examination of the first-year cohorts for fall 2009 and 2010 revealed that 26.7 percent of students expressed an interest in a STEM field at the time of admission to the college, and that 37 percent took three-or-more STEM courses in their first year. Within the student body, 57 percent of students who express interest in STEM, and 61 percent of students who enroll in three-or-more STEM courses, graduate from Amherst with a STEM major within six years. This finding represents an improvement in success rates in the 2004 through 2008 cohorts (45 percent and 53 percent success rates, respectively). The completion of a major in a STEM field may not represent the full extent of success in pursuing a science-based education. The pre-medical program at Amherst is not a major, and many students pursue the pre-medical curriculum without majoring in a STEM field. An analysis

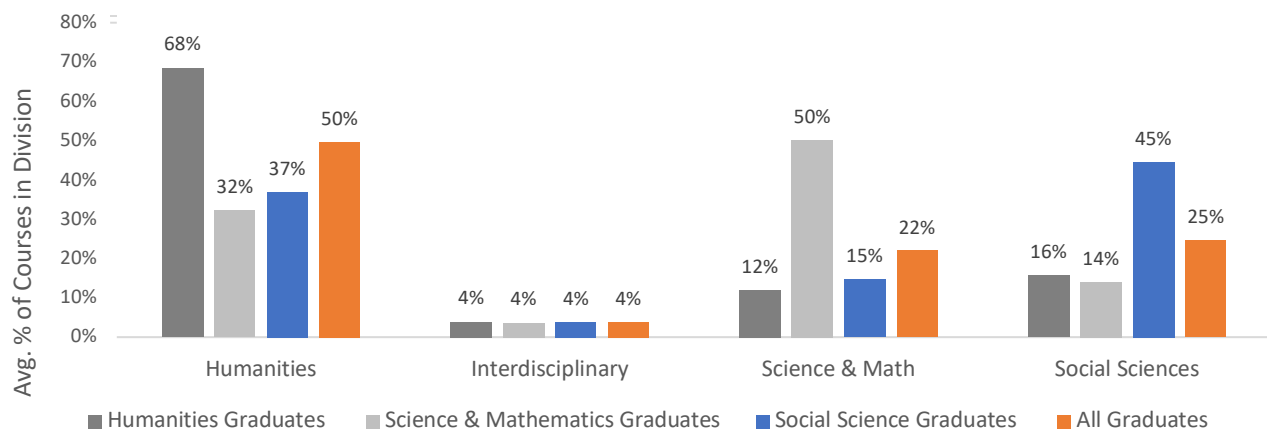
of the transcripts of students entering in the fall cohorts of 2004 through 2008 found that 283 students who had completed the course requirements of the pre-medical pathway; 29 percent of these students had not graduated from a STEM program despite their substantial investment in science coursework. Latinx and black students, in comparison with their white and Asian-American peers, were more likely to be pre-medical students who are not STEM majors.

The college has used these data to build programs that are designed to strengthen access to the sciences at Amherst. Initiatives such as the “Being Human in STEM” program (see the chapter on standard six) have been designed to address academic and non-academic factors that can be a barrier for success in a STEM major for students who come from backgrounds that are traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields. Observations about students’ movement through the STEM pipeline have also been integrated into new placement strategies in the introductory chemistry sequence, which is the most substantial gateway course in Amherst’s STEM curriculum. The college offers two versions of this introductory class, chemistry 151 and 155, with the major differentiation being the level of expected proficiency in calculus. In the past, based on their performance on standardized tests, students were offered one of three options—the requirement that they take 151, that they take 155, or that they had a choice of either course, in consultation with their advisor. Analysis suggests that the students who were given the choice of either introductory course largely selected the 151 option, which places less emphasis on calculus. These students significantly outperformed students who were placed in chemistry 151 and continued to perform more like students in the advanced 155 class in future classes in the chemistry sequence. The department was concerned that having these more advanced students in the basic introductory chemistry course may have led to frustration among students who had been placed in chemistry 151. In the fall of 2017, students were given a definitive placement into either 151 or 155. The chemistry department and the OIRRS will evaluate this change in placement philosophy in the coming years. One immediate benefit is that the enrollments for chemistry 151 and 155 are now roughly equal, which should allow more attention to be devoted to students who are engaging with the content for the first time.

**Curricular Distribution of Students in an Open Curriculum**

As was the case in the 2013, when the interim report was submitted, the breadth of curricular choices made by Amherst students has remained at the center of the college’s evaluation efforts. As part of the strategic planning process and the work of the curriculum committee, considerable efforts have been devoted to gaining a nuanced understanding of how students navigate Amherst’s open curriculum. Given that there are no distribution requirements at the college, it is a concern that students might concentrate their coursework in their areas of academic strength and avoid courses that focus on areas in which their intellectual footing is less sure. On balance, there is not convincing evidence that students take this approach. An analysis of student-by-major division indicates that, while students have an understandable over representation of courses in their own division, on balance, most majors are exposed to a range of the Amherst curriculum.

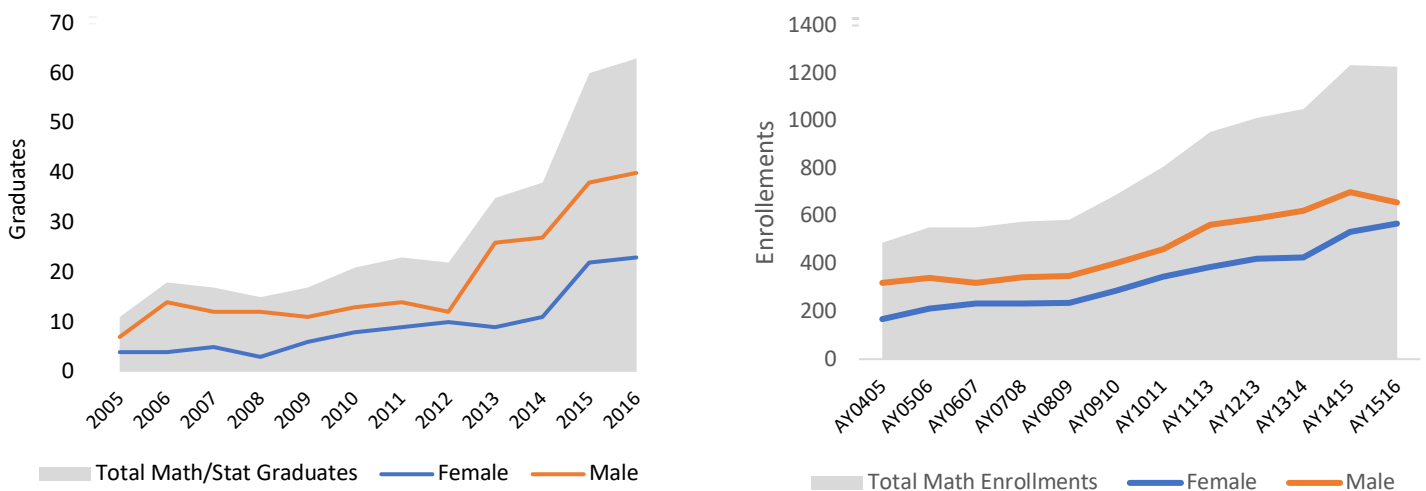
Figure 5: Divisional Course Distribution by Major Division, Classes of 2008–2017





In addition to finding that students majoring in different fields have a similar level of breadth in their course choices, the curriculum committee examined the pattern of student course enrollments by demographic. An analysis of the final distribution of courses by division for the classes of 2007 to 2016 demonstrated that there are measurable, but modest, differences in students’ course choices by demographic. Black and Hispanic students are somewhat underrepresented in STEM and economics, while Asian American and international students are somewhat underrepresented in the humanities. Over the years, college committees that have studied the curriculum have been particularly interested in understanding whether students, particularly in the humanities, have systematically avoided quantitative study. There is little evidence that this is a widespread problem at Amherst. While 8 percent of humanities majors do not take quantitative coursework, this rate has been in decline since Amherst’s last decennial review. Humanities majors who have a second major outside of the humanities division avoid quantitative coursework at half the rate of other humanities majors. The number of these majors who complete a second major outside of the division has grown steadily over the past decade. Many departments are taking steps to ensure that their academic offerings are available to the full student body. Notably, women are increasingly well-represented in science fields, in particular in the biology program. Mathematics and Statistics has seen large growth in both majors and course enrollments over the past decade.

Figure 6: Growth in Mathematics and Statistics Enrollments and Graduates by Gender, 2005–2016



While women are still somewhat proportionally underrepresented among mathematics majors, more Amherst women than ever before are graduating with a degree in this field. The trend in mathematics course enrollments shows even greater gender parity.

The college monitors the student body’s choices of courses and majors to evaluate needs in staffing and facilities, and to ensure that the curriculum remains open to interested students from all backgrounds. The curriculum committee and the Committee on Educational Policy have used data on the distribution of students across the curriculum to inform new policies that have liberalized the policies on course withdrawal, grade extension, and pass-fail options (see the chapter on standard six). These policies are designed to encourage students to explore the curriculum fully and to take risks in pursuing academic content outside of their self-perceived areas of strength. As noted earlier, the college is also exploring an expansion of the STEM faculty to ensure that students in the science curriculum benefit from small class sizes and close faculty support, as enrollment continues to grow in STEM disciplines. The funding of new STEM FTEs will be a focus of the upcoming capital campaign.

Amherst’s humanities programs continue to be an area of strength, even as these subjects have seen declines at peer colleges. As science and math enrollments have increased, enrollments in the humanities continue to make up half of the college’s annual enrollments. Nearly 50 percent of all students graduate with at least one major in a humanities discipline. The charts below present trends in these metrics for the past decade.

Figure 7: Annual Enrollments by Division

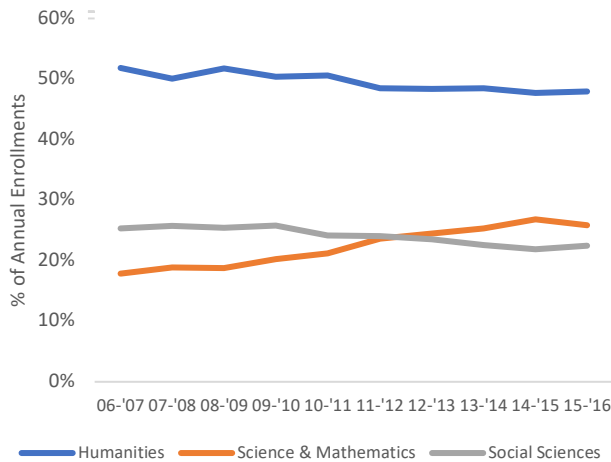
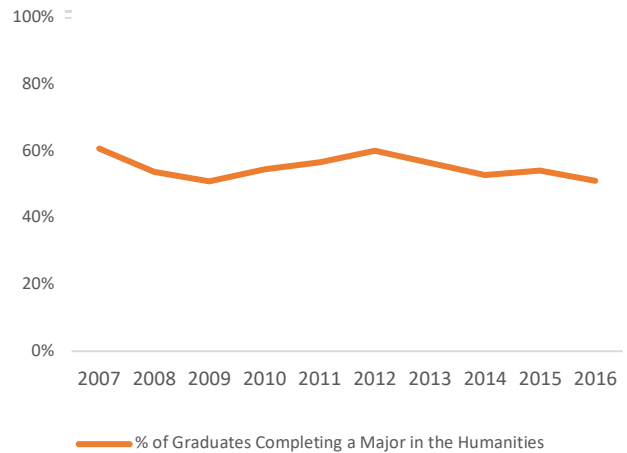


Figure 8: Percentage of Grads Completing a Hum. Major



An analysis using data for major completions from the Department of Education reveals that Amherst has the highest percentages of humanities graduates among its peers. This result remains an area of significant strength and pride for the college. Amherst is committed to the principle that any future expansion of the STEM faculty will be accomplished while continuing to support and enrich the humanities.

