

Benedictine University

2010 Systems Portfolio

Overview (O) –

Benedictine University is a private, not-for-profit institution distinguished by its rich history in the Benedictine and Catholic traditions. Founded in Chicago in 1887 as St. Procopius College, the University moved to Lisle, Illinois, in 1901, became a coeducational institution in 1968, and was renamed Illinois Benedictine College in 1971. The University eventually added adult, master's level, and doctoral programs, and in 1996 became Benedictine University.

Guided by *The Rule of St. Benedict*, Benedictine University continues to build its educational mission on the values that Benedictine men and women have followed since *The Rule's* inception. Chief among these Benedictine values are a concern for the development and welfare of each person, an appreciation for living and working in community, an emphasis on a life lived in balance, and the exercise of hospitality toward others.

Benedictine University also strongly relies on the Catholic intellectual tradition. In fidelity to that tradition, we are committed to investigating questions that address the ultimate purpose of life, to the dialogue between faith and culture, and to the promotion of ecumenical, inter-religious, and cross-cultural understanding. As a Catholic University, Benedictine University is also obligated to follow the principles laid out in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the Apostolic Constitution to which all Catholic Universities must subscribe. While its message is distinctively Catholic, Benedictine University is open to members of all faiths and cultures. In exercising the Benedictine value of hospitality to others, an appreciation for differences can be facilitated in a climate promoting the common good.

The University's Catholic and Benedictine identity is enhanced by our Center for Mission and Identity (CMI) through curricular integration, faculty discussion and study, and national collaborations. Its activities include *Conversatio* Round Table Discussions, a Visiting Scholar in Catholic Thought Program, Summer Faculty Workshops, a Benedictine Pedagogy Conference, library resource and acquisition development, outreach programs, and CMI publications.

The University's Mission Statement states that

Benedictine University is dedicated to the education of undergraduate and graduate students from diverse ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds. As an academic community committed to liberal arts and professional education, distinguished and guided by our Roman Catholic tradition and Benedictine heritage, we prepare our students for a lifetime as active, informed and responsible citizens and leaders in the world community.

Our vision statement adds that

Benedictine University is a Catholic University in the Benedictine Tradition that provides a values-centered Liberal Arts Education enriched by our excellence in Science.

Pursuant to these statements, Benedictine University creates a community of scholars who are committed to Learning and Scholarship, Diversity, and Service.

Learning and Scholarship

Benedictine University has long been strong in the natural sciences, with our graduates having a high acceptance rate into medical and other professional schools. In 2007, the University of Oregon's Center for Educational Policy Research recognized two general chemistry courses at Benedictine University for reflecting the best of college teaching, and specific elements of the courses were designated as "exemplary." During the 2005-2006 academic year, the institution received approximately one million dollars in extramural funding, and an estimated \$600,000 in 2006-2007 to equip a new Genomics laboratory. Since 1991, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute has given Benedictine University three awards totaling more than two million dollars, awards which have had a dramatic impact on the delivery of our science curricula. Most recently, our new Nursing program was awarded a \$240,000 Illinois Board of Higher Education R.N. Expansion Grant. But grant success is not limited to the sciences: In 2009, our new Global Studies program received an \$84,000 grant to develop a China Studies concentration within the Global Studies major, followed by an additional \$92,000 grant for the 2010-2011 academic year to support a new faculty position in Chinese Language and Culture, and provide further funding for faculty development, library resources and teaching materials.

Students participating in the Public Service Fellows Program component of the new Center for Civic Leadership and Public Service will be part of simulations including Mock Trial, Model U.N. and Model Illinois Government. The French Delegation to the National Model United Nations in March 2007, which consisted of 27 Benedictine University students, was awarded Outstanding Delegation, the highest honor given by the National Collegiate Conference Association (NCCA).

Diversity

Long situated in the top tier of *U.S. News and World Report's* "Best Universities – Master" in the Midwest, Benedictine University's diverse student body is even more highly ranked. For 2008, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Benedictine University 13th in the Midwest (and sixth in Illinois) for Ethnic Diversity and as a Top Campus with the Most International Students (fifth in Illinois).

At Benedictine, we promote learning about others through a variety of special events organized by groups of students, faculty, and staff, including the International Programs Office, the Diversity Advisory Committee, the Muslim Student Association, the Benedictine University Unity Foundation, and several others.

Every summer since 2005, selected students from 16 countries and territories from the Middle East and North Africa have participated in a six-week Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Study of the United States Institutes for Student Leaders program. Benedictine University was one of only six colleges and universities across the country selected to host students as part of this U.S. Department of State initiative.

New academic programs link learning and diversity. The Bachelor of Arts in Bilingual Journalism prepares students to work in the Spanish-language market. The interdisciplinary Global Studies major uniquely prepares students to understand the cultures, peoples, and languages of Latin America, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East.

In addition to faculty-led study-abroad programs and partnership exchange programs with international universities in Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, and Spain, Benedictine University's graduate business programs are now offered at universities in China

and Vietnam. In addition, Benedictine students from the U.S. may take a term of courses in China as part of their M.B.A. program. In June 2007, we opened the Asia Institute on the Lisle campus to serve as an education portal for firms who wish to do business in that part of the world.

Service

The exercise of hospitality and appreciation for living and working in community are two Benedictine values that underlie the commitment by students, faculty, and staff to service. Numerous clubs, organizations, and departments provide service to the surrounding community on a regular basis:

- Benedictine University's Center for Mission and Identity has collaborated with St. Procopius Abbey and Monastery, the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem, and Benet Academy, in community outreach efforts to promote *Beit Benedikt*, a peace academy in Jerusalem.
- Relying on student and faculty volunteers, the College of Science has hosted the Illinois Science Olympiad regional competition each of the last five years. This is an annual academic competition.
- Every year, students and faculty in the College of Business serve clients through the Volunteers in Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, helping low-income tax payers complete their tax forms and saving them thousands of dollars.
- Through the Healthy Table nutrition education center, dietetic interns perform nutrition assessments, offer health screening and individualized counseling, and give group presentations to underserved populations. Interns also deliver outreach services at an area clinic and homeless shelter with a new food bank initiative underway.
- Student Life regularly organizes a wide variety of public service events, such as arranging mission trips to areas in need, recruiting students to help at a food pantry, assisting on-campus blood drives, and organizing the American Cancer Society Relay for Life on campus.

O1. What are your goals for student learning and shaping an academic climate? What are your key credit and non-credit instructional programs, and educational systems, services, and technologies that directly support them?

Benedictine University's Vision Statement is that we are "a Catholic University in the Benedictine Tradition that provides a values-centered Liberal Arts Education enriched by our excellence in Science." The University's Mission Statement further elaborates on our Vision: "Benedictine University is dedicated to the education of undergraduate and graduate students from diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. As an academic community committed to liberal arts and professional education distinguished and guided by our Roman Catholic Tradition and Benedictine Heritage, we prepare our students for a lifetime as active, informed, and responsible citizens and leaders in the world community."

Given this context, the University is committed to assisting all students in the acquisition of knowledge and cultivation of skills in **six** major learning objective areas. Graduates of the University's degree programs will attain the following:

1. **Disciplinary Knowledge:**

- Acquire, understand and synthesize discipline-based knowledge;
- Apply disciplinary methodologies in their qualitative and quantitative dimensions;
- Understand the content and interrelationships of specific areas of study; and
- Communicate effectively within and across the disciplines.

2. **Communication Skills:**

- Express oneself clearly and concisely in multiple forms; and
- Appreciate and develop creative expression.

Problem-Solving Skills:

- Reason and communicate informed judgments;
- Identify and solve problems, independently and cooperatively; and
- Understand the nature of and evaluate evidence.

3. **Social Responsibility:**

- Confront and resolve ethical issues and contribute to the work of peace and social justice;
- Exhibit stewardship of self and environment; and
- Develop good citizenship.

4. **Global Perspectives:**

- Benefit from diversity of opinion, abilities, and culture;
- Recognize the importance of the interdependence of cultures and nations; and
- Communicate effectively within and across cultural boundaries.

5. **Self-Direction and Personal Growth:**

- Develop a sense of intellectual curiosity and a desire for lifelong learning;
- Strive for a life lived in balance;
- Develop leadership potential; and
- Foster spiritual growth.

In addition to these six common learning objectives, students become acquainted with the Benedictine values embedded within *The Rule of St. Benedict*, written over 1,500 years ago.

Benedictine University has a five-college structure: the College of Business, the College of Education and Health Services, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Science, and the Margaret and Harold Moser College of Adult and Professional Studies. Through the colleges, Benedictine University offers (<http://www.ben.edu/admissions/>):

- 49 traditional undergraduate majors
- 6 adult accelerated undergraduate degree programs
- 13 graduate programs
- 32 graduate certificate programs
- 4 doctoral programs

Among the baccalaureate degrees offered at Benedictine University's main campus in Lisle, Illinois, are:

- [Accounting](#)
- [Bilingual Journalism](#)
- [Biochemistry](#)
- [Biology](#) (BS and BA)
- [Business and Economics](#)
- [Business with Science Applications](#)
- [Chemistry](#)
- [Clinical Laboratory Science](#)
- [Communication Arts](#)
- [Computer Information Systems](#)
- [Computer Science](#)
- Criminal Justice
- [Diagnostic Medical Sonography](#)
- [Economics](#)
- [Elementary Education](#)
- [Engineering Science](#)
- [English Language and Literature](#)
- [Environmental Science](#)
- [Finance](#)
- [Fine Arts](#)
- [Global Studies](#)
- Graphic Arts and Design
- [Health Science](#)
- [History](#)
- [International Business and Economics](#)
- [International Studies](#)
- [Management and Organizational Behavior](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [Medical Humanities](#)
- [Music](#)
- Music Education
- [Nuclear Medicine Technology](#)
- [Nutrition](#)
- [Philosophy](#)
- Physical Education
- [Physics](#)
- [Political Science](#)
- [Physics](#)
- [Political Science](#)
- [Psychology](#)
- [Radiation Therapy](#)

- Secondary Education
- [Social Science](#)
- [Sociology](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Special Education](#)
- [Studio Art](#)
- [Theology](#)
- [Writing and Publishing](#)

We also offer guidance to our students to assist them in preparing successful applications for pre-professional programs, including pre-Chiropractic, pre-Dental, pre-Medical, pre-Occupational Therapy, pre-Optometry, pre-Pharmacy, pre-Physical Therapy, pre-Podiatry, pre-Veterinary, and pre-Law.

In fall 2008, the undergraduate majors with the largest enrollments were Biology and Health Science, followed by Psychology and Elementary Education.

Accelerated degree programs are also available to working adults who cannot take classes during the day, but who still want to complete a university degree to upgrade their professional skills or to advance in their current position. Twelve baccalaureate degrees (plus one associate degree) are currently offered at the University in night and weekend formats:

- [Accounting](#)
- [Business Administration \(Associate of Arts\)](#)
- [Business and Economics](#)
- [Computer Information Systems](#)
- [Computer Science](#)
- [Finance](#)
- [Health Administration](#)
- [Management](#)
- [Management and Organizational Behavior](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- Nursing and Health
- [Organizational Leadership](#)
- [Psychology](#)

In fall 2008, the adult degree programs with the highest enrollments were the Bachelor of Arts in Management program and the Associate of Arts in Business Administration offered in a learning team (cohort) format. The students in these programs are usually part-time and continuously enroll in courses until the degree is completed.

Besides its undergraduate degrees, Benedictine University offers 13 master's and four doctoral degrees. These advanced degrees are listed below:

- [Master of Arts in Education \(M.A.Ed.\)](#)
- [Master of Business Administration \(M.B.A.\)](#)

- [Master of Education \(M.Ed.\)](#)
- [Master of Public Health \(M.P.H.\)](#)
- [Master of Science in Accountancy \(M.S.A.\)](#)
- [Master of Science in Clinical Exercise Physiology \(M.S.C.E.P.\)](#)
- Master of Science in Science Content and Process (M.S.S.C.P.)
- [Master of Science in Clinical Psychology \(M.S.C.P.\)](#)
- [Master of Science in Leadership \(M.S.L.\)](#)
- [Master of Science in Management Information Systems \(M.S.M.I.S.\)](#)
- [Master of Science in Management and Organizational Behavior \(M.S.M.O.B.\)](#)
- Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.)
- [Master of Science in Nutrition and Wellness \(M.S.N.W.\)](#)
- [Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\) in Organization Development](#)
- [Doctor of Education \(Ed.D.\) in Higher Education and Organizational Change](#)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Values-driven Leadership
- Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.) in Values-driven Leadership

Most courses within each program are taught in classrooms and labs, and several incorporate extensive use of technology and a variety of web resources (see IO1). In the spring of 2009, the University offered more than 350 Blackboard-enhanced classes. A number of major courses for adults in our accelerated programs are delivered in online formats, and weekly peer learning sessions supplement the electronic materials. Online distance learning is currently being used in the graduate business and public health programs. The M.Ed. program has transitioned to a blended delivery format.

- **Web-based Student Services** will allow students to access their academic records, develop a plan to complete their degree, utilize a number of academic advising resources, register for classes each semester, as well as view an array of other services through the online PeopleSoft (PS) system.
- **A Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning** has been designed to deliver a professional development program for all the University's faculty and staff. It has enhanced an understanding of the diverse learning styles and needs of current and future students. The Center further incorporates technology, especially the web, to meet those needs in pedagogically sound ways. Technologically innovative teaching methodologies have been derived to enhance instruction. The Center also has developed student web-based portfolios as graduation requirements for particular programs to meet emerging professional needs in those respective disciplines.

Faculty can utilize a number of devices within the Center, including state-of-the-art computers, video and digital cameras, scanners, and projection units. A software suite for multimedia courseware development is also available, which includes the Dreamweaver, Flash, and Cool Edit programs plus video editing features.

The Center also focuses on developing the professional skills of its faculty by sponsoring a number of professional workshops on campus each year, in which noted speakers are invited to share their expertise on pedagogical transformation through technology. Individuals like Dr. David Brown, vice president and dean of Wake Forest's International Center for Computer

Enhanced Learning (ICCEL), have delivered presentations on how computer technology can foster a sense of community among students, as well as between students and faculty within the classroom.

O2. What key organizational services, other than instructional programs, do you provide for your students and other external stakeholders? What programs do you operate to achieve them?

To complement our academics, the Rice Athletic Center features basketball and tennis courts. The Benedictine Sports Complex, which opened in the fall of 2005, provides our athletes and the surrounding community with spacious football, baseball, softball, and track fields, and multiuse skyboxes.

All of the University's residence halls have Internet and cable television access. Founders' Woods ("FW"), a not-for-profit organization, benefits our students by providing fully furnished, apartment-style units located on the fringe of campus, and their design complements the University's academic buildings, athletic facilities, and other physical structures.

The Krasa Student Center houses the

- Cafeteria - <http://www.bendiningservices.com/>
- Chapel and University Ministry - <http://www.ben.edu/aquip/ministry>
- Bookstore - <http://www.ben.edu/aquip/bookstore>
- Mailroom and Print Room
- Benedictine Central (for registration and financial aid)
- Student Success Center - <http://www.ben.edu/SSC>
- Student Health Services - <http://www.ben.edu/aquip/health>
- *The Candor* Office (student newspaper) - <http://www.thecandor.com/>
- Student Activities Office - http://www.ben.edu/student_life/studentactivities.cfm
- Residence Life Office - http://www.ben.edu/student_life/reslife.cfm

- Career Development Office - http://www.ben.edu/student_life/careerdevelopment.cfm
- International Office - <http://www.ben.edu/internationalcenter>
- University Police - <http://www.ben.edu/police>
- Meeting Rooms and Community Areas

Videoconferencing is becoming increasingly popular as a way to facilitate meetings at the University. It saves time and money on travel and accommodation, and it can make meetings easier to arrange, overcoming some of the difficulties of getting people from different places together at the same time. Videoconferencing is commonly used for:

- Interviewing prospective students and staff
- Research group meetings
- Business meetings
- Teaching and distance learning
- Presentations
- Seminar presentations to remote audiences

Health and Safety

The University complies with all state and federal requirements for safety and environmental concerns.

The Employee Handbook outlines how to deal with hazardous materials and the proper disposal of those substances. The University offers Health and Safety programs on campus for employees, including: CPR-automatic external defibrillator (AED) training and AEDs. Procedures regarding student records are in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); incoming freshmen are informed of their rights through their advisors and Student Success Center staff.

The implementation of a lightning warning system took place to safeguard the students on campus and community members using the Sports Complex. The device is monitored 24/7 by the University Police.

The Chief of the Benedictine University Police, together with 11 seasoned state-certified law enforcement officers and 7 paraprofessional safety officers, takes the lead role in matters regarding overall community safety and response, traffic safety, crime prevention, emergency services, and community relations, education and awareness. Campus police record and monitor interactive high-resolution video cameras in all three campus residence halls where residents are required to use access control cards to gain access to the facilities.

Other Enriching Climate Activities

A number of other campus activities have enriched the University climate considerably. Some of the more notable ones are:

- **Team Benedictine**, in which members of the community engage in beautification projects (e.g., planting trees, shrubs and flowers) on a regular basis;
- **Music Concerts and Jazz Performances** provided by faculty and students in the Fine Arts Department for the enjoyment of the community;
- **An Open Art Collection** provided by our art curator and placed on display in **prominent** locations throughout the campus buildings;
- **A Virtual Library Club and Book Chats** that allow the community to discuss current bestsellers and other texts;
- **The Jim Ryan Seminars**, where a leading state politician (and alum) delivers an assortment of politically relevant topics to our faculty, students, and interested members of the local community.

O3. What are the short- and long-term requirements and expectations of the current student and other key stakeholder groups you serve? Who are your primary competitors in serving these groups?

The short-term and long-term requirements and expectations of students and other stakeholders are identified in *Figure 10-1*. Student requirements and expectations are determined through a variety of sources, including formal survey methods, e.g., National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), informal focus groups and student surveys, and feedback provided to enrollment representatives, academic advisors, partners and program administrators. In addition, trends in enrollment and registration, campus housing, and participation in campus life are analyzed to further define student needs and expectations. The requirements and expectations of other stakeholders are identified through a variety of sources, including alumni surveys and employer feedback.

Figure IO-1. Short-Term and Long-Term Expectations of Students and Other Stakeholders

Students	Short-Term	Long-Term
Freshmen	Collegiate experience; quality instruction and advisement; affordability; well sequenced courses; academic and career support; degree; ready access to qualified academic assistance	Good reputation; further education; jobs and professional opportunities
Traditional Transfer	Quality instruction and advisement; affordability; compact program of study; degree	Good reputation; further education; jobs and professional opportunities
Adult (non-cohort)	Quality instruction and advisement; affordability; compact program of study; convenient, flexible scheduling; internship opportunities; degree	Value; good reputation; further education; jobs and professional opportunities
Adult (cohort)	Quality instruction and advisement; affordability; full-service program model; degree	Value; good reputation; further education; jobs and professional opportunities
Graduate	Quality instruction and advisement; well-sequenced courses; career development support; integration of theory and practice in chosen field	Value; good reputation; certification or licensure

International	Collegiate experience; cultural experience; language immersion; technical assistance with visas	Good reputation; language proficiency; employment opportunities through experience
Residential	Quality food and living conditions; safety; social atmosphere; opportunities to participate in campus life	Life-long relationships
Commuter	Convenient parking and class scheduling; accessibility to services when needed; opportunities to participate in campus life	Life-long relationships; reduced educational debt burden
Other Stakeholders	Short-Term	Long-Term
Parents/Guardians	Quality education; value; safe environment; support services	Value; good reputation; positive employment and educational outcomes
Prospective Students	Academic program availability; affordability; campus life; convenience (if commuter)	Quality education; value; positive employment and higher education preparation
Alumni	Positive employment and higher educational outcomes	Good reputation; continuing education opportunities; opportunity to serve University
Board of Trustees	Responsible fiscal management; fulfill stated mission	Sound fiscal management; academic excellence; response to community needs; University leadership consistent with mission and values
Abbey	Fulfill stated mission; good stewards of financial support to University	Sound fiscal management; academic excellence; response to community needs; University leadership consistent with mission and values
Partners	Quality programs; good reputation; value	Good reputation; growth opportunities

Friends of the University	Worthy investment	Good reputation; quality education; investment in future
Legislators	Quality education; responsible fiscal management	Response to community needs; educated workforce; sound fiscal management
Local Community	Educational, cultural, athletic enhancements	Ongoing educational, cultural, athletic enhancements; opportunity to attract business and residents
Business Employers	Well-prepared employees, interns, co-ops	Continuing education opportunities; respond to changing workforce needs
Graduate and Professional Schools	Well-prepared students	Quality education; good reputation
High Schools/Community Colleges	Academic program availability; affordability; campus life; articulation agreements	Quality education; good reputation; positive employment and higher education outcomes

Our three primary areas of competitors are:

- Area Catholic and liberal arts colleges and universities are potential competitors for our undergraduate programs.
- Local satellite campuses of larger regional institutions are the competition for our graduate programs.
- Competitors of our on-line degree programs.

O4. What are your administrative, faculty, and staff human resources? What key factors determine how you organize and use them?

Benedictine University employs 752 faculty and 268 staff members. Of these, 112 faculty are full-time at various ranks: instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor. Of the 112 faculty, 81% are Caucasian, 11% Asian, 4% Black/African American, 2% Hispanic/Latino, and 2% not specified. We have 640 active job records for adjunct instructors, not all of whom work for us each term; for example, 322 worked during the fall 2009 term. Adjunct faculty are hired based on demand for courses in particular disciplines, as well as on the number of cohort groups in accelerated baccalaureate and master's programs each year. Each faculty member has at least a master's degree, but the majority of the full-time faculty members have completed their doctorate. Continuing scholarly and professional development is expected of all full-time faculty, as well as excellent teaching and a consistent record of service to the University and to the wider community.

The 268 Benedictine staff members are classified as either salaried or hourly employees. Of these, 80% are Caucasian, 3% Asian, 10% Black/African American, 2.5% Hispanic/Latino, 0.5% American Indian/Alaska Native and 4% not specified. Of our salaried employees, 171 are full-time and 21 are part-time. Of the hourly employees, 60 work full-time and 16 part-time. In-house professional development opportunities are provided year-round to all University employees, such as computer training sessions for use of the Microsoft Office Suite. Full-time employees are eligible to receive full tuition remission benefits for bachelor's and master's courses and degree programs at the University. In addition, staff members are expected to serve on University-wide committees and to participate in Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) action projects along with administrators and faculty.

Currently, there are 431 student workers who typically work between 5 - 20 hours per week. They are employed in a variety of capacities: as tutors, teaching assistants, laboratory assistants, library assistants, computer and networking assistants, housekeeping and maintenance assistants, secretarial assistants, and administrative assistants. Student workers serving in an academic capacity (e.g. tutors) must meet appropriate prerequisites.

Benedictine University is committed to providing a dynamic academic community based on rigorous undergraduate and graduate study, underscored by a strong Catholic

heritage and time-honored Benedictine values. Its resources are organized in accordance with this commitment, spelled out more completely in its [Mission, Vision, and Values statement](#).

O5. What strategies align the leadership, decision making, and communication processes with the mission and values, the policies and requirements of the oversight entities, and the legal, ethical, and social responsibilities?

