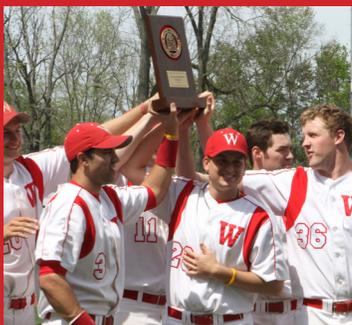




# TRADITION AND CHANGE



# WABASH COLLEGE



A Self-Study Report to the Higher Learning Commission  
Submitted by Wabash College • August 2012

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Throughout the *Self-Study Report* supporting evidence has been made available via in-text hyperlinks while key supporting reports have also been placed in Electronic Resource boxes located in the margins of the report.

### **Commonly Used Acronyms and Abbreviations in the *Self-Study Report***

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| APC          | Academic Policy Committee   |
| CILA         | Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts (also Center of Inquiry)                    |
| CIRP         | Cooperative Institutional Research Program  |
| EQ           | Enduring Questions (a second semester all-college course for first-year students) |
| ESH          | Employment Self-Help  |
| FYESG        | First Year Experience Study Group   |
| GLCA         | Great Lakes Colleges Association  |
| HEDS         | Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium  |
| HELP Program | Housing and Education Leaders Partnership Program                                 |
| MXIBS        | Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies  |
| NCAC         | North Coast Athletic Conference   |
| NSSE         | National Survey of Student Engagement   |
| WNS          | Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (also Wabash National Study)      |

### **Wabash College Accreditation Committee**

Bobby Horton, Associate Professor of Psychology  
John Lamborn, Head Librarian, Lilly Library  
Todd McDorman, Associate Professor of Rhetoric  
Julie Olsen, Associate Dean of the College and Registrar  
Ann Taylor, Associate Professor of Chemistry

With special thanks to President Patrick White, Dean of the College Gary Phillips, Senior Director of Communications and Marketing James Amidon, Director of IT Services Brad Weaver, Professor of English *emeritus* Tom Campbell, and all of the administrators, faculty, staff, students, and trustees of Wabash College who made important contributions to this report.





# **TRADITION AND CHANGE: AN INTRODUCTION TO WABASH COLLEGE**

## TRADITION AND CHANGE: AN INTRODUCTION TO WABASH COLLEGE

Wabash College is a national liberal arts college for men recognized for its strong academics, its commitment to engagement with student development in all aspects of campus life, and its residential environment that calls for responsibility and maturity in fraternity and independent living. A college of approximately 900 young men drawn from around the world, Wabash offers a distinctive education that blends rigorous academic experience with a high degree of freedom and responsibility for its students, all in a tradition-rich environment. At Wabash the average class size is 13 students with a student-faculty ratio of just under 11:1. With small classes, and professors devoted to excellence in teaching, research, and service, Wabash is a college committed to its Mission to educate men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely.

To know and experience Wabash is to become familiar with its traditions, its stories, and above all its spirit of engagement in which faculty, staff, students and alumni come together in ownership of the College's past and hopes for its future. Even a brief visit to campus will acquaint visitors with some of the hallmarks of Wabash tradition and life: the oft-repeated mantra "Wabash Always Fights!," which is both a sign of pride and a commitment to drive to be better and to succeed, often against great odds; the Gentleman's Rule, the one code of conduct for students; the treasured Monon Bell,



*Biology Professor Eric Wetzel teaches an invertebrate biology course in Hays Hall.*

the 300-pound trophy in the storied football rivalry with DePauw University; our commitment to the liberal arts and to being a college for men, one that takes young men and their deepest aspirations seriously; the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts, where rigorous study of the liberal arts has a national impact; the Senior Bench, painted and repainted in pride; National Survey of Student Engagement and Wabash National Study Benchmarks, which evidence the rigor and the engagement of a Wabash education; Caleb Mills' Bell, the 1832 bell used to ring in and ring out every class; the Sphinx Club's passion for spirit and leadership; Serving the Needs of the Country, a goal since our founding; the Senior Arch; the 40-year history of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies; weekly Chapel Talks, voluntary, well-attended, and eclectic; Comprehensive Exams, oral and written, a valued rite of passage and a testament to Wabash's rigorous liberal arts education; inclusion as one of the *Colleges That Change Lives*; The Challenge of Excellence, not just a campaign name, but our way of being; "Old Wabash," the school song which every

student knows and sings at the drop of a hat.

To talk to a student, faculty or staff member, or alumnus is to engage in a conversation about the greatness of the past and our aspirations for the future, to hear what students want for their College, for their communities, for the nation, and the world, and the role they expect proudly to play in that future. To be at Wabash is to see at once powerful traditions and a commitment to change, to changing the lives of our students, and to changing Wabash College and the world for the better.

**W - W - W**

Wabash College was founded in the frontier town of Crawfordsville on November 21, 1832. The College has always been independent and non-sectarian, even though its founders were Presbyterian ministers. The College for men was patterned after the traditional liberal arts colleges of New England; and, like other single-sex institutions remaining today, Wabash provides a valuable choice for students who come to see the strengths and merits of a private, residential, undergraduate, single-sex, liberal arts environment.

Guided by the charge of Elihu Baldwin, Wabash's first president, who wrote that, "Our purpose is, never to rest while Wabash College shall lack any advantages for the student, which are offered by the highest class of American colleges," Wabash strives constantly to meet the needs of motivated students by pursuing support from loyal alumni and friends in the private sector. Never a college just for the wealthy, Wabash has long been committed to taking men of modest means and great promise and turning them into leaders on the regional and national stage.

As a liberal arts college, Wabash is dedicated to retaining strengths from its past, but also committed to embracing the possibilities of the future. Over the past ten years, economic challenges and other headwinds affecting the entire liberal arts sector have fueled change at the College. Some of these changes are external, visible, and publicly known; others are to programs, processes, and procedures that are less obvious. For all our commitment to tradition and the past, Wabash has responded nimbly and adroitly to the pressures of the last decade. Indeed, as we reviewed and evaluated different aspects of the College, we were surprised at the depth and pervasiveness of changes in planning, assessment, finances, student services, and academic programs, to name a few. These changes have been motivated by a series of forward-looking initiatives undertaken at the College to place Wabash in the forefront of liberal arts institutions nation-wide, to extend the "Wabash experience" to more qualified and more diverse students, to live out the mission.