### Direct learning Assessment

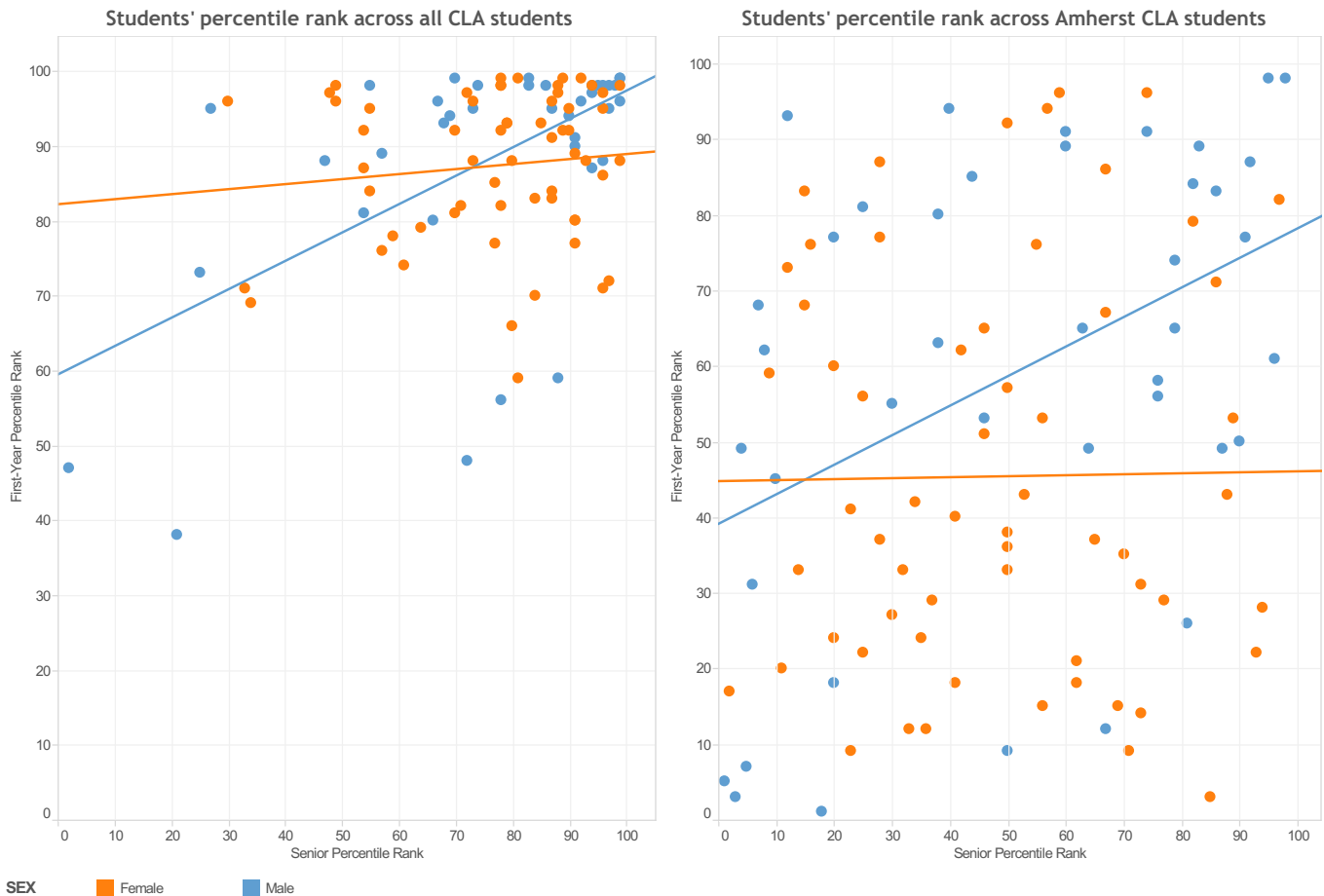
As described above, the college’s learning assessment efforts are largely situated within academic departments and programs and the work of committees. While this approach is authentic to the culture of the college, it can at times result in an assessment culture that is cross-sectional and episodic. Although academic departments have substantial control over the curriculum and its assessment, the charring system has been characterized by terms of short duration and relatively little in the way of reporting. Amherst committees often review large volumes of data as part of their deliberations, but the college at times has difficulty in developing consistent measures of student success that are tracked across time and committees’ work. Recognizing these shortcomings in the college’s current assessment strategy, the dean of the faculty has developed two new policies. First, department chairs will now normally serve for three-year terms and will have increased responsibility for reporting curricular changes to the dean’s office. More consistent reporting by academic departments will allow the college to track curricular change, as well as the learning that happens across departments. The second new initiative is the formation of the ad hoc committee on student learning. Plans call for the new committee, which is expected to begin work in 2018–2019, to be charged with the ongoing review of key academic metrics that have been identified through the work of the curriculum committee. It is also expected that the committee will share pedagogical developments that emerge from the work of the faculty with the Teaching and Learning Center. To help departments enhance their understanding of the students whom they serve and the learning that they support, the OIRRS decided to redesign the department activity report that is issued to academic departments and programs each year. This initiative was ongoing as the self-study was under way. These reports summarize enrollment trends and honors work for each major and provide detailed data on the demographics of students enrolled in courses and majoring in each program. When the redesign of the formerly static document is complete, the report will be issued as an interactive dashboard that will allow chairs to explore their department’s data and to evaluate the information in the context of college-wide trends. The department activity reports will also provide a site for presenting the results of recent surveys, including a comparison between the department’s majors and all other students at the college.

### Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)

The college administered the CLA to a sample of one hundred first-year students and then had the same group complete the evaluation as seniors. This approach provided a longitudinal data set that is being used to measure the critical-thinking and analytic skills of students at the beginning and end of their Amherst careers. The results revealed interesting patterns in the improvement of critical-thinking skills between the first-year and senior year by gender. Male CLA participants had lower absolute scores as first-years, but typically showed more growth by the time they were seniors.

Figure 9: Growth in First-Year to Senior CLA Performance by Gender, All CLA Schools and within Amherst CLA Students

Percentile Rank across all CLA students and Amherst CLA students.



The CLA provides an imputed expected score for each student that is based on academic preparation (as measured by SAT and ACT scores). Students were then given an evaluation of their actual performance relative to this expected benchmark. The results of the paired, longitudinal data for CLA-takers as first-years and seniors showed a disappointingly poor performance for the senior year; 73 percent of the first-year wave had performed at or above the expected benchmark, while 54 percent of seniors performed at or above expectation. It should be noted that most Amherst CLA participants were already in the highest percentiles of the CLA, making improvement in many cases difficult to achieve.

The results were initially discouraging, with more seniors performing “well below” expectations than the same group did as first-years. Further analysis, however, revealed a clear relationship between the time spent on each task and CLA performance, particularly for the seniors who spent considerably less time on each

component of the test in comparison to first-years. This finding, coupled with the relatively small sample size, has limited the utility of the data to inform academic planning.

### **First-Year Seminar Writing Portfolio and Public-Speaking Assessment**

The writing portfolio assessment conducted in the first-year seminar program between 2012 and 2015 has experienced some of the growing pains that are typical of such efforts. The 2015 project incorporated a public-speaking evaluation, as well. Students’ writing and speaking skills were evaluated at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. Evaluators used a rubric designed by the Writing Center to assess the following areas:

Writing	Speaking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thesis and evidence</li> <li>• Structure and organization</li> <li>• Clarity and interest</li> <li>• Mechanics</li> <li>• Evidence of comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance and interest</li> <li>• Clarity of expression</li> <li>• Mechanics of expression</li> <li>• Evidence of comprehension</li> </ul>

Results showed that the 165 students who participated in the pilot project demonstrated notable improvement in both writing and speaking skills. Students were classified into four categories of change in their writing and speaking evaluation from the start of the seminar to the end: negative or no change, minimal growth, growth, and maximum growth. Results indicated that 60 percent of students showed growth in writing ability, and 49 percent showed improvements in speaking skills over the course of the first-year seminar. The results were analyzed further by demographic to understand if there were differences in the efficacy of the first-year seminar for different groups within the student body. The assessment demonstrated consistent results for Pell grant recipients, gender, athletic status, and first-generation status. The college has also hired an expert in public speaking, based in the Writing Center, to support students and faculty in developing this critical skill.

### **Research and Library Skills**

The research and library skills assessment mentioned earlier was piloted in the fall of 2016, with the goal of learning more about first-year students’ ability to conduct research, a skill that is fundamental to making the most of a liberal arts curriculum. As part of the assessment, members of Amherst’s library staff provided a research prompt and asked participating students to go to the library, conduct some basic research on a topic, and then narrate the process that they had followed. Initial results suggest that, among students who arrive on campus as first-years, there is a good deal variation when it comes to their mastery of research skills. In response to what they have learned from the study, research librarians are developing course modules to ensure all students leave the first-year seminar program better equipped to meet the expectations of the curriculum.

### **Survey Program**

The COFHE surveys provide a rich, peer-benchmarked set of data on a wide variety of academic and campus climate issues. These data have been used to inform the strategic planning process, work in diversity and inclusion, and the efforts of the curriculum committee. The COFHE Alumni Survey, coupled with work done in the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and planning and the advancement office to track alumni career outcomes, provides an increasingly nuanced view of post-Amherst outcomes. The recent push for transparency in outcomes, represented most clearly in the College Scorecards published by the Department of Education, has focused heavily on “return on investment” metrics, such as the median salary of graduates ten years after graduation. While Amherst traditionally fares well in these measures, the college resists the reductive call for the benefit of an education to be judged primarily by income potential. The surveys allow the college to look more closely at a broader set of outcomes. For the 2013 Alumni Survey,<sup>127</sup> the college polled all its living graduates. Amherst has radically reshaped the its admission profile in the past thirty years,

but the survey results demonstrate the consistency of the values and life satisfaction of alumni across generations that, at a superficial level, may appear to have little in common. The 2013 Alumni Survey results were analyzed by the following six “generations” of Amherst graduates: the World War II era, the postwar years, the baby boomers, early coeducational students, GenX, and Millennial classes. Rates of graduate and professional school attendance are constant across all Amherst alumni generations, with nearly 70 percent of responding alumni enrolling in an educational program after graduation. The advanced degrees Amherst alumni seek remain concentrated in law, academic doctorates, medical fields, and business and finance. Across generations, Amherst alumni value public service, family, creative and expressive work, and entrepreneurship. These results help establish a core Amherst experience that remains intact across time.