The President is the Chief Executive Officer and exercises administrative oversight over all affairs of the institution. In addition to his executive assistant, two vice presidents assist him: the executive vice president and the provost/vice president for academic affairs. The executive vice president handles all non-academic matters, including supervision of student enrollments and monitoring the University budget. The provost/vice president for academic affairs is the chief academic officer and has specific responsibility for reviewing all academic programs, supporting faculty development initiatives, and establishing policies for future programmatic growth at the University.

Supporting these vice presidents are faculty and staff who have day-to-day supervisory, decision-making responsibilities for managing the University and for communicating decisions to the appropriate members of the University community.

In addition, the University's leadership and communication systems include the Provost's Council (comprised largely of the college deans), the Academic Council, Faculty Assembly, University Services Senior Staff, and the Student Senate. These groups make policy recommendations to the Senior Administration (i.e., the President and vice presidents). There is also Faculty Welfare Committee, whose members are elected by their constituents and who concern themselves with the well-being of their constituents and make recommendations to the Senior Administration.

The University's leadership also includes the University Chancellor and the Board of Trustees (BOT). The Chancellor, who is the Benedictine Abbot of St. Procopius Abbey, maintains the Benedictine presence on the campus and oversees policies as they relate to the Catholic and Benedictine tradition. Having ultimate institutional authority, the BOT formulates and determines general policies as deemed necessary for the administration and development of the University, in accordance with the institutional mission and the terms specified in the University's by-laws.

The Chancellor and the BOT communicate on a regular basis with the President, who is responsible for implementing the policies of the Chancellor and BOT through operational procedures consistent with sound academic practice. Directives from the Chancellor and the BOT are transmitted to the appropriate University personnel through the President. In turn, those charged with implementing these policies describe their results and report them back to the Chancellor and Board. For example, the authority for making decisions on academic matters is delegated to the faculty and provost/vice president for academic affairs, through the President, with the power of review and final decision resting with the BOT.

The President meets regularly with the vice presidents to discuss current matters facing the University. Similarly, the executive vice president meets regularly with the University Services Senior Staff, as does the provost/vice president for academic affairs with the Provost's Council. Designees of the executive vice president meet regularly with the Executive Board of the Student Government Association. The provost/vice president for academic affairs meets regularly with the chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee.

Periodically, the President and vice presidents meet with the Chancellor and BOT to maintain the necessary leadership alignment. Updates on all academic and non-academic matters are provided at these meetings; in turn, any requests from the Chancellor and BOT are relayed to the vice presidents, who will then meet with their respective constituents to address the relevant issues.

06. What strategies align your key administrative support goals with your mission and values? What services, facilities, and equipment do you provide to achieve them?

Benedictine's actions and goals are guided by its Mission, Vision, and Values statements. The University's five strategic goals, as outlined in our AQIP Strategic Planning Master Document, are shaped by these principles and include the following:

1. Striving for Academic Excellence;
2. Developing an Understanding of What It Means to be a Catholic University Grounded in the Benedictine Tradition;
3. Improving the Graduation Rate of All Student Groups;
4. Strengthening Communication and Collaboration Across the University; and
5. Increasing Revenues.

Within this framework, University Services has established four tactical goals:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Revenue and
- Customer Service

The AQIP Strategic Planning Master Document embodies both the strategic and tactical goals. The President, with the Executive Vice President and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, review and revise this document in the spring of each year, with input from the Academic Council and the University Service's Senior Staff Team. The revised document is then submitted to the BOT for review and approval. Once approved, the Strategic Plan sets the University's course for the following fiscal year.

The formulation of our Strategic Plan takes into account the needs and expectations of our students. The President of the Student Senate participates in the monthly University Services meetings, chaired by the Executive Vice President. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs has regularly scheduled monthly meetings with representatives of the Student Government Association; in the 2004 - 2005 academic year, it was a

member of the student newspaper's (i.e., *The Candor's*) editorial board. Members of the middle-level administration (such as the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, the Dean of Students, the Director of Information Technology, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, and the Director of Campus Services) attend Student Senate meetings to consult with that body on upcoming initiatives and ongoing projects.

In addition, student satisfaction with our strategic goals is monitored through surveys like the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, which is used to benchmark Benedictine with other universities. Student well being, personal development, and academic success remain the foci of a number of University personnel, including admissions counselors, freshman advisors, academic advisors, Financial Aid staff, Student Services staff, and faculty, so that our strategic goals can be realized.

Similar assessments are used to measure the satisfaction of other stakeholders, such as employees and alumni. For faculty and administrators, the UCLA-HERI Survey was recently instituted in the 2004-2005 academic year to determine how the University ranks with other private, Catholic institutions in the country. With alumni, in-house surveys are administered on a periodic basis to assess the perceptions of this group as well. Information received from the aforementioned instruments is compared with those established strategic goals, and any discrepancies are subsequently addressed.

07. What determines the data and information you collect and distribute? What information resources and technologies govern how you manage and use data?

In addition to data collection required for compliance with external bodies, e.g., Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the Higher Learning Commission, and accrediting bodies for individual programs, Benedictine University regularly collects a variety of information for its internal constituents. Scheduled program review, for example, requires that academic programs be provided with information about their majors and minors. A new action project is underway to centralize data on complaints and problems being reported across the institution. Annual reports from academic programs require chairs to provide assessment data that is in their possession. Graduation audits, increasingly automated, utilize information from both the registrar's office and department chairs to ensure all students applying for degrees have met (or will have met) the appropriate requirements. Scheduling of courses, both in terms of time blocks and appropriate locations, requires information to be collected from academic programs and then made available to advisors and students. The Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) system of course evaluation has been in place at Benedictine University for several years and by the fall of 2010 will be entirely online, which will save staff a considerable amount of time and reassure students that their remarks are confidential.

Students and faculty engaged in research must work with Benedictine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to determine how to acquire and retain records of their projects. The IRB also reviews annually scheduled national surveys and questionnaires, such as the CIRP survey, in order to ensure their compliance with mandated safety and confidentiality requirements.

Data collected using nationally normed instruments (e.g., the National Survey of Student Engagement) is relied upon to determine how well the University is accomplishing its goals, particularly with respect to comparable institutions. It has also been used to inform action projects, such as one targeting an increase in the number of undergraduate students engaged in research.

Another action project involved piloting a software package for entering, compiling, and tracking assessment data within and across academic disciplines. While the package that was piloted did not meet our requirements, we are going to shift our course management system to a new vendor that appears to have greater flexibility for the collection and reporting of assessment data.

O8. What are the key commitments, constraints, challenges, and opportunities with which you must align your organization's short- and long-term plans and strategies?

One of our commitments is to continue building partnerships. These partnerships enable some of our entrepreneurial programs and ventures, such as our business programs at Shenyang University in China, partnership with Springfield College, and the Sports Complex on campus. Affiliations provide local, national, and international learning opportunities for students at sites, such as community organizations and medical facilities, business and industry, and government agencies. We have successfully collaborated with external partners on grant ventures, which provided funding for research activities.

Although we do have a data-informed assessment process with program review cycles in place, we have an opportunity to enhance the quality of student learning as we broaden the scope of assessment to include comparative data, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), and Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA).

Another important commitment is to increase the diversity of the full-time faculty so that it more closely resembles the University's student base. It is important that we offer academic role models and mentors for our extremely diverse group of students. A challenge to meeting this goal is our limited resources to attract the pool of qualified candidates for positions. Building partnerships with area businesses for the purpose of student mentoring may enable mentoring by community members from diverse backgrounds.

Our key vulnerability is that Benedictine University is largely a tuition-driven institution and thus relies on meeting targeted student enrollment each year. While increases in those numbers have been the norm rather than the exception, there is no guarantee that future enrollment trends will follow this pattern. It is projected that before long, the changing demographic profile will result in fewer freshmen, potentially causing a negative impact on our revenue. Another burden is meeting the high cost of widespread technology needs as we expand our on-line programs, increase the use of our learning

management system, and utilize technology in the classroom as a tool for teaching and learning.

Adjunct faculty development is a potential area of vulnerability because of the large number of adjunct faculty employed by the University. We will need to be diligent in ensuring that these members of the university receive the training and development to facilitate community building, understand and promote Benedictine values, and improve faculty-student engagement. In 2008 we increased adjunct faculty compensation as a step to encourage the longevity of this vital segment of our faculty, and the provost expects to do more in this area over the next few years.

Because we are outgrowing the available space in our buildings, we are becoming increasingly creative with course scheduling to accommodate the need for classes and offices. We now hold cohort classes away from the main Lisle campus, at numerous sites in Illinois, and at the Moser Center in Naperville. A further vulnerability is that, although the Center for Mission and Identity (CMI) has a budget and has become established as a functional “center” of the University, it still has no designated space and staffing with which to work. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning faces a similar challenge.

O9. What key partnerships and collaborations, external and internal, contribute to your organization’s effectiveness?

One of Benedictine University’s long-term goals is “to become a leader in developing effective partnerships with other learning institutions at the state, national, and international levels.” We are, therefore, expanding our established reputation from a single-campus, top tier University in the Midwestern corridor of Illinois to a multi-site, global institution promoting the Benedictine and Catholic traditions. To achieve this goal, Benedictine University has entered into a number of strategic academic partnerships with other institutions and institutes:

Springfield College Partnership

In January 2003, the University partnered with Springfield College in Illinois (SCI) to bring a number of Benedictine undergraduate and graduate programs at the traditional and accelerated cohort levels to the Springfield area; this was an attempt to revitalize the state capital’s oldest institution of higher learning. While Benedictine University’s programs met with success, SCI continued to experience difficulty and will soon close its doors. We will offset this loss by expanding the number of degree programs offered at the Springfield site, as it is becoming a branch campus of our University.

Institute for Professional Development Partnership

For the past eleven years, the University has been offering a number of adult accelerated cohort programs both on-campus and at a variety of sites off-campus through a partnership arrangement with the national Institute for Professional Development (IPD). IPD handles all of the promotional and marketing costs for the cohort programs, and in compensation, collects a portion of the revenues generated.

IPD also prepares course modules for most of the programs and compensates Benedictine faculty for developing any additional modules. Overall, these adult cohort programs have produced significantly high student enrollments, allowing Benedictine and IPD to continue the expansion of these programs to new locations within the state of Illinois.

Deltak Partnership

In 2002 Benedictine University entered into an agreement with our former online partner, Collegis Enterprises, to offer a blended Masters in Business Administration (MBA) program. The blended program consisted of one-half of the contact hours conducted face-to-face and the remaining hours in online format, using such systems as WebCT to deliver the material. Collegis was then replaced by Deltak as our online partner, which is now responsible for the marketing, recruitment, customer care, 24/7 Help Desk support, instructional delivery, and further web development of our growing number of online degree programs.

International Partnerships

Benedictine University has had collaborative agreements with international institutions since the 1980's. International partnerships benefit our education-abroad programs, student and faculty exchanges, collaborative research projects, as well as visiting faculty guest lectures and workshops. The international partnership agreements that we currently have (see chart) are either bilateral exchanges between students, faculty and administrators; dual- or cooperative-degree agreements, whereby the students attend their home university for the first three years, and then finish their fourth year at the host university and receive a degree from both institutions; and open agreements that allow for collaboration between the two institutions in the areas of joint academic courses or programs, short-term training or cultural exchange programs. For a complete list of our International Partnerships with other institutions of higher learning, see Figure IO-2. Item 9P1 explains how these relationships are created and developed.

Figure IO-2: International Partnership Institutions and Type of Collaborative Agreement

	Institution	Program Type
Bolivia	Universidad San Francisco Xavier	Bilateral Exchange
China	Northwestern Polytechnical University	Bilateral Exchange
	Shenyang Ligong University	Bilateral Exchange
	Taiyuan University of Science and Technology	Bilateral Exchange

	Xi'an International University	Bilateral Exchange
Denmark	Copenhagen Business School	Bilateral Exchange
France	Groupe Sup de Co Montpellier	Dual Degree
	INSEEC	Dual Degree
Japan	Chuo University	Bilateral Exchange
Mexico	Tecnológico de Monterrey ITESM	Bilateral Exchange
	Universidad de Monterrey UDEM	Bilateral Exchange
Northern Ireland	Business Education Initiative	Special Exchange Agreement
South Korea	Kyung Hee University	Bilateral Exchange
Spain	Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia UCAM	Bilateral Exchange and Dual Degree
	Universidad Francisco de Vitoria UFV	Bilateral Exchange
	Universitat Internacional de Catalunya UIC	Bilateral Exchange

The short list above does not begin to cover all the collaborations with which the University is involved. We work with the Barnes and Noble book chain, for example, to coordinate book orders, with Sodexo food services to ensure that dietary restrictions for our diverse student body are addressed, and with a large number of area businesses that supply us with a diverse assortment of goods and services needed in a modern university environment.

Category One - HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

1P1. Determining common objectives for learning

Benedictine University's previous Systems Portfolio explained how a particular set of common learning objectives that had been in place for a number of years was clarified, distilled, made more measurable, and linked with Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) evaluation instruments. [<http://www.ben.edu/aquip/aqip-systems-portfolio-0506.cfm>] Concerned that the original outcomes were based on a core curriculum that had been designed to address conditions that had changed, in 2009 the Provost appointed a Task Force on General Education (TGFE) to review and, prospectively, to reform four components of the University's undergraduate general education program:

- its learning outcomes,
- assessment system,
- pedagogy, and
- curriculum.

Comprised of student, staff, and faculty representatives from across the University (see *Figure 1-1*), the Task Force on General Education began its work in October 2009. It is planned to occupy three years.

Figure 1-1. Membership of the Task Force on General Education

Membership of the TFGE
Co-Chairs (2)
College of Business representatives (2)
College of Education & Health Services representatives (2)
College of Liberal Arts representatives (2)
College of Science representatives (2)
Moser College representatives (2)
Springfield College representatives (2)
Student Life representative
Library representative
St. Procopius Abbey representative
Student representative

In year one, the Task Force's main aim has been to formulate the "educational outcomes" for the program — i.e., to state, in a general way, what students should *know* and *be able to do* once they have successfully completed it. A central point of reference in this undertaking is the statement of "clearly identifiable and measurable set of common student learning objectives" produced in 2004 by the Programs Council (which included Department Chairs, Program Directors, and College Deans). The process by which the Council formulated its "loosely organized grouping of 12 outcomes" was described in Benedictine University's *2006 AQIP Systems Portfolio*, and the "learning objectives" themselves are listed there. These objectives, it should be noted, were hardly new in 2004, but are the product of the last systematic reform of Benedictine's General Education program — the one completed in the mid-1990s. In 2004, the Program Council grouped the previous objectives into the six "common student learning categories" presented in *Figure 1-2*.

Figure 1-2. Categories of the University's Current General-Educational Learning Objectives

General-Educational Learning Objectives
Disciplinary Knowledge
Communication Skills
Problem-Solving Skills
Social Responsibility
Global Perspective
Self-Direction and Personal Growth

Much of the impetus for the current review of the General Education Program lies in the provost's judgment that, because the world has changed significantly in the last 15 years, and because so many of the University's current faculty and staff were not involved when our current program was developed, the time is ripe to revisit its nature, structure, and goals. The Task Force is working to formulate educational outcomes that reflect best educational practices and prepare 21st-century students to lead responsible, successful, and fulfilling lives. In so doing, it has been guided by recent publications on General Education, most notably, the so-called "LEAP Report" published by the American Association for Colleges & Universities in 2007 with the title *College Learning for the New Global Century: Liberal Education and America's Promise*.

[http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/GlobalCentury_final.pdf]

Once the University has reached consensus on appropriate Outcomes of General Education, it can begin to ask whether and to what degree the graduates of its present program attain them. At this point, reform of our existing General Education Program

seems likely, but whether reform is necessary and what form it should take will depend on what consensus emerges about the Program's goals—they are the standard against which our current and any future offerings must be judged. With the aim of formulating an outcomes statement that is well-informed, effective and imaginative—and moreover one that wins the support of the University's faculty and staff—the Task Force is pursuing its work in a way that is intended to be transparent, fact-centered, and collaborative. Its efforts include the following:

- Weekly meetings of the 18-member Task Force
- Regular reporting on the work of the Task Force at monthly meetings of the University's five colleges and at the university-wide Faculty Assembly
- Oversight by three supervisory bodies: the Core Curriculum Committee, the Academic Council, and the Undergraduate Curriculum & Standards Committee
- Discussion forums open to all Benedictine University faculty and staff on at least two dates each semester
- Individual consultation of constituents by their representatives on the Task Force (e.g., faculty and staff within individual colleges, staff members within Campus Ministry and Student Life, students, etc.)
- Invitation of outside speakers to address pertinent subjects (e.g., re: "Technology"-outcomes and "Western Civilization"-outcomes)
- Participation by TFGE members in relevant academic conferences (e.g., the American Council on Education (ACE) Internationalization Collaborative, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U's) Conference on Assessment)
- Review and study of relevant publications on General Education from ACE and AAC&U
- Review and study of the general education programs of Benedictine University's 61 comparator institutions, as identified in the 2008 and 2009 IPEDS educational data survey

While work continues on identifying appropriate learning outcomes for a revised curriculum, we continue to evaluate the content and delivery of the existing curriculum. Learning objectives for our writing courses, for example, largely follow the guidelines laid out by the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), General Education Communication Committee, on which the director of our writing program sits. We do modify and adjust objectives, according to the needs and expectations of the academic disciplines around which our Research Writing courses are constructed and according to the Benedictine course content (composed by the institution's Core Curriculum Committee) for the Writing Colloquium.

1P2. Determining program objectives

Identifying and aligning program objectives with those of the University will be revisited once the Task Force on General Education completes its work.

1P3. Designing new programs

While the origins of new degree and certificate programs are varied (including suggestions from the President, initiatives championed by academic deans, faculty interest in creating an innovative program, inquiries from current and prospective students, and monitoring what competing institutions are providing) the design of new degree and certificate programs follows a common process. Programs originating within a college have to prepare a thorough description by following instructions contained in a document entitled “Program Data Form”, which is available on the University’s intranet. It then has to pass the college’s Curriculum and Standards Committee. If the program has a potentially large impact on courses offered by another college, then the proposal also has to be approved by that college’s Curriculum and Standards Committee. Once these goals have been met, it then must be approved by the college as a whole. Finally, information about the new program is sent to the Registrar, who is responsible for seeing that the necessary course and information is entered into the computer system and the next University catalog and course schedules. Joint programs that do not “belong” to any one college must gain approval from each college’s Curriculum and Standards Committee and in addition must be approved by the University’s Undergraduate Curriculum and Standards Committee.

If a new program involves a new degree for the University (as recently occurred with our new B.F.A. program), approval must be obtained from the Illinois Board of Higher Education, as would a certificate program in an interdisciplinary area or an area in which we do not already offer a major.

In conjunction with completing the “Program Data Form”, individuals involved in designing a new program prepare to answer questions from the Curriculum Standards Committees in several areas:

- The purpose, educational goals, and curricular content underlying the program;
- Impact on existing curricular or departmental offerings;
- Level of student preparation and other student-related factors;
- Impact on faculty resources (new positions and existing) at the University;
- Description of an assessment system used to evaluate student learning;
- Marketing demands for the program and what the anticipated enrollments will be; and
- Anticipated revenues as well as costs (e.g., library resources, required technology and facilities) associated with the program.

With respect to non-degree programs, such as the writing program, this process is necessarily different. During the period of Fall 2004 - Spring 2006, acting to rectify specific deficiencies in our current Core and Writing programs, we launched a major

curricular overall to both bring Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) to campus and to remedy deficits in our Core program. We combined our previous first writing course and first-year seminar into one course to avoid repetition among the courses. By doing so, we were able to require students to take all four of our cultural heritage courses, which provide substantial writing practice to students, spread out among their four years in keeping with WAC principles. In addition, we added two Writing Intensive (WI) courses, one in the major and one in the Core, and there are plans to add a third in the future. Our assessment showed improved results for the combined course, as well as the WI course in the Core. During the process of curricular revision, it became clear that we had few resources for students with learning or multi-lingual difficulties. As a result, we added two Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) sections that include workshops that provide additional instruction to those students. We have since hired two instructors with expertise in English as a Second Language (ESL) to teach these courses and workshops. In addition, we have worked to bring additional faculty resources to all those teaching Writing or WI courses. Instructors now have access to a three-day seminar in May for WRIT 101 instructors, WI seminars in May, and an average of six WAC seminars during the school year, plus individual consultation with the Writing Director. New faculty members receive an introduction to Writing Across the Curriculum and Benedictine WI courses through a session in the New Faculty Mentoring Program. Through the Writing Zone, students now have access not only to peer tutoring but also to three hours weekly with the Writing Instructor. Students also have access to 15 hours/week with a Learning Specialist in the Student Success Center for writing review. Weekly Writing Tips and Teaching Writing Tips reach out to faculty, students, and staff on everything from grammar use to composition techniques.

1P4. Designing programs to meet stakeholders' needs

Portions of the previous item address these topics.

1P5. Determining student preparation requirements

This was not identified as an area of concern in the previous Systems Appraisal and is not addressed at this time.

1P6. Communicating preparation requirements to students

Prospective students can easily locate the University's common learning objectives at our website [<http://www.ben.edu/aquip/commonobjectives.cfm>], where policies and information regarding transfer students are also found. Electronic copies of the University's undergraduate catalog (which contain both program requirements and course descriptions) are also found there and contain all the academic requirements and policies, including

- freshman, transfer, and international student admissions;
- course loads;
- class registration;
- course withdrawal and repetition;
- grades and academic standing;

- academic recognition (i.e., Dean's and Dean's Recognition Lists);
- probation and dismissal from the University;
- withdrawal and leave of absence from the University;
- required courses for each program of study (with descriptions, prerequisites, and associated minors); and
- graduation (including application for, total hours, and earned honors).

The online graduate catalog lists academic policies and requirements affecting graduate degree and certificate programs, including

- admissions into specific programs;
- student-at-large (SAL) status;
- the grading system (with incompletes and deferred grades);
- course audits and repeats;
- transfer credit and course substitutions;
- course prerequisites;
- academic dismissal and withdrawal from the University;
- procedures for resolving academic disputes;
- graduate assistantships;
- time limit for completion of the program; and
- graduation (i.e., total hours for each program and related certificates).

In addition to the *Graduate Catalog*, program publications (including recruitment materials and brochures) outline the specific requirements for each graduate major and associated certificates.

All admissions requirements and general academic expectations for entering new freshmen are communicated in several ways:

- by Enrollment Center recruiters and counselors;
- through a variety of recruitment publications (including brochures, program descriptions and four-year course schedules, as well as major checklists);
- at fall and spring University-wide open houses;
- during initial advising and registration periods; and
- at the Benedictine Beginnings orientation programs for new students.

Student Life further communicates expectations to prospective and current students via the *Student Handbook* on the Benedictine website, which describes a variety of policies such as academic appeals and academic honesty.

Expectations are communicated to undergraduate students on an ongoing basis through the advising system, with freshman advisors meeting with their advisees on a regular basis throughout the first year. From sophomore to senior years, meetings continue to take place on an as-needed basis with assigned advisors in major disciplines so that students become aware of all program and graduation requirements before registering for their classes online each term.

