

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students

of

Bowdoin College
Brunswick, Maine

by

An Evaluation Team representing the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after study of the institution's self-evaluation report and a site visit 2017

The members of the team:

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This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation status.

COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**New England Association of Schools and College
Preface Page to the Team Report**

Please complete **during the team visit** and include with the report prepared by the visiting team

Date form completed: October 26, 2017

Name of Institution: Bowdoin College

1. History: Year chartered or authorized 1794 Year first degrees awarded 1806

2. Type of control: State City Religious Group; specify:

_____ Private, not-for-profit Other; specify:

_____ Proprietary

3. Degree level: Associate Baccalaureate Masters Professional Doctorate

4. Enrollment in Degree Programs: (Use figures from fall semester of most recent year):

	Full-time	Part-time	FTE	Retention ^a	Graduation ^b	# Degrees ^c
Associate						
Baccalaureate	1,813	3	1,814	96%	95%	471
Graduate						

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 3 or 6 year graduation rate (c) number of degrees awarded most recent year

5. Student debt:

	Most Recent Year	One Year Prior	Two Years Prior
Three-year Cohort Default Rate	0	1.3	1.3
Three-year Loan Repayment Rate	7.6	8	7.8

	Associate	Baccalaureate	Graduate
Average % of graduates leaving with debt, <i>past 3 years</i>		29%	
Average amount of debt for graduates, <i>past 3 years</i>		\$22,392	

6. **Number of current faculty:** Full-time 194 Part-time 34 FTE 205

7. **Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year:** (Specify year: 2016-17)

(Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions, e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

Tuition (b.)	\$77.588	Instruction	\$55.472
Gov't Appropriations	\$0.000	Research	\$2.355
Gifts/Grants/Endowment	\$65.196	General	\$0.000
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$4.624	Auxiliary Enterprises	\$30.405
Other	\$13.831	Other (a.)	\$72.343
Total	\$161.239	Total	\$160.575

The figures above include Operating Revenues and Expenses only.

(a.) Includes Academic Support, Student Services and Institutional Support.

(b.) Net student charges (tuition, mandatory fees, and room and board, net of scholarships).

8. **Number of off-campus locations:**

In-state _____ Other U.S. _____ International _____ Total 0

9. **Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:**

Programs offered entirely on-line 0 Programs offered 50-99% on-line 0

10. **Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?**

No Yes Specify program(s): _____

Introduction

Following a planning trip by the chair in September, the Bowdoin visiting team spent three days on campus in November of 2017, meeting with trustees, administrators, faculty, staff and students. All members of the team had reviewed in advance Bowdoin's self-study report and supporting documents, and additional materials were made available electronically and in paper form during the visit. This material included the Course Catalog, sample syllabi and course evaluations, faculty committee reports and minutes, information about the curriculum reform process, and a range of additional reports and studies. This extensive material and our conversations during the visit provided the basis for the information and evaluation presented in this report, which speaks to the nine standards for accreditation defined by NEASC.

Members of the Bowdoin community spoke openly with the team, answering questions fully and providing additional material when asked. We met, either individually or in groups, with President Rose, four Trustees (including the chair of the Board, alumni and one parent of a graduate), the self-study committee, the Faculty Committee on Governance and Faculty Affairs, individual faculty members including a lunch with faculty of color, and senior staff. The team also held open forums for students, staff and faculty. These conversations and the materials provided enabled the team to develop a comprehensive view of Bowdoin's operations, aspirations, challenges and opportunities. The team is grateful to the trustees, staff, faculty, students and administrators for their time and candor. We especially thank Tina Finneran, Jeanne Bamforth and Jennifer Crosson for arranging our visit.

1. Mission and Purposes

Bowdoin College was chartered on June 24, 1794 by the General Court in Boston, at a time when Maine was part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Named for Governor James Bowdoin II, the college was endowed by his son, James Bowdoin III, and by the Commonwealth.

From its initial enrollment of eight men from Massachusetts and the District of Maine, Bowdoin has grown to a leading liberal arts college with 1,800 students from across the country and around the world. Coeducational since 1971, the College today enrolls broadly diverse classes while also retaining a commitment to the people of Maine.

Bowdoin cites five mutually reinforcing documents that ground the College's identity. Of these, two most clearly summarize the college's distinctive mission and purpose. The 1794 *College Charter* (updated in 1996) established Bowdoin as an educational institution governed by a Board of Trustees with between 35 and 56 members. In 1999, the Board, in consultation with faculty, staff, students and a task force, adopted the *Mission of the College*, which clarifies the students Bowdoin seeks to serve, outlines its comprehensive approach to education, and affirms the College's foundational commitment to the common good. Specifically, Bowdoin's mission statement draws on the College's history to describe as foundational five dimensions of holistic education ("the formation of a complete individual"): intellectual and academic, social and residential, athletic, aesthetic and environmental, and ethical.

Evidence indicates that this mission continues to animate planning, priority setting and the allocation of resources. For example, in 2008 Bowdoin affirmed its commitment to socio-economic diversity by removing the loan requirement and today scholarship support remains a high priority. The faculty-authored “Statement on a Liberal Education,” written in conjunction with an extensive curricular review, echoes and amplifies ideals expressed in the mission statement. In recent years, the College has renovated athletic facilities and created a Center for the Environment.

Current strategic thinking resonates with Bowdoin’s mission and anticipates a future that is different from the past. Bowdoin is now re-evaluating its housing policies and a faculty-led committee is exploring what dispositions and skills Bowdoin graduates will need in 10 years.

With guidance from President Rose, the College has also tentatively identified three areas of focus: opportunity (ensuring that Bowdoin recruits a broadly diverse community of faculty and students and that all can thrive), intellectual mission (strengthening areas of study and skills that are key for future Bowdoin graduates, such as the humanities and quantitative literacy) and culture (reconciling the claims of identity with those of community).

Taken together, these actions demonstrate that Bowdoin’s mission statement is both abiding and relevant to the opportunities of the present, that it appropriately highlights the distinctiveness of the College, and that it is understood and periodically reviewed by multiple constituencies including the Board. Furthermore, the values and purpose codified in Bowdoin’s mission animate campus culture and the aspirations of current students and faculty.

Bowdoin’s mission statement is published on the website and now also in the catalogue.

2. Planning and Evaluation

Bowdoin employs a model that eschews traditional strategic planning exercises in favor of an approach that builds upon the close connections among campus community members. President Rose, after a year of listening and outreach to the Bowdoin community, articulated a series of strategic ambitions and priorities in October 2016. President Rose describes these in terms of four guiding principles: purpose, culture, opportunity, and innovation.

Bowdoin will devote efforts to planning and evaluating the skills Bowdoin alumni should possess, developing new ways for students to acquire quantitative skills, a recommitment to the humanities, attention to issues of access and inclusion, and a focus on the physical and technological infrastructure of the college to foster learning and community. These values are broadly understood and accepted by the community. Indeed, the most remarkable characteristic of the Bowdoin community is the shared sense of purpose and values.

To meet these goals, the president and senior staff play an important role in integrating the various ad hoc and working group based planning exercises taking place at Bowdoin. This approach is authentic to

the college culture and has been embraced by the college community. Ad hoc committees and working groups can be appointed in three ways: presidential or senior cabinet appointed committees, faculty governance appointed working groups, or departmental working groups that meet over summer session to discuss academic policy and learning evaluation within programs. A recent example of a working group appointed by the president is the Ad Hoc Committee on Inclusion, established in response to issues faced by low-income, first-generation, and students of color in the Bowdoin community. In addition to this, the college identifies issues of campus-wide importance through a combination of dialogue and governance channels and then develops ad hoc committees and working groups to provide program evaluation and strategic direction.

Confusing the issue, though, is that the college uses the same term, “working group”, to describe three mechanisms for addressing issues that would fall under the general concept of planning. Clarity in the language used to describe these groups and how new members of the college community can raise issues for college-wide consideration would be helpful.

Faculty, through the committee on governance and faculty affairs (GFA), play a role in identifying the academic matters addressed by working groups, appointing faculty members, and interpreting the results of planning efforts. This arrangement allows faculty to play an effective role in both identifying subjects of study and integrating academic perspectives into transformative initiatives that fall outside of the traditional governance structure. The role of faculty in the identification of strategic planning initiatives and acting upon findings was notably missing from the self-study, however.

The flexible, working group-based approach, designed to address emergent issues in the life of the campus, is complemented by more traditional planning exercises in facilities. The success of the campus master plan and the planning process that has resulted in the development of the Roux Center for the Environment demonstrates a growing capacity for sustained, campus-wide planning that integrates the views of a set of stakeholders beyond the senior administration.

To complement the identification of college priorities set by the president and senior staff, Bowdoin College has made strategic investments in data, analysis, and planning through the newly reconfigured office of research, analytics, and consulting (IRA&C). Updates to data stewardship practices, modern data warehousing tools, and the availability of peer data through the COFHE consortium should allow Bowdoin to engage in more sophisticated, integrative planning in the coming years. The investment in institutional research and analytics is already having an effect at Bowdoin. The college was able to quickly identify an issue in upper class housing, bring data and analysis to bear on the problem, and execute a strategy to improve housing facilities. Academic departments are furnished with annual profile reports that provide strategic data on enrollments, graduates, and other relevant information. The IRA&C also furnishes data to inform summer working groups of academic departments. Bowdoin is in the process of building a data governance model to establish principles and procedures that will serve as the foundation for Bowdoin’s internal data sharing. A clear data governance model will help the college further leverage their institutional resources for program and academic improvement.