The Alumni Survey has also helped the college better understand the connections between majors and the careers alumni pursue. Figure 10

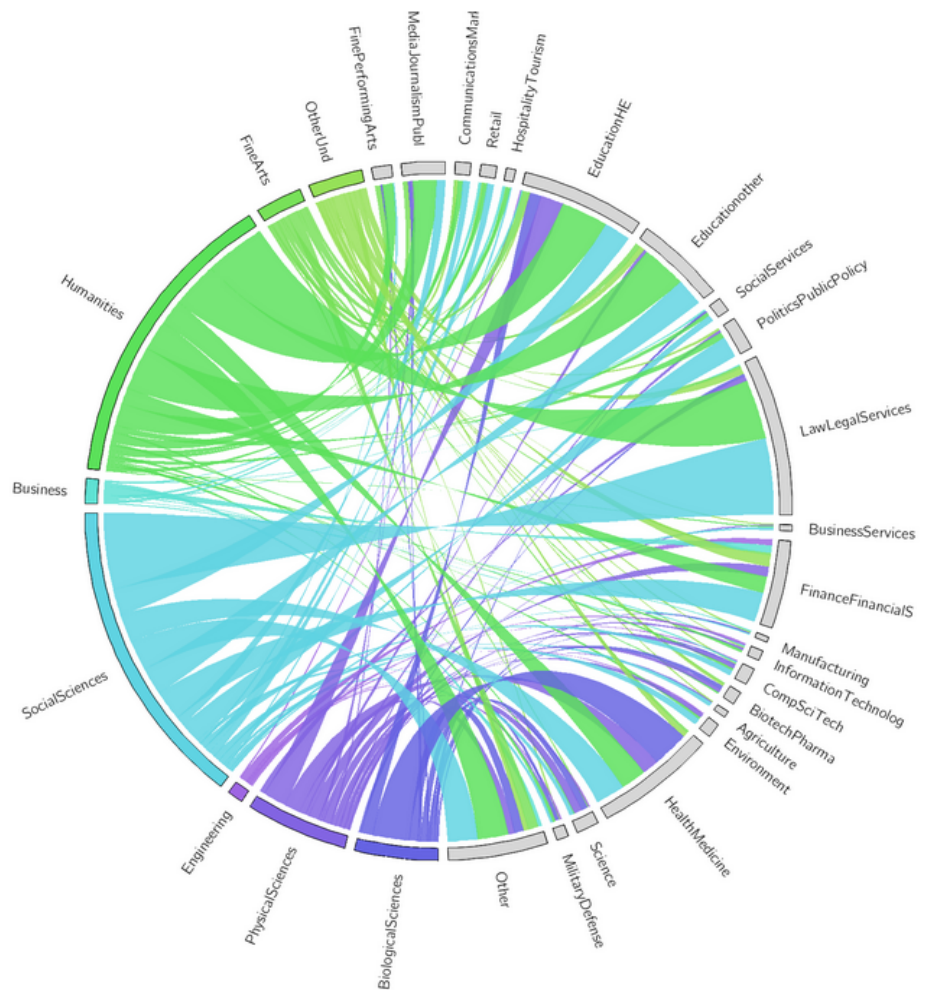
Figure 10: Major to Career Industry Linkages, 2013 All Alumni Survey

presents the major-to-career pathways generated from 2013 survey data. The results confirm that Amherst graduates from across areas of study work in a diverse set of professions. The Alumni Survey, coupled with a now annual first-destinations survey, designed by members of OIRRS and the Loeb Center to track career outcomes for recent graduates, has provided the college with an increasingly detailed view of the career applicability of a liberal arts education.

Results of the first-destination careers survey (designed to mirror National Association of Colleges and Employers standards) for the class of 2016 reveal that financial services (22 percent), education (13 percent), consulting and professional services (12 percent), computer and information technology (8 percent), legal services (6 percent), media communications (6 percent) are the most common sectors of employment for recent graduates.

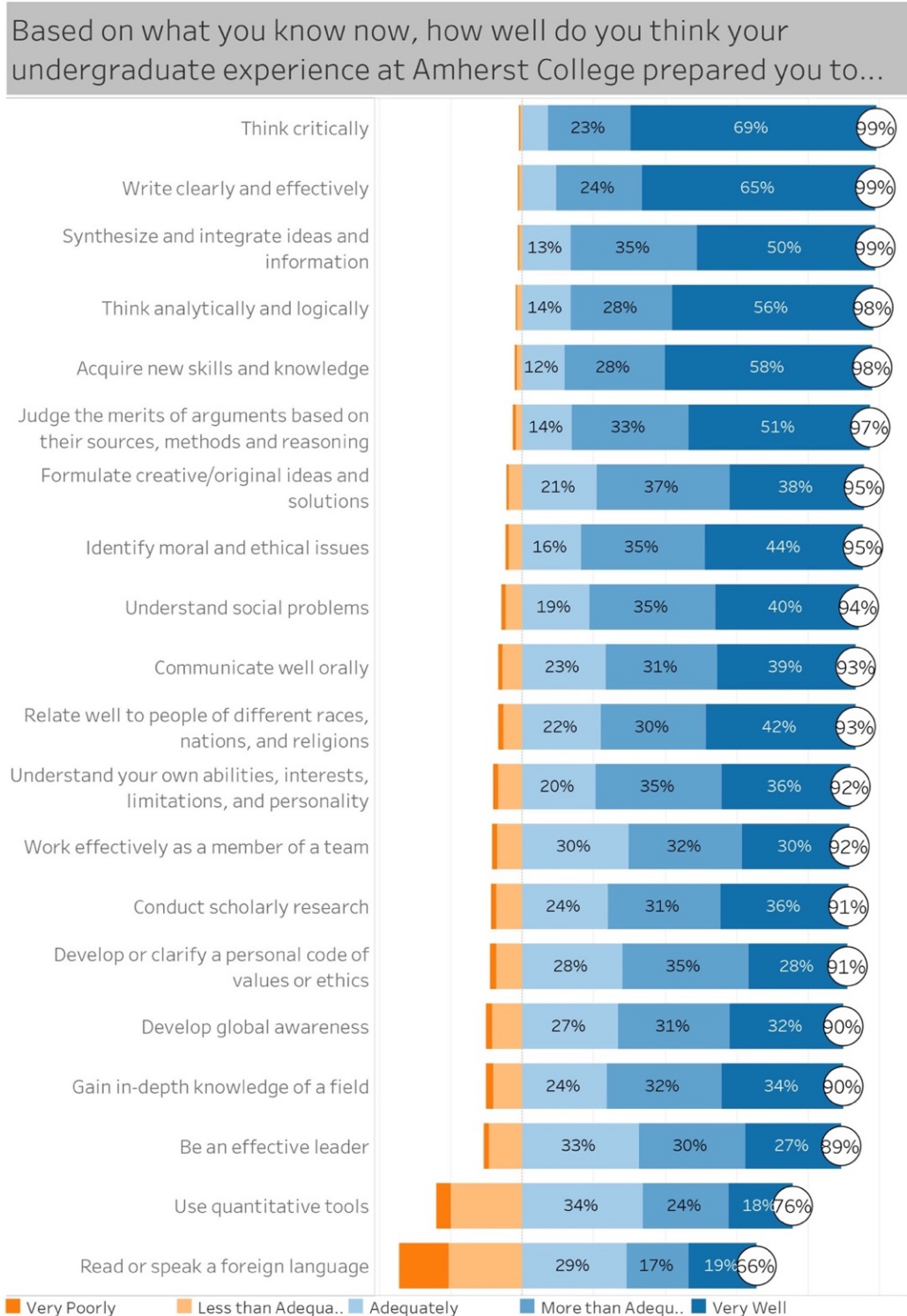
These results are consistent with broader Amherst alumni community’s careers. Six months after graduation, 72 percent of the class of 2016 was employed full-time, with another 17 percent in graduate school or fellowships programs. In surveys of Amherst’s alumni, 80 percent report that they enrolled in graduate school, typically within five years of graduation. The most common graduate schools for Amherst alumni are Harvard, Columbia, Yale, New York University, and Stanford.

The Alumni Survey also provides an opportunity for former students to reflect on their Amherst education. While survey results represent an indirect, self-reported evaluation of the skills Amherst students develop



within the curriculum, the nearly uniform positivity of alumni feedback is telling. Since students are given wide latitude in the selection of courses, the uniformity of the positive response for core liberal arts skills suggests that Amherst students are well served by the college’s curriculum. More than 90 percent of the members of the classes of 2001 through 2016 report that Amherst prepared them adequately, or better, in seventeen out of twenty areas of development.

Figure 11: 2016–2017 Alumni Survey Results for Preparation Areas



The notable outlier is in preparation for foreign language skills, which has been identified as an area of declining exposure for Amherst students. The Committee on Global Education is exploring ways to encourage students to enhance language proficiency through the college's study-abroad programs. As noted earlier, Amherst is also investing in course-based or summer international experiences to expose students to language practice and international experiences. The declining number of students who avoid quantitative coursework, coupled with the rapid rise in STEM majors and enrollments, should reduce the percentage of students who report low levels of preparedness with quantitative skills in the future. Both the CCE and Loeb Center are actively developing co-curricular programs that address leadership development.

### **Co-Curricular Assessment**

The investment in the Loeb Center and CCE is already showing promising results. Increased staffing from a single, half-time position to two full-time positions in support of internships has immediately increased access and equity to these valuable experiences. In the first year of this expanded effort, there has been a 30 percent increase in student participation in the Amherst Select Internship Program; 57 percent of the student body made advising appointments with Loeb staff, the college maintained its 80 percent medical school placement rate, while increasing the number of summer funding awards by 40 percent, and supported 100 percent of requests for summer funding from students on financial aid. During the 2017–2018 academic year, the Loeb staff will be undertaking research to increase its understanding of how internships are distributed across the student body. Recognizing that some students have access to meaningful internship opportunities through private or informal networks, the college will seek to document the range of summer experiences of students. This effort will provide a baseline to measure progress in increasing equity and access in coming years.

The CCE's partnership with the Loeb Center is also yielding benefits for students. Opportunities offered through the two centers continue to grow, with 288 students participating in internships or other substantive summer experiences such as research with a faculty member. Participation in the internship and leadership opportunities offered through the Loeb Center and CCE is representative of the college's demographic diversity. In the past decade, 43 percent of internships and 47 percent of leadership opportunities have been awarded to domestic students of color. More than 60 percent of these opportunities have gone to women.

The Office of Student Affairs has for the past five years been in a period of redesign, rebuilding, and experimentation (see the chapters on standards two and five). As noted earlier, the Multicultural Resource Center, Queer Resource Center, Women's and Gender Center, and Center for International Student Engagement are sites of expanded co-curricular programming. While Amherst has been active in developing new programming, there has been less energy placed on developing clearly articulated co-curricular learning goals and methods for measuring the success of programming for students. The COFHE surveys of enrolled students and seniors provide an indirect measure of student satisfaction with campus and community life, but lack the specificity necessary for program assessment.