At the same time, Wabash College remains a tradition-rich institution with a deep history grounded in a liberal arts Mission and pervasive Core Values. That history is often told in campus publications and books and is revisited in weekly Chapel Talks and celebrated on other public occasions. These efforts of historical preservation range from the official histories of the College as told in *These Fleeting Years* and *Wabash on My Mind* to the more contemporary, student-written *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: An Introduction to the History, Traditions, and Culture of Wabash College*. While that history and those traditions remain an important part of the mythos of the College and create a palpable ethos for the institution, against that backdrop this *Self-Study Report* is focused on the College's more recent past and, even more so, on its future challenges and possibilities.

The application for reaccreditation presents Wabash College with an opportunity to comprehensively assess its mission effectiveness, but also to gain important perspective on the vital areas of change and development occurring at the institution. We see this as an occasion to examine and assess the College on its accomplishments, strengths, goals, and ongoing activities within the context of the accreditation process. Wabash is the institution it is because of the past; but it strives to be something more and better as captured by the mantra "Wabash Always Fights!" In this *Self-Study Report* we document the efforts both to respond to and to lead positive change at Wabash over the past decade. In the process we also identify challenges, opportunities, and actions that will shape the future of a community committed to fulfilling its vital Mission and living out its Core Values in a rapidly changing world.

## The Self-Study Process

Wabash College has been accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools since 1913. The last accreditation visit was September 23-25, 2002. At that time, the accreditation team unanimously concluded that “Wabash College has demonstrated that it has excellent resources (human, financial, and physical), a commitment to mission, a strong assessment program, and ongoing planning efforts which will ensure that Wabash will continue to be a strong four year liberal arts college for men” ([Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Wabash College](#), p. 10). As a result, the visit team recommended continued accreditation with the next comprehensive visit set for 2012-13.

Wabash College’s self-study process is led by the Accreditation Committee, a standing faculty/staff committee that includes a representative from each of the three academic divisions, a staff member, and the Registrar and Associate Dean of the College. While this structure is more streamlined than is common in many reaccreditation efforts, it is fitting to the workings and size of Wabash. Moreover, this structure has made elements of reaccreditation and assessment an ongoing part of the operation of the College.

The Accreditation Committee (2002-present) includes:

- Tom Campbell, Professor of English (2002-2011; retired)
- Bobby Horton, Associate Professor of Psychology (2008-present)
- John Lamborn, College Librarian and Director of Lilly Library (2011-present)
- Todd McDorman, Associate Professor of Rhetoric (2007-present)
- Phil Mikesell, Professor of Political Science (2002-2008; retired)
- Julie Olsen, Registrar and Associate Dean of the College (2002-present)
- Ann Taylor, Associate Professor of Chemistry (2002-present)

### Electronic Resource

#### Accreditation Committee Meeting Notes

Since 2002 the Accreditation Committee has [met regularly](#) to monitor campus and Higher Learning Commission developments. In the first years of the 10-year cycle that meant participating in campus curriculum and assessment discussions, becoming acclimated to the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, and orienting new committee members to the work of reaccreditation. Early preparations for the self-study and fall 2012 site team visit included reviewing accreditation criteria and beginning to collect pertinent documents in 2008-09; meeting with constituency groups in spring 2010; re-engaging examination of department learning goals in 2010-11; and providing an overview of accreditation for the College’s Board of Trustees in May 2011 and a progress report with early drafts of the *Self-Study Report* chapters to the Board of Trustees in May 2012. Committee members also attended the Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference in 2010 and 2011.

### *Self-Study Goals*

To assist with the self-study, in consultation with the President and Dean of the College, the Accreditation Committee developed four goals to guide the self-study process:

1. To use the self-study process and reaccreditation request as an opportunity to reflect deeply on and assess the entire institution while placing particular focus on the achievements and changes since the last self-study as well as attention to our strengths, challenges, and opportunities;
2. To involve the campus in the self-study process and elevate awareness of the value and meaning of accreditation;
3. To produce a *Self-Study Report* that will help guide the campus in assessment and planning activities in the coming years, including ways to advance assessment of student learning and

- reflect on and inform strategic planning across the College;
4. To achieve reaccreditation from the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission.

### ***Preparing the Self-Study Report***

The *Self-Study Report* was prepared in several stages:

- In 2010-11 the Accreditation Committee organized a process for reviewing and further clarifying department learning goals, a process that continued through 2012 with Faculty Meeting reports and the electronic dissemination of a series of [campus newsletters](#) that were designed to improve knowledge about the self-study process, emphasize its importance, and elicit community contributions in its completion;
- In May 2011, the Accreditation Committee overviewed the self-study process at a Board of Trustees Deep Dive session to prepare them for later involvement;
- In spring and summer 2011, Accreditation Committee members drafted content outlines for each criterion and reviewed supporting documents that had been collected to that point;
- In summer 2011, the Accreditation Committee sought additional resources and reports from the President's Staff and faculty and staff involved in specific programs and efforts relevant to the reaccreditation effort;
- In fall 2011, the Accreditation Committee revised, expanded, and reviewed content outlines, complete with supporting documents, and began writing the *Self-Study Report*;
- In February 2012, preliminary criterion drafts were presented to the President's Staff for feedback;
- In March 2012, revised criterion drafts were disseminated to the campus community for review and discussion. Open lunches were conducted to gain feedback, and individuals with expertise in particular areas were asked to review portions of the self-study and to provide oral or written feedback;
- In spring 2012, the reaccreditation visit was [publicly announced](#) and third-party comments were invited via newspaper, website, and alumni magazine announcements;
- In April, a draft of the *Self-Study Report* was circulated to the Board of Trustees. In May 2012, the Board of Trustees discussed draft findings and recommendations from the self-study as part of College planning activities and in preparation for future strategic planning;
- In summer 2012, the President and Dean of the College reviewed the final draft and the Accreditation Committee made final revisions to the *Self-Study Report*;
- In August 2012, the final *Self-Study Report* was submitted to the Higher Learning Commission and distributed to campus.