As mentioned above, Bowdoin’s decentralized planning process appears to be well accepted by the college community. Across meetings with numerous members of the campus community, Bowdoin staff

and faculty expressed appreciation for the flexibility and versatility of the “working group” model of planning and evaluation. It remains to be seen, however, if this approach will be sufficient for the ambitious tasks that Bowdoin has set for itself. The president and senior staff of the college will play an important role in integrating the findings of planning efforts across campus into a cohesive whole. Attention should be paid to ensuring that the results of planning efforts are well understood by standing governance committees, such as the GFA, and the staff of the college.

Evaluation:

The evaluation of student learning and the evaluation of academic programs is the responsibility of the academic deans, the academic departments and programs of the college, and the Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT), with the analytic support of IRA&C. The development of major specific learning goals since the 2006 self-study is a welcome development, though departments and academic programs have not yet developed assessment plans for these newly developed learning goals. While there is evidence of ongoing evaluation efforts in the CLT, these offices are often working in isolation and there does not appear to be clear mechanisms for translating their findings into program improvement or building these observations into college-wide academic planning. Strengthening the relationship between the CLT and faculty, with a focus on the teaching of the college, would help leverage the expertise of the CLT staff in service of college and department academic goals.

Bowdoin is making good use of alumni survey data to demonstrate the college’s efficacy in developing commonly understood liberal arts skills and competencies. As the college notes, 90 percent of alumni report that Bowdoin has contributed to their ability to write effectively, communicate well orally, think analytically, acquire broad knowledge of the arts and sciences, and formulate original ideas and solutions. Bowdoin is also using survey data to identify areas for improvement, such as quantitative skills development. The CLT team is working with departments to integrate quantitative units into existing courses. It is unclear if there is an assessment plan in place for this initiative, but it provides an opportunity for direct learning assessment.

Evaluation efforts to date have largely employed indirect measurements, relying heavily on survey data and descriptive statistics that summarize trends in distribution requirement fulfillment. The team found little evidence of summative, direct learning assessment taking place outside of individual academic units. The self-study, in fact, references learning assessment at the course level, rather than the department, major, or college level.

The college’s adoption of new general education distribution requirements demonstrates a capacity for broad academic planning, though there does not yet appear to have been a sustained effort to evaluate the educational impact of these changes. Bowdoin has provided a thoughtful statement of what educational outcomes each of the distribution requirements are intended to provide to students, and faculty are expected to provide justification of how their course will fulfil the goals of the distribution requirement they speak to. To date, though, relatively little attention has been paid to the evaluation of outcomes from a student learning perspective. The analysis done by the College of when students fulfill the requirements is interesting, but also highlights the difficulty in developing a college-wide requirement that relies on individual faculty electing to tag their own courses. In addition, the analysis

did not evaluate whether the changes in the distribution requirement had the intended educational effect. There appears to be a sense on campus that the current implementation of the distribution requirements may not be uniformly working as intended, and an assessment strategy that focuses on the skills students develop in each area may help bring clarity.

The mathematical, computational, or statistical (MCSR) requirement is the distribution requirement most commonly completed in the first year and dovetails with new focus on quantitative skills development. Assessment in this area, specifically, could be beneficial. It would provide an opportunity to integrate the collective expertise of IRA&C, the CLT, senior academic staff, and the faculty teaching courses in the MCSR requirement.

Conversation with academic staff suggested that Bowdoin may have a more robust culture of assessment than the self-study draft demonstrates. The college relies heavily on a model of summer academic retreats or working groups in which departments have sustained discussions of academic goals and student learning within academic programs. These retreats result in reports of findings that are reviewed and evaluated by senior academic leadership, with recommendations for curricular changes forwarded to the CEP and CIC. While the sample reports provided to the visiting team varied in their structure and content, most represented thoughtful studies of the curriculum and the place of students within the learning process. The reports from summer working groups could in addition provide a vehicle for departments to discuss how learning goals will be assessed, building on the momentum of the work of establishing learning goals for each department.

Bowdoin is also experimenting with its first-year seminar program, introducing a second seminar for students who have been referred to the course by faculty for additional writing skills development. An evaluation of this approach, with a focus on student learning, seems in order if the model is to be expanded with confidence.

The Knowledge Skills and Dispositions (KSD) working group is exploring the defining characteristics of a Bowdoin education in the next decade. While not framed as such, this exercise can be understood as an evaluation of the general education program of the college and result in a set of modified, college-wide learning goals or distribution requirements. The E-series forms on student learning outcomes did not enumerate the general education learning goals of Bowdoin nor how they are assessed. The KSD working group is well positioned to fill in this gap.

Standard 3: Organization and Governance

Bowdoin has made a number of changes to its organization and governance structures since the last review in 2006. Many of the organizational changes have occurred in the last two years. The institution welcomed a new president in Fall 2015 and a new dean of academic affairs in Fall 2017. In addition, a number of administrators have been promoted to fill vacant senior vice president positions at the College. The faculty governance structure was revised in 2008. More recently the president and the Board of Trustees completed a review that resulted in changes to the committee and meeting structure of the Board.

The visiting team's review of the institution's by-laws, the faculty handbook, organization charts and other documents confirm that mandates and responsibilities are well-defined. In discussions with the president, members of the board, faculty, administrators and students, the visiting team noted that the various groups and individuals have a clear understanding of their respective roles and a deep commitment to fulfilling their respective responsibilities.

Governing Board

The Bowdoin Board has forty-three members, including the president. Thirty-nine members are alumni of the College and three are parents of current or former students. Board members bring wide-ranging expertise and the current membership strives to mirror the gender and racial diversity of the alumni. There is an orientation for new board members and *Bowdoin's Statement of Trustee Roles and Responsibilities* clearly delineates the governance responsibilities of the trustees.

In February 2016, the board, working with a board consultant engaged in a review process to identify ways to increase board effectiveness and better engage the board in discussions of the long-term strategic opportunities and challenges the College will be facing. The results of that review process included modifications to the committee structure of the board and changes to the schedule and structure of board meetings. In order to more effectively engage the board in strategic conversations, the College provides materials to board members ahead of the meeting with specific questions to be addressed and then sets aside time at the board meeting for a full discussion of these materials and questions. Since much of the work of the board is done in committees, rather than using committees that reflect the organizational structure of the institution, the new structure establishes committees that can address some of the cross-cutting issues facing the institution such as inclusion, resources and the student experience.

The president and the members of the board the team met expressed satisfaction with the recent board restructuring. One long-term board member acknowledged that the move has led to much more emphasis on strategic rather than tactical issues and has moved board meetings from primarily reporting opportunities to more engaged discussions. Board members seem fully aware of the initiatives the president and the institution are exploring including appropriately supporting opportunities for all who are admitted and enroll at the College; identifying the knowledge, skills and creative dispositions Bowdoin students will need in the future; and creating an inclusive and diverse culture and climate at Bowdoin. The president and members of the board acknowledged that the committee structure may need to be modified as the institution moves forward but seem comfortable that they have established a process of reflection on the part of individual trustees, trustee committees and the board as a whole that will allow them to make appropriate adjustments as needed.

In addition, this strategy has provided more opportunities for robust interaction between trustees, faculty, staff and students. This was a desire of both trustees and faculty. Faculty and staff have been invited to participate in some of the board conversations about future opportunities, and a number of "institutional" working groups, involving trustees, faculty, staff and student have been established to more deeply explore issues, for example, diversity and inclusion.

Internal Governance

The president meets weekly with the senior team and encourages collaboration between team members. While the dean of academic affairs is new to campus, there were a number of examples of collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs in support of the student experience. Bowdoin is justifiably proud of the sense of community and most committees and working groups include representatives of faculty, staff and students.

In its 2007 letter to the College, the Commission recommended that the system of faculty governance should be clarified. In response to that recommendation the College reviewed the faculty governance system and instituted a revised system in July 2008. The new system includes fewer elected committees and appointed committees, specifies the charge of each committee, and establishes guidelines for eligibility for election or appointment. The governance structure, committee mandates and guidelines are published in the *Faculty Handbook*. The College uses “working groups,” as needed to explore other issues that might be raised by faculty or administration.

The Committee on Governance and Faculty Affairs (GFA) is responsible for appointing faculty to committees and working groups. The GFA uses data on recent faculty service records to spread service responsibilities equitably across the faculty. The GFA also serves as a “clearinghouse” for the written reports from committees and working groups. The use of working groups has allowed the College to investigate targeted issues, such as online textbooks, in a limited timeframe. Faculty members can bring concerns to the GFA for action.

Since his arrival on campus the president has met most members of the faculty individually and has engaged different groups of faculty in conversations about Bowdoin’s future. The working groups provide opportunities for dialog about priorities among different constituencies at the College. Nonetheless, some faculty members expressed concern to the visiting team regarding the lack of clarity about how recommendations from committees and working groups are to be processed through the existing governance structure and that faculty meetings are used to communicate reports from the administration and other committees, often leaving little time for substantive discussion. The GFA did recently survey the faculty to solicit topics for faculty-wide discussion and recommendations for how faculty meetings might be used more effectively to discuss substantive issues, and the office of the dean of academic affairs is offering sessions to junior faculty to explain the faculty governance structure. These concerns might be considered as the institution continues to reflect on its governance process.

Faculty oversight of the academic program is conducted through the work of two appointed committees, the Curricular and Educational Policy Committee (CEP) and the Curricular Implementation Committee (CIC). The CEP is chaired by the Dean for Academic Affairs and is responsible for oversight of academic policy, makes recommendations to the Dean and the President on the authorization of faculty lines, and makes proposals to the faculty for any changes to college-wide requirements or proposals for new majors. The CIC is chaired by the Associate Dean for the Curriculum and is responsible for the review of all courses, proposed changes to existing majors and minors, the implementation and

evaluation of distribution requirements and the oversight of off-campus study. Faculty on these committees are appointed by the GFA. Students are appointed by the Bowdoin Student Government.