Reacting to concerns about campus culture, Amherst studied the role of athletics at the college. The college has an athletics culture of long duration, and in recent years, nearly one-third of matriculating first-year students have been expected to participate in NCAA athletics. The report of the Committee on the Place of Athletics at Amherst found little evidence of academic underperformance among student-athletes (controlling for academic preparation), but noted differences in the thesis completion rates, study-away participation, and major selection of athletes vs. non-athletes. The demographics of athletes and non-athletes, however, differ considerably. Amherst differentiates "athletic admits" into two types: "athletic factor" (students for whom athletics is a key part of the admission process) and "coded athletes" (students who have been recruited by a coach, but otherwise meet the typical academic admission profile of the college).

Non-athletes are much more likely to be students of color, first-generation, and low-income compared with the athlete population. Housing and residential patterns have been a focus of the college's investigation into the athlete, non-athlete divide. An analysis of the fall 2014 housing assignments revealed that there were four dorms (mostly comprising the now razed "social dorms") where NCAA athletes represented 60 percent or

more of the residents. In one dorm, Pond, nearly 85 percent of the residents were student-athletes. The demolition of the social dorms and changes to the housing model (see the chapter on standard five) have begun to rebalance the residential picture to distribute the athlete population across the residence halls of the campus more effectively.

Student-athletes themselves report a difference in their campus experience. The OIRRS conducted student-experience surveys with NCAA athletes in the classes of 2014 and 2015. While most athletes report a positive and supportive environment, there are areas in which athletes report difficulties. Nearly 80 percent of senior athletes indicated that, while in season, they could not participate in co-curricular activities in which they would have liked to have been involved, because of schedule conflicts; 57 percent agreed that they have at times felt conflicts between their academic and athletic obligations. As this self-study was under way, faculty working groups from the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, the College Council, the Faculty Committee on Education and Athletics, and the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics were continuing to study the college's athletics programs.

### **Academic Program Reviews and FTE Allocation**

As noted earlier, Amherst's academic departments and programs, particularly through the vehicle of external reviews and the FTE allocation process (see the chapters on standards four and six), have increasingly worked to include rigorous data in their self-assessments. Since Amherst's last decennial review, twenty-six of thirty-eight departments and programs have undergone external reviews. The external reviews represent a critical venue for the assessment of the college's curriculum, providing recommendations for new approaches and content that are validated by outside experts in the field. Requests to the CEP for FTEs are expected to be informed by the department's curricular needs, enrollment trends, and service to the diversity of the college community.

### **PROJECTIONS**

Formal co-curricular learning goals will be developed; better systems for tracking outcomes will be implemented.

Assessment strategies for the recommendations of the *Strategic Plan for Amherst College* and the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee will be developed and implemented.

It is anticipated that a partnership between the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services and the Center for Teaching and Learning will develop, with assessment embedded into pedagogical and curricular redesign efforts. The "Reimagining the Commons" grant will provide a useful vehicle for building this collaboration.

With the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Learning, the college will develop new ways to define and document student learning and share best practices with the faculty and student body.

The Loeb Center and CCE will establish a baseline assessment of summer experiences, such as internships and research experiences. A focus will be on documenting summer experiences that take place without college funding. This work will provide a benchmark for measuring the equitability of the college's internship program in the future.

The Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee will propose new college-wide learning goals during the 2017–2018 academic year. If these new goals are adopted by the faculty, the OIRRS Ad Hoc Committee on Student Learning will develop new measures to evaluate student learning across the college's curriculum.

Amherst will continue to evaluate students' access to the curriculum by carefully monitoring patterns in course enrollments. OIRRS will work to build new tools to ensure that academic departments have access to the demographics of enrollments, majors, and thesis completions.



## INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

### DESCRIPTION

At all levels, Amherst demonstrates its commitment to meeting the highest ethical standards and to acting with integrity and transparency. The college does so through expectations and requirements for the conduct and activities of members of its community; policies, codes, and practices that guide operations and uphold community standards; and institutional engagement with important social issues that touch on the college's mission. This engagement includes direct actions and exercise of the college's voice as a leader within higher education. As Amherst's mission statement conveys, leading a "principled life of consequence," including service to the college, individual communities, and the world, is a central goal of the Amherst education. The mission affirms Amherst's obligation to offer educational opportunity equitably to the most promising students of all backgrounds and to promote intellectual freedom. Maintaining an atmosphere of respect and support for people of diverse characteristics, ideas, and backgrounds is also central to Amherst's mission. These and other core values are fostered through foundational statements, as adopted by the faculty and the board of trustees, which all community members are expected to uphold. The *Statement of Respect for Persons* and *Statement of Intellectual Responsibility*, for example, lays out principles of behavior that serve as the underpinning of the codes of conduct through which standards are codified and assured for the campus community.

For many years, Amherst has affirmed its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and to free artistic expression through its *Statement on Freedom of Expression and Dissent*, through the mission statement, and through stated adherence to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)'s 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. In 2016, the college adopted the *Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*. Statements appear in the *Faculty Handbook*, *Staff Handbook*, and in the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as the college's catalog. At Amherst's opening convocation for the 2017–2018 academic year, President Martin focused much of her speech<sup>128</sup> on the importance of academic freedom and reiterated Amherst's commitment to this foundational principle. The applicability of the statements to the college's electronic environment is explained in the *Policy on Acceptable Use of the Amherst College Electronic Environment* (see the chapter on standard seven). Documents are revised regularly to achieve clarity and equity in policies and procedures.

When events in the wider world put to the test the college's commitment to foundational statements of principle, it is clear that Amherst's faithfulness to its values goes beyond the philosophical and aspirational. The campus has engaged in activism when community members have felt that Amherst's principles and ethical expectations surrounding respect and equity were not being met. In response, goals for improvement have been set, changes made, and progress assessed. As noted in the chapter on standard one, when students voiced deep concern over issues of racism and sexual violence on campus and beyond, the college responded by listening closely and taking steps toward improvement, a process that is ongoing. On two occasions in recent years, classes were suspended to enable the community to engage in days of dialogue, one focusing on race and racism and the other on sexual respect; as noted earlier in the self-study, efforts are under way to create more opportunities for campus-wide discussions. Amherst's dedication to academic freedom expression is evident in the founding of the Amherst College Press in 2012, and in the faculty's adoption of an open-access policy the next year. As noted earlier, the press is helping to make scholarship in liberal arts traditions more accessible; the monographs it publishes are made available for free online first, with print-on-demand options for those who prefer a hard copy (see the chapter on standard seven). Under the open-access policy, the scholarly articles of the Amherst faculty are made freely available through the college's institutional repository, whenever possible. Faculty may opt out of the open-access expectation.

At the same time that Amherst works to address concerns on campus, there is recognition that these pressing issues are deeply embedded, complex challenges being faced by the wider culture. When events threaten Amherst's core values, those of the liberal arts, and society at large, the institution has made efforts to have an impact on a wider stage. The board of trustees has issued statements and made changes that are based on the

college's core principles (see the chapter on standard three). In addition, President Martin has commented publically, including in the national press, on issues that have included immigration and refugee policy, the rights of transgender students, sexual violence, and events in Charlottesville in the summer of 2017 that included Nazi- and Klan-inspired hatred and violence. In another example of Amherst drawing attention to a contemporary problem, in this case the consideration of race in the college admission process, the college took action. As noted earlier, in 2015 Amherst participated in an amicus brief submitted to the United States Supreme Court in support of the University of Texas in the *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* case.

On campus, the values of equity, inclusion, and institutional integrity are being supported through governance processes and organizational structures of long-standing, as well as through the leadership and work of two new offices—the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (OD&I) and the Office of General Counsel (OGC). The board of trustees is dedicated to taking a vigorous role in ensuring the integrity of the college in adhering to its mission and values, as discussed in the chapter on standard three. As is noted in that chapter, students also play an important role in shaping policy on community standards. For example, in 2010, students submitted a proposal to revise the college's nondiscrimination policy to include gender identity and gender expression. After consideration by college committees, the trustees in 2011 approved a revised policy, which adds “gender identity or gender expression” to other protected categories. In 2012, residential life instituted a gender-inclusive housing policy at the urging of students. An example of the ways in which governance structures offer the flexibility needed to address issues of integrity as they arise can be found in the task force that is conducting a review of Amherst's policies and practices in the area of accessibility and inclusion. Soon after some Amherst students and faculty raised concerns in the spring of 2017, President Martin, in consultation with the Committee of Six, charged the Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion to undertake its work (see the chapter on standard five). Amherst's sense of ethical obligation has come to include sustainability and respect for the environment, a particularly pressing issue for this generation of students, including guidelines for “green” construction. As was noted earlier, the Office of Environmental Sustainability was founded in 2014 with the primary goal of integrating sustainability into the daily life of campus.

### **Office of Diversity and Inclusion**

The OD&I is enhancing the climate of respect for all persons at Amherst and is contributing to a culture of equity through educational offerings; the development of new practices, and in some cases their oversight; and collaborations with other offices. As noted earlier, the OD&I, which maintains a website that includes information about its services and areas of oversight, supports the efforts of the Office of Human Resources (OHR) and dean of the faculty to recruit and retain a diverse staff and faculty, respectively (see the chapters on standards, two, three, six, and seven). The office serves students, in particular through the centers that are part of the OD&I—the Multicultural Resource Center, Queer Resource Center, and Women's and Gender Center, and Center for International Student Engagement.

The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and the OD&I have developed programs to promote a climate of civility and respect on campus, many of which are introduced during orientation and programs for faculty, students, and staff. A range of affinity groups, theme houses, and religious organizations allow students to maintain and to share a broad range of cultural identities. Since the 2013 interim report, the centers described above have become hubs of social and intellectual life on campus, organizing scholarly and social events, advising student organizations and individuals, and coordinating activities that involve students from across the campus. The Office of Religious and Spiritual Life serves students of ten different traditions, including Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Humanist. The Multifaith Council offers a number of campus-wide events such as the spiritual autobiography series, in which faculty and staff discuss their most deeply held beliefs and values and their effect on their lives and the “Everybody Has a Story Week,” which brings together faculty, staff, and students to share their personal narratives.

### **Office of General Counsel**

In 2008, after years of exclusive reliance on outside counsel, Amherst appointed its first in-house attorney, while continuing to engage outside legal services for particular issues. The OGC, was established in 2013, and

the senior staff position of chief policy officer and counsel (CPO/GC) was created to lead the office. The CPO/GPC specializes in higher education law, as does the associate general counsel. The two attorneys, who joined the college in 2013, are responsible for managing all college legal matters, including providing advice and counsel to the president, trustees, faculty, and staff on legal and risk issues that affect Amherst, as well as for supervising outside counsel. The OHR is part of the OGC and reports to the CPO/GC. The office describes the following as part of its mission: "...seek[ing] to be principled, knowledgeable, helpful, ethical, and as transparent as possible in our interactions with the college community, subject to necessary restraints of confidentiality. It is our philosophy that prudent management of legal issues enables the college to properly focus its resources on the education of students in accordance with the college's core educational mission." More generally, the OGC supports the operation of the college by providing expert legal advice, engaging in proactive risk management, and overseeing efforts to comply with legal requirements.<sup>129</sup> Since its inception, the OGC has focused on assessing current college policies and procedures and on creating new ones, as needed, with the goal of enhancing fairness and equity and ensuring compliance with federal and state law.