### **The 2002 Reaccreditation Visit and Response**

The result of the 2002 accreditation review by the North Central Association was a 10-year renewal of Wabash College's accreditation without any evidence across the five criteria demonstrating need for commission follow-up or monitoring and only one notation of evidence that demonstrated a need for institutional attention (addressed below). The [site visit and evaluation report](#) were positive about the commitment to mission, resources, assessment program, and planning of the institution.

In particular, the evaluation team report complimented the "outstanding job" the College does "of assessing quality among departments and majors" and the "solid framework for assessing the Wabash approach to general education" (p. 7). In their "recognition of significant accomplishments, significant progress, and/or exemplary and innovative practices," the review team pointed to the

“magnificent physical facility” and “programmatic commitment” brought to campus via the [Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts](#) (CILA) and the potential impact it could have at Wabash and on the broader educational community. The report also contended that in order to “make a case” for the liberal arts not only would the sort of higher education research studies pursued by CILA be needed, but “the results of these studies will [need to] be applied in the teaching and learning of the liberal arts at Wabash College and widely disseminated.” This is exactly what has happened in the broader discussion of the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS) and the work of CILA; in CILA’s establishment as a national resource and venue for exchanging ideas about measuring student learning and using the results of such measurements for improvement; and, most importantly, in how CILA has provided opportunities for Wabash to enhance its educational practices and how Wabash is seeking ways to further utilize knowledge and experience gained from CILA in its work. CILA’s impact upon Wabash teaching and learning has been significant. These efforts are seen in various locations of the *Self-Study Report* but, most specifically, across Criterion 3.

In their report, the consultation team [responded to four questions](#) that had been set forth in the 2002 *Self-Study Report* (pp. 14-15). These questions solicited advice on the strategic planning process, faculty work assignments, promoting post-tenure productivity, and resolving potential tensions between vocational/professional goals and liberal arts teaching. Wabash has progressed in manners consistent with the answers provided to those queries.

In terms of strategic planning, the visit team, noting that efficiency and inclusiveness in the process may be antithetical goals, encouraged that whenever possible planning utilize existing mechanisms of governance and administration and that an effective strategic plan should supply identifiable benchmarks as well as expectations of accountability. The 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, *The Liberal Arts at Wabash College: Serving the Needs of the Country*, which is referenced throughout the *Self-Study Report* and discussed in some detail in Criterion 2, reflects these principles in its campus-wide discussion and development, its reliance on existing committees and offices to oversee and implement it, and its identification of goals and outcomes.

The question of faculty assignments has perhaps been less of an issue of interest over the past decade apart from the question of how to balance teaching and administrative responsibilities and the availability of release time for special College projects and unique teaching and learning opportunities. In general, the awarding of release time is rare except for a two-course release for division chairs and a one-course release for select special projects such as for the Faculty Development Coordinator, the Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator, and the writing of the reaccreditation *Self-Study Report*. However, by utilizing CILA grant funding, the College found ways to support significant release time for pedagogical development, departmental self-studies, and unique teaching efforts. Some of these instances are discussed in Criterion 3.

In response to the third question, regarding post-tenure productivity and engagement, the visit team made two suggestions reflected now in Wabash structures: a salary system that recognizes continuing good work as well as merit awards, and a rich and robust faculty development program. The underlying question itself remains relevant because salary enhancement and ensuring continued engagement by tenured faculty must be paramount concerns. At an institution as small as Wabash, it is essential that all faculty remain active in the work of the College so as to effectively engage students and reasonably distribute committee and administrative responsibilities. One way the College has worked deliberately to provide new opportunities is by use of external resources through Lilly Endowment Inc. grants supporting CILA, through the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) New Directions grants, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grants discussed in Criteria 3 and 4. However, the College recognizes the need to consider this issue carefully, particularly given the

changing demographics of the institution and the comparatively fewer tenured and senior faculty at Wabash compared to a decade ago. With the ending of the Lilly grant funding of CILA, additional resources will be needed to maintain faculty development efforts at their current robust level.

Finally, as was suggested by the reviewers, the relationship of vocational/professional programs and liberal arts teaching has been transformed “into a learning opportunity.” Consistent with the suggestion of the reviewers, one way this has been done is through the Business Leaders Program, which offers students a combination of curricular and co-curricular experiences. The reviewers also suggested that the College “consider a program in leadership studies that builds from liberal learning using resources from across the traditional liberal arts” and “consider the use of experiential learning activities such as internships and collaborative research” (p. 15). Several developments at the College are consistent with this advice. These works include the establishment of the grant funded [Business Leaders Program](#) and the later [endowment of the program](#), the establishment of the Small Business Internship Fund, and expanded cultivation of [internships](#) generally at the College. The establishment of the John W. Bachmann-Edward Jones Chair in Economics and Leadership will advance further this integration by providing academic leadership for these business leadership development programs. A new dual degree engineering program with Purdue University also offers students, especially in-state Indiana residents, a valuable vocational opportunity. In addition, the College has increased collaborative research opportunities between students and faculty, as is discussed more in Criterion 4. The impact of collaborative research with faculty is measured in the dozens of students who are on campus during the summer pursuing academic internships as well as other opportunities.



*Wabash alumnus Rob Shook works with students in the summer Business Immersion Program.*

In addition to answering these questions posed by Wabash College in 2002, the visit team offered three observations about the *Self-Study Report* and evidence demonstrating fulfillment of the accreditation criteria:

1. **“The team concludes that while the [self-study] report addresses effectively all of the required areas for a comprehensive self-study... it could have been improved by greater inclusiveness in input and review by faculty of the college” (p. 4).**

Bearing this advice in mind, the Accreditation Committee implemented a more inclusive process for the present self-study, much of which is explained above. This started in 2010 with meetings with administrative offices (Admissions, Advancement, Business Office, Dean of the College, and Dean of Students) about the self-study and engaging them in discussions about how the College mission shapes their work. It also involved re-engaging all academic departments in a new examination of the relationship of their curricula to the mission and revisiting departmental learning goals. Beyond these efforts specifically to include offices and departments, the Accreditation Committee developed an expanded communication plan that informed the community of progress on the self-study, made public requests for information needed for the self-study, and provided opportunities for input. As explained, this included soliciting people from across the College to review the draft chapters of the *Self-Study Report* and provide feedback. This enabled increased education about accreditation, increased awareness of the self-study process, and multiple opportunities for participation prior to delivery of the final *Self-Study Report*.