Since the previous Systems Portfolio, advising for entering freshmen has been reorganized. A New Student Advising Center was opened in October 2007 as an outgrowth of an early AQIP action project on retention. Working with the Admissions Office and replacing the existing Freshman Advising Program, the Center worked with chairs of academic programs to familiarize its staff with updated course information, implemented new registration initiatives, and monitored its progress both in enrolling and retaining traditional undergraduate and transfer students. The most recent results indicate greater blocks of time spent with first-year students and significantly fewer withdrawals compared with the previous year.

1P7. Helping students select programs

Listed as “SS” in previous Systems Appraisal.

1P8. Working with underprepared students

Addressing the needs of potentially underprepared students actually begins with admissions review. The Admissions Committee may request additional assessment prior to making an admissions decision. This may include requiring the student to re-take the ACT exam (a residual ACT exam is administered through the Student Success Center) or to complete a Pre-Admission Reading Test (PART) to determine a grade level equivalent of reading skills as well as the completion of a writing sample from a timed, prompted activity. The Admissions Committee may also impose a number of conditions on a student’s admission, including limiting the number of hours a student may take in the first semester of study to 14, require enrollment in HUMN 100 (Critical Reasoning), require enrollment in a Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) section of WRIT 101 or a combination of these conditions. Evaluation of skills continues with testing and placement of freshmen into the proper Basic Skills (Writing and Math) and Foreign Language courses. For many students, this occurs in the spring or summer before their first semester, prior to their first advising and registration period. Recently, more online testing has been put in place, allowing earlier identification of incoming students’ skill levels and identification of appropriate enrollment options.

Benedictine University’s Student Success Center is designed to support students’ academic, personal and professional development by providing resources and services that maximize academic success, enhance student experience, and better prepare them for further study or the workforce. The Center engages students by providing support for academic work as well as co-curricular activities and professional goals. The Student Success Center’s services include:

- Academic support and tutoring functions
- Accommodations services for students with disabilities
- Advising and related support for undecided majors, students on academic probation and continuing probation
- Leadership development
- Supplemental education and service learning

- Comprehensive career development services, including assessment, internship services, career education programs, job search functions and career resources
- Orientation and continuing orientation programs

The University's online advising software allows faculty to submit Early Warning Notices to students enrolled in their courses. Those electronic forms permit instructors to identify courses of action they recommend students take and provide an option to send a copy of the notice to a student's advisor, allowing that person to follow up any such recommendations.

1P9. Addressing different learning styles

Identified as "SS" in previous Systems Appraisal.

1P10. Addressing unique needs of select student subgroups

As described in Category Two, one of Benedictine University's other distinctive objectives is connected to our interest in diversity. Because of this, we acknowledge the importance of identifying the special needs of some members of our community. With respect to students, accommodations are directly related to the nature of a student's needs.

Students having limited physical mobility: All campus buildings are ADA compliant, some having had accessibility addressed before the ADA became law. Campus Security provides display stickers for individuals requesting use of special parking areas reserved for members of the community having limited physical mobility, either permanently or temporarily.

Students having documented learning disorders: All course syllabi are required to include the following statement:

ADA Requirements - If you have a documented learning, psychological, or physical disability, you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations or services. To request accommodations or services, contact the Student Success Center in the Krasa Center, Room 012. All students are expected to fulfill essential course requirements. The University will not waive any essential skill or requirement of a course or degree program.

The university has an Accommodations Team that reviews students' requests for academic accommodations and the accompanying documentation to determine appropriate academic accommodations services. This team is coordinated through the Student Success Center by the Special Programs Coordinator and consists of the Associate Dean of the Student Success Center and faculty members representing the areas of Special Education, Psychology and Nursing. Organized by a full-time learning specialist working in the Student Success Center, academic accommodations available to students are related directly to the student's diagnosis, as supported by professional recommendations in the documentation provided. The most common among these include:

- Extended time for testing in a quiet test environment
- Designated note taker in class

- Modified or enlarged classroom / reading materials
- Books on tape
- Preferential classroom seating

As with parking, in the event of an injury or emergency, accommodations may be granted on a temporary basis. The University's main library has two assistive technology workstations, and there is another in Student Success Center.

Students having English as their second language:

The University provides a program in English for Academic Purposes that offers language support to undergraduate and graduate students for whom English is not a native or first language. English for Academic Purposes' workshops provide students with opportunities for one-on-one and small-group instruction that promotes individual and discipline specific development. Special attention is paid to issues of appropriate collaboration, academic honesty, and other issues pertinent to the building of scholarly community and the promotion of professional success. [<http://www.ben.edu/aquip/eap>]

Commuter students: Because a large portion of our students commute to campus, different arrangements have been made to address their needs:

- Lockers for students to secure their possessions while on or away from campus
- A special monthly free breakfast for student commuters
- Four senators in the Student Government Association (equal to the number of senators from residence halls)

Graduating seniors:

- Career planning and placement, assistance in preparing resumes and rehearsing interviews
- Assistance with graduate school searches and practice exams for common graduate entrance examinations
- Resume referral
- Establishing connections with University alumni

The Displaced Earner Program: Begun in the Spring 2009 semester, current students whose parents or guardian become unemployed or whose financial situation radically changes because of the current economic crisis may take advantage of Benedictine University's "Displaced Earner Program," a three-pronged advisory plan that meets different needs for all students, such as current traditional undergraduate students whose financial situation has changed; students who have graduated from Benedictine but have been unable to find employment; and adult undergraduate and graduate students who find it difficult to continue their degree program.

[<http://www.ben.edu/aquip/economic-hardship.cfm>]

Early Alert Team: A group of University staff whose mission is "to provide early intervention and prevention for students who are experiencing distress, engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors, or who have been identified as at risk." This group is contacted by faculty, staff members, students, or parents who have a concern (such as mental health issues, academic or personal difficulties, behaviors that generate concern, or knowledge of personal or family problems) about a student. Once contacted (online

forms are available on the university website), the Early Alert Team can assess the situation, offer support, and provide referrals to the appropriate resources either on or off campus.

1P11. Defining and communicating teaching and learning expectations

Faculty become aware of the evaluative criteria for determining and documenting effective teaching and learning during their initial orientation process. They learn that those criteria are listed in *The Faculty Handbook*, which is available on the University's shared network drive, and they are apprised of how their regular reviews will utilize those criteria in evaluating their teaching. Information about teaching and its evaluation is reinforced by individual academic programs at Benedictine, which work with their faculty to mentor and observe them, and to provide appropriate feedback. All faculty members are also evaluated by students through the IDEA program, which indicates broad performance parameters and enables comparison with other similar institutions. In addition, the University has established a Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE). Since its inauguration in September 2008, the CTLE has sought to provide dialogue and professional development opportunities in areas of curricular design, development, teaching methods, and assessment for fostering reflective critiques, informed practice, scholarly investigations into teaching practices, and accountability to students and the public.

From September 2008 to the present, the CTLE's activities have included workshops for faculty on a variety of topics designed to address teaching, working with students with different learning styles and challenges, and classroom management issues: Academic Advisor Training, Teaching the Generation 1.5 Student, and a series of faculty workshops based on the book *What the Best College Teachers Do* by Ken Bain. The CTLE has also provided intensive individual mentoring to faculty working to improve their teaching in response to feedback from IDEA and peer observation.

Also under the umbrella of the CTLE, Dr. Allison Wilson runs the New Faculty Mentoring Program which initiates new faculty members into the Benedictine community and educates them regarding the University's expectations for effective teaching. All participants attend a series of workshops over the course of their first academic year at Benedictine on topics such as teaching strategies, academic advising, IDEA evaluations, and rank and tenure expectations. Each new faculty member is also assigned a mentor who is generally a senior faculty member from another department. One of the mentor's responsibilities is to observe the new faculty member in the classroom, answer questions, and provide feedback on teaching and learning.

Dr. Jonathan Lewis (Assistant to the Provost for Academic Assessment) and Dr. Tom Wangler (IDEA Coordinator) have worked under the umbrella of the CTLE in the area of assessment. Among other things, Dr. Lewis is involved in researching ways to use technology to improve assessment at Benedictine University. In the fall 2009 semester, Ms. Jennie Kamieniecki (CTLE administrative assistant) worked with Dr. Lewis to provide support in piloting the electronic portfolio component of the *LiveText* program

(currently used by the Nutrition program and the School of Education) in the Department of Psychology and Sociology and the Department of Languages and Literature's Spanish program. Ms. Kamieniecki also worked with Dr. Wangler to pilot the online administration of the IDEA assessment program in order to improve efficiency and reduce both the paperwork and staff hours associated with administering IDEA evaluations in their current format. Administration of student surveys using nationally distributed assessment instruments (e.g. NSSE, CIRP, CLA) is coordinated annually by the CTLE with key participants having completed training for the protection of human subjects.

As Benedictine University's Board of Trustees has become more actively interested and involved in the institution's academic success, sessions have been held to acquaint them with the expectations for effective teaching and how these are implemented in regularly evaluating faculty. In the summer of 2010, a retreat on the topic of assessment of student learning was scheduled. That event brought together members of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, the provost, academic deans, associate provost, assistant to the provost for academic assessment, and other individuals involved in evaluating student learning. A key goal of the retreat was to familiarize trustees with the existing assessment practices and examples of assessment that led to changes in instructional practices in order to improve student success.

1P12. Building effect course delivery

Identified as "SS" in previous Systems Appraisal.

1P13. Ensuring programs and courses are up-to-date

Identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and not answered at this time.

1P14. Altering and discontinuing programs

Identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and not answered at this time.

1P15. Addressing learning support needs

Not identified as an area of concern in previous Systems Appraisal and not answered at this time.

1P16. Aligning co-curricular with curricular learning objectives

Not identified as an area of concern in previous Systems Appraisal and not answered at this time.

1P17. Determining students have met learning expectations

An area that is evolving, we will be better able to provide information here once the Task Force on General Education completes its work, which will include plans for assessing student learning.

1P18. Designing assessment of student learning

Some information is available in other items in this category. Again, we will be better positioned to provide information here once the Task Force on General Education completes its work, which will include plans for assessing student learning.

1R1. Measures of learning regularly reviewed

Every term, course information is collected with the IDEA course evaluation tool. Adjuncts and new faculty are required to evaluate all of their courses, while tenured faculty must evaluate at least one course per term. While some of the information collected addresses course design, several elements cover student judgments about their own learning and are used both in conjunction with instructor evaluation and course design.

Shortly after becoming an Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) institution, Benedictine University required its academic programs to develop a Program Assessment Matrix, which is essentially a map of the University's and the program's learning objectives, aligning those objectives with courses, and identifying methods of assessment. As part of a team activity at a "Making a Difference in Student Learning: Assessment as a Core Strategy" workshop in 2007, the deans and assistant to the provost collaborated on developing the format for annual reports to be submitted to the assistant to the provost for academic assessment and to the dean of the program's college. Due in the middle of June, those reports asked each program director to submit two things:

- (1) The most recent Program Assessment Matrix - updated to reflect any changes made during the year (see Figure 1-3), and
- (2) An Assessment Narrative - an account of the program's assessment activities during the year and its plans for the following year.

Figure 1-3. Excerpt from the Program Assessment Matrix for Psychology & Sociology

Common Student Learning Objectives	IDEA Learning Objectives*	Discipline-Based Student Learning Objectives	Courses Emphasizing Objectives as Essential or Important	How Assessed (Course Assignment, IDEA*, Capstone Experience)
Disciplinary Knowledge				
<i>Cognitive Background</i>				
<i>Application of Learning</i>				
Acquire, understand and synthesize discipline-based knowledge	(1.) Gain factual knowledge	Understand the complexities of individual and group behavior	Soc100; Psyc 100; Psyc/Soc100	Exams, papers, content exam in Freshman & Senior years. IDEA. Group IDEA.
Understand the content and interrelationships of specific areas of study	(2.) Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories	Understand how Sociology and Psychology obtain and synthesize concepts derived from other disciplines	Soc100; Psyc 100; Soc/PSyc 210; Psyc 350; Soc1350	Exams; papers; content exam in Freshman & Senior years.
Apply disciplinary methodologies in their qualitative and quantitative dimensions	(3.) Apply course material	Use qualitative & quantitative techniques in the conducting of social & psychological Research	Soc/PSyc 150, 250, 251, 299, and 395	Exams, papers, group projects, class presentations; in Soc/PSyc they complete a capstone thesis. IDEA. Group IDEA.
	(4.) Develop specific skills, competencies, or attitudes needed in the field	How to use various research methodologies in the gathering of data, and what statistical techniques to use in the analysis of data. Also students learn to use power-point in presenting their findings.	Soc/PSyc 150, 250, 251, 356, 299, 395, 390 & 391	Exams, papers, group projects, class presentations, and capstone thesis
Communication Skills				
<i>Expressiveness</i>				
Communicate effectively within and across the disciplines	(8.) Develop skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing	Develop competency in writing lab and research reports according to APA standards, and delivering power-point presentations	Psyc 312/313, 314/315, 316/317, 318/319; Soc/PSyc 299, 395	Exams, papers, capstone thesis according to APA style

The narratives provide an opportunity for programs to describe the results of their own assessment plans, which employ a variety of instruments and procedures to determine student success. Portfolios of student work, results from national examinations assessing subject matter knowledge, scores and pass rates of licensure, certification or professional exams, and many other means are regularly used by programs across the institution every year.

As we have begun to move to an electronic system of submitting and collecting assessment data, the annual reports will be more two-way than they have been in the past, with more information provided to program directors. The annual report request for 2009 – 2010 also has requested information on the time(s) of year during which programs conduct assessment and thus need information provided to them to improve their deliberations. Information from the annual reports were used during the summer of 2010 during a retreat on assessment described in 1P11.

Benedictine University has also identified a series of nationally recognized instruments that it will implement on a three-year, rotating basis. These include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). These instruments allow us to compare and contrast our students with those of similar institutions, including other Catholic colleges and universities and institutions sharing our Carnegie classification. Information collected by these instruments is received by the President and by the

Assistant to the Provost for Academic Assessment, who analyzes the results and gives presentations of major findings to the Provost's Council and to the Faculty Assembly. Presentation materials are also made available to the Board of Trustees and to the Academic Council (comprised of all program chairs) and synopses provided for use by the Office of Marketing and Communications. Information from these instruments is also available to the student newspaper and alumni magazine, which have published articles about them.

Finally, Academic programs undergo program review once every five years during which additional information is collected about students, outcomes, and program evolution in response to challenges to improve student learning.

1R2. Performance results for common learning and development objectives

As can be seen in Figure 1-3, the university's common student learning objectives are delivered across the curriculum and are not restricted to general education courses. While this ensures that students are enrolled in many courses placing a major emphasis on achieving these outcomes and that a variety of artifacts are generated in conjunction with those courses, it also complicates any effort to assemble a single, comprehensive measure of student success. Once we complete work on incorporating an integrated course management and assessment collection system, we will be much better situated to assemble, and reach conclusions derived from, these diverse materials.

This does not mean, however, that we have not been monitoring student performance in these areas. With respect to writing, since the previous Systems Portfolio, the director of our writing program engaged in a carefully organized project to determine the efficacy of combining two courses that were commonly required of incoming freshmen into one. The thorough nature of this project (the number of faculty hours for the assessment alone totaled at least 355, 155 of those from volunteers on the Writing Advisory Committee) and the significant impact it had on our students' writing justifies describing it at length.

The project's main question was: Would students in the combined First Year Seminar (FYS)/Composition class do as well at writing and assimilating Benedictine values as their counterparts in the default model, and would students in the Writing Intensive (WI) sections of our contemporary Core course write better than their comparators?

Pilot instructors were chosen from full-time faculty, two from English Language and Literature, one from Political Science, and one from Religion (in order to determine whether faculty other than Composition/English faculty would be capable of teaching in this course).

As a permanent part of the Writing Program's assessment, we instituted a WebCT-based pre-post test of incoming first-years, first-years after the second writing course in the disciplines, and students in the contemporary Core course, usually in their Senior year. In addition, we assessed the experimental cohort at the end of the first term to enable us to gain preliminary data that would help us make decisions about the

curriculum. The pre-post test consists of a short grammar quiz, a short information literacy quiz (managed by our librarians), and an essay keyed into the service-learning portion of our FYS. In a process inspired by Barbara Walvoord's *Assessment: Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*, each essay was evaluated by two readers using a six-point primary-trait rubric; readers' grades were normalized together and established anchor papers; the two scores were added together for the final score on a scale of 12-60 points.

Other measures included evaluating

- identical argumentative essays from four pilot and two control composition sections;
- identical reflective essays and final exams from four pilot and two control FYS sections;
- written student surveys;
- a separate student focus group from four pilot, two composition, and two FYS sections;
- faculty surveys;
- essays and student surveys from two pilot and two control WI contemporary Core courses;
- IDEA data from all the above;
- and grades from all the above.

All identifying marks were removed from papers and exams and evaluated in batches by at least one faculty member. For the Student Focus Group, a faculty member not teaching any of the involved classes spoke for an hour with each group of students separately, using four open-ended questions as a guide, recording the conversation and analyzing the results afterwards. We employed measures that would not only avoid teaching to the test but also would add value to the writing experience of the students in the courses assessed.

The results of our assessment were mixed, but generally positive. Students showed tremendous range in writing ability, with significant deficits among some students in all areas assessed by the pre-post tests and qualitative essays reviews: ideas, organization/focus, ethos, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. The wide range surprised none of us, given the wide range of abilities among students accepted at Benedictine. Overall, the data showed few statistically significant differences between the pilot and the separate courses, though when measures differed, they more often favored the pilot. The goal set for the pilot course was to break even with the outcomes for the other two courses. In other words, if one course could produce a result similar to two courses, it would be seen as successful. The pilot course met, and possibly exceeded, that goal.

The WI Core course exceeded expectations on every count, producing statistically significant differences from the standard contemporary Core classes. There were some differences among individual results from the eleven different measures, but where one result seemed sketchy, another filled in gaps:

1) WebCT Pre-Post Tests: Essays, Grammar, and Information Literacy

While the essay pre- and post-tests showed significant improvement for students as a whole, the difference between the two groups was not

statistically significant. When examining each class by itself, however, we found that there was significant improvement over the course of the semester. The grammar, on the other hand, showed no significant improvement, but a borderline significant difference was present between the two groups, with the pilot slightly ahead.

2) Argumentative Essays from Four Pilot Courses and Two Composition Sections

The reader for this measure found that the essays written about pure First-Year Seminar (FYS) readings were either better than or as good as those written about more traditional composition readings/topics.

3) Reflective Essays from Four Pilots and Two FYS Sections

Though the two readers of reflective essays found slight differences between the pilots and FYS on some criteria, they agreed in their scoring of the two groups as of equal quality overall.

4) Final Exams from Four Pilots and Two FYS Sections

Though individual classes performed differently, there was no pattern of difference between models. We speculated that students put their energies in different places at the end of the semester, but most did well in one measure of Benedictine mission and values.

5) Open-ended Survey Questions from Four Pilots, Two Composition Sections, and Two FYS sections

Although a number of groups distinguished themselves for one reason or another, those distinctions appeared to center around the individual instructor rather than the content of the course or the structure of the course itself. The strongest remarks related to pedagogy, evaluation methods, and instructor expectations. There was no discernable pattern of difference between the pilot and composition/FYS.

6) Student Focus Group

Though we expected students enrolled in different courses to confer and decide that an approach used in one section was better than that used in another, groups preferred the option to which they had been assigned. Pilot students reported positive impressions of two techniques that were stressed in pilot course development: They felt that their reading comprehension had been improved by analyzing the course readings through thinking about writing, and they felt that their writing had been improved by multiple drafting opportunities. Both composition/FYS and pilot students felt that they had learned a great deal about Benedictine heritage and values from their course or set of courses.

7) Faculty Survey

As a whole, pilot instructors rated the new model as equal to or better than the old and thought most flaws were fixable. Instructors found the combined course more difficult to teach than the FYS, which some had taught before, but these faculty preferred the emphasis on writing. Faculty who had taught composition before preferred the new model because of the change in content.

8) Essays from Two WI Core sections and Two Conventional Core Sections

Essays in the WI courses showed statistically significant improvement over the old version. Both readers assessed the essays on a scale from one to four. The section with the best results had sequenced assignments with the final essay being the culmination of a semester's worth of writing. Not surprisingly, students in that course expressed the greatest feeling of accomplishment.

- 9) Open-ended survey questions from two WI Core sections and two conventional Core sections.

Student responses clearly favored the WI sections in three areas: research, writing, and critical thinking skills.

- 10) IDEA Data

None of the differences in IDEA scores were statistically significant.

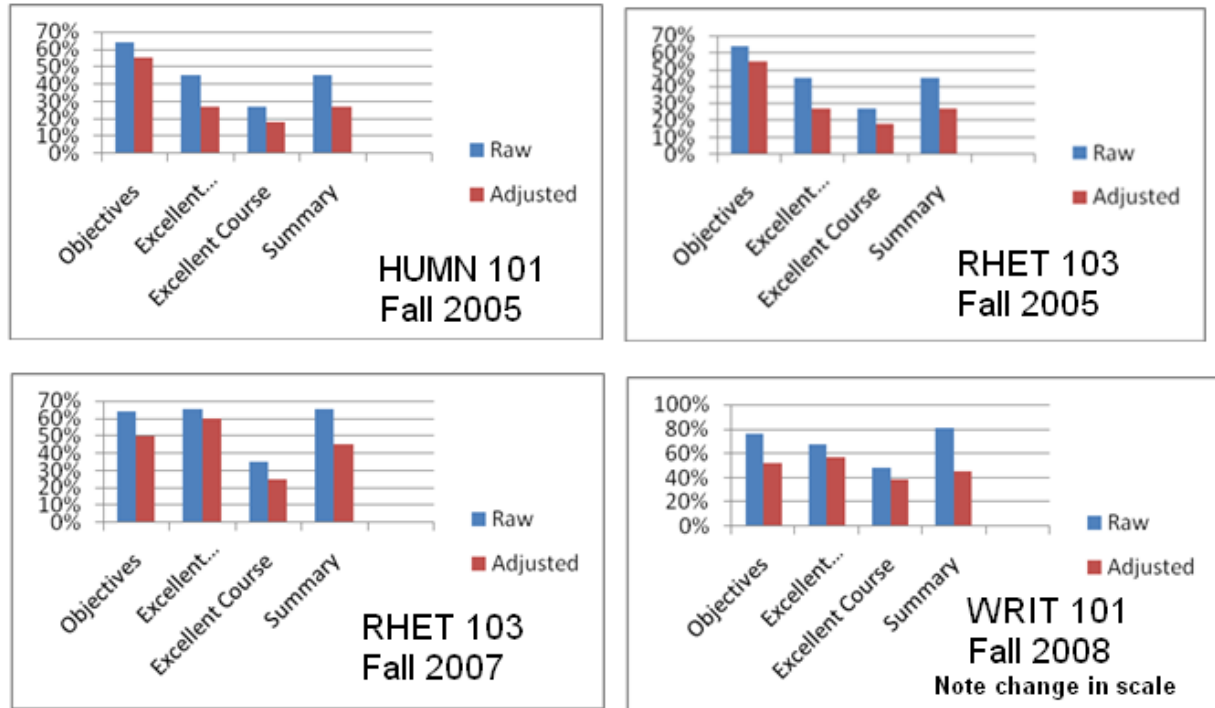
- 11) Grades

Withdrawals and failures were the same for all groups, as were C's and D's. The pilot had a higher number of B's than A's; FYS had roughly equal numbers; and composition had more A's than B's. Differences in A's and B's could result from greater success or from grade inflation; other measures suggest the latter. None of the differences were statistically significant.