Students from the Bowdoin Student Government expressed gratitude for the many ways in which they are included in the decision-making process at the College. There are student representatives on appropriate committees and students indicated that members of the administration routinely seek out their input on decisions relating to the student experience. We encourage the College to continue its exploration of the role of students at the faculty meeting.

4. The Academic Program

Bowdoin takes justifiable pride in its reputation as a prestigious liberal arts college with a strong commitment to public engagement. The understanding of, and commitment to, this mission seems widespread among the faculty, and the president has tried to focus the mission more directly on assuring all Bowdoin students equitable access to knowledge, skills and creative disposition required for an intellectually rich and professionally successful life.

The “general education” program consists of five distribution requirements: Mathematical, Computational or Statistical Reasoning (MCSR), Inquiry in the Natural sciences (INS), Exploring Social Difference (ESD), International Perspectives (IP), Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) and 3 divisional requirements of one course each in Natural Science/Math, Humanities and Arts, and Social/Behavioral Sciences. Each student must also take a first-year seminar in one of several fields, all of which stress college level research, analytical, discussion and writing skills.

By the start of junior year, Bowdoin students must select one of 44 disciplinary, interdisciplinary or coordinated (integrated with a non-major program) majors including the option of a student-designed major.

The definition of the five distribution requirements in 2006 has led to some difficulty in identifying courses with the appropriate characteristics. Administrators cite faculty reluctance to redesign their standard courses to satisfy the learning outcomes expected for each of the distribution areas as limiting the number of seats available in designated courses, particularly in the sciences. The self-study noted that the definition of the distribution requirements, and the divisional requirements, was confusing and even contentious for the faculty from the start. Students also have noted some confusion about whether all the area-designated courses actually achieve the goals of the distribution requirement and/or whether some requirements overlap. Despite faculty work group efforts to clarify the purpose and role of these general education requirements, there remains some confusion and disagreement.

All department courses automatically fill the divisional requirement for their discipline.

New courses and new proposals for distribution designation as well as new majors are reviewed by the Curriculum Implementation Committee, made up of: six faculty selected by the Committee on Governance and Faculty Affairs (GFA), two students selected by the Dean of Student Affairs after a nomination process, and four administrators. That committee then recommends additions to the Committee on Educational Policy, which sends approved proposals to the committee on Government and Faculty Affairs, an entirely elected committee of faculty which presents the proposals to the

monthly meeting of the whole faculty for final approval. The visiting team did note that course proposals from the faculty do not require even a preliminary syllabus, which Bowdoin may wish to reconsider to help evaluate both the level of required work as well as the orientation of learning outcomes toward major or distribution/divisional learning goals.

Credit Hour: Bowdoin maintains a traditional definition of course credit. Each course receives one credit and four courses are required each semester. In translation, each course would represent 4 credits in a “traditional” credit system. Most courses meet f2f 3 hours per week. Some have additional organized exercises, laboratories or film sessions in addition to appropriately extensive reading and research assignments., but many rely on extra reading or writing equivalent to bring the courses to the four-credit standard (three class hours plus nine hours of weekly preparation).

Syllabi may or may not be published in Blackboard (visible to course registrants), so at present there is no formal way to monitor the actual course assignments to determine if they meet federal standards in practice. For both student information/advising and administrative monitoring, Bowdoin might therefore want to consider a mechanism for making course syllabi more readily available as well as requiring (as noted above) at least tentative syllabi for course approval. While the team is quite confident that Bowdoin faculty see that Bowdoin courses represent appropriately high standards of academic challenge and achievement, a somewhat more formal process of monitoring course requirements could help confirm that.

Courses transferred in from other four-year colleges as three credits translate to 0.75 course units in the Bowdoin system. Students may use up to four credits (one full semester) of AP or IB credits with the credit score requirements set individually by the appropriate departments. Courses may be transferred only from other accredited four-year institutions and Bowdoin permits “study away” for a semester or full academic year, both domestically and internationally. Students may propose on-line courses for Bowdoin credit, but these must be approved on a one-by-one basis by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Rules for gaining course credit are clearly specified in the catalog published online and in hardcopy. The hardcopy version contains lists of major requirements by course number, but no course descriptions. Course descriptions do appear on-line because apparently the plan is to eliminate the hardcopy publication entirely.

Assessment: All majors and programs have established learning outcomes for their programs and have reported them on E-1-A forms in the self-study. Faculty do seem generally aware of the need to assess learning outcomes, but departmental assessment does not seem to have moved much beyond the definition of outcomes stage. All departments use the identical entry in column 3 of the E-1-A's: “CEP, CIC, the faculty as a whole, and departmental/program faculty play a role in determining the curriculum and its effectiveness. We have just established departmental learning goals, and will establish a process for assessment and interpretation of evidence in decennial reviews”. Some departments have begun mapping specific course-level learning outcomes onto the program goals, but despite emphasis on assessment in previous NEASC reviews, none seem yet to have implemented a consistent evidence gathering process or developed improvements based on assessment of expected learning outcomes. Many changes to curriculum have been made and reported, but no evidence was provided that these were based on systematic assessment data.

At the course level, the somewhat limited sample of syllabi reviewed showed that most describe the learning goals of the course and have course requirements that would permit assessment of these.

Chemistry is presented as an example of a department that uses standardized ACS exams to evaluate individual course learning outcomes in Organic Chemistry and Analytical Chemistry, but even this department has not yet assessed the learning outcomes for the major as a whole. Collegial faculty relations, the obvious academic quality of the faculty, and respect for faculty autonomy have perhaps slowed the adoption of regular formal assessment processes among departments, but more formal collection and analysis of data on student learning would only help direct the continuous improvement of student learning. To move assessment efforts forward, Bowdoin may wish to consider requiring a specific section on assessment as part of every department's annual report as well as the decennial department reviews.

Institutional level learning outcomes are still being refined within the broad goals described in "The Offer of the College." First year surveys, senior surveys and alumni surveys are all administered regularly, as are universal electronic course evaluations. Bowdoin has recently decided to use the standard COFHE senior survey in place of its own homegrown version, which permits comparison with other COFHE institutions. The first COFHE Senior Survey (2016-17) report actually suggested that slightly more than 50% of seniors were "very satisfied" with major advising, with 84% being generally or very satisfied. Moreover, the report indicated that levels of satisfaction with a variety of COFHE core skills parallel to some of the general education requirements vary considerably. Bowdoin students are much more confident in their ability to write effectively and think critically, but are much less confident of their ability to understand science and art. This could be considered the basis of at least a preliminary effort at assessing institutional learning outcomes, but these and the other survey data have not yet been formally incorporated into a regular review or assessment process, and the results are shared only with relevant faculty or administrative groups as needed.

On the other hand, as noted above, specific issues or departmental concerns are discussed and considered in a series of faculty work groups in which faculty work on specific issues in a concentrated way for a few days over the summer or more regularly throughout the school year. Faculty Working Groups may be initiated by the Dean, the GFA or individual departments, and they file reports with the appropriate department, dean or the GFA. They function as mini task forces around specific issues. This has been a successful, collegial mechanism for addressing problems, gathering data and considering changes, but it is somewhat ad hoc in charge and process, and Bowdoin needs to have more consistent mechanisms for assessment of its programs for continuous improvement.

Advising: Bowdoin has established an extensive advising system relying predominantly on faculty. There is a Dean for First Year Students who reaches out to incoming students to help them understand the standards of integrity, behavior and scholarship expected in the Bowdoin community they are joining. She works closely with the First-Year Seminar Program and the Faculty Liaison for Advising to assign pre-major faculty advisers to incoming students, and deals with individual students as behavioral issues arise. In addition, Bowdoin for 7 years has had a BASE advising program to help students who might be considered underprepared at entrance. Last year approximately 94 students (of approximately 500 in the incoming class) were invited to participate in the program, 57 applied and 45 were placed with 15 specially selected and trained advisers who met with them roughly once per week to monitor progress. BASE advisers receive \$1000 in professional development funds for their participation. The program is considered very successful in helping such students integrate fully into the Bowdoin community. The College is sensitive to the challenge of giving all students equitable access to all of the resources of a Bowdoin education without eliminating the diversity of views that strengthen that community.

The Center for Learning and Teaching houses the Quantitative Reasoning Program, the Baldwin Program for Academic Development, the Writing Project, the Writing and Rhetoric Program, and English for Multicultural Students. The staff and faculty seem completely committed to helping all students thrive at Bowdoin and the Center makes peer tutoring available by hiring 175 student tutors each year. It is on the edge of the campus, but appears to attract a large number of students of all backgrounds and holds a variety of outreach events throughout the year. The team was impressed with the efficiency of locating all these services under one roof and the clear enthusiasm of the staff for their tasks.

In addition, Bowdoin is planning to start a 6-week summer bridge program, tentatively titled “THRIVE,” in 2018 which will be designed to give students who have been less traditionally represented at Bowdoin and are under-prepared a head start in adjusting to the academic and social demands of the Bowdoin environment.

For general academic advising, students are assigned to a faculty adviser. All faculty members are expected to advise after their first year, and all are assigned 8 pre-major advisees (four first year and four second year) and an additional number, up to 40, advisees in their major fields. According to the Self Study, 86% of first year students report satisfaction with academic advising, but as noted above, seniors do not rate their advising quite so highly. The general data on advising does not seem to have been analyzed in any depth and there is at present little or no assessment of advising or evaluation of advisers. In the future, through assessment or the traditional faculty work groups, Bowdoin may want to consider whether it is productive to make all faculty members advisers and/or whether additional specialized training or selectivity might improve the satisfaction of students with academic advising.