In an effort led by the CPO/GC, that began in 2016 and which continues, Amherst began a comprehensive enterprise risk management (ERM) assessment. The ERM involves multiple steps. It began with the identification of risks across the college and the evaluation of the severity and probability of the risk, as well as of mitigating measures already in effect. This effort was conducted by the members of the president's senior staff, along with an associate dean of the faculty and the associate general counsel, and under the direction of the Five College risk manager. The board of the trustees is informed of the progress of the ERM through the ad hoc ERM Committee, which includes the board chair and the chairs of each of the board's committees. An effective ERM assessment is recognized as essential to institutional planning for financial and other contingencies and the prudent allocation of resources to manage risks.

### **Addressing Sexual Misconduct**

In 2012, accounts by current and former Amherst students about sexual assaults on campus and the college's responses to the incidents appeared in local, national, and social media—shocking the campus and beyond. At the time, a process was already under way to revise Amherst's procedures in this area and to consider broader ways to try to prevent sexual misconduct. The reports by students and Amherst graduates, however, prompted an immediate and comprehensive examination of this issue. As noted in earlier chapters of the self-study, in 2012, the Special Oversight Committee on Sexual Misconduct (SMOC) was charged with making recommendations to President Martin for "improvement in the college's efforts to prevent and address sexual assault on campus, and to advise the president as she seeks immediate changes." The committee was asked to consider the campus environment (taking stock of campus culture and identifying ways that it impedes or facilitates sexual respect among students); resources (examining the structure and mission of the student affairs function and making recommendations for how to restructure and redistribute its resources); education (recommending improvements to Amherst's program of sexual education, to better promote gender equity and healthy sexual behavior on campus); recent history (distilling lessons learned from recent instances of sexual misconduct at Amherst, as well as from the experiences of other institutions); and policy and Title IX (providing a summary of recommendations for policy changes throughout the college, including those associated with Title IX). As noted earlier, the committee issued its report, titled *Toward a Culture of Respect: The Problem of Sexual Misconduct at Amherst College*, in January 2013, and it was shared with the trustees, the Amherst community, and the public via the college's website.

In response to the SMOC's recommendations to address issues surrounding sexual misconduct, Amherst has moved aggressively to improve education and prevention and to undertake efforts to change campus culture, to establish a more professional approach to adjudication, to deal swiftly and strongly with criminal acts, and to provide remedies for the effects of sexual misconduct. As noted in the chapter on standard three, the findings of the SMOC contributed to Amherst's decision to establish the OGC, including the dedicated Title IX office and program. As was also noted, in response to a request from the SMOC, the board reviewed the issue of underground fraternities at Amherst and voted in 2014 to reaffirm its 1984 *Resolution on Fraternities* and,

effective July 1, 2014, to prohibit student participation in fraternities and sororities and fraternity-like and sorority-like organizations, either on or off campus. The SMOC report, as was discussed in the chapter on standard two, also called for reimagining and recasting the student affairs function. As described earlier, much work has been done in this area, and these efforts continue. For example, progress has been made on strengthening the mental health services (see the chapter on standard five) that the college offers, another recommendation of the SMOC. Amherst has also taken seriously the SMOC's emphasis on the need to develop appropriate spaces for social activity that can help promote an environment that minimizes the risk of sexual misconduct. In 2013 the college had a shortage of such spaces—specifically, larger and more open spaces in which students could interact openly and without fear of being “stuck” in spaces away from public view. Significant progress on meeting the SMOC's recommendations is evident in many quarters: the 2014 renovation of the Powerhouse into a social space for all students; the demolition of the “social dorms”; completion of the Greenway Residence Halls, which were designed to help address the concerns raised; and experimentation with a “neighborhood residential model,” (see the chapter on standard five).

### **Title IX**

In response to the issues raised and the needs that had been identified, the CPO/GC spent much of her first year at Amherst addressing issues related to Title IX, most prominently sexual misconduct, by assisting with the revision of adjudication procedures and their implementation; hiring the college's first full-time Title IX coordinator in 2013; and educating the community about the requirements of Title IX. Also that year, Amherst implemented its first *Sexual Misconduct Policy* and created an adjudication process particular to complaints of sexual misconduct. The Title IX team is now a part of the OGC, and the Title IX coordinator, an attorney with civil rights experience, is responsible for the coordination and implementation of Title IX compliance and education at the college. (All new faculty and staff are required to participate in Title IX training.) The Title IX website<sup>130</sup> is regularly updated with information relating to the work of the Title IX office, including reports on the community's engagement with the office and data from annual student surveys.

Through its policies, practices, staffing, and the resources it provides, Amherst works to ensure that its educational environment is free from gender-based discrimination. Amherst's *Sexual Misconduct Policy, inter alia*, defines the type of gender-based conduct that is prohibited at the college. The policy applies to all persons who are in contact with the Amherst community, including students, faculty, staff, visitors, and independent contractors. The *Student Code of Conduct*, the *Faculty Handbook*, and the *Staff Handbook*, include descriptions of the processes for the investigation and resolution of complaints of sexual harassment. These processes are also presented in hard copy, as well as on other relevant pages of the college website. College policies, including, but not limited to, the *Statement on Respect for Persons* and the *Sexual Misconduct Policy*, clearly articulate the institution's values and expectations as they relate to different treatment based on sex or gender. The policies are regularly discussed in cross-campus training sessions, as well in meetings with students about disclosures of problematic behavior. The college supports its commitment to compliance with Title IX through campus-wide policies, practices, and procedures and through the Title IX office.

### **Title IX Office**

As Title IX work is based within regulatory and legal compliance, a reporting structure to the CPO/GC allows for close oversight and frequent consultation on issues related to Title IX. The Title IX office is an independent office, as is essential, given the legal framework connected to different treatment based on sex or gender, as well as the sensitivity of the information being managed. Within the college's administrative structure, the Title IX office and its Title IX coordinator maintain independent oversight of the institutional response to reports that a student has been affected by sexual misconduct. The office carries out this work in collaboration with relevant campus partners, and the Title IX coordinator has the ready access to individuals and offices across the institution needed to accomplish the office's mission. The Title IX office has consistent and open communication with the campus police, as is necessary and appropriate to support campus safety, as well as legal and ethical mandates related to gender-based concerns that affect the Amherst community. The office has various means to communicate with and obtain feedback from the community. In addition to the

coordinator, the office is supported by five deputy Title IX coordinators, each serving a major campus constituency. There are two deputies for students, one for staff, and one for faculty, and athletics). In collaboration with the Title IX coordinator, the deputies are well situated to educate the community about policy and to respond to disclosures of problematic gender-based conduct (named in the law with the umbrella term “sexual harassment”).

### **Title IX Team and Title IX Review Committee**

The Title IX coordinator directs a Title IX team, which includes the associate general counsel, the college’s chief of public safety, and the Title IX deputies described above. The team meets weekly to assess information regarding sexual misconduct and the college’s responses. The Title IX Review Committee, which is composed of faculty, staff, and students, considers issues related to Title IX practice and policy and makes recommendations for improvement. For example, the committee has solicited and obtained community feedback on issues related to the college’s “mandatory reporting” policy (the policy that identifies which Amherst employees are required to share information related to sexual misconduct with the Title IX coordinator) and the structure of the college’s adjudication procedures for complaints of sexual misconduct against students. The college has responded to committee recommendations by undergoing significant Title IX policy review and both recommending and implementing changes.

### **Educating the Community about Title IX**

The Title IX office regularly trains community members. These programs are intended not only to cover Title IX “basics,” but also to highlight key values that undergird the work of the Title IX office. The office serves the entirety of the community, including survivors of sexual violence, as well as witnesses, and the accused. Through its training programs, the office conveys that any person of any sexual identity and/or gender identity can both experience and perpetrate sexual misconduct. As noted earlier, all new faculty and staff receive Title IX training. Students are provided with information about Title IX-related policies and resources in various ways. During orientation, all students receive the *Student Code of Conduct* in printed form and are informed about the types and definitions of sexual misconduct prohibited by the code. In addition, the Title IX office schedules presentations with students to describe the manner and type of assistance the office can provide. In all of its programming, the Title IX office stresses its neutrality and its ability to provide services and resources to all community members, regardless of identity and regardless of the role in which that person is working with the office (e.g., as a complainant, respondent, or reporting person).

### **The Title IX Process**

When reports of possible violations of the college’s sexual misconduct policies are received, the Title IX office manages the response, in coordination with the relevant deputy Title IX coordinators. The two deputies for students are members of the staff of the OSA. These collaborations support the many interests and concerns that arise when a community member is affected by sexual misconduct, including the following: physical and emotional health, academics, and housing concerns. The Title IX office also collaborates with the OSA to issue “No Contact Orders,” requiring that two students not have any communication with one another. Affected community members receive complete information regarding college policy and process; available support resources; on-campus opportunities for redress; and the role of law enforcement, if any. When one party to a matter is a student and the other a staff member, the Title IX Office manages the response with the OHR, through the chief human resources officer, who also serves as the deputy Title IX coordinator for staff and visitors, as noted earlier. When both parties are staff and/or visitors, the OHR manages the matter. To ensure overall compliance, aggregate data on gender-based matters managed through the OHR is regularly shared with the Title IX Office. When one party is a student and the other is a faculty member, the Title IX Office manages the response with the dean of the faculty, who also serves as the deputy Title IX coordinator for faculty. When both parties are faculty, the responsibility falls to the dean of the faculty.

### **Office of Student Affairs: Support for All Students**

The OSA is committed to meeting the needs of each student. Staff within the office are available and accessible to all students, parents and guardians, faculty, and college staff. When there is a concern about a

student, the first point of contact is through the class dean. Depending on the issue, the class dean may address the question or refer the student to another OSA staff member who can help. Areas of support are accessibility services, case management, the counseling center, the health center, and academic support (see the chapter on standard five). The OSA holds weekly “care team” meetings with members of its staff and campus partners to discuss intervention and support for students with identified needs. The OSA trains all of its staff in non-discriminatory policies and practices.

## **Community Standards**

### **Students**

Students are expected to act responsibly, ethically, and with integrity, including adhering to the honor code (located in chapter one, section one of the *Student Code of Conduct*). As noted earlier, the principles of behavior are expressed in the four statements that make up the honor code, which are the *Statement of Intellectual Responsibility*, the *Statement on Respect for Persons*, the *Statement of Freedom of Expression and Dissent* and the *Statement of Student Rights*. These statements are located in the *Student Code of Conduct* both in print and online on the Community Standards website and in the *Faculty Handbook*. In 2016, the OSA changed the name of the student handbook to the *Student Code of Conduct* in order to reflect revisions in the content of the publication that had been under way for a number of years. The “handbook” had included rules, regulations, restaurant suggestions, tips about Amherst, and other helpful community information. As websites became more efficient vehicles for conveying up-to-date information about college departments and community resources, over time, the student handbook came to focus largely on policy. To ensure that the information given to students about community standards was complete, accurate, and accessible, the OSA combed through the college’s website for information about standards and centralized the material. New to what is now called the *Student Code of Conduct*, for example, are standards about environmental health and safety, residential living, and traffic and parking. The format of the piece was improved; sections were re-ordered to improve the transparency, flow, and organization.