2. **“The team finds the substance of the report to be accurate; however, the self-study is largely lacking in self-criticism or expression of continuing or pervasive concerns, and could have been improved by greater attention to and analysis of concerns and issues” (p. 4).**

In demonstrating that Wabash College meets all of the criteria for reaccreditation, this *Self-Study Report* identifies areas for improvement and includes forward-oriented reflections in evaluating the College’s efforts and plans for the future. Evidence of this orientation is found in the self-study goals provided earlier, which included using the self-study process and reaccreditation request as an opportunity for broad institutional reflection that will help guide future campus assessment and planning activities. This potential is further reflected in how the President’s Staff has approached the reaccreditation process, using the self-study as a way to identify strengths, opportunities, and challenges for the College and devoting Deep Dive sessions of the May 2011 and 2012 Board of Trustees meetings to discuss these prospects as the College begins a new strategic planning cycle in the coming months.

The creation of a new Board of Trustees Strategy Committee underscores the commitment to the ongoing practice of strategic thinking. This committee will include trustees, faculty, and staff. Finally, the *Self-Study Report* offers frank observations on Wabash processes and goals, including locations where processes have needed revision, and instances where the College can improve further. Such reflections are included throughout the *Self-Study Report* as a means to help focus attention on campus needs, and, in particular, constitute points of focus in the conclusion of each Criterion chapter.

3. **“While the twice monthly faculty meetings and large number of committees on which faculty participate suggest significant faculty participation in the governance process, there is a lack of clarity about the roles of various faculty committees, the relationship among them, and their relationship to final decision making authority and responsibility. For some members of the Wabash community, this leads to a perception that they lack important information related to decision making at the College” (p. 8).**

This observation was offered by the review team as evidence that demonstrated a need for institutional attention. The comment raises a complex issue, and it likely reflects the view of some faculty at the time. Attention to issues of faculty participation in governance and information access continued to mount after the reaccreditation review. In spring 2006 a faculty motion was brought to change the chairing of faculty meetings, proposing to replace the President with a faculty member. The faculty elected to not vote on this motion and, instead, formed an ad hoc Governance Committee, which met between March and October 2006 to study governance at the College. Their work included interviewing all faculty members about issues of governance, constructing a partial history of governance structures at the College, and issuing [a final report](#) related to perceptions of governance and possible changes.

In detailing changes in governance, the report noted that the development of new professional, administrative structures in several offices — admissions, finances, advancement, and athletics for instance — had the effect of altering traditional faculty involvement in these areas from being active decision-makers to, more often, receiving information about decisions. The report noted that these changes were not entirely unwelcome both because of the changing nature and complexities of College administration more generally and because of faculty time commitments and increased interest in and expectations for scholarship and other campus leadership. However, the side-effect of the changes were noted in the two major findings of the report: concerns over transparency (“Faculty

do not have as much knowledge of College decision making processes as they would like.”) and concerns over meaningful influence (“The faculty do not feel that they have as much influence in important college decisions as they would like.”). The report concluded by making several “small item” suggestions for changes and by reporting on a meeting with the new President and Dean, who had joined the College between the time the committee was formed and when the report was issued.

New President Patrick White and Dean of the College Gary Phillips brought with them a commitment to increased transparency and inclusion of faculty in institutional decision making. This led, in response to a motion adopted by the faculty, to the use of bi-weekly reports written by the President and the Dean of the College, issued in conjunction with faculty meetings, which document appointments, activities of the President and Dean, and important institutional information about current and future operations. There also has been unprecedented consultation with and involvement of the division chairs by the Dean of the College in all levels of personnel, programmatic, and budget decision making.

Examples of this involvement include the academic program review of faculty positions in 2009, the instrumental role of the division chairs in shaping the Placher salary supplement, the application of Lilly Endowment funds to strengthen the academic program, and the participation of the division chairs in deciding on *Faculty Handbook* changes, including efforts to improve the faculty grievance process, faculty review process, and faculty compliance issues. The Dean of the College also now routinely explains salary enhancement decisions in annual salary letters to all faculty. Collectively, these practices have brought more knowledge of budget matters; greater use of the informal department chairs group for all-college course staffing and other curricular planning issues; and more opportunities for participation in activities such as an extended, inclusive process of strategic planning and, for three years, annual community meetings to understand the implications of the financial crisis and the institutional response to it. These last mentioned presentations of the College’s budget status by the Chief Financial Officer and President have increased College-wide awareness of ongoing financial challenges and improvements. Many of the smaller items in the report also have been acted upon, such as a faculty orientation session on faculty meeting procedures and clarifying that faculty committees select their own chairs.

While these have been important actions in improving and clarifying faculty governance and involving faculty in decision making, perceptions of transparency and meaningful faculty influence in decision making have been tested and occasionally questioned in recent tough times. Examples include faculty reactions to the 2009 academic program review that assessed each academic program and all faculty positions and brought forward a new staffing plan, or when controversial personnel decisions have been made. However, in both cases faculty were provided with regular updates on the financial situation and explanations of decision making on staffing changes. To be sure, opinions differ on the processes and priorities used and continued reflection on the subject of governance will be useful. But one of the reasons this is an area of interest is the high engagement of the faculty in the life of the College and the ownership it feels for many aspects of community life. Much as students are invested in the College, faculty care deeply about the institution and play a significant operational role in College life, from admissions to commencement.