The Office of Institutional Research, Analytics & Consulting is focused on developing a comprehensive integrated data “hub” or warehouse, and the next step will be to develop mechanisms to use the data effectively in assessment.

5. Students

Admissions

With an average acceptance rate of 15% and yield rate of 50% over the past year, total enrollment at Bowdoin College over the past few years has remained steady at a headcount of around 1,800. Of the student body, 50% are male and 50% are female, with 30% being students of color. Around 13% of Bowdoin students are Pell recipients and 12% are first generation college.

Bowdoin’s Mission Statement articulates the institution’s objective to engage students of uncommon promise in an educational experience that is intensely intellectual, explores students’ creativity and hones leadership capacity. The “Offer of the College” articulates the abilities and outcomes expected from students as a result of their liberal arts education from Bowdoin. Over the past 10 years, the College has cultivated a strong and diverse applicant pool. The applicant pool has increased by 26% during this period and yield on offers of admission has increased 9.2%, resulting in increased selectivity of 14.8%. The College has intentionally expanded its geographic reach and has been committed to recruiting a diverse student body. The percentage of domestic students of color in the entering class has risen from 22.6% in Fall 2006 to 31% in Fall 2016. The socio-economic diversity of the Fall 2016 cohort is evidenced by data indicating that 19% are “high need” (according to institutional definition)

and 14% are eligible for Pell Grants. 15% of the entering cohort are the first in their families to attend college. Bowdoin's recruitment efforts are periodically reviewed and assessed against institutional objectives. Partnerships have been developed with community-based organizations (CBOs) and Questbridge in order to cultivate high-achieving underrepresented applicants. The Lawlor Group has recently completed a research project to help the institution understand how prospective students conceptualize the opportunities that Bowdoin offers. Marketing materials are being evaluated in light of this research and the institution plans to launch revised materials next year.

Supporting these gains in access to the Bowdoin experience are robust financial aid policies. The college maintains a policy of "need-blind" admissions for domestic first-year students, and commits to meeting students' full financial need (without requiring loans for parents or students). Over the past 10 years, the percentage of students receiving financial aid has increased from 40 to 45 percent. 52% of the incoming Class of 2021 are receiving institutional financial aid, the first entering cohort that has been above the 50% threshold. The average Bowdoin grant for aided students has increased from \$24,400 in 2006 to nearly \$40,000 in 2016 (an increase of approximately 64% - this roughly maintains relative position controlling for tuition and enrollment increases). Bowdoin has been diligent in clearly articulating financial aid policies, but also recognizes that the escalating costs of the education that the College provides will require increased sensitivity and awareness if they are to continue enrolling a diverse student body from a socio-economic perspective. The institution recently joined the Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success in order to highlight Bowdoin's commitment to affordability and access. Bowdoin anticipates that increasing proportions of enrolling students will qualify for need-based grant aid in the future and is budgeting appropriately in anticipation of greater need among future students. Beyond merely meeting the full, demonstrated financial need of students, several key administrators are actively working on identifying needs and priorities under a rubric of "comprehensive financial aid". This work considers the intentional and unintentional impact of current financial aid policy and explores what more might be done to support a greater level of equity for aided students (support for unpaid internships, unpaid summer work experience, etc.)

Throughout the visit, multiple constituencies brought forward the concern of supporting underrepresented students to have positive intellectual and personal experiences at Bowdoin. The theme that was often repeated is that the College cannot hold a dated vision of expecting underrepresented students to become "the traditional Bowdoin student." Instead, the institution needs to undergo significant curricular, pedagogical, and cultural changes that make all Bowdoin students feel welcomed and valued. This means that the institution needs to be very purposeful in discussing the needs of underrepresented students such that the focus is not one of academic remediation. Instead, multiple constituencies described the need for Bowdoin to recognize the legitimate strengths and experiences that underrepresented students bring to the campus. This implies that the institution will need to focus on changing itself, not simply asking students to change themselves. This work cannot be the responsibility of faculty of color (who are already providing significant and often unrecognized levels of service to underrepresented populations.) In contrast, this initiative must be owned by the larger Bowdoin community. As Bowdoin has increased broadly-defined student diversity in recent years, the institution has been intentional about supporting students of all backgrounds and identities – as they pursue a rigorous education and actively engage in the campus and local communities. As discussed in greater detail in Standard 8 of this report, retention rates for students of color (SOC) are slightly below the rates of all students (91% for SOC versus 94% overall). Graduation rates for first generation students

and SOC are 90% and 92% respectively (versus overall 6-year graduation rate of 95%). Although small differences, Bowdoin views these as important issues that the institution is addressing via various programs. Examples include the BASE advising program that, “provides an intensive advising experience for students who have faced especially significant educational, cultural, or socioeconomic challenges on their way to college; and provides training for faculty in order to improve advising for all Bowdoin students.” The report on this program indicates that BASE participants are more positive about the advising experience than students not participating in the program. Participants also report greater satisfaction on a variety of advising dimensions, feel that their advisors “know” them better, and report a stronger sense of competence at using the tools and resources that Bowdoin offers.

The programming and support structures offered throughout Student Affairs (but notably via the Student Center for Multicultural Life, Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity and the Women’s Resource Center) enhance the overall community as well as affirm and validate the vital contributions of these historically marginalized populations. The students with whom the team met indicated that Bowdoin is making good progress on creating a more welcoming environment, as well as anticipating and/or responding to the needs of the diverse populations now more notable in the student body.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences

The Division of Student Affairs implements a comprehensive orientation program for new students that begins the process of building community relationships among the students and includes information on available resources, academic opportunities, expectations and support. Beginning with their initial highly-integrated residential experience in “the Bricks” and throughout their first year at Bowdoin, the professional and student staff of Student Affairs provide a wide array of social and co-curricular experiences as well as “wrap around” support for students. Like many of its peers, Bowdoin expects students to assume responsibility for recognizing when they need assistance with academic and/or personal issues and to access appropriate resources when necessary. Because this does not always occur (either because students fail to acknowledge their difficulties or lack the agency to engage resources proactively), Bowdoin has cultivated a wide “safety net” of faculty advisors and administrative staff that identify students who are struggling and connect them with needed support.

Bowdoin has recently begun discussions about appropriate levels of support for sophomore students. As students transition to sophomore year, approximately 200 of them reside in College Houses while the other 300 or so live in residences that are a bit farther from the center of campus and seemingly lack the levels of community engagement that the common spaces of the College Houses foster. Sophomores may benefit from a greater level of support as they navigate the typical milestones of their second year (e.g. choosing a major, decisions about study abroad, etc.). Student Affairs is collaborating with students and other staff across the institution to identify and understand the scope of the issues confronting sophomores not living in the College Houses as well as possible remedies.

Another housing-related issue that the institution is investigating involves the growing number of students (particularly upperclassmen) who wish to live off campus. This is a critical issue for Bowdoin to address given the importance of a vibrant and engaged residential community in realizing the College’s mission. The number of students living off campus has increased by 60% over the past three years, with

approximately 12% of students living off campus in 2016. Beyond the financial impact to the institution (estimated at \$515,000 annually), Bowdoin has determined that the students who choose to live off campus are disproportionately white (81%), male (61%), full-pay (72%), and involved in varsity or JV/club sports (55% and 21% respectively). The institution is rightly concerned about this cloistering given how highly Bowdoin values the opportunity for students from diverse backgrounds to live with and learn from each other throughout their experience at the College. Policy changes along with renovation and/or new construction of upper-class housing are being planned.

Leadership development opportunities for students abound at Bowdoin in support of the institution's mission statement. There were 132 registered student groups in 2016, offering a vibrant array of activities in areas such as the arts, athletics, community service, cultural, environmental, media, recreation, religion and wellness. More structured leadership opportunities are offered through the endowed Leadership Development Series in the Student Activities Office, the extensive leadership training offered by the Outing Club, the "Leading for the Common Good" program coordinated by the McKen Center, and the intergroup dialogue sessions led by the associate dean of students for diversity and inclusion. Beyond mere athletic competition, the coaching staff in Athletics takes seriously their role in mentoring students and has recently implemented the Leadership and Empowerment through Athletic Principles (LEAP) initiative for student-athletes. LEAP, now in its third year, provides leadership training for both coaches and student athletes as well as consultation and training from a sports psychologist. The Director of Athletics seems committed to a quality experience for student athletes and routinely monitors key performance indicators to ensure that students involved with the program are successful students and productive members of the Bowdoin community.

The Bowdoin Student Government (BSG) is actively engaged in working with College staff and faculty on student life and institutional policy issues. Indeed, students are well-represented on several faculty, campus and trustee committees. The students with whom we met indicated a feeling of connection, collaboration and involvement with College staff. They felt that there is a high degree of transparency about issues that the College is confronting and they feel invested in the outcome of those decisions, both large and small. Students reported that there is a high degree of student involvement in the BSG, with 70% of the student body voting in the most-recent election cycle. They also reported that the channels being used by the institution to communicate both events and policy issues were largely effective.

There is evidence that Bowdoin continually assesses new issues and emerging needs among the student body and aligns responses in order to realize institutional objectives. The leadership team is examining the experiences of high-need students to ascertain what educational and experiential barriers may negatively impact their experience at the College. Faculty and staff have been intentional about providing additional support for promising students whose background may have prepared them less for rigorous academic work. Bowdoin strives to implement coordinated and collaborative approaches that create opportunities for students from different backgrounds and life experiences to interact and learn from one another.