Accompanying the change in title of the *Student Handbook*, the former “student conduct process” was renamed the “community standards adjudication process (CSAP)” in order to parallel the adjudication process for sexual misconduct. The two processes did not change substantively. In describing the CSAP, information was more deliberately segmented, and language was added to clarify the explanation of each step of the process. The most significant change to the CSAP was the transition from a Committee on Discipline (CoD) to a Community Standards Review Board (CSRB). The CoD had been composed of four faculty members, appointed by the Committee of Six, and four students appointed by the Association of Amherst Students (AAS). The small number of participants in the process created scheduling challenges and scant cross-sectional student representation. The CSRB continues to include four faculty members appointed by the Committee of Six and four AAS appointees, but a new student selection process now creates a pool of as many as twenty additional students, from which CSRB panels are composed for hearings. An added benefit is that Amherst now trains a strong cohort of students to be peer ambassadors for proactive teaching about community standards.

Community standards and integrity have taken on a prominent role in new student orientation in recent years. Students first agree to the terms of the college’s honor code when they accept Amherst’s offer of admission. This commitment is reinforced as students are introduced to campus life and to the standards of the community they are about to join. All students are required to attend sessions on sexual respect, academic integrity, and community standards. Orientation ends with a ceremony of signing the student honor code, officially signifying students’ intent to matriculate. Continuing students are required annually to read and acknowledge a statement of the college’s FERPA policy, the college’s copyright and fair use policy, the hazing policy, the honor code, the Drug-free Schools and Communities Act, and the code of conduct to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities. This “annual checklist” of policy acknowledgements is presented to students as part of the registration process and ensures that all students are informed on their rights and responsibilities within the Amherst Community. Violations of the community’s ethical standards include alcohol/drug use, possession or distribution; fraud; intellectual dishonesty and plagiarism; disrespect for

persons; violence; theft; vandalism; and abuse of college property. With the exception of sexual or gender-based misconduct, alleged violations can be resolved through the community standards adjudication process and the CSRB. As noted earlier, sexual or gender-based misconduct is addressed by the Title IX coordinator and may be referred to the sexual misconduct adjudication process. This process was refined in 2013 in a collaboration with an attorney who specializes in this area, under the oversight of the CPO/GC. Students have access to grievance procedures, whether as complainants or respondents, through the *Student Code of Conduct*.

### **Grievance and Disciplinary System**

*The Statements on Academic and Expressive Freedom, 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. Amherst has an active chapter of the American Association of University Professors, 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 faculty and staff are described in their respective handbooks. The Office of Human Resources administers a grievance procedure to resolve employee disputes. The Office of the Dean of the Faculty has oversight over grievances relating to the faculty. As noted above, grievance procedures for students are part of the *Student Code of Conduct*. As noted earlier, at the start of every semester, faculty are responsible for explaining to their students the implications for each course of the *Statement of Intellectual Responsibility*. A website titled “Intellectual Honesty and Plagiarism”<sup>131</sup> was created to clarify regulations and procedures and explain the issues involved. In addition, the college seeks to ensure ethical practices through its conflict of interest policies<sup>132</sup> (see the chapter on standard three). Amherst uses EthicsPoint, a service that allows any member of the college community to report suspected misconduct or other issues.<sup>133</sup> Reports may be confidential.

As noted in the discussion of the college’s efforts to address sexual misconduct, Amherst responds to serious breaches of community standards by launching intensive investigations to seek the truth about allegations. When violations are confirmed, the college acts swiftly and forcefully to address the situation. Recognizing that such incidents are often outgrowths of broader institutional problems that may be challenging to rectify, Amherst ensures a broad and vigorous response. For example, in 2016, it came to light that members of the men’s cross-country team had a sustained history of engaging in sexist online exchanges with one another, supposedly to “welcome” new teammates and introduce them to the culture of the team. An investigation revealed that individual levels of involvement varied, and that some team members did voice objections to this practice. The investigation also made clear that no one had informed the coaches, director of athletics, or the OSA about this practice, and that the behavior of the team pointed to a pervasive cultural problem. While there were no findings of criminal misconduct, the college retained an outside investigator and, based on the individual’s report, levied considerable sanctions, including suspensions of varying lengths, mandated educational programming, and denial of access to meets and practices. More broadly, the situation further underscored the critical need to enhance the ways in which the college builds community on campus, a conclusion of *Amherst Uprising* as well (see a number of references to that protest in earlier chapters). President Martin pledged to renew efforts to engage all constituencies in discussions about the kind of community the college wants to be and how it would it can realize its aspirations (see the chapter on standard five for plans that are under way).

### **Privacy**

Privacy of student records (also addressed in the chapter on standard five) is protected in accordance with the requirement of the law by the registrar’s office, the OSA, the admission and financial aid offices, health services, campus police, and the counseling center. The policies are explained in *the Student Code of Conduct*. The dean of the faculty’s office and the OHR maintain the privacy of discussions and communications regarding personnel decisions and disciplinary proceedings, as does the OSA, regarding matters of discipline. Amherst’s library endorses the American Library Association’s *Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records*.<sup>134</sup> As noted in the chapter on standard seven, the IT department has formulated and made readily

available policies protecting the privacy of users of the college's website.<sup>135</sup> The ombudsperson,<sup>136</sup> an independent officer of the college who reports directly to the president, works in strict confidentiality and provides resources for handling complaints, conflicts, and disputes outside of the normal channels of management. The OSA adheres to FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974), HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996), and other regulatory standards to ensure privacy for students. As noted in the chapter on standard five, in 2014, the OSA moved from paper record-keeping of student files to electronic filing systems. The office utilizes a software system for student academic records and a separate system for student concern/conduct issues. This new system helps to ensure the privacy of student information. As noted earlier, the counseling center and health center utilize electronic medical software for student records, which provides an additional level of privacy. Information on the policies related to student records can be found in *the Student Code of Conduct*, Section nineteen (pp. 118–119).

### **Ensuring Integrity in Research**

Amherst has codified and strengthened internal procedures for the human subjects committee (IRB), institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC), the institutional bio-safety committee, and the radiation safety committee. The IRB monitors legal compliance and ethical standards in research involving human subjects. The IACUC oversees compliance with and reporting on federal animal care and use regulations. In January of 2013, in keeping with the policies of the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Research Integrity (ORI), the college re-wrote its research misconduct policy<sup>137</sup> and extended it from PHS-funded faculty and students to include all faculty and students. In accord with federal regulations, the college submits an annual report to the ORI and the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare of the National Institutes of Health. Descriptions of the committees and pertinent instructions, policies, procedures, and guidelines are posted on the website of the dean of the faculty. The dean of the faculty's office, working with faculty committees, has developed a range of policies that address, among other things: grants, patents, the protection of human subjects, financial disclosure, scientific misconduct policy, and copyright.

Amherst students, post-baccalaureate fellows, graduate students from other institutions, staff, and postdoctoral fellows conducting research in the natural and physical sciences, as well as all students and postdocs working on federally funded research in any discipline, are required to complete online training tailored to their area of research on the responsible conduct of research before beginning work. Online training is provided via the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), with guidance from the college. Students researchers in the sciences are further asked to engage in discussion with their mentor about the ethical and responsible conduct of research. In addition, faculty and students funded through the Public Health Service (PHS) are required to complete the CITI online course in financial conflict of interest.

### **Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit and Data Integrity**

These areas are discussed in the chapters on standards four and seven, respectively.

### **Financial Approach and Practices**

In its approach to the management of the college's finances and in all of its practices, Amherst maintains the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and transparency. As noted in the chapter on standard seven, when making investment decisions, the investment committee of the board of trustees and the college's finance team adhere to environmental, social, and governance ethics and principles. Legal, ethical, and reputational factors are core elements of the gift acceptance policy, which was referenced in the chapter on standard seven.

### **Communications/Public Disclosure**

The college conveys information about itself accurately, comprehensively, and consistently through a full range of media, with an increasing emphasis on emerging technology. Audiences include prospective students; alumni, parents, and friends; students, faculty, and staff; and the general public. Amherst maintains a full program of print materials that provide an overview of the college, including the *Amherst College Catalog* (in print and online); the admission view book and other admission publications; the *Amherst Magazine* (in print and online); and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Over the past decade, the type and volume of information



available online has increased rapidly. Social media, electronic news, and videography play a prominent role in efforts to share information and raise awareness about Amherst's mission. Via technology, the reach of the college's messaging has been extended, and access has been expanded. The website provides information about Amherst's history, mission, and demographics; the faculty; academic life; the student experience; and the accomplishments of alumni. As itemized in the Data First Forms, the website serves as an essential vehicle for the dissemination and disclosure of public information. In all of its efforts, the communications office supports the *SPAC's* priorities. A communications strategic plan developed in 2016 sets as the office's priority projects that showcase the ways in which the college is reinventing liberal arts education for the twenty-first century; creating opportunities for the most talented students of all backgrounds; and building its financial strength and providing outstanding financial support. In recognition of the important role of communications at Amherst, the senior-staff-level position of chief communications officer was created in 2014.

### **Digital Communications**

The Office of Communications distributes videos,<sup>138</sup> photography,<sup>139</sup> and print publications widely through the college's website, social media platforms, and direct mailings. In all of its work, the office strives to create engaging and readily available information about Amherst. In its efforts to achieve this goal and to support the work of the office, the digital communications group makes use of the architecture of the website, the headlines and labels used to guide users through the site, web content, and the search tool and site index.

### **Media Relations**

Media relations efforts focus on generating media coverage of broad, institutional stories about Amherst.<sup>140</sup> This work promotes and advances the priorities of the *SPAC* and the college's overall mission and provides information to college constituencies and the public. The media relations team builds relationships with members of the media and monitors coverage. Clips of coverage about Amherst are circulated internally via email and are often repurposed for an e-newsletter,<sup>141</sup> the website, and social media platforms. Staff distribute press releases and other information to news outlets. When responding to coverage of serious problems that Amherst faces, the emphasis is on accountability and transparency. The website is used to keep the campus and public informed about how Amherst is addressing a particular situation. For example, following the revelations about sexual misconduct (discussed earlier in this document), the college created a Title IX website that featured a list of resources for survivors; checklists of actions taken, in real time, to benefit members of the community; and related statistics. The website is now well established as a source of information and is continually updated. Other examples of the college's commitment to transparency include the posting on the website of financial statements,<sup>142</sup> data on campus security policy, and certain campus crime statistics.<sup>143</sup>

### **Editorial Content**

In recent years, the office's editorial operation has shifted from a single focus on publishing the alumni magazine<sup>144</sup> and become a more nimble operation that produces written, photographic, and video content for the college's website, social media platforms, and the magazine. Emphasis is placed on illustrating and reinforcing Amherst's mission and strategic priorities, as well as informing and educating readers in a substantive and transparent manner.

### **Social Media**

The Office of Communications has the following three strategic priorities for its efforts that focus on social media: produce original social media campaigns, implement frequent short-term social media posts that provide insight into the Amherst community, and support other college-related social media activity and best practices. The team's overarching goal is to reinforce and amplify Amherst's mission and the priorities of the *SPAC*, and to create a loyal and engaged audience base across social platforms.<sup>145</sup>

### **Conferences and Special Events (CASE)**

The communications office's CASE team provides support for the integration of speakers, symposia, festivals, and other events into the fabric of the Amherst experience. At President Martin's request, the team helped to develop City Streets, an all-campus celebration of the student body featuring a display of the flags of students'

home countries and foods from each continent. This festival, coordinated by the CASE team, is one of a number of new events designed to build community and create new traditions at Amherst. The CASE team also coordinates the college's formal academic ceremonies, including convocation and commencement.