According to Guba and Lincoln's *Fourth Generation Evaluation* model, assessment works better when all stakeholders participate in designing the assessment, selecting measures, and determining the results. Listening to our stakeholders, particularly in selecting the measures they would find important, was crucial to our task. Eleven measures certainly afforded us a fuller glimpse than one would have done. In our case, the key sign that the new course was successful was that none of the glimpses showed worrisome or consistent deficiencies among the pilot sections.

Recent analysis of IDEA scores for the new course (RHET 103 then WRIT 101) shows a steady upward trend over the last four years, compared to the original two courses. Figure 1-4 shows IDEA scores from the two courses freshman courses used in Fall 2005 compared with the scores from a revised course with similar writing objectives piloted in Fall 2007 and a further refined version of that course from Fall 2008.

Figure 1-4. IDEA score comparisons



The effort involved in this project reflects the value that effective writing has at Benedictine University, a value that was given further documentation by the 2008 NSSE results, which show definite strengths in writing, a result of work done across campus to improve the curriculum, increase focus on writing process, and incorporate teaching of writing into more courses.

For example, on the criteria of “Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more” and “Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages,” our seniors exceeded comparable numbers at schools in Catholic C&U, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2008 schools with a very high level of statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). Our first-year students exceeded the same groups at the same rate on “Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages” and “Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a regular course.” Both seniors and first-years exceeded comparable groups at a very high level of significance on “Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in” and “Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.” Other areas of excellence included “Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings,” “Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments,” and “Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments,” though these numbers likely reflect the strength of our curriculum overall.

Based on assessment information from Spring 2009, students continue to show real signs of improved skills.

1R3. Performance results for program learning objectives

These vary by discipline. Over the next few years, as a new learning management system is put into place, results will become more widely available. Links to those results do not yet exist, though reports about program learning objectives are collected annually.

1R4. Evidence that graduates meet stakeholders' needs

An area which needs more regular collection and reporting but which is not addressed at this time.

1R5. Results for learning support processes

An area which needs more regular collection and reporting but which is not addressed at this time.

1R6. Comparison of learning results with those of other institutions

Identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and not answered at this time.

1I1. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and

There have been several instances of individual improvements which cumulatively lead to institutional improvement as well as developments that are more extensive and either have improved our success in strengthening student achievement or when completed will have that effect.

Individual improvements include two changes in our undergraduate core curriculum coming from an analysis of enrollment patterns. More specifically, the Cultural Heritage courses occupy the center of our Core Curriculum and are seen as providing a unique Benedictine component to the education of all our undergraduates. There are four such courses, but students transferring into the institution usually are exempted from taking at least one of them. This meant not only that those students were entering the other Cultural Heritage courses without having the kind of background needed to increase their chance of success, but also that the one course requiring students to complete a community service activity was being avoided. In the summer of 2008, information about patterns of student course selection led the Core Coordinator to work with faculty to introduce a new Cultural Heritage course for the large number of transfer students who were unable to complete the original series. For similar reasons, a community service activity that had been required of all incoming freshmen was moved to the capstone

Cultural Heritage course taken by all undergraduates, effectively requiring service learning for all undergraduate students.

Another example of an individual improvement designed to improve student learning came from an analysis of NSSE and CIRP data indicating that while a relatively large portion of our incoming students expected to participate in conducting research (either with a faculty member or as part of a senior capstone experience), a much smaller number of seniors reported actually having done original research. Support from the provost and academic deans led to creation of a registered Action Project devoted to increasing the number of undergraduate students who work with faculty in conducting research. Although still unfolding, this project has already made progress by increasing the number of 200- and 300-level research practicum courses offered in the College of Liberal Arts. Because students participating in the 300 level research practicum courses are required to present their findings either in a journal or at a conference, our provost worked with his colleagues at other area institutions to expand an annual student symposium to include a greater range of disciplines. Originally created to encourage the work of science students, the Associated Colleges of the Chicago Area's annual student symposium now accepts work by students from the humanities and other liberal arts fields. The Action Project includes a goal of beginning an annual day to demonstrate and celebrate student accomplishments in research.

Developments which promise more extensive impacts on student learning include the continued development of our Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, which is working on establishing a more broadly reaching peer-mentoring or co-mentoring program for post-third year review and post-tenure faculty. While IDEA evaluations provide some feedback regarding what is working and what is not working in the classroom, not enough has yet been done to “close the loop” between IDEA feedback and actually using this feedback in concrete ways to change and improve teaching and learning. Although this program is still in the early planning stages, it is envisioned that it will be independent from the rank and tenure evaluation process to give faculty a comfort zone in which they will feel free to be open with regard to the most difficult teaching challenges they face. The participants in this program will observe each other's classes, critique each other's syllabi and assignments, and share techniques and strategies to help each other raise the quality of their teaching to the highest possible level. In addition, CTLE's director is organizing efforts to introduce learning communities to the Lisle campus beginning in the fall of 2010. More information about the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence is available at its website:
[<http://www.ben.edu/aquip/CTLE>]

112. Selecting processes and setting targets to improve helping students learn

An area which will be considered as new general education outcomes are introduced but which is not addressed at this time.

Category Two - ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

2P1. Designing and operating key noninstructional processes

Those processes are derived from efforts to advance Benedictine University's commitment to three distinctive objectives: Scholarship, Service, and Diversity, described in more detail in 2P2.

2P2. Determining non-instructional objectives

In 2002, the President created two focus groups for the purpose of determining, setting, and interpreting distinctive objectives relative to the Vision Statement. Both groups were composed of volunteer faculty, students, and staff. Each had as its charge the examination of different clauses of our Vision Statement. Focus Group 1 examined the first clause: "Benedictine University is a Catholic University in the Benedictine Tradition." Focus Group 2 examined the second clause: Benedictine University "provides a values-centered Liberal Arts Education enriched by our excellence in Science." In 2003 these two focus groups became our AQIP Vision Action Projects and were eventually coordinated under the Benedictine Center of Science and Values in 2004. The specific charge of the Center was to develop effective strategies for realizing these Vision components as well as furthering related distinctive objectives. Its work has now fallen to the newly founded Center for Mission and Identity (CMI), itself the product of an unregistered action project. One of the CMI's current tasks is to oversee the functions of the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* Subcommittee so that the University can fully implement systems and processes that are aligned with the norms articulated in the respective papal encyclical and which will enhance our distinctively Catholic character. (See the link at <http://www.ben.edu/aquip/retention-ap.cfm> for more information).

Our distinctive objectives are derived directly from our Mission and Vision statements. These statements advocate *Diversity* when they affirm our dedication "to the education of undergraduate and graduate students from *diverse* ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds." They promote *Service* when they indicate that education at the University is "distinguished and guided by our Roman Catholic Tradition and Benedictine Heritage," and that we "prepare our students for a lifetime as active, informed, and responsible citizens and leaders in the world community." They require *Scholarship* by affirming our dedication to the education of all students and our commitment to a values-centered Liberal Arts Education enriched by our excellence in Science.

2P3. Communicating non-instructional objectives

- Expectations concerning *Scholarship* are communicated to faculty chiefly through the *Faculty Handbook*, the Rank and Tenure (R&T) Committee, the Faculty Development Committee (FDC), the Faculty Mentoring Program, hiring and new employee orientation processes, the Faculty Assembly, college meetings, and the Institutional Review Board (IRB). They are communicated to students by the faculty, the Associate Vice President for Student Life, the *Student Handbook*, and the University's [Academic Honesty Policy](#) (AHP).
- Expectations concerning *Service* are communicated by the President, the provost/vice president for academic affairs, the assistant to the provost for institutional mission, University Ministry, the CMI, the Core Curriculum Chair, and

- the Scholars Program Chair. They are also communicated by the *Faculty Handbook*, through the hiring and new employee orientation processes, the Visiting Scholar in Catholic Thought program, as well as the Faculty Assembly and college meetings. The University has periodically sponsored full-day, campus-wide meetings to help communicate *Service* expectations to all its members. For several years, the entire University community has been invited to help clean, repair, and maintain the campus grounds during bi-annual Campus Beautification events.
- Expectations concerning *Diversity* are communicated to faculty by the President, the provost/vice president for academic affairs, the college deans, department chairs and program directors, the Rank & Tenure Committee, the Programs Council, the Core Curriculum Committee, the Faculty Mentoring Program, and the faculty advisor for Study Abroad and Exchange Programs. Diversity expectations are communicated to staff in several parts of the *Employee Handbook*, including a letter from the President at the very beginning of the *Handbook* which states, "As you walk the Benedictine campus you will immediately notice its uniqueness. Benedictine students are from all walks of life, cultures, races, and religious affiliation. Our Benedictine Heritage teaches us that God comes to us in the stranger. In welcoming all, we welcome God into our presence. We are a diverse and thereby a rich campus. I invite you to help us grow and nurture this diversity by becoming a welcoming member of the community."

2P4. Assessing appropriateness of non-instructional objectives

1. Expectations concerning *Scholarship* are regularly assessed and reviewed by the following people and units: the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees (BOT), the President, the provost/vice president for academic affairs, college deans, department chairs, College Faculty Review Panels, the Rank & Tenure Committee, the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC), and the Faculty Assembly. More specifically, each year the R&T Committee reviews the faculty scholarship standards outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, recommends any modifications be made to the Academic Council, deans, and Faculty Assembly, and then advises the FWC to update the *Handbook* when these changes are approved. The Academic Affairs Committee of the BOT and President are notified via the provost of these changes so that faculty scholarship expectations are clearly communicated to all key administrators at the University.
2. Expectations concerning *Service* are regularly assessed and reviewed by the following University officers: the Chancellor, the President, the provost/vice president for academic affairs, the assistant to the provost for the institutional mission, the director of University Ministry, the chair of the CMI, the Core Curriculum chair, and the director of the Scholars Program. The service requirement expected of students in the University's Common Core and Scholars Curriculum is examined annually for appropriateness and effective linkage with course content. Special Catholic and Benedictine programming to be offered each semester is overseen by the director of University Ministry, the assistant to the provost for institutional mission, and the CMI chair. Key administrators such

as the provost are informed of any curricular service changes, as are the University Chancellor and the President when Catholic/Benedictine Workshops are planned for members of the internal and external communities.

3. Expectations concerning *Diversity* are regularly assessed and reviewed by the President, the provost/vice president for academic affairs, the executive vice president, the director of admissions, department chairs and program directors, the core chair, the director of the Scholars Program, and the faculty advisor for Study Abroad and Exchange Programs. The associate vice president for enrollment management meets with her staff each month to assess the number of incoming students of diverse ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds and to determine how her office can increase that recruitment pool. Academic programming (e.g., requirements within majors, study abroad curricula) is reviewed annually by core and scholars directors, department chairs, program directors, and the international faculty advisor to further meet the needs of this rapidly growing, heterogeneous student population.

Beginning in 2009, the newly created University Planning Council (charged with overseeing strategic planning and reporting its recommendations to the President) began meeting with the different groups identified above. Leaders of those groups reported on their activities, recent accomplishments, near- and long-term goals, and any needs they foresaw to achieve their objectives. Minutes from those meetings, as well as submitted reports and PowerPoint presentations, are made available to the University community in folders located on the University's shared drive.

2P5. Determining faculty and staff needs related to non-instructional objectives

An area where additional work would be worthwhile but not answered at this time

2P6. Incorporating faculty and staff needs in readjusting non-instructional objectives

Listed as a strength in our previous Systems Appraisal.

2R1. Regularly reviewed measures of non-instructional objectives

Listed as a strength in our previous Systems Appraisal.

2R2. Performance results in accomplishing other distinctive objectives

Faculty development was listed as a strength in the previous Systems Portfolio.

2R3. Comparison of performance results with those of other organizations

Results from the instruments we have adopted for regular use (NSSE, CLA, CIRP) provide the ability to gain a sense of our institution's performance, as do results from other instruments which we have used on a less regular basis (e.g. FSSE In 2009, Noel-Levitz in 2003-2004). Because we have just recently begun using some of these instruments on a regular, recurring basis, reliable results are not yet available. We will answer this item at a later time.

2R4. How performance results strengthen the organization

Three distinctive objectives — *Scholarship*, *Service*, and *Diversity* — are connected with the University's history, identity, and mission. Coupled with *Learning*, these objectives provide the overriding conceptual framework of the University. We are committed to creating a community of scholars who will become: 1) effective practitioners of their discipline (*Scholarship*); 2) active participants and change agents within society (*Service*); and 3) proponents of individual differences, beliefs and lifestyles, both on campus as well as in the world (*Diversity*).

Through *Scholarship*, students engage in research of their own or collaborate with faculty, then communicate their experiences and findings in the classroom, online, or at conferences. One of our educational goals is to make students more technologically adept and capable, and, in the process, make them more employable as well as ready to undertake specialized education within their disciplines. *Service* activities allow students to apply skills they have learned in extracurricular functions and to keep distinctive Catholic and Benedictine traditions at the forefront in whatever volunteer work they perform. University Ministry and Student Life are two vital service areas that advance this objective, but other events involving faculty and staff (such as a day organized for the outside community to bring unusual items to campus for recycling) have both benefited the outlying area and have modeled responsible behavior for students. Ethnic and religious organizations on campus promote the *Diversity* objective; in addition, opportunities for dialogue with our increasingly diverse student body both inside and outside the classroom prepare graduates for effective collaborations with members of local and national businesses and organizations, and provide employment opportunities within those settings.

Every year, an individual employed by the university community is selected to receive the Benedictine Life Award. Celebrated as the highest recognition the institution can bestow on one of its own, the award recognizes an employee who fosters the spirit of community and demonstrates the Benedictine qualities of life. The award is given at a large, campus-wide event and receives widespread publicity, reminding students, alumni, parents, faculty, and a wide variety of other people having connections with the institution of the importance of service and a life lived in balance.

211. Recent improvements in accomplishing other distinctive objectives

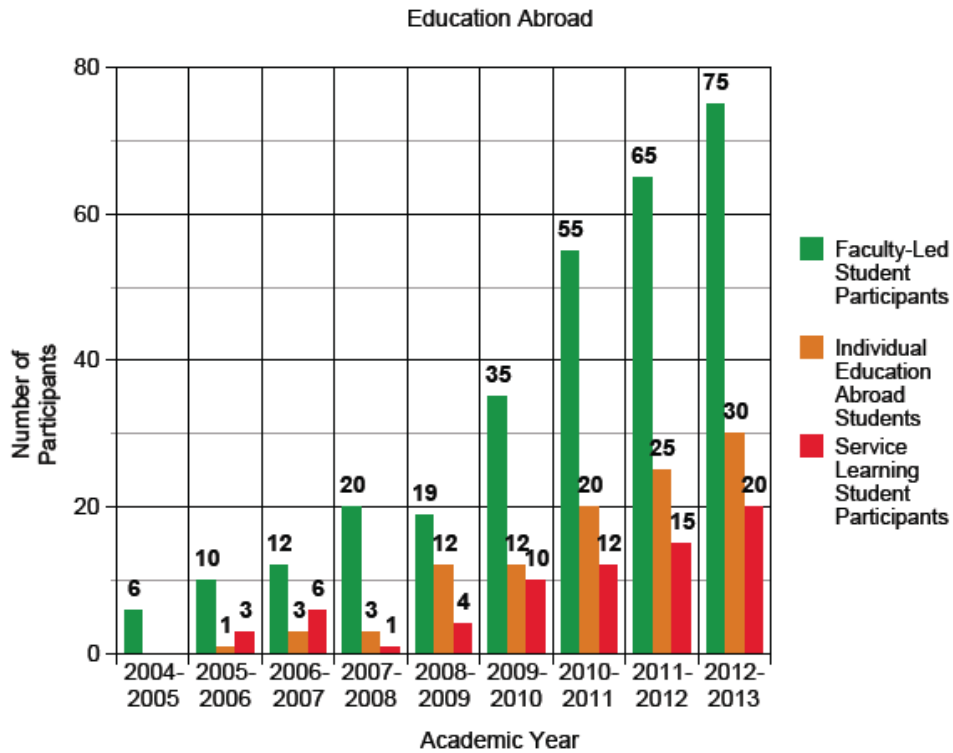
While we were pleased with how well our institution performed in many areas tracked by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), we also found areas where we would like to see improvement. Our commitment to *Scholarship*, for example, meant that we wished to increase the number of our undergraduate students involved in research, which we've begun addressing via an action project. At this time, we have increased the number of research practicum courses available to students, organized more on-campus opportunities for them to report their research results to other students, and led an effort to expand what had been an annual symposium organized by area colleges exclusively for science students so that humanities students could also participate. Analysis of enrollment patterns led faculty to restructure the *Service* expectation of our Core Curriculum to ensure that all undergraduates would participate in community service projects. With respect to *Diversity*, our student body remains very heterogeneous, and the composition of our faculty has continued to move in that same direction:

- With respect to gender and ethnicity, we expanded the diversity of the pool of candidates brought to campus to interview for new faculty positions. For the 2008-09 hiring period, nine of fourteen regular/term faculty hires were women, including two hires in areas defined as underrepresented by the National Science Foundation.
- With an increased focus on internationalization of our campus and the curriculum, we successfully recruited and hired six new faculty members with international experience.

Currently, of the 112 full-time faculty, 90 are white, 2 are Hispanic (who were added during the last 4 years), 5 are African-American (an increase of 2 over the last 4 years), and 11 are Asian (an increase of 8 over the last 4 years). In the same period, figures for staff are similar, with 166 white, 20 African-American, 1 Native American, 6 Asian, 5 Hispanic, and 2 nonresident aliens among the total. Gender breakdowns show rough parity between male and female faculty at the earlier stages of their careers with 25 male and 10 female among the full professors.

With respect to our objective to “prepare our students for a lifetime as active, informed, and responsible citizens and leaders in the world community,” we have experienced steady growth in the number of students pursuing study-abroad opportunities or participating in service learning experiences (such as those to the Philippines, Bolivia, and Tanzania organized by Campus Ministry). Figure 2-1 reflects that growth and adds targeted rates for the next two years.

Figure 2-1: Actual and Projected Number of Students Studying Abroad, 2004 – 2012



2I2. Selecting processes and setting targets to improve other distinctive objectives

We will respond to this item in a future update.

Category Three - UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS

3P1. Identifying changing needs of student groups

Because a key Benedictine value is “a concern for the development of each person,” the University uses both formal and informal means to identify ways in which its programs and services can be enhanced to meet the changing needs of its prospective and current student groups.

Figure 3-1. Identifying and Responding to the Changing Needs of Students and Key Stakeholders

Group Being Considered	Where / How Needs Identified
Prospective Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions Events: <i>Open Houses</i> <i>Information Sessions</i> • High School Visits • Community College Visits • Feedback from Coaches • Campus Interviews/Tours • Analysis of Applications by Admissions Committee • Other Assessment Processes
Current Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEA Course Evaluations • Academic Program Review • Student Advisory Committees • Library Statistics Survey • Service Center Surveys <i>(IT, Food Service, University Ministry)</i> • Student Government Association Surveys • <i>CANDOR</i> (student newspaper) Editorials and Letters

Key Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President’s Initiatives • Board of Trustees’ Initiatives • Employer Feedback <i>(job fairs, internships, campus interviews)</i> • Alumni Board Meetings • Pre-Professional Health Program Meetings • Surveys of Recent Graduates
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Participation from prospective students and feedback received during open houses, information sessions, and other recruitment events are used to revise enrollment activities and to determine whether changes in financial aid should be pursued. Members of the Enrollment Center staff also regularly visit area high schools and community colleges to connect with prospective students and stay current with student expectations and interests, with additional feedback received from athletic coaches as they recruit student athletes.

Applications from prospective students who do not meet admissions requirements are reviewed by the Admissions Committee, which evaluates each student’s academic record and may admit a student with conditions aimed at ensuring their academic success, such as limiting the number of semester hours a student may pursue in the first term of study, or restricting the student’s academic major.

Once admitted, students complete academic assessments in mathematics, foreign language and writing to determine appropriate course placements. Students having remedial needs are placed in appropriate level courses and, if possible, courses with structured learning assistance (SLA) programs.

Several of the University’s academic programs, including the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) and Teacher Education programs, identify changing student needs through student advisory committees. Feedback received from these groups has been used to enhance academic advising and improve channels of communication with students. The University’s cohort programs use a model of collecting student needs and concerns through a student representative acting on behalf of the entire cohort group. All academic programs are reviewed once every five years, a process that includes creation of a self-study and an appraisal by an external reviewer. These reviews are intended both to ascertain current program practices and to identify ways in which programs can be strengthened, thus benefiting students.

Determining the changing needs of students extends beyond the academic arena. All freshmen students were surveyed with the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory in 2003 and 2004 with results used to shape a registered Action Project addressing student retention. (See <http://www.ben.edu/aquip/retention-ap.cfm>) In addition, students are often asked to participate in more informal survey processes, including those sponsored by the Library, Student Government Association, Information Technology (IT), Food

Services and University Ministry. Recently, when one of those surveys found several students indicating that the temperature in a particular classroom area was a problem, it was immediately addressed. Another useful source for identifying student needs is the campus newspaper, *The Candor*, whose editorials, guest columns, and letters to the editor provide unsolicited perspectives and suggestions.

3P2. Building and maintaining relationships with students

Benedictine University begins the process of building and maintaining relationships with prospective students through an extensive series of admissions events beginning their junior year of high school. Included are those that connect with students on a particular interest level: for example, the Science and Continuing Studies Open Houses as well as the Tribute to Transfers. At each of these events, representatives from the faculty and staff extend a sense of hospitality that is unique to the Benedictine value system. Communication is furthered through a series of newsletters, email messages and personal telephone calls by Enrollment Center representatives, coaches, and other members of the University community. Relationship building also occurs in high school and community college settings, where prospective students are invited to obtain information, ask questions and meet with staff. A culminating enrollment event is the St. Benedict's Scholarship Dinner, where the University acknowledges freshman merit scholars and officially welcomes them into the Benedictine University community.

Relationships with these students are maintained once they arrive on campus through the SOAR (Student Orientation) program that is designed to facilitate their integration into the campus community. The Opening Convocation Ceremony held at St. Procopius Abbey further allows these entering students to become acquainted with the our Benedictine and Catholic traditions.

One of the significant formal relationships the University establishes with current students occurs through academic advising, which was restructured to expand and streamline the services available to new students through the middle of their first academic year, at which time "Declare Your Major" Day, celebrates the students' transition from the freshman to sophomore year. Transfer and adult students are initially advised by the New Student Advising Center (NSAC, whose website can be found at <http://www.ben.edu/advising>) and are then assigned a faculty advisor in their chosen field of study who works with them to the point of graduation.