While Student Affairs has published a set of aspirational values that enhance campus residential communities and also articulates leadership development objectives in various programs for students,

there does not seem to be a clearly defined set of overarching learning goals for co-curricular life with corresponding assessment strategies. Given Bowdoin's investment in Student Affairs and the institution's belief that co-curricular and campus life contributes to the overall educational experience, the College should consider clearly articulating goals for co-curricular learning along with specific assessment strategies that appropriately capture what students gain from their co-curricular involvement.

Throughout the team's meetings on campus, staff made reference to survey data (both qualitative and quantitative) that they use to inform their work. (It should be noted, though, that very little of the data being tracked by the staff and informing their work was included in the Self Study.) Be that as it may, the team recognizes how the staff is assessing the environment and using assessment strategies in their planning. There was work done on identifying possible systematic dashboard measures within Student Affairs in 2009 as reflected in the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plans, June, 2009. Again, some offices seem to be tracking some measures over time, but the connection of these data to planning might be made more explicit. As already has been noted, Bowdoin has recently become part of the Consortium on the Financing of Higher Education (COFHE) and as a result will benefit from having peer survey data to compare with their own data on student satisfaction with various aspects of the Bowdoin educational experience. In sum, Bowdoin may benefit from being more coordinated and explicit about the ways in which assessment data is being collected and utilized to inform the important work being done in Student Affairs.

Throughout the visit, students uniformly reported a high degree of engagement with both the curricular and co-curricular dimensions of their experience as well as deep appreciation for the Bowdoin community. They feel invested in the success of the institution and hope to continue to be actively engaged in making an already strong institution even better for them and for future generations of Bowdoin students.

6. Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

It was stated, often and unequivocally by the vast majority of Bowdoin College faculty, that the Bowdoin Mission drives the College in all respects and that the faculty is at its best when uniting teaching with the imperatives of the curriculum. Indeed, the visiting team was able to clearly recognize that the work done by the faculty in putting the Bowdoin curriculum into place and ensuring its vitality through the First-Year Seminar, commitment to advising, teaching excellence and interdisciplinary work across the curriculum has been critical to the success of the College in increasing enrollment so steadily since 2006. The evidence presented in the self-study provides ample confirmation that Bowdoin faculty, to a person, are ardently committed to the empowerment and success of Bowdoin students as they reinforce the "Offer of the College." It is also abundantly clear that faculty-student collaboration remains the norm and that faculty continue to regard this as one of the many defining qualities of the Bowdoin experience. It was consistently demonstrated to the visiting team that the mission to "carry the keys of the world's library in your pocket," which pervades all elements of the Bowdoin College experience, is also fervently embraced by its faculty members.

Bowdoin College has been quite forward-thinking in maintaining a 2:2 teaching load for its faculty even as the College also moved quickly to implement more frequent sabbatical leaves, greater opportunities for student-faculty research engagement, and the move to a 9:1 faculty-student ratio which it has maintained for the past seven years. This was accompanied by an increase in the faculty from 192 in 2006 to the current number of 234, although the College has yet to fully realize the dictates of the last two reviews to significantly increase diversity in faculty recruitment. That being said, although the College has made it a strong priority to increase the diversity of the faculty in response to the Report on Diversity and Inclusion commissioned by the College in 2016, manifest in the formation of the Committee on Faculty Diversity and Inclusion and the revival of the Target-of-Opportunity Hiring Policy in 2015 (which has resulted in one faculty hire), the retention of faculty of color remains an issue of significant concern.

The establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Inclusion in the academic year 2016-2017, which resulted in launching the current search for a Senior Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity who will answer directly to the President of Bowdoin, is a good step toward ensuring that diversity remains a part of the College's imperative in making hiring decisions across the curriculum. Given the significant increase in students of color at Bowdoin since the last full accreditation review in 2006, it was consistently acknowledged by members of the Bowdoin faculty that there is a need for a "critical mass" of diverse faculty and staff members to effectively realize the continued recruitment, and subsequent retention, of a diverse student body. The institution of, support of, and training for the BASE (Bowdoin Advising to Support Academic Excellence) Program and the recently announced THRIVE initiative also attest to the faculty's commitment to diversity and inclusion in the academic program, in general, and in teaching and learning, in particular.

The potential for a more stable leadership base manifest in the recent appointments of a relatively new President, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dean of Students will enable the faculty to be firmly guided toward rendering their collective workload commensurate with the College mission and to better, more efficiently, consolidate committee assignments to work in tandem with the senior administration to ensure the success of the "Offer of the College" while also avoiding the proliferation of long term ad hoc committees, as was cautioned against in the NEASC report of 2007. The visiting team noted that this trend has continued in that the Committee on Governance and Faculty Affairs now allocates and oversees specific committee assignments, ensuring equity in service across the faculty and alleviating concerns about balancing time between scholarship and teaching.

Tenure and promotion is another area of college relations wherein concerns were consistently raised regarding diversification and retention of the faculty. Even as the team encountered no faculty who question the transparency of the reappointment and promotion process at Bowdoin, current procedures were identified to the visiting team as permitting too much variability across the curriculum because of the heavy dependence upon student evaluations in the process and the reliance upon departmental autonomy and individual faculty initiative in rendering effective mentoring and consistent evaluation of junior faculty, in particular, and tenure-track faculty, in general. The visiting team was surprised to learn, for example, that it is quite rare for faculty to visit one another's classes with the aim of offering mentoring advice or specific evaluative, or even summative, assessments of classroom performance. Instituting such a practice, perhaps using the resources of the Center for Learning and Teaching, could be an essential tool for both recruitment and retention of junior faculty. This is especially significant given the larger numbers of visiting faculty members teaching at Bowdoin in order

to accommodate the more generous sabbatical opportunities available since 2011. Particularly given that the self-study indicates that: “A recent pilot program encouraging mutual classroom visits by faculty colleagues for the purpose of mentoring and discussion of pedagogy has sparked renewed interest in and demand for peer observation among the faculty,” the team concurs with the recommendations of the 2016-2017 Classroom Visitation Working Group to establish “a campus-wide peer faculty classroom visitation program, which will be led by the Center for Learning and Teaching and the Faculty Development Committee’s Teaching Subcommittee (p. 60). This initiative would have the benefit of developing an environment of support, transparency, and departmental mentorship that could only serve to benefit all members of the faculty in the long run, while proactively guiding junior faculty to seek the advice of the senior mentors in preparation for reappointment and promotion reviews.

The visiting team was quite impressed to find that, in both reviewing the self-study and talking with members of the academic staff and faculty during the visit, there were absolutely no concerns expressed about opportunities to pursue scholarship or innovative pedagogical endeavors. The only concerns that were consistently expressed were regarding efficacy and improvement of teaching and learning as it related to student empowerment and engagement. With this in mind, the College should continue to ensure that the lines of communication remain open between faculty and the administration as new initiatives are proposed and implemented to enhance advising and teaching.

7. Institutional Resources

Human Resources

With 1,015 full- and part-time employees, including 234 faculty, Bowdoin’s staffing ratios and levels are in line with the norms of its peer group of other top national colleges. Staff positions are divided equally between administrative and support positions. Bowdoin participates in a detailed staffing survey conducted by the Consortium for the Financing of Higher Education (COFHE) every three years, and uses the results to identify areas for attention and potential restructuring. Turnover rates among staff are consistent with the experience at peer institutions, in the 5-10% range. The College offers an attractive benefits package. Health benefits total \$13 million, with an increase of 4.5% for the current year—a lower rate than in recent years stemming from plan design changes, higher employee shares, and increased participation in a high-deductible plan. Compensation accounts for 64% of the College’s overall operating expenses.

Human Resources has developed templates, customizable by area, to assist in the annual performance evaluation process. Approximately 85% of staff receive an evaluation annually. Senior level positions have accounted for a notable portion of the remainder—a finding that presents an opportunity given the recent turnover of senior leadership and the importance that goal setting and active management will play in implementing the College’s strategic directions. Tracing back to several years of zero or very low increases, Bowdoin decouples the personnel evaluation and salary setting processes, yet tightening the link between these would likely encourage a more substantial evaluation process across units. Currently, the Vice President of Human Resources works closely with senior officers to allocate separately an approximate 3% merit pool, plus an additional margin for retentions and other special

adjustments. Human Resources conducts regular market analysis to benchmark salaries to ensure that the College remains competitive and to identify internal equity issues requiring attention.

The College stresses onboarding and careful review during a six-month probationary period for new employees. Onboarding is systematic with checklists at multiple levels of the organization, and a compelling three-month check-in gathering of new hires across the College is held.

Recognizing the limited opportunities for vertical promotion in a college of its size and relatively low turnover, Bowdoin has chosen to focus its professional development offerings on building out “toolboxes” useful in a variety of positions. Recent sessions have focused on project management, manager/supervisor skills, effective presentations, and social media. Sessions often involve outside speakers and trainers. This focus on tools is complemented by encouraging managers to identify opportunities to stretch talented staff to work on larger projects and task forces.

Not surprising given its geographic location, Bowdoin struggles with diversifying its staff. However, the College has embarked on outreach efforts in Brunswick and outlying communities to promote itself as an option to under-represented and under-employed groups. For example, the College is actively engaging the growing immigrant population in Portland and supporting staff volunteer activities through the McKeen Center for the Common Good.

Human Resources recently completed the implementation of Workday as its administrative system. In addition to increasing the analytical capacity of the unit, the process entailed the systematic review of dozens of work processes to identify efficiencies, eliminate redundancies, and employ best practices.

A comprehensive set of employment policies and other essential information is available in the staff and faculty handbooks and is updated and reviewed regularly.