### **Advancement Communications**

This team works to encourage generosity and engagement among alumni, parents, and other donors, and to raise awareness of Amherst's academic excellence and the impact of philanthropy on the college's ability to provide its stellar education.<sup>146</sup>

## **APPRAISAL**

### **Academic Freedom**

Recognizing a national climate in which academic freedom is being threatened on many fronts, in 2015, the Committee of Six undertook to create an academic freedom statement for the college. The goal was to reaffirm Amherst's commitment to a *sine qua non* of rigorous liberal arts education: the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, and free artistic expression. The process of considering this statement on academic freedom began in April of 2015, when Professor Trent Maxey wrote a letter to the Committee of Six. He noted, "As we move forward with the strategic plan and bring greater focus to creating a stronger sense of community on campus, I strongly believe we should include a robust conversation about the place of academic freedom in that community." Professor Maxey referred the committee two statements of principle that had recently been adopted by the University of Chicago and Princeton University and suggested that the committee discuss the statements and consider a similar articulation of principles at Amherst. The Committee of Six agreed to take up this matter, and over the next two years, periodic discussions of this topic followed. Legal scholar and writer Lawrence Douglas, Amherst's James J. Grosfeld Professor of Law, Jurisprudence and Social Thought, drafted the *Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom* and led the consultation that took place with faculty and student groups. After a series of conversations, the faculty approved the statement in 2016, and the board of trustees endorsed it that year.

### **Orientation for New Faculty**

Beginning in 2017–2018, during an orientation event that focuses on governance, all new faculty members will be provided with the *Amherst Statement on Academic and Expressive Freedom* and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)'s 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. These documents will serve as the basis of a conversation to introduce new-scholar teachers to the shared expectations of the Amherst community. Acknowledging that colleges are facing a more rigorous legal and regulatory climate and a student body with changing needs, the dean of faculty sponsors training for new faculty on the policies that affect the work of instructors. Topics addressed within orientation sessions include the Americans with Disabilities Act, privacy (FERPA), and the faculty's responsibilities under Title IX. Presenters include the chief of public safety, the accessibility services manager, the chief policy officer and general counsel, and the Title IX coordinator. The Title IX coordinator trains members of the faculty about their responsibilities under Title IX.

### **Student Orientation and the Honor Code**

In recent years, assessments revealed that having students sign the honor code during a large ceremony as part of orientation was not achieving all of the OSA's goals for introducing students to community standards. In response, the office modified the signing ceremony to ensure that students understand the code. Students are now required to watch an online video produced by the Title IX office and to attend a one-hour workshop, during which orientation leaders use a script to lead small groups of students in discussing the parts the code that focus on academic integrity, including penalties for violations. Students are asked to evaluate several scenarios, deciding whether or not violations of the honor code have taken place. In addition, the college's sexual respect educator now oversees sexual respect training during orientation. In the OSA's assessments of orientation, the focus is not on whether students like programs, but rather on whether they have mastered the content and gained the tools they will need to thrive as part of the social and intellectual community.

Recent first-year orientation sessions on the honor code, specifically those focusing on academic integrity and respect for persons, have been extremely effective. Assessment after 2016's orientation indicated that 100 percent of first-year students understood what it had meant for them to sign the honor code, 99 percent understood how to apply the section on academic integrity, and 98.3 percent understood how to apply the section on sexual respect and respect for persons. To ensure that the honor code reflects community standards, it is periodically reviewed by the College Council, as noted earlier. Reflecting a tradition of shared governance and communal obligation to community standards, revisions to the honor code must be approved by both the student body and the faculty. The honor code was last revised in 2008 and, as noted earlier, is currently under review by the College Council and Committee of Six.

### **Office of General Counsel**

The effectiveness of an in-house model for providing legal services is difficult to quantify. The impact and volume of the OGC's work clearly demonstrates that the in-house legal staff is providing the college with access to timely legal services that address a spectrum of issues, prevent legal issues from arising, and provide substantial cost savings through the reduction of outside legal fees. Over the years, the dean of the faculty's office, working with faculty committees, has developed a range of policies that address, among other things, grants, patents, the protection of human subjects, financial disclosure, scientific misconduct policy, and copyright. The OGC has or will be evaluating many of these policies to ensure compliance with the law.

### **Title IX**

Over the past four years, Amherst has made significant adjustments to its policies and has enhanced staffing, resources, and practices, in order to fulfill its commitment to safe and equitable access to educational benefits and opportunities regardless of sex or gender. The Title IX office engages in planning and reflection on a continual basis in consultation with the college community. Areas of focus include changes in federal law and guidance, with attendant best practices. In collaboration with the Office of Sexual Respect Education, the Title IX office annually conducts a student survey to assess experiences, attitudes, and perceptions relating areas to sexual misconduct and sexual respect. The survey identifies areas of policy and practice in need of attention, and is itself regularly evaluated. To clarify areas of concern identified in the previous two survey cycles, in 2016–2017, the Title IX office conducted anonymous online focus groups with a demographically representative sample of Amherst students. In addition, persons who attend Title IX training are provided with a survey to assess their experience, and this feedback informs improvements in programming. The Title IX office issues annual reports to the community regarding the work of the office, including aggregate data regarding received reports and adjudications.

### **Equal Opportunity**

Amherst has reaffirmed its commitment in all reaches of college life to equality of opportunity and to affirmative action under the law. The creation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in 2016 (see the chapter on standard two) and the allocation of resources to its efforts are indicative of the greater emphasis on building a community that is inclusive, not just diverse. Amherst will continue to give special importance to inclusion within the student body, faculty, and staff. This commitment finds its most tangible expression in the policies in admission and student affairs (see the chapter on standard five), faculty recruitment and retention (see the chapter on standard six), and staff recruitment and retention (see the chapter on standard seven).

### **Human Resources**

The OHR's commitment to modernization is enhancing equity and increasing transparency across numerous college functions. The job classification and compensation program (JCCP) allows employees to better understand a path for career progression through a position classification structure (see the chapter on standard seven). Through the JCCP, salary ranges for all staff positions have become more transparent and accessible. This information is now posted on Amherst's website and is publicly available to both employees and external job candidates. In 2015, after evaluating the process for approving position changes (i.e., promotions, increases in hours, filling vacancies, transfers, and compensation adjustments),

the college created the Personnel Changes Review Committee. Its charge is to ensure consistent, fair, and equitable responses to the identification, evaluation, and resolution of personnel changes in all departments.<sup>147</sup> Every two weeks, the committee reviews requests for personnel changes and uses market data, internal equity information, and budgetary considerations to inform decision-making. In addition, the introduction of a single performance management program has provided all staff with the opportunity to receive performance feedback and develop professional goals (see the chapter on standard seven). Finally, the recent employee survey has provided valuable information to help the OHR continue to address culture issues by modifying and developing policies, program and practices.

### **Digital Communications**

Amherst's website has evolved significantly over the last decade. To respond to changing needs and to incorporate new tools and functionality, the site is updated and refined constantly. In 2016, the website was redesigned, a process that had last occurred in 2008. In 2012, significant changes were made to ensure that the site would be accessible on all electronic devices. The communications office keeps pace with emergent technologies both to produce the website and to analyze users' interaction with the site. In recent years, the office's photography process has become a digital operation; equipment has been upgraded, and specialized tools have been incorporated into the office's work. Plans call for the office to continue to incorporate new technologies, increase staffing as is fiscally possible, and monitor the field of digital communications. The office involves in all of its major projects stakeholders from across campus and in the alumni community. Such collaborations have grown in strength and number over the last decade. As an example, as part of the website redesign process, all college constituencies were involved in the initial planning phase in 2015, and updates were shared regularly. Information sessions held on campus provided opportunities to demonstrate the site's new features. As this self-study was under way, the communications office, with a consultant, was developing a new graphic identity for the college. Focus groups were conducted with members of the campus community to solicit input and share work-in-progress. Because the website follows a distributed model (many staff and faculty may edit pages), the site grew significantly over the past decade, but not always in an organized way, resulting in content that is sometimes duplicative or incongruous. Work is under way to address this unplanned growth and redundant content, and progress is being made.

### **Media Relations**

In recent years, a philosophical shift from a public affairs model to a centralized communications effort has increased effectiveness. An editorial team that was once scattered across different college offices now works in the same space and comes together for weekly planning meetings, with improved productivity through collaboration. The new structure, combined with the office's use of new media relations technologies, has resulted in significantly increasing positive news coverage of the college. Future changes will be guided by the ever-shifting landscape of journalism and the twenty-four-hour news cycle. Amherst's media relations function will monitor changes in this area and will embrace emerging technologies.

### **Advancement Communications**

In 2013 and 2015 a general alumni survey and an alumni perceptions survey provided insight into the motivations, concerns, and viewpoints of the Amherst alumni body. These data continue to guide the creation and circulation of print and digital materials that support the college's fundraising goals. As a result of what was learned from these instruments, communications geared toward alumni have a greater presence across Amherst's communications platforms.

### **Editorial Content**

The redesign of the website in 2008 brought with it a greater demand for web content. This trend continued as the social media landscape intensified, and the redesign of the website in 2016 generated a need for even more content. The alumni magazine was redesigned in 2013 and refined further in 2015 and 2017. A 2012 readership survey helped determine the scope and shape of the 2013 redesign. The survey revealed that the magazine and the college's e-newsletter are the two most important sources of information about Amherst for

alumni. Focus on these two platforms has increased accordingly. All faculty, staff, and students now receive the e-newsletter and have long received the magazine.

### **Social Media**

Social media content on the website has kept pace with the audience for these sites, and a dedicated position was created in 2015 in the Office of Communications. The director of social and new media collaborates with faculty, students, and staff about social media protocol, best practices, and efforts to launch social media vehicles. For example, the college photographer provides visuals, the editorial director offers magazine feature and website content, designers create logos and Snapchat filters around college themes, writers offer articles, and the media communications director provides external news clips and articles. A six-member student social media team focuses on communications for current students, and the office expects this program to continue to develop steadily. Each summer the team develops a comprehensive plan to encompass events and issues already anticipated for the academic year, as well as strategies to manage the unexpected. Planning efforts include meeting with department heads in admission, advancement, and other areas and developing a series of GIFs, memes, filters, graphics, Tweets, and posts for the year ahead. In the two-year period from 2015 to 2017, such efforts have led to a 56 percent jump in Facebook followers (9,503 to 14,804) and a 117 percent jump in traffic on Twitter (82,200 Tweet impressions to 179,000 Tweet impressions). Reports on social media statistics, impressions, traffic, and user responses are used to inform planning in a variety of contexts within the Office of Communications and other college departments. In recent years, social media posting policies for visitors have been updated and clarified, and the social media team responds quickly to all comments, questions, and direct messages. Users who send questions to any of Amherst's social media platforms are directed to email addresses and web pages with the appropriate and helpful content. For example, those inquiring about scholarships are provided with the email address of the admission office and are guided to the associated web page. All social media platforms include descriptions about Amherst and direct contact information, including website addresses, emails, and phone numbers. The team has also created a direct point of contact via *social@amherst.edu*. Social media platforms are reviewed quarterly, and content that is outdated or inaccurate is immediately corrected.