In addition to academic advising, the University builds relationships with current and prospective students through utilization of Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social networking sites. Efforts are underway to recruit more regionally to acquire more on-campus students, so recruiters are contacting different high schools and attending a variety of events.

The University enhances its interactions with current students through a variety of extracurricular social activities. These include monthly "Commuter Breakfasts" sponsored by various service offices on campus, the Eagle Enrichment program for

student athletes, and a variety of student clubs and organizations in which students are encouraged to participate. The Student Government Association (SGA) sponsors a series of social activities throughout the year as well and represents a variety of student interests in areas of academic honesty, course scheduling, and commencement planning. Representatives from the SGA are frequently included on standing and ad-hoc faculty-student committees. University Ministry and Student Affairs functions (offered on a monthly basis) further provide students with a rich array of social experiences to complement their educational ones.

3P3. Analyzing and meeting the changing needs of stakeholder groups

Will be better able to respond to this item after the TFGE has completed its work.

3P4. Building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders

Portions addressed in Category 9 but not developed in detail here.

3P5. Determining new student and stakeholder groups

Portions addressed in Category 9 but not developed in detail here.

3P6. Collecting and analyzing complaint information

A registered action project in this area is underway. We will be better able to respond once the group working on that project implements its recommendations.

3R1. Determining the satisfaction of students and other stakeholders

Determining the type and level of student satisfaction with academic programs and non-academic services is a regular part of University life, as are processes to collect and review the satisfaction of employees. Figure 3.2 lists some of these instruments and processes.

Figure 3-2. Sampling of Methods Used to Determine Satisfaction of Students and Other Stakeholders

Method	Frequency	Explanation	Comparison
IDEA Evaluations	Every term	Determine student satisfaction with courses and instructors	Internal and benchmarking comparison
National Survey	Every 3	Determine	External

of Student Engagement	Years	student engagement with institution and its programs	
Survey of Recent Graduates	Annually	Determine satisfaction with programs and job preparedness	Internal year to year
University Services Surveys	Annually	Determine student satisfaction with service	Internal year to year
Freshman Surveys	Annually	Determine student satisfaction with advising	Internal year to year
Internship Supervisors Survey	Annually	Measure satisfaction of internship supervisors with student interns	Internal year to year
Employee Satisfaction Survey	Annually	Determine staff satisfaction with their work situation	Internal

In addition to annually collected information, other efforts have been undertaken to gauge student and stakeholder concerns. For example, questionnaires are distributed after every orientation event and after our Welcome Weekend, forums were created to identify student concerns with respect to the closing of Springfield College and the introduction of Benedictine University programming, and our internal Workforce Initiative sought out the views of support staff, which led to an employee taskforce scheduling regular sessions with supervisors. The library and the office of information technology periodically contact students, either via questionnaires or via student government, to ascertain student reactions to current services and to collect ideas about possible future offerings.

3R2. Performance results for student satisfaction

In several areas, Benedictine University's students have expressed satisfaction with its programs and services, and they have offered suggestions for additional activities that have been taken under review. For example, although not based exclusively on student demand, the new undergraduate program in Medical Humanities addresses interest in a

program for students wanting to utilize the institution's strong pre-med capabilities yet not wishing to major in one of the natural sciences. The new Criminal Justice program addresses student interest in having more complete exposure to that field than was available in the Sociology program's Criminal Justice concentration. The institution's first time participating in the NSSE produced very high marks in all five of the composite measures generated in that group's report, with both its freshman and senior groups reporting higher levels of engagement than students at comparator institutions in virtually all areas.

Figure 3-3. 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement Comparisons in Composite Categories (= B.U. students scored higher at a statistically significant level)*

Measure	Year in School	Benedictine University	Catholic Colleges	Carnegie Comparison	NSSE Overall
Academic Challenge	First	60.4	54.9*	51.8*	52.9*
	Senior	61.8	58.6*	56.1*	56.5*
Collaborative Learning	First	52.1	45.3*	42.3*	42.5*
	Senior	56.9	54.2*	51.3*	50.8*
Student-Faculty Interaction	First	43.3	37.0*	34.0*	34.6*
	Senior	44.8	45.4	41.1*	42.3
Supportive Campus Environment	First	66.7	64.5	60.3*	61.0*
	Senior	60.0	62.4	57.3	58.0
Enriching Educational Experiences	First	34.2	28.4*	26.4*	27.5*
	Senior	38.0	42.7	37.8	40.4

In conjunction with a marketing initiative involving branding the University more effectively, student forums produced several positive comments about the institution's financial aid programs. When students expressed frustration with the parking situation on campus, a survey about parking expansion was distributed across campus and led to plans for a new parking garage, currently under construction with completion anticipated in January 2011.

3R3. Performance results for building relationships with students

We are working on developing valid measures for this item.

3R4. Performance results for stakeholder satisfaction

This was listed as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal.

3R5. Performance results for building relationships with stakeholders

We are working on developing valid measures for this item.

3R6. Comparisons with other institutions in understanding students' and stakeholders' needs

Nationally normed instruments such as NSSE and CIRP show that Benedictine University compares well with respect to comparable institutions. Because we are working toward repositioning the University, we will be looking at a different set of comparator institutions and will have more meaningful results for this item in the near future.

3I1. Recent improvements in understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs

There have been several recent developments in this area affecting students from a variety of backgrounds:

- Creation of the Education Assistance Program, which offers substantial discounts for first-time incoming adult undergraduate and graduate certificate students and first-time incoming graduate degree-seeking students. The program is described at <http://www.ben.edu/aquip/eap>
- Formation of the Displaced Earner Program, designed to assist current students whose parents or guardian have become unemployed or whose financial situation radically changed since the student initially enrolled. http://www.ben.edu/campus_resources/displaced provides more information about the program.
- Development of an Early Alert Team that provides early intervention and prevention for students who are experiencing distress, engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors, or who have been identified as at risk. Visit <http://www.ben.edu/eat> for details.
- Creation of a Parent Liaison, who provides a contact point for families of students enrolled at the institution, with separate liaisons for the Lisle and Springfield campuses. The website at <http://www.ben.edu/parents> contains information for parents, with a cover letter from the liaison.
- Creation of Ben Cards for students, faculty, and staff. Ben Cards contain more information than the I.D. cards they replaced. Go to http://www.ben.edu/campus_resources/bencard for a description of the services they support.
- Formation of a registered Action Project charged with developing a centralized system of tracking complaints currently collected at various points across the university (e.g. the library, provost's office, information technology desk, etc).
- A new Student Advising Center was opened in October 2007 to replace the existing Freshman Advising Program. The Center worked with chairs of academic programs to familiarize staff with updated course information, implemented new registration initiatives, and monitored its progress both in enrolling and retaining traditional undergraduate, transfer, and graduate students. Initial results found fewer withdrawals and an increase in freshman to sophomore retention to 80% from a little over 70%.

3I2. Selecting processes and setting targets for improving understanding of students' and other stakeholders' needs

We will be better positioned to respond to this item once we have more experience implementing and utilizing information collected from existing and new instruments.

Category Four - VALUING PEOPLE

4P1. Identifying credentials, skills, and values required for faculty, staff, and administrators

This was listed as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal.

4P2. Ensuring employees possess required credentials, skills, and values

This was listed as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal.

4P3. Recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees

The hiring of potential employees for full- and part-time positions is coordinated through the Personnel Resources (PR) Office. In academic areas, the department chair/program director must receive approval from the college dean and the provost/vice president for academic affairs before initiating the hiring process. For positions in non-academic areas, Personnel Requisition Forms must be filled out by the hiring supervisor. The executive vice president authorizes final approval to initiate that hiring process.

All positions are posted at the University's public web site for internal and external consideration and then advertisements for those positions may be sent out to regional and/or national publications as appropriate. In August of 2010, we implemented a new on-line employment application process to coincide with the University's new website. Faculty apply for positions through AcademicJobsOnline and staff/adjuncts apply through Ceridian Recruiting Solutions. When an applicant sees a job for which they wish to apply, they click on the job and are taken to the application webpage of either AcademicJobs or Ceridian. From there, they simply follow the procedures as described. Responses are processed by PR and forwarded to the hiring manager or academic unit where the position is available. The manager/academic unit reviews each application and selects candidates for personal interviews and campus visits.

All new employees receive an intensive orientation to the University's philosophy, policies, and procedures through PR's New Employee Orientation Program, with staff orientation varying from one-half day for staff and one full day for faculty.

Outcomes of the New Employee Orientation Program include the following:

- Completion of I-9 documentation;
- Receipt of an employee photo ID and parking permit;
- Explanation of payroll procedures and the direct deposit process;

- Receipt of *The Employee Handbook*;
- Review of employee benefits;
- Anti-sexual harassment training;
- Safety training;
- Introductions to and meetings with co-workers;
- Navigation through the University's information technology environment, including e-mail, voice mail systems, and the PeopleSoft (PS) data system

Upon completion of the Orientation Program, new employees sign a Confidentiality Agreement. (Faculty receives a letter of appointment prior to the start of the academic year.

New hires are provided information about benefits from PR and the benefits administrator. New faculty participate in a similar orientation program but also hear from department chairs/program directors, college deans and the provost/vice president for academic affairs concerning their expectations of new faculty members. A year-long Faculty Mentoring Program is also part of the orientation.

The central process involved in retaining faculty is successful completion of promotion and tenure requirements, which are spelled out in detail in the *Faculty Handbook*. To give new faculty a solid foundation, annual reviews are conducted during their first three years after which they are no longer considered probationary. Because faculty are expected to remain active professionally, retention is enhanced by their participation in sabbatical opportunities and utilizing faculty development funds. The University is committed to ensuring that both of these areas are adequately funded and in recent years has expanded the budget of its faculty development fund. Every year, the Faculty Welfare Committee works with the University administration to update and improve compensation for faculty, another key to retaining qualified professionals.

Attracting and retaining qualified adjunct faculty has received greater attention in the last few years, with increases in compensation supplementing other opportunities (e.g., eligibility to apply for faculty development funds, stipends for attending workshops on campus), and each college assembling its own separate handbook for adjuncts, and organizing orientation and other events for their adjunct instructors.

Staff departments have varying levels of opportunity for advancement within the department. Some provide employees with well-defined career paths; while other smaller units may look to the broader University community for advancement opportunities for their employees. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of the tuition-remission benefit for their personal and professional development. Managers complete annual performance evaluations for all staff. These evaluations identify the strengths and weaknesses of the individual employee, the employee's contribution to meeting department objectives and advancing the mission of the University. High-performing employees are identified and provided opportunities for advancement; solid performers are provided opportunities for professional development and growth. Underperforming employees are provided the opportunity to be successful through a performance action plan.

4P4. Orienting employees to the organization's history, mission, and values

Although already listed as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal, we have begun working with members of St. Procopius Abbey to create a retreat or series of programs for newly hired staff to familiarize them with the Benedictine heritage.

4P5. Planning for changes in personnel

Within the process for socializing new faculty are provisions for non-renewal if serious problems are identified and documented. If progress is not satisfactory, a recommendation is made to the dean and provost as to the non-continuance of that faculty member's appointment and a plan to start a search for a replacement candidate the next academic year. The third-year review of the probationary faculty member is more extensive and formal than the first two years, and it follows the same process as an actual promotion review. Faculty who do not receive tenure are given a terminal one-year appointment, making it possible both for them to locate new positions and for programs to plan for replacements.

Succession planning is also needed for faculty who take on administrative responsibilities. Benedictine University has a tradition of mentoring individuals who have been promoted to leadership positions. The new provost is committed to sending four to five department chairs per year off-campus to participate in leadership-training seminars and workshops, institutionalizing a process that has been largely informal to this point. We are moving to implement the practice of identifying a "chair-elect" who will work alongside the current department chair to learn about the position they are expected to fill.

Succession planning for staff is under consideration in conjunction with the university's "Workforce Initiative" but has not yet been fully implemented beyond the process described in item 5P10. Planned changes in personnel are the result of the department managers' annual evaluation of the goals and direction of the department. The University prefers to plan for a necessary reduction in staff through attrition and redeployment.

4P6. Designing work processes and activities to support productivity and satisfaction

Can reply more effectively once Workforce Initiative has completed implementation.

4P7. Ensuring the ethical practices of employees

In 2008, the University established the positions of Compliance Officer/Audit Manager and General Counsel to equip the institution for the increasingly complex legal and ethical compliance requirements involved in today's system of higher education. Benedictine University has policies and procedures in place that address the following issues:

- Code of conduct
- Sexual harassment
- Compliance statement
- Conflict of interest
- Whistleblower protection

- Research misconduct
- Workplace violence and hate crimes
- Ethical behavior
- Students' rights and responsibilities

These policies are contained in the *Employee Handbook*, which is provided to new employees at orientation and in the *Faculty Handbook*. The policies also appear on the new [Compliance webpage](#) of the University's website. An Internet and confidential telephone helpline was established for anonymous reporting of unethical behavior on campus. Retaliation against employees who report unethical conduct is strictly prohibited. A university-wide compliance program is in development that will provide additional compliance policies, employee training, and compliance monitoring.

4P8. Determining and aligning training needs with organizational plans

The wide variety of positions across the University requires employees to be familiar with technology specific to their position and with systems commonly used by virtually everyone. When hiring, descriptions of desired and expected levels of technology competence are included in all advertisements. Once hired, new employees become acquainted with software systems commonly used across campus (e.g. the Microsoft Outlook e-mail and calendar system, the University's shared drive where such documents as blank forms, expense accounts, and handbooks can be found, etc). Throughout the year, the Office of Institutional Technology offers regularly scheduled training sessions for faculty, staff, and administrators who need to learn more about (or be brought up to date with) the Microsoft Office suite of programs.

For several years, our professional development coordinator has been responsible for maintaining the growing number of course websites, which now number more than 500. This has included not only creating courses and enrolling students in them, but also providing training to faculty wanting to customize their course website or to incorporate innovative instructional technology into the site. She has also helped faculty who wish to try out new teaching technology, such as personal-response systems and lecture-capture systems, and providing training to other faculty who wish to try out those innovations.

During 2009-2010, a review of our existing course management system (WebCT) determined that it needed to be replaced, both for economic and technological reasons. A group of three individuals with instructional technology backgrounds distributed a questionnaire to faculty to identify the features most important to them in any new course management system, as well as what new features they would like to have available. They then reviewed the capabilities of several systems before generating a short list of possible alternative systems which would streamline course creation, include built-in assessment capability, and utilize the most recent developments in technology (e.g., access via mobile phones, support for video conferencing, etc). Vendors were brought to campus and given an opportunity to demonstrate their companies' products and a new course management system ([Desire2Learn](#)) was recommended based on reactions from faculty preference. That recommendation was approved by the provost, and once contracts are reviewed by legal counsel and signed, training sessions are planned for fall

of 2010. Additional sessions will be scheduled for spring and summer of 2011 to ensure smooth transition to the new system by the end of the fall 2011 semester.

A registered action project is underway to identify additional technologies that will facilitate collaboration of faculty, staff, and administrators across our several branch campuses and connect with our overseas instructional sites. That project will necessarily include recommendations for training in the effective use of identified technological systems, utilizing the employee orientation period and routine technology training sessions described earlier.

Finally, the director of the Office of Information Technology periodically meets with representatives of student government to learn what sorts of capabilities students would like to see, as well as to alert them to developments that affect them (e.g., restrictions on printing that had to be undertaken to curtail rapidly escalating paper and toner costs). To some extent training needs are also driven by statutory and regulatory requirements.

4P9. Training and development of faculty, staff, and administrators

This was listed as a strength in previous Systems Appraisal.

4P10. Designing and using the personnel evaluation system

This was listed as a strength in previous Systems Appraisal.

4P11. Aligning employee rewards with institutional objectives

This was listed as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal.

4P12. Determining motivational issues for faculty, staff, and administrators

This item was not flagged in the previous Systems Appraisal. We have done work in this area, most notably in support of improving academic career flexibility where a Career Flexibility Summit for faculty was held in August of 2009. Subsidized by a \$25,000 innovation grant from The American Council on Education (ACE) and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the summit was designed to clarify existing career flexibility options and benefits for University faculty, review exemplary practices from other organizations, and identify top priorities for improving academic career flexibility. Because results are still being reviewed to identify appropriate responses, we are delaying a detailed response until later.

4P13. Providing for employee satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being

The PR Office makes sure that a safe environment is provided to all employees, students, and visitors to the University by coordinating a number of activities to ensure this goal is reached, including:

- Safety orientations held throughout the year for all new employees and student workers;

- Training workshops held throughout the year so that all employees are prepared to deal with natural as well as man-made disasters (e.g., from tornados to hazardous waste spills);
- Annual updates on the University's Emergency Response and Recovery Plan that provides information on how to handle particular crises (e.g., from bomb threats to suicide attempts);
- One-on-one training sessions with automated external defibrillators (AEDs) that are placed at strategic locations around campus;
- Ongoing safety inspections of high-risk areas (e.g., food services, laboratories, athletic facilities, physical plant); and
- Review of all new facility plans as well as redesigns of current structures so that they are fully compliant with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements prior to their implementation.

Most recently, a registered action project was completed that directly targeted the health and well-being of the University community. It utilized both undergraduate and graduate students in the University's Nutrition program to offer an exercise and nutrition program to any interested employees, and a total of 73 people participated. The University also hosts an annual health fair for employees, which features exhibits from local healthcare providers. Employees are encouraged to attend the fair to obtain literature, ask questions and have free testing of blood pressure, vision, blood sugar, etc.

Other organized efforts to improve the health and well-being of the campus community periodically appear, including most recently efforts associated with the Years for the Environment campaign and its emphasis on eating more organic foods and avoiding heavily processed and seasoned items. More informally, the popular television program "The Biggest Loser" led the associate vice president for student life to organize a similar event.

4R1. Regularly reviewed measures of valuing people

Listed as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal.

4R2. Performance results in valuing people

Results from a University of California, Los Angeles - Higher Education Research Institute (UCLA-HERI) questionnaire distributed to faculty in 2004-2005 found more than four out of five were satisfied with their autonomy and independence, relations with other faculty, their colleagues' competence, and overall job satisfaction. Almost nine out of ten indicated that they still wanted to be a college professor. More than three-fourths believed that their work added meaning to their lives and that they found real joy in working, and more than four-fifths felt that their research was respected by colleagues in their department. In the years since that instrument was distributed, several developments have occurred that could be expected to strengthen faculty satisfaction: The *Faculty Handbook* was revised in a highly collaborative effort that introduced a number of gains (e.g., institutionalizing the practice of a reduced teaching load for faculty during their first year of employment and in the year before they apply for tenure); faculty development funds have been augmented; contributions to Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association - College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF) increased to 7%;

and faculty salaries have been raised to keep pace with the cost of living. The faculty salary adjustment for the most recent year (2008-2009, reflected in the 2009-2010 pay period) actually exceeded the cost of living.

Full-time administrators who participated in the UCLA-HERI survey produced responses that were very similar to faculty, especially in relationships with and competency of colleagues, the value of their work, and overall job satisfaction. More than four-fifths expressed overall job satisfaction and three-fourths indicated that they found joy in doing their job. More than nine out of ten indicated that their work added meaning to their lives. As with faculty, subsequent developments may have strengthened these numbers, as administrators' compensation has also increased, and they have been given more opportunities for professional development.

Although the previous system appraisal identified no formal mechanism to assess support staff perceptions, a workforce initiative was underway at the time our earlier Systems Portfolio was under construction. Initially undertaken in conjunction with reorganization of the Personnel Resources area, the Workforce Initiative revised workplace conditions for support staff. Placing at its center the importance and value that the University places on staff employees and the work they do, the initiative was comprised of several stages. Job descriptions were revised for all staff and compensation then adjusted for hourly employees in 2005-2006. That same year, an interim evaluation process was used while a new tool for evaluating performance was identified. Introduced in 2006-2007, that tool was revised in 2007-2008 as a consequence of appraisal feedback. Annual reviews now include an opportunity for staff to raise concerns about their work situation. Also, using ideas from their participation in the Benedictine Pedagogy Conference this past spring, campus leaders are working with members of St. Procopius Abbey to create a retreat or series of programs for newly hired staff to familiarize them with the Benedictine heritage.

In the spirit of expanding community involvement in as many aspects of University activities as possible and appropriate, staff have been given greater involvement in some key academic matters. Most recently, they have been invited to join "Open Forum" discussions connected with the Task Force on General Education, which is developing recommendations for revising the University's undergraduate core curriculum. Anecdotal evidence from those sessions found staff were both grateful for being involved in the discussion and interested in learning how their work would be contributing to student learning.

4R3. Evidence of faculty, staff, and administrator effectiveness

This was listed as a strength in previous Systems Appraisal.

4R4. Comparison of performance results in valuing people with other organizations

Will reply to this at a future date.

4I1. Recent improvements in valuing people

Two of the improvements since the previous Systems Portfolio are described above: a workforce initiative designed to revise job descriptions and update compensation for support staff and a Career Flexibility Summit for full-time faculty, along with upgrades to their compensation and revision of the *Faculty Handbook*. In addition, significant attention has been paid to improving working conditions of the adjunct faculty on whom virtually all our academic programs rely. More specifically, a handbook expressly for adjunct faculty that originated in the College of Science was expanded and modified to cover adjuncts across the University. Copies are provided to all adjunct faculty members and an electronic version is available on the University's intranet system. Adjunct faculty may attend technology training workshops and will be encouraged to participate when the institution moves its online instructional capabilities to a new learning management system.

Other types of opportunities have varied across the colleges. In the College of Business, for example, a unique opportunity for adjuncts to teach abroad is underway. Materials and orientation are provided to prepare and support adjuncts teaching in China over a 1 – 2 week period at one of Benedictine University's partner institutions. In the College of Science, adjuncts attend scheduled workshops addressing instructional issues as well as dinners where appreciation for their efforts is shown. The College of Liberal Arts also hosts a reception and dinner for adjuncts, and two grant-writing workshops held in the spring of 2010 specifically invited adjuncts, who did participate. Additional arrangements are in place at the departmental and program level, such as occurs in the writing program in which adjunct faculty are mentored, attend workshops and lunches devoted to discussions of improving student writing.

Compensation for adjunct faculty was significantly raised in January, 2008 and, beginning in January, 2009 they will be able to contribute to TIAA-CREF. Also, all adjunct faculty members are eligible to apply for funding from the Faculty Development Committee; some have applied and received support.

Two other developments, consistent with the University's core values, affect all employees. First, during the recent economically difficult period that all institutions of higher education have faced, a deliberate decision was made to redirect staffing needs and to delay proposed construction in order to prevent laying off any employees. Second, a new system was developed to promote ethical behavior at the University by protecting whistle-blowing and anonymous reporting of unethical behavior.