Financial Resources

Bowdoin’s financial resources are substantial, managed prudently, targeted toward the College’s teaching and research mission, and expanding. Evidence of this strength may be found in the following:

- The endowment has doubled from \$673 million to \$1.3 billion over the past decade, and its \$746,000 endowment per student ranks among the highest levels for national liberal arts colleges. Accordingly, the College has increased the amount distributed from the endowment to operations, reaching \$61 million (38% of the budget) on a 5% draw in the current year, including coverage of 74% of the financial aid budget.
- Increases from the endowment have enabled operating expenses to increase by a 4.3% annualized rate to reach \$157 million during the decade ending FY2016—a period notable for a nearly 20% growth in faculty lines filled.
- The College raised \$384 million over the past decade. The giving participation rate among Bowdoin alumni ranks near the very top nationally, at approximately 55-60% annually, and total

gifts have increased from an average of \$32.9 million during FY2004-06 to \$43.3 million during FY2014-16.

- Investment returns have outpaced Cambridge Associates' median in each of the one-, three-, five-, and ten-year periods by considerable margins (e.g., 340 basis points for the ten-year rate).
- Moody's reaffirmed Bowdoin's Aa2 credit rating in spring 2017, with a stable outlook.

The College contracts with Barclays for a comparative analysis of its financial ratios and indicators, which is shared with the trustees annually. This analysis, the particular data of which are confidential, indicates a strong financial position for the College relative to other top colleges, warranting an Aa2 credit rating for its most recent debt issue. The College's debt-related ratios have weakened in recent years, and this is the one notable area in which it trails peer norms. However, the College's plan to settle approximately \$67 million of its \$309 million long-term debt in 2019 using an escrowed reserve will return these ratios to peer norms, and provide capacity for future borrowing for Bowdoin's emerging capital plan.

Bowdoin maintains a ten-year projection to inform its near-term budgeting. This financial planning and scenario-based orientation allows it to anticipate challenges and identify tradeoffs. Budget reserves from prior year operating surpluses enabled Bowdoin to weather the 2008-09 recession without layoffs and to stay the course on its endowment spending policy, thereby avoiding the sharper interventions found at many peers. This led the College to draw as much as \$4-5 million annually from reserves for several years, with the last draws in 2016-17, as it smoothed the effects of the recession on its operations. The College does not expect to draw from reserves to balance the budget in FY2018, despite a higher-than-expected financial aid commitment to the entering class. The ten-year model projects a surplus of \$700,000 for 2017-18 and potentially \$2-3 million in the out years.

While these draws allowed the College to sustain, and ultimately enhance, its investments in program, financial aid, and other initiatives over the past decade, the primary reserve now sits at less than \$5 million. A target reserve of 10% of operating expenses, or \$15-20 million has been identified, but the College should undertake a scenario-driven analysis to inform the sizing of this reserve. In addition to the primary reserve noted above, the College also maintains separate reserves for technology replacement, health insurance volatility, and utilities rates. We concur with the College's plans to consider combining these into an omnibus reserve since the underlying risks are not highly correlated.

Bowdoin is notable for its disciplined approach to budgeting, and the institution acknowledges the likelihood that it may be entering a new norm with regard to the pace of growth for its primary sources of revenue. Endowment payout and net tuition now comprise roughly 85% of the College's revenue, and both of these flows will likely be lower in the coming decade than in recent years as a result of:

- Downward pressure on tuition increases, coupled with Bowdoin's interest in extending financial aid enhancements in the years ahead to diversify its student body, suggests that increases to net tuition may be in the 2% range or lower. Financial aid spending is expected to increase by at least \$5 million, or 15%, between FY2016 actuals and the FY2018 budget. Net tuition is

projected to increase by 1.5% annualized between FY2016 actuals and the approved budget for FY2018. (The actual rate is expected to be lower given the higher than expected financial aid expense for the entering class.)

- Many of Bowdoin's peers have decreased their longer term endowment return assumptions to 6-7% from 8-10% in the past. Factoring in the need to maintain intergenerational equity in the spending rate policy will likely translate into year-over-year increases in payout distributions in the 3-4% range for many colleges.

These pressures on the primary sources may drive spending growth lower than the 4.3% rate of growth during the past decade, depending on levels of philanthropic support for new initiatives.

As a result, Bowdoin has adopted a disciplined budget outlook that constrains non-personnel spending growth to 1-2% annually, seeks to limit staff growth, and optimizes existing square footage in order to focus incremental growth in the budget on ensuring that compensation levels continue to attract and retain talented faculty and staff. The College recently completed zero-growth and zero-based budget exercises on its non-personnel budgets in FY2016 and FY2017 to identify opportunities for reallocation.

New initiatives of any significant scale are likely to require continued philanthropic success.

Fortunately, a robust and sustained record of fundraising success, combined with disciplined budget management and conservative modeling, suggests capacity for Bowdoin to imagine new initiatives in the years ahead amidst these more constrained inflows from endowment and net tuition.

The ten-year budget model provides an effective outlook for baseline budget growth, but does not incorporate explicit placeholders for major new strategic directions that are being developed sequentially. Reflecting such strategic investments, at least as placeholders, and more fully integrating the ten-year operating budget with longer-term projections for capital projects will enhance the opportunities for surfacing and considering tradeoffs and contingencies.

Over the past decade, the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid estimates that the percentage of entering students that are first generation has doubled to 16% for fall 2017, according to admissions staff. The College aspires to adopt a more comprehensive aid strategy, providing students with additional aid for internships and other means of leveling students' experiences with Bowdoin. This must be considered carefully alongside budget implications of likely future trends in the percentage of students on aid and the increasing average package size under existing policies.

As planning priorities emerge and the endowment provides a larger share of the budget, the College may choose to revisit its spending rate methodology to determine whether alternative approaches, such as an annual inflator bounded by a range, would better support multi-year planning efforts. Such a shift would provide greater predictability for the endowment's large contribution to the budget year to year.

A strong reliance on "budget hearings" between the President and each cabinet member resembles the budget process one might find at a larger university. This process incentivizes senior leaders to consider opportunities for savings across their units before seeking new general funds. Senior leadership socializes the major drivers of the budget with trustees throughout the year, leading to approval of the

budget in the spring. The “budget book” document presented to the trustees provides an excellent summary of trends and challenges as context to the next year’s proposed budget. A FY2016 software project has improved the data flow and consolidation of worksheets used in the budget process, allowing for a greater emphasis on analysis at the unit and central levels.

Faculty involvement in the budget process centers on departmental and program requests to the Dean for Academic Affairs, proposals for curricular enhancements through the Curricular Implementation Committee, and consideration of faculty lines in the Committee on Educational Priorities. (Vacated faculty lines revert to the center for reassignment.) The list of issues on which the Governance and Faculty Affairs committee is charged to advise the President and Dean includes “budget and financial priorities,” according to the Dean of Academic Affairs website. However, a review of the minutes of the meetings and discussions with the committee suggest that this is not an area of active focus for the committee. (The minutes referenced only a treasurer’s report scheduled for the May meeting.) In practice, Bowdoin does not appear to have the type of faculty, staff, and student budget committee common at many of its peers. As Bowdoin enters a new phase of budget tradeoffs among financial aid, capital renewal, and other program investments, the College may want to consider the advantages of such a budget or priorities committee to provide advice on competing priorities from across the College and as a forum for engaging the campus community more generally about the choices ahead.

Discussions with the Dean of Academic Affairs confirm that Bowdoin’s budgeting places a priority on faculty recruitment, retention, and support. Faculty compensation, which is pegged at the fourth to sixth position in a highly competitive peer group, remains healthy as do start-up packages for faculty in the sciences and a commitment to exploring partner accommodation options. The Dean sets aside a mostly endowed pool of \$180,000 annually to support course development and faculty research. Primary challenges identified on the academic side include pressures on classrooms and offices associated with a 20% increase in faculty lines over the decade and addressing the demands caused by enrollment shifts away from some fields while maintaining a sense of the whole as a liberal arts college.

Like its peers, Bowdoin has restructured its trustee audit committee to broaden the focus beyond the financial audit and financial statements to identify areas of compliance, reputational, and other risks for the institution. The College maintains relevant policies and procedures, has a history of clean audits, and maintains appropriate insurance coverage. Recognizing the complexity of compliance and other risk mitigation, we applaud the College’s pursuit of a more nuanced process for identifying and prioritizing risks and the possibility of striking a better balance between distributed responsibility for mitigating risks in the units with the advantages of central oversight and coordination.

Bowdoin has witnessed considerable leadership transition in the finance and administration area, with the three top positions turning over in the past year precipitated by the resignation of a long-serving senior vice president. The potential disruption of such turnover was mitigated considerably by the College being well-positioned to fill the positions internally, allowing for continuity.

Information, Physical, and Technological Resources

Bowdoin's main campus consists of two million assignable square feet spread across 117 buildings on a relatively compact (~200 acres) and easily navigated series of leafy and pleasing quads. The College estimates the replacement value of its building stock to be \$564 million. The buildings range in size from large-scale structures such as the library, athletics facilities, and a residential tower to many smaller wooden structures ringing the campus for administrative offices and smaller academic and other programs.

The campus is notable for the relative absence of signs of perpetual construction found at many of its peers in recent years. Bowdoin has not expanded the footprint of its campus significantly over the past decade with major new construction. New construction during this period has been modest, primarily a new arena and health and fitness center, despite the sharp increase in faculty size. Looking forward, the 29,000 square-foot Roux Center for the Environment (\$16 million) is expected to open in FY2019, and will provide needed office and classroom space. The College has continued to invest in its existing facilities through major maintenance and targeted renovation projects, although many major renovation projects were clustered in the earlier part of the past decade. Overall capital investment on Bowdoin's campus, including new construction and existing buildings, totaled \$175 million during the decade ending FY2016, according to the most recent Sightlines analysis. Bowdoin is nearing completion on a long-range master plan to guide development of the campus through the coming decades.