At the same time, while the Wabash faculty has a high degree of ownership in the institution and the faculty often expects to be consulted on far-ranging issues and in ways that may be uncommon at many other institutions, collectively the faculty can better exercise opportunities for participation in decision making. That is, one source of discussion friction is that faculty can more regularly take full advantage of opportunities in faculty meetings, special meetings, and committee structures to participate in discussions, be they about strategic planning, curriculum review, or other topics, and to

do so with broad College interests in mind. These tensions and points of difference are not peculiar to Wabash faculty. It is also the case that when decisions are made contrary to the perspectives of some faculty, for instance staffing decisions or financial policies, it can result in faculty feeling their voices are being ignored. Navigating these issues likely has been made even more difficult recently given significant demographic turnover and that conversations have taken place amidst economic challenges and concerns. There is undoubtedly a delicate set of concerns and balances implicated here, ones that at once make it vital that faculty do participate in committees and institutional governance so as to take advantage of opportunities during planning and decision-making processes and, at the same time, that institutional leaders strive even more to make decision making as transparent as possible in terms of objectives, criteria, and processes.

### ***Responses to the Site Team***

The Advancement Section of the 2002 visit team report enumerated four suggestions resulting from the self-study and reaccreditation visit. Here we identify each of those suggestions and explain institutional developments and responses to them over the past decade.

- 1. “While some progress has been made in increasing the gender and racial/ethnic diversity of the faculty, stronger efforts are needed to increase the diversity of the Board of Trustees and non-faculty staff” (p. 13).**

A decade later the gender and racial/ethnic diversity of the faculty has continued to increase, as is discussed more directly in Criteria 1 and 3. There has not been a discernible change in terms of the diversity of non-faculty staff overall. In fall 2003, 55% of non-faculty staff were female and 3% were African American. In fall 2011, 50% of non-faculty staff were female and 3% were African American. Efforts at increasing racial/ethnic diversity among both faculty and staff are complicated by the demographics of Montgomery County where, according to the 2010 census, 95.2% of the population is White and only 0.9% of the population is Black. Nonetheless, Wabash has made important strides in diverse hires of an Associate Dean of the College and of coaching staff. Two of the 10 head coaches are African American (both the head coach and assistant coach for basketball are African American). Given the College’s view that teaching and learning is not solely a faculty responsibility but rests on the shoulders of staff as well, attracting and retaining a more diverse workforce remains an important goal.



*Track Coach Clyde Morgan works with Billy Rosson and National Champion Jake Waterman.*

The Wabash College Board of Trustees consists of 36 current members plus emeritus members. With the exception of the President of the College, all but one present member of the Board are alumni of the College (that trustee is an honorary alumnus of the College). Four members of the Board, current and emeritus, are of racial or ethnic minorities. The President has discussed with Board leadership and the Committee on Trusteeship of the Board the value of further Board diversification. The need to engage a more diverse population in having a stake in the success of Wabash is widely recognized. The Committee on Trusteeship is considering the establishment of Visiting Committees with special areas of interest as a way of bringing more diversity into the Wabash sphere and creating a pool of non-alumni leaders with potential for membership on the Board of Trustees.

- 2. “The *Red Book* should be expanded to become a single source of information which contains the ‘gentleman’s rule,’ academic dishonesty policy, student governance procedures and student services information. This would provide a more cohesive approach to guidelines for student life and student services” (p. 13).**

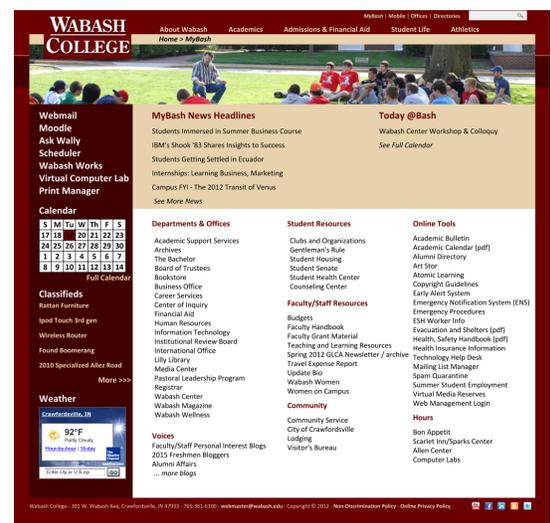
With the continued expansion of technology and its now ubiquitous presence, Wabash has redesigned its approach to presenting vital information to students. The *Red Book* referred to by the 2002 reviewers no longer exists. Instead, vital information about the Gentleman’s Rule, academic dishonesty, and student services is provided via the Wabash College website, during freshman orientation, and during both regular meetings and a cycle of workshops held by the Office of the Dean of Students. Students are regularly referred to these website resources. A collection of such information, which essentially represents a student handbook, is [provided here](#).

The recently redesigned Wabash website was done with student access to information about the College, including student life, expressly in mind. From the Wabash College homepage — as well as other primary pages across the website — students and prospective students can select the prominently featured [“Student Life” tab](#) to access information on topics including residential life, student clubs, volunteering, wellness, and academic support services. Additional key information is located on the [“MyBash” page](#), a link for which appears at the top of almost all official Wabash web pages. The “MyBash” portal identifies important resources for the community, students, staff, and faculty. Here, for instance, students find detailed information about [Academic Support Services](#), [Career Services](#), and the [Health, Safety, and Security Issues](#) booklet, putting all the vital information about services and contacts at their fingertips.

Similarly, the “Student Resources” area of the “MyBash” page provides vital information on the [Gentleman’s Rule](#), the [Student Health Center](#), the [Counseling Center](#), and the [Student Senate](#). Each of these pages provides students with a plethora of information ranging from a video featuring the Dean of Students speaking about the meaning of the Gentleman’s Rule, to important information on health services and links to health resources, to the budgets, policies, and guidelines of the Student Senate. The redesign of the Wabash website has brought this important information together in an efficient, organized, and accessible manner.

Relatedly, the College has launched a new [Freshman Webpage](#) that is used to communicate important information and requirements to incoming students. Updated annually, the site provides [a checklist](#) of everything incoming students need to do in the summer in preparation for arrival to campus in August: selecting housing and Freshman Tutorial, signing up for Employment Self-Help (ESH), completing loan and financial aid paperwork, submitting health records, filling out an alcohol use survey, reading the FERPA policy, and completing placement exams. As a student completes the items they are checked off on the site, and the information goes to the appropriate offices on campus. The site also provides students with an introduction to the services mentioned above — academic support services, career services, health services — and also academic information, information technology information, and a set of links designed for new students. In this way Wabash [reaches out proactively](#) to students earlier with important information while placing it in an easily accessible, centralized location.