### **PROJECTIONS**

The College Council, the Committee of Six, the student body, and the faculty as a whole will continue to assess and refine the honor code on a regular basis.

The next few years will be critical to Amherst's efforts to engage students in establishing high standards of personal and collective behavior. The college will sustain current efforts to engage students in discussions about the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs, respectful relationships, and sexual respect, in particular. Amherst must be a campus where all students, faculty, and staff are safe to conduct their lives free from the threat and reality of sexual assault and harassment.

In future years, the CPO/GC would like to expand the OGC to include a director of compliance. Recognizing that higher education becomes more regulated each year, and with highly detailed regulations, Amherst would benefit by devoting more resources to the oversight of regulatory compliance.

The initial enterprise risk management (ERM) assessment is complete. Amherst is working to minimize the highest risks. Going forward, as the college identifies new risks, the ERM Committee will evaluate the severity and probability of each risk, and, as needed, will develop mitigation plans.

The SPAC process provided an opportunity for the communications office to articulate its priorities and to place greater emphasis on planning. The office now develops communications plans prior to major annual events, conducts post-analysis, and uses lessons learned to aid future planning efforts. Information obtained through Google Analytics and other tools is informing decisions about the language, formatting, and visual presentation of online content. For videos, statistics are gathered about the number of views, length of time spent watching, and social shares; social media statistics also help the office increase its understanding about which photos provoke the most engagement. A culture of analysis has helped the office improve its efficiency and effectiveness, a trend that is expected to continue in the years to come.

## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Bidy Martin, Letter to the Amherst Community, September 12, 2016.  
<https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/president/statements?page=2>
- <sup>2</sup> “Home: Some Thoughts on the Protest in Frost Library Last Fall,” Cullen Murphy, Amherst magazine, summer 2016, pp. 17–22. <https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/magazine/issues/2016-summer/home>.
- <sup>3</sup> *Strategic Plan for Amherst College*, p. 19.  
<https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/Amherst-College-06-09-2015-strategic-plan.pdf>
- <sup>4</sup> Letter from Professor Rhonda Cobham-Sander to the Committee of Six, February 25, 2014.
- <sup>5</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/offices/facilities/test-new-homepage/projects/capital\\_project/current\\_projects/science-center](https://www.amherst.edu/offices/facilities/test-new-homepage/projects/capital_project/current_projects/science-center)
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/offices/center-teaching-learning>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/colloquia/center-humanistic-inquiry>
- <sup>8</sup> Members: Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services; Professor John Cheney, associate dean of the faculty (geology); Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer; Professor Catherine Epstein, dean of the faculty (history); Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer; Bidy Martin, president; Dunstan McNutt, research and instruction librarian; Nancy Ratner, associate dean of admission and director of academic projects; Professor Austin Sarat, associate dean of the faculty (Law Jurisprudence and Social Thought and Political Science); Walter Schaeffler, associate chief financial officer and treasurer; Janet Tobin, associate dean for academic administration (coordinator).  
[https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/general\\_information/neasc-reaccreditation-2018/committees](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/general_information/neasc-reaccreditation-2018/committees)
- <sup>9</sup> Members: Professors Amrita Basu (political science and sexuality, women’s and gender studies); Catherine Epstein (history), dean of the faculty, ex officio; Nicholas Horton (mathematics and statistics); David Schneider (music); Martha Umphrey (law, jurisprudence and social thought); and Boris Wolfson, (Russian). Janet Tobin, associate dean for academic administration, served as secretary).  
[https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/general\\_information/neasc-reaccreditation-2018/committees](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/general_information/neasc-reaccreditation-2018/committees)
- <sup>10</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/general\\_information/neasc-reaccreditation-2018/node/640035](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/general_information/neasc-reaccreditation-2018/node/640035)
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/today/green-amherst/office-of-environmental-sustainability>
- <sup>12</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/fph/fachandbook/preintroduction](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fph/fachandbook/preintroduction)
- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/support/writingcenter>
- <sup>14</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/support/moss\\_quantitative\\_center](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/support/moss_quantitative_center)
- <sup>15</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/cce>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/careers>
- <sup>17</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/studying-student-learning/departmental-learning-goals?shib\\_redir=1967705484](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/studying-student-learning/departmental-learning-goals?shib_redir=1967705484)
- <sup>18</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/facts/trustees/statements>
- <sup>19</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/president/senior-staff>
- <sup>20</sup> *Strategic Plan for Amherst College*, introduction.  
<https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/Amherst-College-06-09-2015-strategic-plan.pdf>
- <sup>21</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/diversity/diversity-inclusion-task-force>
- <sup>22</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/diversity/office-of-diversity-inclusion>
- <sup>23</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/sexual-respect/committees/title\\_ix](https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/sexual-respect/committees/title_ix)
- <sup>24</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/counseling>
- <sup>25</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/faccommittees/curriculum-committee](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees/curriculum-committee)
- <sup>26</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/general\\_information/cap](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/general_information/cap)
- <sup>27</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/today/future/strategic-planning>
- <sup>28</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/guidelines-for-external-reviews](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/guidelines-for-external-reviews)
- <sup>29</sup> <https://acpress.amherst.edu/>
- <sup>30</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/careers>
- <sup>31</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/global-learning/study\\_abroad](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/global-learning/study_abroad)
- <sup>32</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/faccommittees/curriculum-committee](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/faccommittees/curriculum-committee)
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- <sup>34</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/sexual-respect/committees/oversight\\_cmte/report\\_2013\\_january](https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/sexual-respect/committees/oversight_cmte/report_2013_january)
- <sup>35</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/cce/student-initiated-ideas/design-thinking-challenge>
- <sup>36</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/offices/enviro\\_health\\_safety](https://www.amherst.edu/offices/enviro_health_safety)
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47 In 2008, the senior staff comprised the dean of the faculty (the chief academic officer), the chief advancement officer, the treasurer (renamed the chief financial officer), the dean of admission and financial aid, the dean of students (renamed the chief student affairs officer), and the executive assistant to the president and the secretary of the board of trustees (renamed the chief of staff and secretary to the board of trustees).

48 <https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/aas>

49 Amherst administered the COACHE survey in 2013 and again in 2017 to reassess issues of faculty life at the college.

50 [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/support-for-teaching/mellon-project](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/support-for-teaching/mellon-project)

51 In 2007, 17 percent of Amherst students majored in STEM; by 2016 that percentage had doubled, with, one-third of students majored in STEM, enrollments in the sciences since 2007 have increased by 67 percent.

52 [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs)

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65 <https://www.amherst.edu/museums/naturalhistory>

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70 [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/support-for-teaching/mellon-project](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/support-for-teaching/mellon-project)

71 Statements of Intellectual Responsibility, on Freedom of Expression, and Dissent, and on Respect for Persons

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73 <https://www.amherst.edu/admission/mission-statement>

74 [https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/facts/common\\_data\\_sets/2017](https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/facts/common_data_sets/2017)

75 <https://www.amherst.edu/media/view/669797>

76 <http://myatlas.cms.com/map/?id=750#!t/1270:1>

77 <https://www.amherst.edu/admission>

78 *Image Now*: Scanning software for students' academic records

79 *Titanium*: electronic medical records system designed specifically for higher education counseling centers

80 *Medicat*: electronic medical record system designed to support higher education institutions medical health centers

81 *Maxient*: database to support case management for academic, care, and conduct issues for higher education

82 *StarRez*: student housing software to support all facets of residential life

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84 <https://www.amherst.edu/offices/student-affairs/new/leap>

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89 [https://www.amherst.edu/offices/campus\\_police?shib\\_redir=664895544](https://www.amherst.edu/offices/campus_police?shib_redir=664895544)

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[https://www.amherst.edu/offices/human\\_resources/currenttrainings/supervisoryforum](https://www.amherst.edu/offices/human_resources/currenttrainings/supervisoryforum)

120 Scroll to the end of [https://www.amherst.edu/offices/human\\_resources](https://www.amherst.edu/offices/human_resources)

121 “The library operates as a campus hub, in which it functions as an intellectual and physical space for a wide range of academic and nonacademic pursuits and events; a connector, in which it builds community by forging relationships and creating opportunities among a wide range of groups and individuals on campus and beyond; a responsive innovator, in which it perpetually assesses user needs to create expectations that are exceeded through a welcoming atmosphere and continuous staff development; a center of scholarly communication, in which it takes a leadership role in developing and offering new models of information exchange; a steward of resources and disseminator of the same, in which it creates, curates, manages, delivers, and preserves resources to support the community on campus and beyond, with an emphasis on removing barriers to use; and a place of teaching, research, and learning, in which it works as a partner in academic research and personal development by prioritizing teaching and providing resources, spaces, and technology for exploration.”

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123 [https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/fph/fachandbook/electronicspolicy/node/69814](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fph/fachandbook/electronicspolicy/node/69814)

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127 <https://www.amherst.edu/alumni/survey>

128 <https://www.amherst.edu/news/specialevents/convocation/2017>

129 The mission of the Amherst College Office of General Counsel is to support the operation of the college by: providing quality legal advice; engaging in proactive risk management; selecting and coordinating with outside counsel; overseeing efforts to comply with legal requirements; and otherwise managing the legal affairs of the college. We seek to be principled, knowledgeable, helpful, ethical, and as transparent as possible in our interactions with the college community, subject to



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necessary restraints of confidentiality. It is our philosophy that prudent management of legal issues enables the college to properly focus its resources on the education of students in accordance with the college's core educational mission.

<sup>130</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/sexual-respect/title\\_ix\\_explained](https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/sexual-respect/title_ix_explained)

<sup>131</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/offices/student-affairs/community-standards/intellectual-responsibility-and-plagiarism>

<sup>132</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/offices/human\\_resources/policies/conflictinterest/cip](https://www.amherst.edu/offices/human_resources/policies/conflictinterest/cip)

<sup>133</sup> <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/35638/index.html>

<sup>134</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/library/about/policies/general>

<sup>135</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/about/privacy/node/233>

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/offices/ombuds>

<sup>137</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/ResearchMisconductPolicy\\_Feb26-13.pdf](https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/ResearchMisconductPolicy_Feb26-13.pdf)

<sup>138</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/user/AmherstCollege/videos>

<sup>139</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/today/amherst-in-pictures>

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/news/amherstinthenews>

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/alumni/connect/news/enews>

<sup>142</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/offices/office\\_of\\_the\\_chief\\_financial\\_officer/annual\\_reports](https://www.amherst.edu/offices/office_of_the_chief_financial_officer/annual_reports)

<sup>143</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/offices/campus\\_police/general\\_safety/stats](https://www.amherst.edu/offices/campus_police/general_safety/stats)

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/magazine/>

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/news/social>

<sup>146</sup> <https://www.amherst.edu/give>

<sup>147</sup> [https://www.amherst.edu/offices/human\\_resources/personnel-changes-review-process](https://www.amherst.edu/offices/human_resources/personnel-changes-review-process)