The College contracts with Sightlines to conduct regular reviews of its level of investment in facilities and trends in deferred maintenance. The most recent benchmarking report positions Bowdoin favorably relative to other top colleges in terms of the size of its renovation backlog and its amount of annual investment. However, a gap between the amount of investment necessary and current and projected amounts remains and was identified as an important issue by senior leadership to the trustees in May 2017. Sightlines estimates the immediate backlog of near-term maintenance and renovation needs at approximately \$50 million, which is manageable. Bowdoin currently budgets \$5.4 million annually for capital re-investment, which falls about \$1.6 million per year short of the consultant's recommendation. Bowdoin's facilities leadership team argues that much of the current annual allocation goes towards space and programming adjustments that do not directly address the backlog, and that the effective gap is closer to \$4.5 million per year. Leadership is exploring with the trustees options for increasing the budget allocation for renewal and optimizing those dollars toward the most critical needs. Addressing deficiencies in upper-class housing, which have contributed to an increased number of students opting out of campus housing in recent years, has emerged as a priority claim on the renovation budget in the near future to reduce the disparity among housing options. Closing the gap in the renovations/stewardship budget would position the College among very few institutions nationally that come close to meeting this full need. This will require tradeoffs with programming initiatives and new construction, as the College refines its strategic priorities.

Bowdoin is working with an outside consultant to identify priority opportunities to improve the accessibility of its facilities. Accessibility projects are often integrated into major renovation projects, but the College, like many, struggles with ensuring accessibility to a number of major buildings not slated for a near-term renovation. The extent to which these more challenging accessibility concerns are tackled in the near term will depend in large part on which buildings are otherwise identified for substantial renovation over the next decade.

Sustainability is imbedded into the culture of Bowdoin generally and is evidenced in the approach to the construction and operation of its facilities. The College has adopted a minimum LEED Silver standard for construction and has committed to carbon neutrality (with credits) by 2020. An annual utilities initiatives pool of \$500,000 enables efficiency upgrades. Facilities and senior leadership have surfaced the tension and complexity of competing options related to sustainability goals; for example, weighing the pros and cons of investing in renewables versus improving the envelopes and insulation of buildings. A sustainability coordinator works closely with student “eco-reps” on messaging to the campus community and identifying and championing new programs to reduce consumption.

Bowdoin offers a robust environment of technology tools and services to its faculty, students, and staff. Notable offerings include a high performance computing cluster that supports the research of approximately 20-25 faculty drawn from across disciplines and recent upgrades to improve the performance and reliability of the network. This resource is largely supported by one dedicated staff line, who maintains the cluster and provides limited consulting support for faculty, plus a portion of the staffing bandwidth in the Academic Technology & Consulting (ATC) group. This may be an area for growth as faculty and student interest in computational and large-scale modeling expands. The ATC unit has migrated back and forth between the Library and Information Technology units, and offers an opportunity for increased collaboration between those two units to ensure that faculty (and students) can explore innovation uses of technology in their teaching and discovery. The group recently relocated to the first floor of Hawthorne Longfellow Library to increase its visibility.

Classrooms are supported uniformly with a tech-package that provides continuity as faculty move from one space to another. Information Technology has flagged an upgrade of classroom technology on the near-term horizon. Specialized rooms for telepresence, GIS, and other tools are available on campus. A 2017 survey returned favorable feedback on a wide range of service areas, both in absolute terms and relative to peer norms on the same survey.

Bowdoin’s information technology unit follows a systematic replacement cycle for equipment, including four years for desktops, three to four years for public computing lab machines, five years for audio-visual equipment, and 8-12 years for major network components. The operating budget includes an annual budget allocation of \$1.7 million for these cyclical replacements as well for upgrades to the high performance computing cluster and selected administrative software.

Bowdoin adopts a “best of breed” approach towards its administrative systems rather than pursuing an enterprise-wide solution. This requires attention to data integration across platforms to ensure a robust and effective reporting environment. Bowdoin provides data warehouses to join data for reporting, maintains security to ensure that sensitive data remains protected, and employs secondary reporting tools such as Cognos and Tableau for more specialized reporting and data visualization needs. The recent “fast-track” implementation of Workday in Human Resources provides evidence of adept project management, ability to work in close partnership with the administrative unit, and being opportunistic to leverage system implementation to explore business process redesign.

Data and cyber security is a prominent concern at Bowdoin, as it is across higher education. The College first dedicated staff to this area in 2008. Security concerns have multiplied as the College migrates storage and applications to cloud-based servers. IT employs a robust protocol of monitoring tools and techniques to spot unusual behavior on its network, and has recently implemented two-factor authentication for many of its systems. This remains an area that will likely require additional bandwidth in the future.

The Senior Vice President/Chief Information Officer position is currently vacant, with interim leadership provided by two co-leads drawn from senior leadership in the unit.

The Hawthorne-Longfellow Library (H&L) serves as an active hub of activity located near the center of campus. Like most academic libraries, H&L is reimagining its role in the College. A “Library of the Future” planning process is expected to convene in Spring 2018. In the interim library leadership has launched new initiatives in the existing spaces, such as the Research Lab, Innovation Space and a new telepresence room to facilitate interactive classroom learning opportunities. Gate counts, and Special Collections & Archives registered researchers (+17%), and reading room usage (+58%) are all higher than in the previous year.

The reallocation of a vacant position to create an outreach librarian has enhanced the Library’s involvement with the curriculum. In the past year, librarians supported 174 courses, including 80% of the first year seminars and increased the number of public programs and class sessions by 40%. As an example, the outreach librarian is working closely with a faculty member in History to inject an archival research intensive experience into a capstone course.

The Library has several projects underway aimed at digitizing portions of its collections to make them more accessible to scholars. The emergence of the computational and digital studies program, coupled with shifts in research in the humanities and social sciences, is expected to increase student and faculty interest in accessing digital materials and mastering tools and techniques to analyze them. An advisory committee is being formed to prioritize areas of the collection to digitize. The library, in collaboration with Academic Technology & Consulting, will provide the tools and support to users who want to integrate these digital resources into teaching and scholarship.

It will be important to provide a framing for the unfolding discussions around the Library’s future in the coming months, including a sense of budget investment and space bounds around which to envision programming. While Bowdoin’s path will need to be driven by the distinctive aspects of its collections and services, but it may be useful to consult closely with peer colleges who have recently re-envisioned the role and configuration of the library on their campuses.

8. Educational Effectiveness

As a highly-selective, small liberal arts college, Bowdoin is dedicated to fostering the intellectual and personal growth of its students. “The Offer of the College” — emblazoned in the Academic Handbook, on the College webpage, and on the wall leading into the Office of the President — provides an aspirational vision of what an undergraduate education at Bowdoin will encompass including: appreciation for

other's work, criticism of one's own work, and the opportunity to make a host of friends. The visiting team noted that in conversation after conversation, faculty and administration emphasized the feeling of community on campus and a shared vision for a positive learning environment both inside and outside of the classroom.

Since the last site visit, Bowdoin has taken a number of important steps to improve the assessment of student learning on campus. These include updating placement tests and ensuring the results are in student advising records; requiring completion of the required first-year seminar in the fall semester; participating in the NSF and New England Consortium on Assessment and Student Learning Consortia programs; joining COFHE which allows for comparison of peer institution data; and examining services associated with supporting quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and academic integrity.

Anecdotal evidence implies a strong culture of student learning. Classes have strict enrollment limits according to level (16 for first-year seminars; 50 for 1000 level classes; 35 for 2000 level courses; 16 for 3000 level courses) to ensure that students have the ability to develop strong intellectual relationships with their faculty. In 2016-2017, the College dedicated \$325,000 in funding to support independent research for 110 undergraduates. Department reports highlight both honors thesis and departmental prizes that students receive. The Chronicle of Higher Education ranked Bowdoin fourth in the nation for undergraduate institutions that produce Fulbright Scholars. In 2016-2017, twenty students were offered Fulbright Fellowships, and one student was named a Marshall Scholar. All of these accomplishments are to be celebrated.

At the college level, there are at present no overarching learning goals. Instead, the core requirements serve as the framework for identifying what Bowdoin students should learn from their undergraduate education. The General Education Requirements were developed in 2004 and evaluated in 2013, and they include one course in Mathematical, Computational or Statistical Reasoning; one course in the Inquiry in the Natural Sciences; one course in Exploring Social Differences; one class in International Perspectives; one course in Visual and Performing Arts, as well as divisional requirements and a First-Year Seminar.

Bowdoin is clearly engaged in thinking about student learning and effectively uses indirect assessment. With regards to formal assessment efforts, particularly direct assessment of student learning, the results are more mixed and this is an area for improvement for the College. Going forward, not only will Bowdoin want to conduct direct assessment of each of the core general education requirements, it will also want to ensure that any indirect assessment measures mirror the goals of the general education requirements.

At the departmental level, there have been notable successes as well as opportunities for growth. One of the major accomplishments since the 2011 review was the development of learning goals for each division, major, and minor. The development of these goals was a bottom-up effort, rather than a top-down mandate ensuring greater involvement and engagement from the faculty. In a meeting with Department Chairs, members of the team heard about how the development of the learning goals fostered conversations in the department about curriculum, pedagogy, and student achievement.