This information is also conveyed in ways that go beyond electronic format. Freshman Orientation provides students with an education on many of these same issues. During orientation sessions students learn about student organizations and clubs and are introduced to topics and offices such as Academic Support Services, Schroeder Center for Career Development, Health Services, Employment Self-Help, the Registrar’s Office, the [Health, Safety, and Security Booklet](#), and the Gentleman’s Rule. The [Freshman Orientation program](#), along with this information, provides students with a strong sense of the campus culture and information about student life and student services. In particular,



The “MyBash” page on the website consolidated resources for students, faculty, and staff.

education on the Gentleman's Rule — Wabash's concise code of student conduct — has been enhanced in recent years. Previously there was a single session on the Gentleman's Rule during August orientation. However, in order to boost student educational understanding of the meaning and expectations of the rule and to generate an ongoing conversation that extends across a student's four-year education, there are now three orientation sessions that address this policy on student behavior. The discussions begin on students' first night on campus when the Dean and Associate Dean of Students lead a panel entitled "Introduction to the Gentleman's Rule." This panel includes discussion of academic honesty. This is followed up the second night of orientation with another session, "Exploring the Gentleman's Rule," that is led by student orientation guides and alumni. There is a final session at the close of orientation on "Behaviors of a Gentleman and Responsible Citizen." All told, students receive nearly five hours of instruction and discussion about Wabash's expectations for student conduct.



*President Patrick White regularly addresses the Gentleman's Rule in his Chapel Talks.*

Finally, there is programming across campus, presented on a regular cycle, that reinforces expectations of gentlemanly behavior and works with students as a teaching and learning exercise on clarifying and enforcing guidelines for student life and making sure students are aware of student services. For instance, annually early year Chapel Talks, from figures such as [President White](#) and [Dean Raters](#) address the meaning of the Gentleman's Rule. Dean Raters and Associate Dean William Oprisko also meet with each living unit early in the fall semester to discuss the Gentleman's Rule as well as expectations and to address concerns. Since 2004, they also have met Resident Assistants weekly and held a bi-weekly meeting with Resident Assistants and Fraternity Presidents. Finally, as is discussed more in Criteria 4 and 5, the development of the Housing and Education Leaders Partnership (HELP) Program has been an impactful leadership education program run each semester for living unit leaders.

In sum, not only is information about the Gentleman's Rule, academic dishonesty, governance procedures, and student services readily available, it is also presented in multiple formats on an ongoing basis so as to engage students in a regular dialogue and self-discovery about the meaning and expectations of being a student and community member at Wabash College. This teaching approach is rooted in the central mission of the College to educate students to think critically about their conduct as gentlemen, to act responsibly as community citizens, to lead one another effectively as teachers/students, and to live among the entire community humanely. In this important respect, the Gentleman's Rule is far more than a code delimiting behavior; it is an invitation to conversation, conscience, and community befitting adult life in a residential liberal arts setting.

**3. "The college should assess periodically its legal exposure associated with its handling of student disciplinary procedures" (p. 13).**

Over the past decade, the College has reflected on issues of legal exposure as they are connected to the interrelated topics of student discipline and campus safety. The College had undertaken significant review of such topics by mid-decade while approaches were further reviewed after the accidental death of a student on campus in 2007 and an alcohol-related death in 2008. As compared to 2002, the College is much more intentional about its approach to questions of a legal nature, is more cognizant of the legal realities of the day, and has a functional, forward-looking view toward consultation with outside legal counsel. There is regular and routine communication by staff with the College's legal counsel in clarifying legal requirements, developing new ways to minimize risk, and regularly reviewing insurance coverage. A partner in the law firm advising the College is on staff as a part-time faculty member in the political science department, thus providing ready access to information and

counsel. The most important work in this area, however, is the emphasis the College has placed on education, planning, and clarifying of institutional processes.

In terms of student discipline and associated procedures, decision making continues to reside in the Dean of Students' Office. In fall 2008, following an alcohol-related student death and the subsequent withdraw of recognition of a fraternity, the College undertook a comprehensive review of the Gentleman's Rule, including both a weekend summit on its meaning (involving students, alumni, and faculty) and a subsequent series of living unit discussions, led by the President, the Dean of Students, and several faculty and staff members. These gatherings, both the summit and the living unit discussions, addressed the responsibilities and expectations of the Gentleman's Rule. Also, two analyses of the possible creation of a more formal judicial board were undertaken. The Student Senate investigated the idea as did, independently, the Dean of Students' Office, bringing alumni, faculty, and students together to consider the issue. Two concepts were developed out of this process, and they were practiced with sample scenarios. Ultimately the parties concluded that a judicial board structure did not fit the Wabash ethos of fostering individual responsibility and that the Dean of Students should remain the arbiter in disciplinary matters.

Other developments related to the relationship of legal rights and student-discipline include changes in the Academic Honesty Policy and new policies and procedures for protecting intellectual property and research involving human subjects. The latter two issues are discussed in Criterion 4D while here we only elaborate on the Academic Honesty Policy changes. Much of the process for addressing academic dishonesty is housed in the Dean of Students' Office, and the Dean is the person who maintains, and is the only one with access to, records regarding honesty violations. However, the process for determining academic dishonesty and the avenues of appeal available to students have been reviewed and improved. For instance, there is now an automatic appeal when a student is reported to have engaged in an act of academic dishonesty that would result in his immediate expulsion from the College. These changes, and the creation of a Faculty Appeal Panel to review issues of academic dishonesty, are discussed more in Criterion 3.