With respect to providing for employees' health and well-being, significant upgrades have begun on the University's athletic and fitness center, the Dan and Ada Rice Center on the Lisle, Illinois campus. When that facility was completed more than 30 years ago, it easily met the needs of the University's sports teams and physical education program. However, the focus of the Benedictine community – and society in general – has changed over the years. Today, there is a greater emphasis on overall wellness, not just of athletes, but of the general population. The renovation of the Dan and Ada Rice Center began in January 2010 with the installation of a new hardwood floor, giant scoreboards and island baskets in the basketball/volleyball arena. Installation of a new 1,700-seat telescopic bleacher system, including 400 preferred chair-back seats, was completed in late August. This winter, Benedictine University will continue the Rice

Center renovation with the construction of a new and dynamic health and fitness facility that will attract talented new students, increase service to current students, faculty and staff, and foster a greater awareness of the need to maintain personal health and wellness. The new fitness center will feature a 7,500-square foot lower level dedicated to cardio and circuit training that will allow patrons to complete all levels of training and fitness activities. The cardio center will feature elliptical trainers, treadmills and stationary bicycles. Two private studios will provide ample space for fitness and yoga/pilates classes. A 5,200-square foot strength training mezzanine will provide athletes with a dedicated space to build the strength necessary to compete on an intercollegiate level. The additional weight training area will contain both free weights and strength training equipment to cater to a variety of users. Athletic teams will benefit from the additional equipment, and students, faculty and staff will have an area where they can work toward their own fitness goals

4I2. Selecting processes and setting targets for improvement in valuing people

Not addressed at this time.

Category Five - LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

5P1. Defining and reviewing the organization's mission and values

Ultimate responsibility for defining and reviewing Benedictine University's mission and values lies with the Board of Trustees (BOT), and St. Procopius Abbey whose historical and on-going connections with the University place it in a unique relationship. That relationship was manifested in 2002 when the late Fr. Kevin Sheeran argued that institutions of Catholic higher education have a special responsibility to assist one another, a view that persuaded Benedictine University's Board of Trustees and administration to assist then-struggling Springfield College of Illinois. The relationship between the two campuses evolved over the next several years, ultimately with Springfield College scheduled to terminate its existence in mid-2011. Benedictine University, however, will continue to offer several degrees at that site, providing continuity for Catholic higher education in a setting more than a hundred of miles from its central campus. Both students and faculty from Springfield College will find a home at the new Springfield campus of Benedictine University.

Another group closely connected with mission and values is the Center for Mission and Identity (CMI), a group formed early in the University's relationship with Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) as an outgrowth of an unregistered action project. CMI brings speakers to campus, organizes events relating to such ongoing issues as the relationship of faith and reason, and its members participate in annual meetings of the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities.

The system for reviewing and approving new academic programs, as well as sites for their delivery, must explain connections with the institution's mission. This requires both those proposing and others reviewing such initiatives to consult and interpret the

University's mission and values. Because proposals of this kind must survive several sets of reviews, a variety of groups and individuals (including program review committees comprised of faculty, the program's council of department and program chairs, the provost and appropriate deans, the President, and several others) are expected to have a sound grasp of the guiding principles embodied in Benedictine University's mission and values statements.

5P2. Setting directions in alignment with mission, vision, values, and commitment to high performance

This was identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and is not answered at this time.

5P3. Recognizing student and stakeholder needs when determining directions

This was identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and is not answered at this time.

5P4. Seeking future opportunities while maintaining focus on students and learning

Answering this item at a future time will allow for clarification of some opportunities (e.g., completing the process for adding Springfield as a branch campus).

5P5. Making and implementing decisions in the organization

The organization of responsibility at Benedictine University requires several groups and individuals to be involved in major decisions, and thus work collaboratively. In general, standing committees or special task forces consider an issue and make recommendations to the senior administration (i.e., the President, executive vice president, and provost/vice president for academic affairs). The President and two vice presidents work closely together, with executive decisions being made at that level. In well-defined instances (such as those involving operational budgets, granting of degrees, and cases of promotion and tenure), the President brings recommendations to the Board of Trustees for the members' review and approval. Recently, the provost has worked with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees to expand their familiarity with current developments in his area. For example, in the spring of 2010, a special session of the group was held to review instruments and processes in place for evaluating faculty instruction, and in the fall, another session was devoted to reviewing assessment of student learning.

Observations and recommendations involving the University's strategic plan are given to the President from the University Planning Council (UPC). While many of the group's reports provide updates on and descriptions of how various groups and individuals are addressing expectations identified in the strategic plan and do not involve direct decision-making, the UPC has forwarded suggestions to the President that go beyond simple monitoring of the strategic plan. For example, it has recommended creation of an

Office of Institutional Research to collect and disseminate data needed by various groups at the University.

Over the past four years, University task forces have been utilized more frequently to bring a variety of individuals together to address longstanding issues or far-reaching policies in a specified period of time. The reason for this can be linked to the success of the task force created to revise and update the *Faculty Handbook*. That group was chaired by the associate provost with membership including tenured and non-tenured faculty, representation from each of the University's colleges, the chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee, and the director of the library. It met regularly from 2006 – 2008 and provided updates to the Faculty Assembly, as well as holding several open sessions for faculty to offer ideas and provide reactions to revisions under consideration. This effort was undertaken not only to make necessary updates and to clarify ambiguous areas, it also was an outgrowth of one of Benedictine University's first AQIP action projects, which focused on improving shared governance. The revised *Faculty Handbook* was approved by both faculty and the Board of Trustees in the fall of 2008 and was identified at a meeting of the Faculty Assembly as an example of the sort of collaborative decision-making that was listed as an opportunity in the previous Systems Appraisal feedback report. Most recently, that model has been employed in conjunction with review of and revision to the University's general education outcomes and methods of delivering and assessing them. Another multi-year project, the Task Force on General Education includes representation not only from faculty in all colleges but from different campuses and from staff responsible for helping support general education instruction (e.g., the library and the Student Success Center). Open forums have been attended not only by faculty but by other members of the campus community, whose input has helped shape some outcomes. Another example of this format is University Technology and Information Founders group (UTIF), whose members included staff from across the University, as well as faculty. The group met from August of 2009 until June of 2010 and produced a document identifying key technology needs in the area of communications, collaboration, and instruction that will need to be addressed as the institution continues to grow.

5P6. Using information in decision-making

This item was not flagged in the previous Systems Appraisal. We will provide a response at a later time.

5P7. Communication within the organization

We will be better positioned to reply to this item after the new University Planning Council has been in existence for another few years. It is emerging as an important point for communicating across different portions of the University community, as well as upward to the President.

5P8. Communicating a shared mission, vision, and values

This item was identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and is not answered at this time.

5P9. Promoting and strengthening leadership among faculty, staff, and administrators

This item was not flagged in the previous Systems Appraisal. We will provide a response at a later time.

5P10. Maintaining mission, vision, and values during leadership succession

Benedictine University has a tradition of mentoring individuals who have been promoted to leadership positions. The new provost is committed to sending four to five department chairs per year off-campus to participate in leadership training seminars and workshops, institutionalizing a process that has been largely informal to this point. By the end of the spring semester of 2009, six department or program chairs had attended Council on Independent Colleges (CIC), American Council on Education (ACE), or Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) training sessions. Later that year, they shared what they learned with their peers. The provost allocated funds to continue these external training opportunities that have continued into 2010. Supplementing this has been movement to implement the practice of identifying a “chair-elect” that works alongside an existing department chair to learn about the position they will be expected to fill. Retention of language in the *Faculty Handbook* concerning the expectation of revolving responsibility for serving as chair makes these kinds of practices essential for continuity of program administration. A similar practice has been implemented with respect to the key position of AQIP liaison, selected from tenured faculty having held previous leadership positions.

With respect to succession training for staff, changes have been made in conjunction with the workforce initiative that was undertaken to revise and update the organization and evaluation of staff. We now have an informal plan in place for an individual to step in when a manager/director of an area separates from the department or the University. Opportunities are provided, at the department level, for an individual to participate in activities that provide some initial experience in the position they may take on. Many offices have designated a “second-in-command” staff member who is able to take on many of the responsibilities when the director or manager is out of the office. If the head of the office is vacating a position, and a current employee has been selected to take that manager’s place, either temporarily or permanently, opportunity is provided for the separating employee to train their replacement as much as time allows. The most recent example of this involves our new emergency preparedness manager, responsible for handling safety issues. The individual she succeeds will be training her this year.

5R1. Regularly reviewed measures of leading and communicating

Leading and communicating are key considerations when annual reviews of key personnel are conducted. The chart below indicates who is responsible for making those evaluations.

Figure 5-1. Administrative Evaluation Chart

Who is Evaluated	Who Conducts the Evaluation	Frequency of Evaluation
President	Executive Committee of BOT	Annually
Provost & Academic VP	President with input from faculty	Annually
Executive VP	President	Annually
Associate Provost	Provost with input from faculty and Provost's Council	Annually
Academic deans	Provost and faculty from their college	Annually
Director of Library Services	Provost with input from faculty	Annually
Registrar	Provost	Annually
Department chairs	Dean and department faculty	Annually
Program chairs	Dean, department chair (where appropriate), program faculty	Annually

Another important indicator of leadership is the level of financial support for leadership development, such as attendance at workshops that train future leaders. Funding levels for faculty development more generally also reflect a commitment to helping faculty improve their accomplishments and capabilities, investing in their future as more effective leaders and mentors. In that regard, funding that had been designated for merit awards has been moved into faculty development, allowing greater support for travel to conferences. Each subsequent year, more funding has been made available for this purpose, and support has been extended to include adjunct faculty.

Items 6P1 and 6P3 also identify instruments that both communicate with members of the community and collect information about effective communication. For example, the BenAlert system is monitored to determine how extensive communication of emergency information is, while the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) includes items measuring students' relationships with faculty, relationships with administrative personnel and offices, and quality of academic advising.

Effective communication is an ongoing challenge in a period when technological changes create new means to distribute information. Consequently, one of our current action projects involves creating a centralized system of tracking complaints to coordinate the collection and responses to complaints, which are not only received at different locations but also through a variety of means, including face-to-face, telephone, and online. Information about complaints received and processed will be regularly collected to monitor how quickly effective responses are delivered.

5R2. Results for leading and communicating

While progress has been made in this area since the previous Systems Appraisal, we will provide a more complete response at a later time.

5R3. Comparing leadership and communication results with other institutions

Obtaining comparable figures for other institutions is still underway, as the 2015 Plan has identified a different set of comparator institutions. This item will be updated at a future time.

5I1. Recent improvements in leading and communicating

The provost now distributes written updates to the campus community about developments at the University at least once per semester, with frequent updating of developments connected with the 2015 plan. Other efforts to keep the community informed include upgrading *Voices* magazine (the alumni magazine sent three times a year to alumni, friends and donors) to 4-color throughout; transitioning the *Campus Notebook* (the faculty and staff e-mail newsletter) from a text-only e-mail to a web page providing easier connection to existing information; development of a new athletics website in June 2009; and work currently underway on a Compliance website .

Item 5P5 describes one of the most effective developments in this area: the effective utilization of task forces to handle complex projects, ensuring representation from all affected areas and frequent opportunities for involvement of those affected.

Finally, in conjunction with the increasing prominence of assessment, there have been several meetings with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees to upgrade that group's understanding of assessment, a critical step to strengthening their oversight capability and helping them understand recent developments in the relationship between effective teaching and the improvement of student learning.

5I2. Selecting processes and setting targets for improving leading and communicating

We will be better positioned to reply to this item after the new University Planning Council has been in existence for another few years, as it is one of the main instruments for reviewing processes in place throughout the University and making recommendations for improvement to the President.

Category Six - SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

6P1. Identifying support service needs of students and other stakeholders

The University continues to use various measures to identify the needs of students and other stakeholders. Below is a list of several methods employed:

- Departmental and office in-house surveys
- Customer feedback form on our website
- Barnes & Noble, Sodexo Food Service and Campus Services annual survey
- University trustee senior student focus group
- Annual graduation survey

- IDEA student course evaluations
- National Surveys – National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)

Student Life staff meets weekly with the student leadership of Student Government Association (SGA) and programming board and advisors meet regularly with student clubs members. In addition, the President, executive vice president and provost meet monthly with the Student Senate president and vice president. Constant contact with our stakeholders provides the University a quick response to their needs.

Through various committees and boards, the University is able to obtain additional feedback: College of Business Advisory Board, Faculty Welfare Committee, Alumni Board, Board of Trustees Committees (BOT), Students Today, Alumni Tomorrow (STAT). Feedback obtained is incorporated into our day-to-day operations.

6P2. Identifying administrative support service needs

This was identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and is not answered at this time.

6P3. Designing, maintaining, and communicating processes contributing to safety and security

Responding to observations about [safety and security](#), in August of 2006, Benedictine University launched a University Police Department, the third private university in Illinois to do so. Providing full law-enforcement services 24 hours per day, the department is presently staffed by 11 state-certified police officers, who are supported by 12 contract security officers and two student aids. The chief of police chairs the Emergency Response and Recovery Team (ERRT) comprised of senior staff members and administrators representing all service and academic departments. The ERRT continually reviews, updates, and issues emergency response plans and operational incident-command procedures. The plan includes responses to severe weather, hazards, disasters, and work place violence. An Alert Wave Public Address System has been installed and will be used when there is any threat to life or property and can be integrated with the University's closed-circuit television system. It is wireless, has 157 components (speakers, strobes, and horns) throughout campus, and is controlled through the University police dispatch desk, which is manned 24 hours. University police post a monthly newsletter to all users of the University's e-mail system, announcing recent developments the campus community should be aware of. Special announcements, such as those involving changes to parking requirements in conjunction with special events, are also circulated this way. Every year, an updated Emergency Operations Plan is distributed to all offices on campus, with additional emergency information (e.g., evacuation routes) posted on doors to all offices and in building corridors.

Additional initiatives include designing and implementing the BenAlert system and assigning the duties of director of emergency management to a staff member. The

BenAlert system, which is tested once a year, enables students, faculty, and staff to receive alerts and notifications within minutes by phone, text, and/or e-mail messages regarding emergency situations affecting the University. Alerts are short messages about an urgent or immediate situation. Notifications are follow-up messages that may contain more detailed information that are not as time-sensitive. BenAlert enables the ERRT to schedule and send personalized voice messages to up to six phone numbers per student, faculty and staff member, and immediately sends messages via four different modes of communication:

- Voice messages to home phones, work phones, cell phones, and e-mail addresses
- Text messages to cell phones, PDAs, networked digital signage, and other text-based devices
- Text messages to e-mail accounts
- Messages to TTY/TDD receiving devices for the hearing impaired.

This has been supplemented on the Lisle campus with an Alert Wave public address system. The University also has designed two types of community teams utilizing the diverse skills and knowledge represented on campus: ERRT and the Early Alert Team (EAT). ERRT has developed an emergency operations plan with the sole purpose of preparing the University community in the event of an emergency or a disaster. Adherence to these guidelines by the University community has the potential to save lives, reduce injury and property damage, restore essential operations and priority services, and permit University officials to communicate with members of its community in a timely manner in the event of an emergency or disaster.

The mission of EAT is to provide early intervention and prevention for students who are experiencing distress, engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors, or who have been identified as at risk.

These groups have had their skills developed by completing ICS 300 and ICS 400 classes, and a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) refresher with officials from the DuPage County Office of Homeland Security. They raise the community's awareness with emergency plans with fire drills, repeated showing of timely videos (e.g., *Raising Awareness About Sexual Assault* and *Shots Fired On Campus*) and organizing a Basic Weather Spotter Class.

Several times a year, the University also makes available to faculty, staff, and administrators basic training in CPR, including information describing how to use the defibrillators, which are located in every building.

In addition to physical safety, the University is committed to providing appropriate electronic security to protect private information and block programs that could jeopardize the integrity and continued functioning of key information systems. To accomplish this, the Office of Information Technology provides a filtering service for campus e-mail that intercepts not only junk or spam messages, but also messages that

may contain computer viruses. If suspicious messages make their way through this system and are detected, e-mail alerts are sent to all users to let them know how to avoid accidentally exposing themselves to risk. The campus's wireless system requires new users to have their computers checked to identify any potential threats to the campus network, and all users are required to update their passwords regularly.

6P4. Managing support service processes to address intended needs

We will be addressing this item in a future update.

6P5. Documenting support processes to encourage knowledge sharing, innovation, and empowerment

We will be addressing this item in a future update.

6R1. Regularly reviewed measures of student, administrative, and organizational support service processes

The University collects and analyzes data from a number of measures related to student and administrative support services processes. Some instruments, broad and more national in scope like the Higher Education Research Institute – Cooperative Institutional Research (HERI-CIRP) freshman survey and the NSSE, allow the University not only to evaluate responses from our own students, but also those from comparable institutions. The University also has undertaken a registered action project to coordinate the collection and tracking of complaints from several separate systems in place at various points across the institution (including the library, Information Technology, the provost's office, and University's website).

Other surveys provide benchmarking data such as those utilized by Residence Life, Food Services, and Campus Services generate results related to specific service units. Many service areas customize measures to track stakeholders' needs, results, and improvements. For example, the Office of Information Technology tracks work orders both to ensure prompt and appropriate response and to accumulate information that can forecast likely trouble spots. For example, a spate of calls about malfunctioning computer monitors may show the monitors were purchased at the same time, alerting Information Technology support to anticipate similar failures among other monitors, and allowing proactive measures to be taken to avert such an outcome.

The Career Service Survey (CSS), undertaken after graduation, course evaluations, and the athletic student evaluation provide information about satisfaction with many of our programs that target students.

6R2. Performance results for student support service processes

This was identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and is not answered at this time.

6R3. Performance results for administrative support service processes

This was identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and is not answered at this time.

6R4. Use of information by student, administrative, and organizational support areas to improve services

We will be addressing this item in a future update.

6R5. Comparing results for supporting organizational operations with other institutions

While benchmarking data is limited for student and administrative support services at Benedictine University, two national instruments are utilized on an annual basis: CIRP New Student Survey and NSSE. With respect to CIRP, only a few related support service questions are of relevance inasmuch as the survey is conducted very early in a student's academic career, before they have had contact or been involved with support services. Some figures are available allowing comparisons and contrasts to be assembled covering factors involved in selecting the University, and these are often related to admissions and support services personnel and programs.

Figure 6-1. % Freshmen who say these items were “Very Important” for selecting their university (2009 CIRP results)

Statement	Ben Univ %	All Catholic %	Selective Catholic %
This college has a very good academic reputation.	62.0	68.8	69.6
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college.	47.4	53.2	52.4
A visit to the campus.	31.8	45.5	47.5
The college has a good reputation for its social activities.	23.3	35.8	41.2
I was attracted by the religious orientation of the college.	15.6	15.0	17.6
Rankings in national magazines.	15.1	13.8	17.3
Information from a website.	14.7	17.3	19.5

The CIRP data from the most recent year ($n = 313$) shows that academics and size of the institution are two of the most critical factors in selecting Benedictine University. These percentages are comparable to those of both Catholic institutions as a whole and the most selective Catholic, four-year colleges (see *Figure 6-1*). Social activities, religious orientation, ranking in national magazines, and website information are some of the least important factors for attending Benedictine University and those respective Catholic institutions.

Results from the 2008 NSSE survey showed no difference between our first year students and students in two comparison groups in the “Supportive Campus Environment” composite measure. As with the other two comparison groups, the figure dropped a few percentage points among seniors. See *Figure 6-2*.

Figure 6-2. Score Comparison for Supportive Campus Environment Composite (2008 NSSE results)

Cohort	Ben Univ	Institutions Scoring in the top 50% in this area	Institutions Scoring in the top 10% in this area
First-year Students	66.7	65.8	68.5
Seniors	60.0	63.5	66.7

It should be pointed out that in four of the five NSSE composite items, our students scored significantly higher than students in the two comparison groups. But although this composite item did not show much difference, it returned the highest score of all the grouped items in the NSSE results. That is, on items contributing to the Supportive Campus Environment score (campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically; campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities; campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially; quality of relationships with other students; quality of relationships with faculty members; and quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices), students gave Benedictine University very high marks. This is a little surprising given how few first-year students indicated that Benedictine University's social life and religious affiliation were very important to them in selecting the institution (see Figure 6-1). But while incoming freshmen might not consider these factors to be critical in choosing Benedictine University, the University believes that services in those areas (e.g., Student Life, University Ministry and Public Relations) should focus on such dimensions to provide students with the most enriching type of liberal education experience possible from the very beginning.

6I1. Recent improvements in supporting organizational operations

There have been several recent improvements in this category since the previous Systems Portfolio. The first is the establishment of a University Police Department from a public safety office, described in 6P3. University Police employs Illinois-certified police officers that have full police powers including arrest. The police officers bring specialized training and experience to the University, which provides strong service and mentoring relationships with students. Their expertise increases the level of performance of campus-area patrols, criminal investigations, traffic control, traffic, and parking enforcement and crime prevention. The police staff has been instrumental in enhancing the ERRT and safety features on campus. Also in the area of public safety, the

University follow Clery Act notifications, is moving toward full compliance with National Incident Management System (NIMS) standards, and has begun plans for a mock disaster drill.

Second is the restructuring of the University Development Office. The re-creation of this office was undertaken to fortify the relationships of current students, past students, and friends of the University, as well as to form new relationships. The founding of the Students Today Alumni Tomorrow (STAT) student group provides the staff of the Alumni Office with current students who are involved with and aware of the significance of alumni relations while they are still on campus. The additional talent and direction these groups provide has brought additional contacts and funds to the university.

Third is the formation of the New Student Advising Center (NSAC). The staff works with freshman, transfer, and adult undergraduate students to develop personalized academic plans. These professionals develop relationships with the new students early in the enrollment process, which continues over time as they remain the primary resource for students during their early months on campus. Though small, the increased conversion of students and are admitted to those who are registered (from 34.5% in 2007 to 36.5% in 2010) suggests the promise of the center. Increased conversion also has improved services to our new students, as we are encouraged to offer new services when so many students take advantage of what is offered.

6I2. Selecting processes and setting targets to improve supporting organizational operations

We will be better positioned to reply to this item after the new University Planning Council has been in existence for another few years, as it is one of the main instruments for reviewing processes in place throughout the university and making recommendations for improvement to the president.

Category Seven - MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

7P1. Using data to support instructional and non-instructional programs and services

Identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and not answered at this time.

7P2. Using data to support planning and improvement efforts

The nature of the objectives being pursued dictate both the information collected and how and when it is used. For example, in 2009, the Task Force on General Education (TFGE) was charged with recommending an updated set of educational outcomes and a means of delivering them to Benedictine University's undergraduates. Once the group identified a set of outcomes and presented them at a series of open forums, they recognized the importance of evaluating the current set of courses addressing general education to determine the degree of overlap, and whether it was reasonable to suggest modifying, as opposed to replacing, the existing general education system. The group worked with members of the Core Curriculum Committee (some of whose members also

served on the TFGE) to collect information about the current system and present conclusions and observations to faculty at another open forum.

While task forces operate on varying schedules, the collection of data about undergraduates via nationally normed instruments is now done on a regular basis. A recently completed Action Project established protocols covering preparation for and administration of each instrument, as well as dissemination of findings to encourage their having an impact. Standard procedure involves presentation of findings to the President, provost, and Provost's Council, followed by a similar presentation to faculty at Faculty Assembly, and then more narrow reports created for public release via the student newspaper and alumni magazine. Those presentations include identification of key findings and areas of recommended improvement. For example, the most recent Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) results showed our incoming freshmen were less likely than freshmen nationally to have been involved with student groups in high school. Because retention is closely associated with a student's degree of integration within an institution, all presentations of the CIRP data included the observation that extra efforts needed to be made to encourage incoming freshmen to join student organizations, participate in athletics, or become actively involved within their chosen major. Data collected from these national instruments has also been made available to the Board of Trustees (BOT), most recently in its review of the University's system of assessment. That group expressed interest in monitoring results from the three instruments we have begun using on a regular basis: CIRP, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA).