However, other departmental efforts have been more mixed, largely relying on the interests of individual faculty members to enact change. Some departments have now mapped their curriculum (Chemistry, Environmental Studies, Government) onto their learning goals. Other departments are using

exams (Chemistry) and professional standards for their field (German) to better understand student learning. Some departments (Chemistry, Education) recognize that, while they already have assessment mechanisms for their students who are engaged in senior thesis/research projects or capstone courses, they do not have a way to assess students who are not engaged in these advanced learning opportunities. A more comprehensive strategy that encompasses all departments in a plan for direct assessment is needed.

For departments that are interested in developing their assessment efforts, one important tool previously noted in this report is the Summer Working Groups (different from the GFA working groups), which are 2-3 day departmental retreats. Departments request funds to take a “deeper dive” into an area that a department wishes to improve, and these conversations are often tied to assessment or used to prepare for the decennial reviews. Each year, approximately 15 departments receive funding, and the expectation is that each working group will develop a written report of their progress which is reviewed by the Dean’s Office. Topics have included: Curriculum and Learning Assessment Across Environmental Sciences Core Courses; Assessment of Changes in the History Major; and Assessment and Revision of Biology 109.

Both administrators and chairs described these summer working groups as essential to developing departmental assessment measures. However, because this is a voluntary program, the departments that have the greatest interest in assessment will be the ones that are most likely to make progress, while those that have less interest, will lag behind. Since formal reviews are conducted only once every ten years, this means that some departments could not engage in any form of assessment for a significant period of time.

Bowdoin College has a number of steps it could take at the departmental and course level to advance its assessment of student learning. Just as the College prioritized the development of departmental learning goals, Bowdoin could develop a master assessment plan to ensure that all departments are engaged in this work, requiring all annual department reports to include a section on the assessment of student learning. Of the seven sample annual reports submitted to the visiting team, only one (Chemistry) had any substantive discussion of learning in the majors and, of the course syllabi reviewed, many did not include learning goals which ideally would be tied to the learning goals of a major or a minor.

For academic support services, the libraries have the most robust methods of assessment. Using the framework of the Association of College and Research Libraries, the libraries have their own learning goals which are used in conjunction with departmental learning goals. Upon entry into the College, each student is given an information literacy exam. While the average score for all students is 70%, students still struggle with identifying appropriate sources and citation. Library staff work with faculty to develop information literacy skills through actual class assignments, so information is gained in practical ways related to success in the courses.

In the June 2009 Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan, different offices within the division created a comprehensive document that included mission, vision, values, strategic priorities, resource requirements and dashboard indicators.

Bowdoin College does an absolutely excellent job of using indirect assessment. The College clearly values student opinion, and surveys are regularly given to students to better understand their learning

experiences. These surveys include: course evaluations; expectations about first-year seminars; satisfaction with academic and tutorial help; impressions of the college experience for participants in the BASE advising model; and senior and alumni surveys. A number of examples of the College's use of survey results were provided to the team: changes in services (potentially expanding the BASE advising program); changes in curriculum (rethinking the quantitative reasoning requirement); and changes in pedagogy (offering different classes for STEM students based on quantitative preparation). Each of these initiatives demonstrates a willingness by the institution to look at its practices and to work toward creating a better learning environment for Bowdoin undergraduates. The College does need to improve its direct assessment of student learning, both inside and outside of the classroom. While this is a challenge for all colleges, Bowdoin's strong tradition of indirect assessment measures may have the unintended consequence of overshadowing the need for direct assessment measures of student learning.

As a highly selective liberal art college, Bowdoin enjoys strong retention and graduation rates. With the exception of one year in which there was a large gap between the general student population and first-generation college students, the overall first-year to sophomore retention rate is approximately the same for the general population, first-generation college students, students of color, and aided students.

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
General Students	97%	98%	97%	94%
First-Generation	95%	90%	98%	94%
Students of Color	97%	96%	97%	91%
Aided Students	96%	97%	96%	94%

The six-year graduation rate is very high, but there is a gap in the number of first-generation college students and/or the number of students of color who graduate in this time period when compared to the general population. This gap is less pronounced for general students in comparison to aided students.

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
General Students	93%	93%	94%	95%
First-Generation	N/A	88%	88%	90%
Students of Color	89%	87%	91%	92%
Aided Students	92%	92%	90%	95%

When graduation data is examined in a four-year timeframe (important for reasons of student debt), issues of academic progress and inclusivity become more apparent. In 2013-2014, non-students of color had a 92% four-year graduation rate compared to 83% for students of color. In the same year, 95% of no-need students graduated in four years, compared to 82% for high need students. Again in the same year, 90% of non-first-generation college students graduated in four years, compared to 83% of first-generation college students. Study abroad rates show similar gaps in participation. As Bowdoin continues to assess its educational effectiveness, it will be important to understand why these gaps are occurring and to ensure an inclusive learning environment exists for all students.

Career outcomes are also strong for Bowdoin alumni. According to the 2016 Senior Survey, 85% of seniors met with someone in career services in their final year and 77% met prior to their senior year. Within one year of graduation, 74% of graduates enter the job market. Ten years after graduation, 75% of graduates are in pursuit of or have obtained a graduate degree. An astounding 90% of graduates five and ten years after graduation say that Bowdoin prepared them well for many aspects of their lives after college. Bowdoin has conducted further data analysis to better understand how levels of overall satisfaction vary according to financial need as an undergraduate, first-generation college student status, and race/ethnicity. Continuing this research will be instrumental in helping future generations of Bowdoin students succeed.

9. Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

Bowdoin College provides and maintains a comprehensive set of information about the College primarily via the institution's website. The institution's mission is clearly stated and there are accurate descriptions about the College including information about programs, courses, services and other offerings at the institution. The website provides information about the governance structure of the College, including the Board or Trustees, the officers of the College, and the members of the Faculty. The institution accurately states its accreditation status and provides access to current financial statements.

Information about admissions and financial aid is easily located on the website and the cost calculators are fairly easy to use. As mentioned previously in this report, Bowdoin is currently in the process of re-tooling its admissions materials based on an external review and market research completed last year. The goal is to effectively reach target audiences and articulate the promise of a Bowdoin education in more compelling ways.

Policies regarding transfer of credit, charges and refunds, current course offerings, and academic policies and procedures are accessible online. Data related to retention, graduation rates and post-graduation plans of students are also available.

The faculty, administrative staff and students with whom the team met seemed quite committed to the institution and dedicated to making Bowdoin an even better place. There was a sense of community, and an ethic of care and responsibility for other members of the College. Policies governing the conduct of members of the community are clearly articulated on the institution's website and, when appropriate, members of the Bowdoin community periodically must reaffirm their understanding and compliance. Policies governing faculty and staff are reviewed during employee orientation; grievance procedures are well-articulated for all constituent groups.

As indicated throughout this report, Bowdoin is striving to increase the diversity of its student body as well as of the staff and faculty. The College seems committed to fostering a working and learning environment free from harassment and discrimination and that values the worth and potential of each member of the community. Toward this end, the College is in the process of creating a new senior-level position which will oversee the institution's efforts in equity and inclusion (broadly defined).

The visiting team has a sense that Bowdoin is not an institution that rests on its laurels. Rather, there was evidence of ongoing periodic review and continual improvement. The College is in a strong financial position and President Rose intends to be “bold and aspirational” in envisioning the Bowdoin of the future.

Bowdoin is currently working to develop a comprehensive digital strategy and accompanying resources to better meet the needs of the College and its audiences. Management of the institution’s website has been challenging, but initiatives to improve content and search-ability, to implement a fully mobile-responsive design, and to improve accessibility are currently underway and should be completed within the next few years.

Affirmation of Compliance

To document the institution’s compliance with Federal regulations relating to Title IV, the team reviewed the College’s Affirmation of Compliance form signed by the CEO. Bowdoin College publicly discloses on its website and in its Academic Handbook its policy on transfer of credit. Public notification of the evaluation visit and of the opportunity for public comment was made one month prior to the visit in The Times Record (Brunswick, ME) and The Bowdoin Orient, as well as on the College’s website. Copies of the institution’s grievance procedures for students can be found in the Student Handbook which is available online. The team’s discussion of Bowdoin College’s credit hour policy can be found in Standard 4: The Academic Program.

Strengths

Of Bowdoin’s many strengths, the visiting team especially highlights:

- A deep, shared commitment across all constituencies to the College’s mission.
- Strong financial management, exceptional financial capacity and an effective culture of philanthropy.
- Consistent, creative attention to the organization of the Board to ensure effectiveness and engagement.
- Ongoing reform of faculty governance and attention to communication across constituencies.
- Significant investment in diversity and inclusion to ensure that all have the opportunity to succeed at Bowdoin.

Each of these speak to the abiding collegiality and dedication that characterize the Bowdoin community.

Concerns

Identified areas which would benefit from continued attention from the leadership team and Bowdoin community include:

First, Bowdoin’s creative, nimble approach to strategic planning will require aggressive, frequent communication so that all constituencies stay aligned with current priorities, collaborate effectively, and see how ad hoc working groups connect with abiding structures of governance.

Second, Bowdoin's clarity of purpose and mission is not yet matched by a culture of assessment. Serious ongoing attention to developing consistent mechanisms for direct assessment of student learning at the course, department and college level is needed. Given the strength of the Center for Learning and Teaching, and the expanded capabilities of Institutional Research, Analytics and Consulting, Bowdoin is well-positioned for this continued work in the area of assessment.

Third, our committee recognizes Bowdoin's commitment to diversity and inclusion, evident in the resources that are dedicated to ensuring that all students can succeed. At the same time, members of the community expressed impatience with the pace of change with respect to faculty diversity that may benefit from continued experimenting with expansive job descriptions, implicit bias workshops, and intentional recruiting.

Finally, our committee expresses deep admiration and thanks to the Bowdoin community both for their hospitality and for the opportunities they afforded us to learn from them.

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