Assessing legal exposure for Wabash is also about responsibility and building a responsible community, which of course is central to the Gentleman's Rule. Thus significant emphasis is placed on community education that improves campus safety, which also decreases the risk of legal exposure. For instance, a by-product of the investigation into a possible judicial board was the creation of the Dean's Presidents Council. The standing members of the council are the presidents of five prominent student groups at the College (Student Body, Inter-Fraternity Council, Independent Men's Association, Sphinx Club, and Malcolm X Institute for Black Studies). The Dean of Students meets with this group every two weeks as needed to discuss campus issues and discipline. The Council provides a forum for information exchange, limits student angst, and addresses issues of concern to the campus with the students playing a significant role in working to respond to problems to educate one another. An example of action produced by the Dean's Presidents Council was a student-only mandatory chapel in November 2010 to address with the student body concerns the Presidents Council had related to underage drinking. Other educational program efforts in the area include a 2005 grant from the NCAA CHOICES Alcohol Education competition in support of a program entitled "[LITTLE Choices have GIANT Consequences.](#)" the development of the W.A.R. (Wabash Acts Responsibly) Council, mandatory freshman completion of the AlcoholWise survey, continued utilization of the HELP Program, which includes discussion of hazing and laws on hazing,



*Dean of Students Mike Raters has an informal lunchtime discussion with the Dean's Presidents Council.*

regular Gentleman's Rule discussions, and more intentional risk management efforts in living units.

Apart from the development and impact of the HELP Program and continual risk management work with housing leaders, perhaps the two most significant developments related to safety and related legal concerns have been the revamping of Campus Security and the expanded work of the Safety Committee. The College hired a [Director of Safety and Security](#), a person with substantial professional experience working with students in educational settings. He is a constant presence on campus and has discussions with students about the consequences of behaviors and alternative courses of action. The Director of Security, the Safety Committee, and the President's Staff [coordinate regular drills](#) with the local police and fire departments and have hosted a variety of safety, emergency, and disaster planning exercises and drills. The Director of Security also has revamped the training of security personnel. While serving a different student life function, the expanded presence of the Safety Committee also has contributed to a safer campus environment by developing an [Emergency Procedures Guide](#), working with Information Technology Services to implement an improved campus alert system that includes voice and text messaging to all students, faculty, and staff, and developing [evacuation and shelter information](#). Such efforts reflect the College's cognizance of and commitment to safety while also reducing various sorts of legal exposure.

**4. "The college should explore ways to maintain flexibility in providing adequate spaces for student housing" (p. 13).**

Student housing remains an area of emphasis for the College. Housing space — the "campus bed count" — and the condition of housing is monitored [regularly and reported on](#) at each Board of Trustees meeting. In fall 2011, campus housing was at approximately 88% of capacity.

Since the last self-study, the 10-year Fraternity Partnership — a program devoted to the renovation and/or new construction of campus owned fraternity houses — has concluded. This effort significantly upgraded the quality of student housing. Moreover, a space that was previously divided between independent living and fraternity living is now entirely an independent living unit, with the fraternity members having received a new facility. This residence, College Hall, has been completely remodeled and refurbished. Additionally, in 2008 a fraternity house was re-purposed for independent living after the fraternity's recognition was withdrawn. Housing renovations are discussed in more detail in Criterion 2B.

Further improvement to the amount and quality of the housing stock for independent students remains a high priority and is the subject of ongoing discussion and planning with the building or renovating of residential facilities identified as a core initiative in the current strategic plan (Goal 4). Accordingly, the topic has been discussed by the Board of Trustees and improving independent housing through new construction, renovation, and reduction in the use of small College-owned houses has been identified by the Dean of Students as a priority in his presentations to the Board.

The College has retained two firms to examine student housing needs and each has made presentations on the subject with various planning options. Work over the course of multiple years with Hastings & Chivetta Architects resulted in an extensive January 2010 analysis of campus facilities, including student housing, and presented a range of potential design concepts. In this report, five sites were identified for potential new residential facilities, with two of these generally favored. Those locations are to the west of the Caleb Mills House and the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies.

The planning process engaged in with Hastings & Chivetta yielded several goals and objectives that

will contribute to future decision making, including: developing design concepts that are future oriented; eliminating small houses; phasing improvements to minimize campus disruption; projecting future needs of existing housing; outlining potential future land acquisition; proposing housing that will enhance recruitment and retention; providing parking for student housing; and preserving open and green spaces.

In fall 2011 the College revisited residential facility needs with a second firm assembling preliminary groundwork for addressing independent housing and a potential new student center. [The assessment](#) focused on the educational purpose and needs new construction would serve in advancing the College's mission. No decisions have been reached in the area, but the College continues to review information in the process of campus planning with the intention of including independent housing as a central element of the College's next capital campaign.

Electronic Resource

**Hastings & Chivetta  
Findings and  
Concepts**

## **Tradition and Change: Major Developments at Wabash Since 2002**

The entire self-study is an examination of developments at Wabash since 2002, a time of major changes in the nation, the economy, and the world of higher education. Thus, this introductory overview of significant changes at the College since the last reaccreditation review provides a context and guide to the meaning for the analysis that follows. The story of the developments — the details, the evidence, and many more examples of change — is located in the criterion chapters comprising the body of this *Self-Study Report* and further in the supporting documents and web pages referenced in the discussion of the criteria. Here we discuss a broad backdrop against which we situate those changes, show how we make sense of them, and indicate how the College is positioned to move forward in order to better accomplish its mission.

The 10-year period from 2002-2012 was marked by continuities and changes punctuated by the pivotal event of the 2008 recession. The essential strengths of the College identified by the last reaccreditation visit team, namely “excellent resources (human, financial, and physical), a commitment to mission, a strong assessment program, and ongoing planning efforts which will ensure that Wabash will continue to be a strong four year liberal arts college for men,” continued uninterrupted in the transition from Andrew Ford's presidency to that of Patrick White's (2006), buttressed early on by the last stages of a successful capital campaign and a major grant in support of CILA from Lilly Endowment Inc. But a shift in economic fortunes soon impacted the work of the College, leaving no area of College life unaffected.

In 2006, Wabash was distinctive in that an unusually large amount of its operating budget was supported by endowment income, nearly 54%. Wabash had built one of the largest per-student endowments in the country, but in that fortunate process the College also had become overly dependent on that income. When the economic crisis and the crash in the equity markets quickly wiped out over a third of that endowment, the College was forced to rethink its financial models. Our immediate and longer term response emphasized retaining our core strengths while assessing and acting to decrease costs and maximize revenue.