Information central to ongoing operations is regularly collected and reported to those most directly and immediately affected by it. For example, many groups need enrollment data to anticipate financial aid demand, meet parking requirements, forecast needs in the area of tutoring, etc. Enrollment figures are updated and that information shared as it becomes available with general enrollment estimates and other information announced at the opening meeting of the entire campus community in August, with more precise information reported later in the fall. News releases as well as reports in *Voices* magazine share that information, as well as other financial figures, to the general public and to alumni.

7P3. Determining data collection and storage needs

This was identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and is not answered at this time.

7P4. Analyzing performance data and communicating results within the organization

Overall performance can best be judged by how well the University accomplishes its mission and, to do so, meets goals identified in its strategic plan. Data is regularly collected to inform decisions in both these regards. With respect to the mission, for example, Benedictine University joined more than thirty other Catholic colleges and universities supplementing its 2008 NSSE survey with fifteen additional items specifically

addressing institutional mission. Results were provided to the Center for Mission and Identity (CMI), as well as to the President, provost, trustees, and faculty. Since the strategic plan's inception, the University Planning Council clarified its role in this area and began inviting members of the University to its meetings to report on the progress made in their areas toward meeting strategic goals and to explain what evidence they employed to reach those judgments. Supportive in nature, those sessions led to the generation of reports and recommendations to the President concerning overall progress toward meeting the strategic plan. The BOT has the responsibility of monitoring the institution's progress in meeting both its mission and its strategic plan, so its members are routinely provided with relevant information, as well as data they request. The BOT, for example, introduced the idea of identifying key dashboard indicators to provide a general sense of how well the University is performing. Those indicators are periodically updated and the new information routinely provided to the Board in preparation for its meetings.

Information concerning how well the University is performing is distributed via a variety of ways: at meetings (both campus-wide gatherings and smaller groups), via e-mail, on both the Internet and University intranet, and by publication and mailing of the periodical *Voices*. With respect to meetings, the Faculty Assembly is a forum for reports to the entire faculty (e.g., results of nationally normed instruments: see item 7P2) The entire community has traditionally met on opening day, which features reports from the President and vice presidents about developments, projects and newly hired individuals. Similarly, the Founders Day celebration brings announcements of awards to individuals and groups that have made significant contributions, while the annual Employee Recognition Day features announcements of years of service and promotions. Other meetings where information concerning institutional performance is shared include monthly meetings of the academic staff, held by the Provost and attended both by the academic staff and by academic deans and associate deans. Smaller meetings where institutional performance information is distributed include the aforementioned University Planning Council and the Provost's Council.

E-mail is an effective means of providing widespread access to information about University performance, particularly for those unable to attend meetings on the Lisle campus. The provost provides a report to the community each semester about developments and upcoming challenges and projects via e-mail, and the minutes from Faculty Assembly meetings are distributed the same way. Additional information is provided through the monthly releases of the *Campus Newsletter*, distributed by e-mail and containing links to the University's new website, which also includes an electronic version of the *Voices* alumni magazine. That periodical contains the institution's annual financial report. Additional information about performance is posted on the intranet or shared drive, to which employees have access.

One of the most focused communication vehicles of data about institutional performance is the *Fact Booklet*, assembled annually by the associate provost working with the registrar. Data within the *Fact Booklet* provides an overall profile of the University's student base and is presented in tabular format. The following information is included in the booklet:

- annual undergraduate and graduate student headcounts;

- headcounts broken down by load (full-time versus part-time);
- headcounts broken down by degree status (associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral);
- total credit hours generated for the different degrees;
- headcounts broken down by gender;
- headcounts broken down by ethnicity;
- headcounts broken down by age (i.e., traditional versus adult learners);
- student-to-faculty ratios;
- student geographic profiles (including the percent coming from the state of Illinois and other states, as well as the number of foreign countries represented in the student base);
- six-year graduation rates for full-time, baccalaureate degree-seeking undergraduates;
- freshman-to-sophomore year retention rates for full-time, baccalaureate degree-seeking undergraduates;
- average ACT composites, as well as the 25th and 75th percentile composites for these undergraduates; and
- percentage of these students in the top 10% and top 50% of their high school classes.

At one time published in hard copy for release to faculty and staff, the *Fact Booklet* is now distributed electronically to those groups.

7P5. Determining needs for and sources of comparative data

A registered action project addressing this area was recently completed, but its conclusions and recommendations have not been fully implemented. Answering this item at a later time will allow for a more complete and informed response.

7P6. Alignment of data with organizational goals

While annual program reports and regularly scheduled program reviews have been in place for some time, there are changes underway in the collection and dissemination of data that would make a description of current practices moot. Waiting to answer this item at a later time will allow for a full implementation of new procedures in this area.

7P7. Ensuring timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and security of information systems

This was identified as a strength in the previous Systems Appraisal and is not answered at this time.

7R1. Regularly reviewed measures of effective information management

This item was not flagged in the previous Systems Appraisal. We will provide a response at a later time.

7R2. Evidence that measuring effectiveness system meets the organization's needs

In key areas, it is clear that the University's efforts at measuring effectiveness are working and helping to make decisions that improve our ability to carry out the mission and meet strategic goals. For example, information about the enrollment patterns of transfer students led to the creation of a new Cultural Heritage course. The course was designed specifically for those students, as well as relocating a service learning experience away from a course taken only by enrolling freshmen to the final Cultural Heritage course required of all undergraduates. Monitoring of enrollments and identification of student needs and interests informed decisions to expand program offerings at the Springfield and Moser campuses, while participation of faculty from those locations in the TFGE ensured that the needs of their student populations were included in discussions about instructional revisions.

The University is still evolving in this area, as some of the data about the mission and strategic goals have not been as direct or informative as needed. For example, participation in CIRP and NSSE provides the university with self-reported data about student study and work habits that are useful for monitoring effort or identifying behaviors commonly associated with academic success. The University has only begun to use the CLA instrument to determine changes in actual student performance or to compare students' abilities with those of students enrolled at other institutions. The University also has encountered some challenges in identifying the appropriate technological tools for entering and tracking assessment data. Initially, the University had selected LiveText, a software system that had been adopted by the education program for use in tracking its students' having met certification requirements, for use institution-wide. But an action project designed to pilot and then implement that software identified such serious shortcomings that it was abandoned and a new system, Desire2Learn, was selected. Desire2Learn's integration of course management and assessment-tracking capabilities combined with its ability to incorporate the latest technological innovations, will allow the University to collect and aggregate information about student learning that is either not collected or difficult to standardize. Moreover, the TFGE is strongly committed to ensuring that the new general education system it will be recommending must include assessment of student learning outcomes. These two developments mean that very soon the University will have consistent, direct measures of student learning available for all new student-learning outcomes.

7R3. Comparing results for measuring effectiveness with other institutions

Obtaining comparable figures for other institutions is still underway, as the 2015 Plan has identified a different set of comparator institutions. This item will be updated at a future time.

7I1. Recent improvements in measuring effectiveness

Answering this item at a future time will allow for clarification of how some new processes are working out.

712. Selecting processes and setting targets to improve measuring effectiveness

The Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) system has been crucial for identifying areas and setting targets to improve the University in a variety of ways. Usually, this has been done by Benedictine University's AQIP Liaison (who serves as assistant to the provost for academic assessment and accreditation), who encourages creation and adoption of registered action projects designed either to address needs and shortcomings identified in the Systems Appraisal or to respond to areas receiving extensive coverage at the annual Higher Learning Commission meetings in Chicago. Widespread familiarity with the Systems Appraisals facilitates these conversations, as members of the University Planning Council and Provost's Council recognize the importance of addressing areas identified as needing improvement. The liaison's presence on both the Provost's Council and University Planning Council permit him/her to report on developments at the Higher Learning Commission meetings.

Part of the institution's culture that promotes targeted improvement comes from the commitment of its top leadership to the AQIP model. At the University's most recent Strategy Forum, for example, team members created a three-part planning document reflecting AQIP's forward-thinking approach: where are we now / where would we like to be / how do we get there. Shortly afterward, we created a registered action project to ensure that that document was used throughout the institution. The President and provost insist on its adoption wherever appropriate, and its format has become so well known that it is now reflected in the agenda of some meetings.

Category Eight - PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

8P1. Identifying key planning processes

Our 2006 Systems Portfolio presented a history of recent planning at the University that requires updating. Both before and since that document was assembled, members of the Benedictine University administration and faculty participated in Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Strategy Forums to identify methods to strengthen strategic planning. At its most recent Strategy Forum in November of 2007, participants assembled a strategic planning document reflecting AQIP's tripartite "Where are we now? Where do we want to be? How do we want to get there?" approach to continuous improvement, and adopted it for guiding all subsequent planning. A registered action project was then created to publicize and make more widespread the use of this approach to planning throughout the University. Because the President and Provost were both convinced of its value and strongly advocated its adoption, the document has become widely used. For example, when the provost assembled an initiative to prepare the University for changes needed by 2015, he structured his reasoning and goals through direct use of that document. (See Figure 8-2) When a team of faculty and I.T. staff summarized a months-long investigation into identifying a new learning management system, it used those three questions to organize its one-page executive summary. Even unofficial organizations within the University community (such as the

Environmental Committee) have used the planning document to organize and evaluate their activities. It has become standard practice to employ the document when teams working on action projects hold their initial planning meetings.

Another major development that occurred subsequent to the 2006 Systems Portfolio was the creation of the University Planning Council (UPC) to oversee strategic planning; ensure fit between the University's strategic plan and new initiatives (such as the expansion of educational opportunities internationally); suggest, approve, and monitor registered AQIP action projects; assist in the production of accreditation documents (such as this edition of the Systems Portfolio); and make recommendations to the President concerning strategic planning needs. This body, comprised of 10 representatives from across the University community, acts as the AQIP steering committee. In the fall of 2008, the group arranged a special meeting with AQIP Director of Education and Training Lynn Priddy and began integrating the University's strategic plan with AQIP categories and strategies. The UPC meets twice a month during the academic year and at other times as needed. After devoting its initial meetings to identifying organizational principles and procedures, the group now reviews the University's strategic plan and receives reports from individuals implementing projects linked to the plan to determine how best to ensure their success and, by extension, the success of the strategic plan. The group's chair meets with the President at least once per semester to report on the council's activities (minutes of each meeting are posted to the institution's shared drive) and its recommendations for advancing the University's strategic plan.

Another group involved in strategic planning that meets regularly is the Provost's Council, comprised of the academic deans; associate provost; assistants to the provost; registrar; director of the library; legal counsel; director of corporate, foundation, and government grants; and director of international programs. This group assists the provost in planning projects related to academic matters, such as the 2015 Plan, closing of the Springfield College and creation of the new Benedictine University Springfield branch campus, budgeting for new programs and positions that reflect priorities of the strategic plan, etc. It meets on a monthly and as needed basis and includes opportunities for participants to announce developments in their areas, to seek advice, and in general to benefit from the group's experience and expertise.

When planning implies changes affecting large segments of the University community, or when external circumstances warrant (such as the economic challenges confronting all institutions of higher learning), the President or provost appoint task forces representing those segments to make recommendations concerning how best to proceed. Because their charge is limited and their recommendations are expected to have widespread impact, these task forces generate widespread attention and support. For example, the Task Force on General Education (TFGE, described in section 1P1) was created in the fall of 2009 to continue improvement in the area of academic excellence. While membership is primarily comprised of faculty (chosen to represent all colleges and campuses), members also include representatives of student life, the library, student government, and St. Procopius Abbey. Resources have been provided to allow members to attend conferences in areas affected by general education revision

(e.g., assessment), to acquire materials germane to the process, to bring guest speakers to campus, and to cover the cost of a summer workshop. Following the model employed successfully by a previous task force that revised the *Faculty Handbook*, the TFGE has held open forums to report its progress and to receive additional input, in addition to reporting to the Faculty Assembly. In a similar fashion, in support of the strategic goal of revenue enhancement, a new task force has been created to review existing implementation of the PeopleSoft records system. That group also has representatives from affected areas and is charged with making resource allocation recommendations to increase utilization of PeopleSoft's capabilities.

8P2. Selecting short- and long-term strategies

Apart from the changes just described in 8P1, procedures have remained as they were described in the previous Systems Portfolio, which was rated as Satisfactory in the previous Systems Appraisal.

8P3. Developing key action plans to support organizational strategies

Action plans have been developed to accomplish several objectives associated with our institution's organizational strategies. First, to increase project success and thus validate and reinforce our participation in AQIP, projects have been made smaller and shorter in duration. Previous action plans tended to be ambitious and persist over long periods, making it difficult to determine their accomplishments, creating problems tracking their many sub-projects, and making AQIP participation seem more demanding than it was intended to be. Also, action projects are now much more likely to be registered, placing the institution on record as having committed itself to working to ensure their best chance of success. While an earlier approach to developing action projects included many unregistered plans, by registering action plans, they became easier to track and created a more complete written record of our activities. To clarify, Benedictine University is an active institution that at any time is engaged in many different projects intended to advance its mission and secure its future, but not all such projects go through the process followed by registered action plans.

Second, where possible, action plans are chosen to address items identified by the previous Systems Appraisal as areas of greatest opportunity, in order to utilize outside reviewers' experience in identifying areas of concern. We seek to ensure that registered action plans are developed in each AQIP category. (See Figure 8-1) NB: Previous action plans included unregistered projects that touched on several of these areas. While the institution remains active and innovative in many areas, we have moved away from creating and tracking unregistered action projects.

Third, action plans involve key decision makers on campus, encouraging cooperation among them and the groups they represent. More specifically, months before an action plan is scheduled to end, the AQIP liaison consults with both the University Planning Council and the provost to identify potential new projects and to receive reactions to draft proposals.

Fourth, whenever practicable, action plans are deliberately organized to ensure that the teams working on them come from across the University. This is a valuable part of the AQIP approach, as individuals who would ordinarily not encounter one another find themselves collaborating to accomplish a common objective. Although smaller in scale than other campus events that bring together diverse groups from the University community (e.g., semi-annual campus beautification events), action plans work well at developing camaraderie because larger events keep the different segments grouped together, while action plans bring individuals together.

Finally, several action plans have been directed toward identifying best practices, understood as determining the best configuration of existing (or new) organizations and the most effective procedures for accomplishing ongoing needs. For example, an action project was undertaken to compile the proper protocol for administering a series of annual, nationally normed assessment and informational questionnaires, such as Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). That project organized input from and output to existing groups on campus (such as the Faculty Assembly and Provost’s Council), but it also identified the need for a group to coordinate the implementation of these surveys, assemble a budget for them, and ensure they were approved by our Institutional Review Board. Two similar action plans are currently underway, one to create a centralized system of tracking complaints currently received at various points around the institution and the other to identify the best technology for facilitating collaboration across our increasingly dispersed campuses.

The University Planning Council receives updates on action projects as it monitors activities underway to advance goals identified in the institution’s strategic plan. Depending on the nature of the action project, the University community may receive updates on the University’s website, in articles printed by the student newspaper and alumni magazine, or from information on the University’s intranet shared drive.

Figure 8.1 - Registered Action Projects By Long Term Strategic Goals and AQIP Categories

Action Project’s Objective	Long-Term Strategic Goal	AQIP Category
Establish and implement a learner-centered assessment process	1-Striving for Academic Excellence	1 – Helping Students Learn
Expanding undergraduate student research	1-Striving for Academic Excellence	1 – Helping Students Learn

Improvement of student learning through use of benchmark data	1-Striving for Academic Excellence	1 – Helping Students Learn
Increase the graduation rate for traditional freshman students	3-Enhancing Graduation Rates	3 - Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs
Wellness programming	2- Promoting a Catholic University in the Benedictine Tradition	4 – Valuing People
Create a collaborative community through systems of shared governance	4-Strengthening Communication and Collaboration	5 – Leading and Communicating
Create a centralized complaint processing system	4-Strengthening Communication and Collaboration	6 - Supporting Institutional Operations
Live text software assessment pilot	1-Striving for Academic Excellence	7 – Measuring Effectiveness
Foster principle of continuous improvement in planning processes	4-Strengthening Communication and Collaboration	8 – Planning Continuous Improvement
Implementing effective collaboration technologies and procedures	4-Strengthening Communication and Collaboration	9 – Building Collaborative Relationships

8P4. Aligning planning processes across the organization

An action project is currently underway that will affect this area, which previously was rated as an opportunity, but there are no results to report at this time.

8P5. Defining objectives and setting targets for organizational strategies and action plans

The objectives and measures identified for guiding strategies and action plans come from several sources. Some are based on national norms or targets identified during previous research. For example, we now have an action project devoted to increasing the proportion of our undergraduate students who complete their own research projects or who work with faculty on established research activities. The decision to undertake this was inspired by figures reported in our NSSE results, which indicated that while the University believed a large portion of our students already engaged in these opportunities, in fact students reported the same level of research activity as students at other institutions. Moreover, in both the 2008 NSSE and 2009 CIRP surveys, first-year students indicated a low level of expectation that they would be involved in research work. This action project is designed to increase both the number of students involved in research and the proportion of students who arrive on campus expecting to do research. Another example of using results to inform future practices would be our use of IDEA results both to identify instructional support needs of new faculty and to suggest workshop themes for the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence.

Other targets are determined by schedules of existing activities. For example, for annual reports to be completed in a timely fashion, program directors need to receive information (e.g., number of majors, group scores on teaching evaluations, etc.) at specific times. Budgeting cycles often dictate when recommendations for supporting new activities or positions must be completed. When task forces are assembled, they typically are charged with accomplishing specific outcomes by designated dates, with those outcomes and dates shaped by larger strategic needs. For example, the task force reviewing effective use of the PeopleSoft system needs to assemble its recommendations before the next fiscal year begins to prepare for any shifts in staff or other resources.

Both the 2015 initiative and the TFGE have utilized information from comparator institutions to inform their objectives, with the former focusing primarily on institutions in the Chicago-land area and the latter reviewing a list of comparable institutions nationally based on IPEDS data from 2008 and 2009. Other indicators and targets derive from community and institutional partnerships and the unique opportunities these often permit, requirements of external stakeholders (such as program accreditation groups), and budgetary constraints.

8P6. Linking strategies and action plans to resources and needs

See 8P1 for information about the University Planning Council, created in part to address this item, rated as an opportunity in our Systems Appraisal.

8P7. Assessing and addressing risk during planning

With respect to financial risks, Benedictine University has long prided itself on careful stewardship of its resources. This is reflected in the process of budgeting academic programs, which involves several steps from the initial submission by a program or department chair to review by the appropriate dean and forwarding to the vice president for business and finance for assembling a preliminary budget by late March or early April. Final budgets are not determined until October, when enrollment figures in all programs are confirmed and when the Board of

Trustees (which has ultimate budget authority) votes on the budget. If any program seeks new positions, its chair must assemble a rationale and forward it to the appropriate dean. Deans then meet with the associate provost to review the rationales from different programs and then ranks them. The provost, who observes but does not participate in these discussions, then assembles a rank order and works with the vice president for business and finance and the executive vice president to determine how many and which positions can be funded.

With respect to legal risks, the University appointed its first in-house attorney as of October 1, 2008. The general counsel advises senior leadership regarding the full range of legal issues with which the institution must contend, including general legal matters as well as matters unique to higher education. The general counsel also directs substantially all legal work performed for the University by outside legal counsel. The creation of this office substantially expanded the institution's access to legal services, as compared to the retention of outside counsel for particular matters in the past. Among other duties, the General Counsel is a regular participant at Provost Council meetings where he may comment or advise upon the legal aspects of topics under discussion, which is one example of "preventative lawyering." The current provost has organized those meetings to include discussion of case studies written around plausible events on a university campus that place both individuals and the institution at risk. These discussions provide those in attendance with opportunities to reflect on the possible repercussions of various courses of action.

Complementing legal counsel is the addition of a compliance officer whose job is to ensure policies and procedures are in place that address the responsibilities of the institution under the law. This includes drafting new policies, investigating instances of alleged misconduct, implementing training programs, and conducting compliance reviews.

With respect to strategic planning, the University Planning Council is charged with reporting its recommendations to the President concerning opportunities and concerns for activities and groups promoting the attainment of strategic goals. Described in section 8P1, that group's charge is directly related to reducing the risk that the institution's main goals are overlooked or key processes undertaken in advance if specific goals are under-resourced.

Defined broadly, risk is closely associated with safety and security, which is addressed in some detail in item 6P3. That section includes physical security on campus, campus health services, teams of staff charged with assisting in the event of fire or significant weather events, and threats to the University's computer information systems.

8P8. Developing capabilities to meet demands of strategies and action plans

There have been few additions to this item from the previous portfolio, which was not identified as being either a strength or an opportunity in our Systems Appraisal.

8R1. Regularly reviewed measures of planning processes and systems

Listed as an opportunity in our Systems Appraisal, there have been no major changes in this area.

8R2. Performance results for accomplishing organizational strategies and action plans

This item was listed as satisfactory in our previous Systems Appraisal.

8R3. Targets for performance of strategies and action plans

Committed to having a registered action project in each of the nine categories, the University's plans for future action projects include identifying an appropriate plan related to Category Two, the only remaining area where we have not undertaken such a project. The University also seeks to address more items listed as "Opportunities" in the first Systems Appraisal, particularly as these relate to identified strategic priorities. For example, the most recent action project involves identifying and acquiring appropriate technology for enhancing collaboration across increasingly dispersed campuses, development of which is an element of our strategic plan. Additional deadlines and targets for performance were identified during a three-day planning retreat addressing the 2015 Plan. That retreat utilized the AQIP planning document to designate not simply how to get from where we are to where we want to be, but also which individuals or groups have specific responsibilities and when individual elements need to be completed and objectives met. A portion of the 14-page 2015 Plan (which is available to the Benedictine University community via its intranet) is shown in Figure 8-2.

Figure 8.2 – Excerpt from "Working Document: AQIP Academic Affairs – Benedictine 2015: A Roadmap to Excellence, 2008-2015"

ACADEMIC QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (AQIP)		
Center for Mission and Identity (CMI) – October 2009		
<u>Status Quo & Areas of Concern</u>	<u>How Do We Get There?</u>	<u>Where Do We Want To Go?</u>
<p>V. Catholic Intellectual Tradition and Inter-religious dialogue.</p> <p>A. – Center for Mission and Identity (AQIP project for last 6-7 years) [Sponsored and/or support events and activities: -- Visiting Scholar in Catholic Thought (students) -- <i>Conversatio</i> Round Table Discussions (faculty, staff, alumni) -- Faith and Reason Symposiums (students, faculty and staff) -- Faculty Sumer Workshops -- Convocation for <u>Chicagoland</u> Faculty and Administrators -- Benedictine Pedagogy Conference -- Comprehensive website -- Members of University of St. Thomas Ryan Institute on Catholic Social Teaching -- Hosted two conferences on Benedictine Pedagogy among members of the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities [ABCU] B. -- Hired a full-time faculty member if Theology, major and certificate programs developed Catholic Social Thought in Business Ethics course</p>	<p>V. Catholic Intellectual Tradition and Inter-religious dialogue.</p> <p>A. Develop system of assessment and reporting: -- # hits on CMI website (from whom, for what) -- # of events designated as CMI sponsored or supported -- # and % of participants (who is attending and from what college – students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, etc.) -- # of academic courses utilizing CMI sponsored events and/or other incorporated Catholic elements -- # of students enrolled in academic courses in theology, Catholic studies or courses utilizing Catholic and/or Benedictine elements -- # and type of assignments given to students within coursework -- # of majors and minors in Theology programs -- # of degrees and certificates awarded in theology -- # of students enrolled in Catholic or other religious focused courses -- # and type of community service oriented programs and participants -- # and types of research by faculty and students which are linked to Catholic</p>	<p>V. Catholic Intellectual Tradition and Inter-religious dialogue.</p> <p>A. – Externally recognized leader among the ABCU and Chicago-land Comprehensive Masters Institutions with hallmark programs in inter-religious dialogue. B – Become a regional magnet for Catholic theological studies C. – Integrate ethics and Catholic social thought throughout business curriculum. D. – Make Catholic and Benedictine traditions and their features systemic throughout the university. E. -- Develop system of assessment and reporting for theological studies and other religious affiliated activities. F. -- Increase participation in religious affiliated national and local conferences, workshops and associations. G. -- Ally with alumni to build support for the university in regard to its Catholic and Benedictine heritage and financial support of programs associated with that heritage. H. -- Clearly guided and defined staff, student and administrator development programs. I. Gain an understanding of the influence of non-Catholic religious elements on campus to its community members. J. -- Create more opportunities for student participation and understanding of Catholic</p>

AQIP Template President-Provost
9/4/2008

811. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Planning Continuous Improvement?

AQIP’s expectation that registered action projects be related to each of the nine categories ensures that resources are distributed throughout the University community. While some of the early projects were very ambitious, this allowed them to drift and become far-reaching with, for example, the project on increasing retention leading us to undertake a variety of sub-projects in pursuit of the larger objective. Shorter-term projects mean that a succession of action projects focuses attention and resources on specific activities which, taken together, comprise comprehensive approaches to larger goals.

Recent improvements in planning continuous improvement can be found in two areas: (1) activities of the University Planning Council (described in 8P1) in reviewing how the University’s strategic plan connects with activities of academics, student services, and other programs and offices across the institution (see Figure 8-3 for an excerpt from its 21-page tracking document) and (2) the work of task forces to bring together representatives from across campus to work on projects affecting large segments of the University, such as the TFGE (also described in 8P1).

Figure 8.3 – Excerpt from University Planning Council Tracking Document

AQIP CATEGORY 2: <u>Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</u>		PRIMARY STRATEGIC GOAL: <u>Developing an Understanding of What it Means to be a Catholic University Grounded in the Benedictine Tradition</u>		
Secondary Goal / Date Started	Primary Responsibility/ Specific Action, Task or Program	Progress to Date	How We Measure	Overall Impact of Goal
2.1 Identify and strengthen specific Benedictine/ Catholic characteristics.	A. Tait and A. Martin: Develop and coordinate various activities that promote the Benedictine/ Catholic identity.	In progress: See AQIP CMI Action Plan for more details.	Assess whether activities associated with the Center are being completed in accordance with the AQIP CMI’s Action Plan. AQIP plan reviewed by University Planning Council.	Ensures that a process exists for evaluating programs designed to enhance the Benedictine/ Catholic identity.
2.2 Promote environmental awareness and responsibility through campus-wide initiatives and external community endeavors.	J. Kauth and Campus Environmental Committee Establish and participate in activities that raise consciousness and promote actions to support sustainability. Develop an Action Project proposal that defines the purpose and scope of a three year sustainability plan for the university and includes an assessment plan to evaluate its effectiveness.	In progress	Action Planning proposal submitted to the University Planning Council for review and action.	Recognizes Benedictine as a University committed to environmental consciousness and sustainability.
2.3 Develop a mechanism for interdisciplinary grant writing and funding to support the University’s Vision.	Provost; Deans; Director of Grants Generate grant-funding opportunities for promoting Catholic and Benedictine identity	In progress: See Grants Office Plan for more details. <i>Current Grants funded:</i>	Establish yearly targets and assess the effectiveness of the process relative to the number of grants and projects funded.	Promotes the University’s Vision in accordance with the vision of foundations, donors and governmental agencies. .

The University Planning Council receives updates on action projects as it monitors activities underway to advance goals identified in the institution’s strategic plan. Depending on the nature of the action project, the University community may receive updates on the University’s website, in articles printed by the student newspaper and alumni magazine, or from information on the University’s intranet shared drive.

AQIP has accompanied Benedictine University as it has offered programs at new sites. The IBHE's decision permitting the institution to provide four-year degree programs in Springfield, for example, has led to an action project designed to facilitate collaboration across campuses by utilizing new interactive technologies. While individuals from Springfield had participated in planning for these new developments, this action project rapidly increased the amount of participation. This has occurred most notably in the review and revision of our general education requirements, undertaken by a task force whose members now include two individuals from Springfield that do not have to commute the 180+ mile distance on a weekly basis to attend the group's meetings.

8I2. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Planning Continuous Improvement?

An answer to this new item is evolving. One completed action project dramatically expanded use of the AQIP planning document, while another that is now underway is designed to have an impact on the culture of assessment by facilitating data collection and reporting.

Category Nine - BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

9P1. Building relationships with organizations from which we receive students

High Schools and Community Colleges

Relationships with organizations from which the University receives students are extremely important to Benedictine University. Not only does the University wish to maintain existing relationships (such as those with area community colleges, upon whom it relies for a large portion of its undergraduate student body), it also seeks to identify new groups who may be able and interested in encouraging their students to attend Benedictine University.

This is most easily and directly done with educational organizations in the University's immediate vicinity whose proximity allows representatives from the Enrollment Center and other offices to make personal visits, as well as for representatives from those campuses to visit the University. It is through those kinds of ongoing exchanges that the University becomes aware of new areas to consider developing programs or certificates. Over the last two years, for example, the University has developed a new degree program in studio art that is based on a cooperative agreement with the College of DuPage (COD), the two-year institution from which it receives most of its transfer students. Students who successfully complete an AFA degree are eligible to apply to the program. Not only does this allow students from that community college to obtain a BFA degree without having to travel out of the area, it also permits the University to offer a degree that it would otherwise find difficult to support. Subsequently, Benedictine finalized a 2+2 agreement with COD enabling students starting their careers there to supplement their AA degree with Benedictine University courses and quickly obtain a degree in Global Studies.

Historically, Chicago-area high schools have provided the vast majority of the incoming freshman class, so considerable attention is devoted to cultivating and maintaining connections with them. Within that large number, several individual high schools contribute a

disproportionate share of students. Individual members of the Admissions Office are assigned to these schools, becoming the main contact between them. Understandably, given the common background, several area Catholic schools have long had close relationships with the University. Benedictine tracks enrollment from all high schools and encourage applications from those having Catholic affiliation with a Catholic High School Recognition Award, an annual scholarship given to graduates from a Catholic high school that are registered full-time. Benedictine University has also been recognized for its connections with St. Ethelreda grammar school, located in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, where the institution originated as St. Procopius College over a century ago. Most recently, that recognition came in the form of inclusion in the first *College Access & Opportunity Guide* produced by the Center for Student Opportunity, a nonprofit organization supporting higher education aspirations of underserved students. Benedictine University's partnership encourages students at St. Ethelreda to pursue education as a career by enhancing their math and science skills.

Collaboration with area high schools includes coordination of events with their academic calendars. Preferred Visit Days bring groups of students to campus on days when their high school does not have classes scheduled, while Preferred Advising Days (scheduled during spring break) allow students who have committed to Benedictine University to receive advising and complete placement tests without missing any of their high school classes.

Springfield College

While the paragraphs above describe developments in collaborative arrangements that have been in place for some time, over the last several years Benedictine University developed a unique association with Springfield College of Illinois (SCI), a two-year Catholic institution which had encountered difficulty meeting its enrollment goals. Initially, Benedictine University provided junior- and senior-level academic programming to complement the first two years at the associate level at SCI so that students could successfully attain bachelor's degrees. Basic skills and core classes, as well as some of the requirements within the designated major, were satisfied in the initial two years of academic studies at SCI. More advanced requirements within the designated major, as well as additional electives needed to satisfy the bachelor's degree, were then delivered by Benedictine faculty during the final two years at SCI. As time went on, however, enrollments in SCI's two-year programs did not improve, ultimately leading to the decision to close that institution and make the site a branch campus of Benedictine University. During 2009 and 2010, a number of initiatives were undertaken to prepare for this transition. Item 9I1 describes some accomplishments emerging from these initiatives.

International Partnerships

In the area of international partnerships, Benedictine identifies prospective partners through word of mouth, referrals, and recommendations by existing partners and from on-site program managers. Once the University selects a lead, ascertains that they are appropriate entities recognized by the respective authorizing bodies, and agrees to get the appropriate authorizations for the University's programs to run in their country as is done in the U.S., typically the University conducts a site visit. The University takes time to become familiarized with the other school, exchanges ideas, and finds common ground. Additional visits help develop the partnership and conclude agreements. Because the agreements may vary in size and scope, it was necessary to establish guidelines for developing these institution-to-institution

relationships for the benefit of all Benedictine student, faculty and staff. Having these guidelines in place ensures that programs representing Benedictine University will maintain academic quality and consistency.

Because partners' needs vary, different types of agreements are written to address a program's central purpose, such as student, faculty, scholar and/or staff exchange; research collaboration, material, and curricular exchange; short-term programming or training; or bilateral or dual degree programs. An international agreement is commonly known as a cooperative arrangement (including contracts, memoranda of understanding, or letters of intention) and is subject to approval by the President or provost of Benedictine University on behalf of Benedictine University.

Because the International Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Cooperative Academic Agreement, the Bilateral Academic Agreement, and any additional addendum, are binding, legal contracts, it is essential that each formal agreement be decided upon and entered into with careful consideration and concern. It is relatively easy to create new partnerships; however, the difficulty comes in maintaining a lasting and successful relationship that is beneficial for both institutions, hence the need for careful consideration of each new prospect. Guidelines we have used in establishing any new partnerships include:

1. History – Has Benedictine University established a relationship with this university in the past? How long has this agreement been in place and how successful has the agreement been? Who are the primary contacts and have they been kept in the communication process?
2. Reciprocity – What is the essential outcome for the Benedictine University student, faculty and staff? Is this a relationship that will benefit the Benedictine students, faculty and staff? What are the benefits that this institution will bring to Benedictine currently or in the future?
3. Contact/Communication – Who will be the contact person for the partnering university? For Benedictine University?
4. Student Exchange and Visitor Information System (SEVIS) –Does the relationship with this institution comply with all federal government regulations regarding student visa requirements? Do all of the elements of the agreement comply with the regulations of both countries and rules of the universities?
5. Financial Support – What kind of funding or financial support is in place for the agreements? What are the specific financial and other supports provided for Benedictine University students/scholars/faculty/staff while visiting the partner institution? What is in place for the visiting students/scholars/faculty/staff?
6. Evaluation/Renewal – What are the criteria in place for evaluating the relationship? How will the partnership be evaluated prior to the renewal of the agreement?

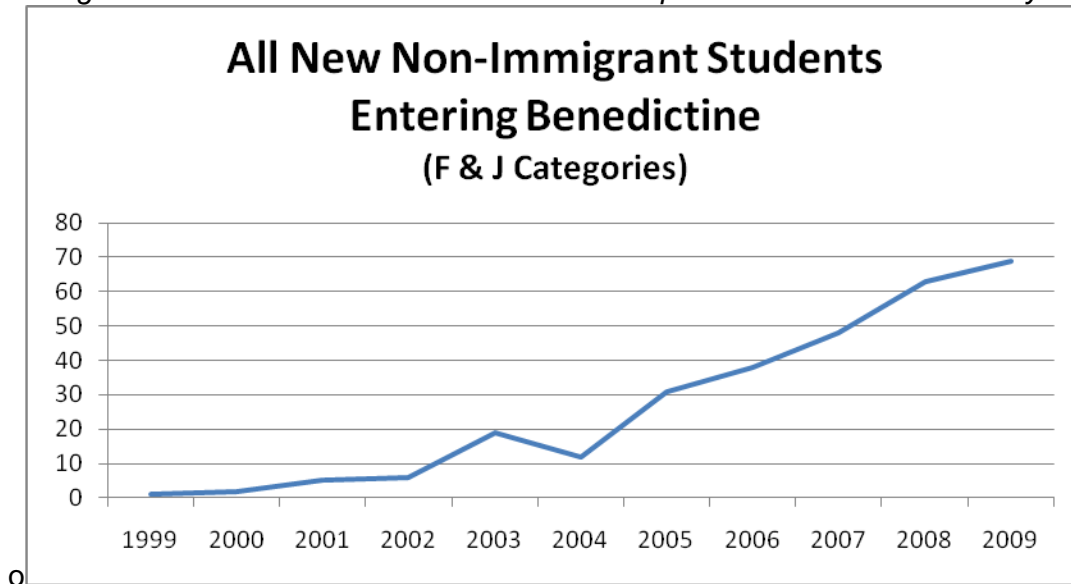
As a general rule, if any of the following elements is lacking, an agreement or MOU should not be signed:

1. Some previous faculty interaction between the proposed partner institutions;
2. Strong potential for mutual benefit;
3. Compliance with applicable legal restrictions and University regulations;
4. Secured financial and infrastructure support (as necessary);
5. Identified on-site coordinators or contact persons at each institution;

6. Stated support from all colleges, departments and programs explicitly identified in the agreement; and
7. A plan for regular program evaluation and renewal.

International connections also bring students from abroad to study at Benedictine University's main campus in Lisle. Figure 9-1 illustrates rapid expansion in the number of foreign students taking coursework at Benedictine University over recent years.

Figure 9-1: International Students at Lisle Campus of Benedictine University



Institute for Professional Development and Deltak Partnerships

For a number of years, Benedictine University has collaborated with the Institute for Professional Development (IPD) to supply educational opportunities to working adults within the local community. By collaborating with IPD, the University has provided degree opportunities in geographic regions where adult learners reside and extended the educational outreach mission of the University to more diverse groups of learners.

A number of adult cohort programs are being offered at the Moser and Lisle campuses, as well as in the surrounding suburbs, thanks to the University's partnering with IPD. These cohort programs cover several degree options:

- Associate of Arts in Management (AABA)
- Bachelor of Arts in Management (BAM)
- Masters of Business Administration (MBA) and
- Masters in Education (MED)

The programs are currently offered at the University and at 92 approved off-campus sites in the Chicago area, as well as in some outlying areas.

Benedictine University provides online course instruction permitting working adult students the opportunity to earn their MBA degrees. Begun with the MBA degree, online programming now includes the MSN degree for practicing professionals whose schedules limit their educational options and opportunities. With Benedictine being responsible for the course content and Deltak responsible for the online delivery and necessary technological resources, the University has developed an attentive customer care center that promotes the Benedictine values of hospitality and a concern for each student participating in the program. Admissions, probation, and other academic decisions related to the *WebFlex* program reside with their respective program directors on Benedictine's Lisle campus.

9P2. Developing relationships with organizations and employers that rely on our students

This item represents a portion of a more comprehensive question concerning creating, prioritizing, and building relationships with other groups. We have updated items 9P1 and 9P4 to reflect current practices and will update this item in a similar fashion at a future date.

9P3. Developing relationships with organizations providing services to our students

This item represents a portion of a more comprehensive question concerning creating, prioritizing, and building relationships with other groups. We have updated items 9P1 and 9P4 to reflect current practices and will similarly update this item at a future date.

9P4. Developing relationships with organizations supplying materials and services to our organization?

For many years, Benedictine University supplied a larger portion of the services required by its students than it does now. Like other institutions of higher learning, Benedictine University has subcontracted several key services it used to supply: Barnes and Noble now manages the campus bookstore; Sodexo provides campus food service; and Human Resource Management Systems addresses many of the human resources needs. Reasons for making these shifts are predominantly economic but also involve quality of the service provided. The process of identifying an appropriate subcontractor is methodical and focuses on ensuring that the University receives the quality it requires. Periodic reviews of cost and quality have led the institution to restore some services to its direct oversight (e.g. in the areas of supporting information technology and of providing campus security).

There are several ways that the University prioritizes relationships with key external organizations on which it relies. One method is to centralize acquisition of materials so that, for example, office supplies are ordered from the same supplier. Another method is to offer tuition reduction to members of some organizations with whom the institution has a working relationship, such as the Lisle and Naperville Chambers of Commerce, whose family members receive a 25% tuition reduction for courses taken at the institution.

As a way of encouraging and acknowledging the quality of service outside organizations provide to Benedictine University, the institution provides tuition remission for the immediate families of a select group of vendors with whom we have established an ongoing relationship. Every year, at the institution's Founders' Day celebration, a special award is given to the partner/vendor of

the year (chosen on the basis of the quality of its service and on the compliments its workers receive from Benedictine students, faculty, and staff). The annual Employee Recognition Day event provides an additional opportunity for vendors and suppliers who work on campus to join colleagues from across the institution in observing employee accomplishments.

9P5. Developing relationships with the associations, agencies, consortia, and the general community

This item represents a portion of a more comprehensive question concerning creating, prioritizing, and building relationships with other groups. We have updated items 9P1 and 9P4 to reflect current practices and will similarly update this item at a future date.

9P6. Ensuring partnership relationships meet needs

This item was listed as both a strength and an opportunity in a previous Systems Appraisal. We will update it at a future time.

9P7. Developing relationships among units within the organization

This item was listed as both a strength and an opportunity in a previous Systems Appraisal. We will update it at a future time.

9R1. Regularly reviewed measures of building collaborative relationships

With respect to educational organizations, a close watch is placed on conversion rates, i.e. the ratio of students applying from an institution who are accepted compared with applicants from that institution who actually enroll. Institutions having high conversion rates receive more frequent contact from their assigned admissions counselors, while those with continued low rates are watched. If rates for those institutions remain low, contact is reduced (sometimes even discontinued) and counselors' time reallocated to cultivating other institutions.

Monitoring of academic programs delivered largely by partnerships with Deltak and the Institute for Professional Development (described in O9 and 9P1), identified low retention and completion rates among students taking programs in an accelerated format. Consequently, virtually all those programs have been eliminated with some of the same degrees made available in a cohort format and delivered in weekend sessions. Admissions requirements for entry to those programs also increased, so that incoming students are now required already to have completed either their AA degree or other course prerequisites. Our Enrollment Center currently reviews applications made to programs managed by partnership organizations and has the authority to deny admission to applicants identified as inadequately prepared for success, authority that it has exercised.

In another area of collaboration for advancing academic objectives, students in several major fields are either required or encouraged to complete an internship or other field experience. In all cases, supervisors are contacted at least once a semester to collect information about student success and program design. Some programs organize events for internship supervisors to come together where they can be thanked for supporting our academic mission

and suggestions for program modification can be collected. For example, the Department of Psychology and Sociology holds an annual dinner for internship supervisors.

In the area of organizations that supply materials and services, contractual services with vendors are reviewed on an annual basis in order to maintain a high level of service and address current needs of the campus. However, if there is an issue with service or the vendor requests, the relationship is reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Monitoring how long it takes to pay suppliers provides information about an area of concern to outside organizations upon which the University relies. The practice in the accounts payable area is to pay invoices within 30 days, with managers meeting each week to review weekly and monthly incoming receipts and outgoing disbursements. Benedictine University's secure financial situation is reflected in another measure: its line of credit from U.S. Bank, which it has not utilized in several years. Other financial measures monitored include regular meetings of University officials with U.S. Bank for updates regarding the bank's reviews of the University's financial performance in order to assess credit worthiness. Each quarter, the University sends financial reports to banks with which it has specific agreements and each year complete the Higher Learning Commission's Annual Institutional Data Update to arrive at the total composite financial indicator score. Paying attention to this ratio allows institutions to avoid appearing on the Department of Education's list of colleges failing its test of financial strength. Needless to say, the University has never appeared on that list.

9R2. Performance results in building collaborative relationships

This item was listed as "SS" in the previous Systems Appraisal.

9R3. Comparison of results for building collaborative relationships with other institutions

Obtaining comparable figures for other institutions is still underway, as the 2015 Plan has identified a different set of comparator institutions. This item will be updated at a future time.

9I1. Recent improvements in building collaborative relationships

The area where collaboration has had the greatest impact recently is within the relationship with SCI and the University's move to create a branch campus in Springfield, described in items O9 and 9P1. In preparation for that eventual development, we have worked to increase the contact between faculty at the Lisle campus and in Springfield, with two representatives from Springfield's faculty serving on the new Task Force on General Education (TFGE). That group (described in 1P1) is preparing recommendations for revising the current undergraduate set of learning outcomes. By the time the new Springfield campus is fully operational, its faculty will be extremely familiar with the new outcomes, having had a hand in crafting them. In addition, not only have teams of faculty and support staff visited the Springfield site, the University has brought faculty from Springfield to the Lisle campus for workshops involving online instruction and learning, and their views were solicited during the recent process of identifying a new learning management system. To prepare for better collaboration with that campus (which is more than 180 miles away), the University assembled a registered action plan to identify the best kinds of technologies to use for working from a distance, and have included Springfield's I.T. specialist as a member of the group working on it. Several of the TFGE's meetings have

been held with distance learning technology. Once the University learns the best technologies to employ and increase faculty and staff familiarity with how best to use them, it will be better positioned to utilize those resources to improve collaboration with other distant sites, both across the state of Illinois and abroad.

The Office of Enrollment has expanded the number of events it organizes, having doubled the number of breakfasts it sponsors for representatives of institutions from which the University recruits students, with separate events for high school guidance counselors and for community college advisors. At these events, information is provided to each institution's representative concerning the number and success of students at Benedictine University. It also has joined Private Illinois Colleges and Universities, an organization which coordinates visits to community colleges. The University now is making eight visits to different area community colleges each semester in conjunction with that group. On campus, it holds three Open House events for graduate programs and recently has supplemented traditional fall and spring undergraduate open house events with college-specific open house events, thus expanding collaboration within the institution itself.

As described in 9P1, the University's relationship with the College of DuPage has been altered with the creation of new collaborative agreements coordinating courses taught at their campus with new courses developed on our campus in order to produce 2+2 degrees. Studio Art is one of these, Global Studies is another, and work is currently underway on a third 2+2 agreement in the area of Music Education.

One final area in which there has recently been improvement has been collaborating with our textbook supplier, Barnes & Noble. In order to comply with new federal requirements in the area of earlier notice of textbook adoption in scheduled courses, the University has revised our book-order procedure to ensure prompt selection of textbooks. This has led to earlier identification of textbooks that are out of print, permitting new orders to be submitted in advance of a term's beginning and reducing frustration sometimes unfairly directed toward the bookstore.

9I2. Selecting processes and setting targets to improve the building of collaborative relationships

We will be better positioned to reply to this item after the new University Planning Council has been in existence for another few years, as it is one of the main instruments for reviewing processes in place throughout the university and making recommendations for improvement to the President.