The last four years have seen significant success in these efforts. Admissions has continued to meet, if not exceed, the goal of matriculating 250 qualified students each year but with fewer student aid dollars spent and under a mandate to increase net tuition revenue. Advancement has met and exceeded targets, reaching record giving this year in the Annual Fund, and increasing the goal for the Annual Fund in coming years. At the same time, Wabash began a \$60 million targeted Challenge of Excellence campaign to provide needed financial support for scholarships, faculty salaries,

international programs, and career development. The academic program has added new curricular opportunities in biochemistry, Chinese language and history, and creative writing; maintained high quality student engagement; and strengthened high impact teaching practices, while at the same time reducing the total number of full-time faculty. The Business Office has managed College operations with balanced budgets while reorganizing procedures, most importantly introducing for the first time multiyear budget modeling. In an environment where parents demand value added for their tuition dollars, Communications and Marketing has responded by telling the stories of a small liberal arts college where men are indeed taken seriously, and where every aspect of student life grounds student responsibility, growth, and maturity in the Gentleman's Rule. And with major grant support coming to a close, CILA has shifted its work from data gathering to the application of data leading to change through partnerships with the Teagle Foundation, the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium, and scores of institutions across the country. In short, in a period of fewer fiscal resources, Wabash has marshaled its human resources — its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and benefactors — and adapted to new environmental conditions that have called for different ways to accomplish its mission.

Economic factors have not been the sole cause of change. The evolution and extension of the College's assessment ethos to all sectors of institutional life now compels a better coordination of those efforts through a more centralized institutional research function. Attention to the differential experience of high impact teaching practices across a diverse student body and less than acceptable persistence rates for students of color and first generation students has led the College to develop invigorated advising processes and diverse pedagogies, intended to support the success of all students. With respect to the quality of student life, new soccer and baseball fields and an upgraded football field, as well as coming efforts in strategic planning for upgraded independent housing and potentially a new student center, have revealed the importance attached to the teaching and learning that happens outside the classroom. And the development of new academic offerings in Asian Studies, collaborations with Purdue and DePauw, and expanded student/faculty immersion travel as called for in the current strategic plan is congruent with the founders' commitment that the College should spare no effort to ensure that its students will have what is required in order to navigate successfully the world beyond college. In short, our Mission Statement and Core Values anchor us in the past and propel us forward to embrace those changes that lead students themselves to be changed.

Another way to see the context of institutional continuity and change over the past 10 years is to view it in terms of the record of administrative and faculty change as Andrew Ford, the 14th president of Wabash, concluded his immensely successful 13-year presidency after the fourth year of this 10-year period. The arrival of [Patrick White, installed as Wabash's 15th president](#) on July 1, 2006 marked the beginning of a significant transition in the President's Staff and other administrative personnel. Those changes include:

- [Gary Phillips](#) became Dean of the College on July 1, 2006;
- [Larry Griffith](#) became the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer on July 1, 2006;
- Steve Bowen '68 became Chairman of the Wabash Board of Trustees on July 1, 2007;
- [Mike Raters '85](#) was promoted from Associate Dean of Students to Dean of Students in May 2008;
- Former Dean of Students [Tom Bambrey '68](#) retired as Director of Athletics, 2008-2011;
- [Joe Haklin '73](#) became Athletic Director on July 1, 2011;
- [Cheryl Hughes](#) became Associate Dean of the College in July 2009;
- [Michael Brown](#) was named Associate Dean of the College and Director of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies in September 2011;
- Tom Runge '71 was named Interim Dean for College Advancement on December 1, 2011 while the College was engaged in a search for a new Dean;

- Jim Amidon '87 was promoted to Senior Director of Communications and Marketing on December 1, 2011 and was made a direct report to the president;
- [Jonathan Stern](#) became Dean for College Advancement on July 16, 2012.

With new staff have come different institutional leadership experiences by which to engage Wabash's challenges. One can associate many of the initiatives over the past decade with the questions and talents these new persons have brought with them.

The changes in upper-level leadership are reflective of a broader personnel transformation across the College — in fact nearly 60% of the faculty is new since the year 2000 — which has enriched the work of the institution while inflecting its essential character and dedication to mission with new energy and experiences. Changes related to personnel and how they have translated into new developments in the work of the College are discussed across the *Self-Study Report*, but most particularly in the chapters dedicated to Criteria 1, 2, and 3.

A second context for considering developments at the College over the past decade is through the strategic plans and capital campaigns that bookend the time period. At the time of the last self-study, the College was in the midst of its first [comprehensive strategic plan](#) and completing the [Campaign for Leadership](#) capital campaign, both of which were ambitious in their scope and goals.

And now, at the time of this self-study, the College is guided by a new strategic plan, [The Liberal Arts at Wabash College—Serving the Needs of the Country](#), and is completing another, more targeted capital campaign, [The Challenge of Excellence](#). (Even as we prepare this report, the College has begun the process of preparing a next phase of strategic planning.) To be sure, the influences of these efforts are seen across this *Self-Study Report*, in every Criterion chapter in fact, as the goals contained in these strategic plans and the investments in human and physical resources brought about by the capital campaigns have guided and are reflected in the improvements to the Wabash educational experience.

However, a third factor has probably most shaped this self-study. This *Self-Study Report* is in large part a telescoping of attention on the ways the College has responded to the significant financial downturn of 2008, its impact across the College, and upon the ways Wabash has not only maintained itself since 2002 — and in some places remade itself — but also implemented changes that have continued to strengthen the College over the nearer- and longer-terms: changes to the financial model, including decreasing a level of reliance on endowment income that had made Wabash one of only a handful of schools to draw at least 50% of its operating budget from its endowment; changing the approach to staffing and how staffing vacancies are evaluated; improving assessment practices across the institution by employing the expertise of CILA; continuing the strength in Admissions and Advancement through heightened attention to marketing and communication; accentuating an understanding of the College's commitment to the education of the whole person as embodied in our mission and the Gentleman's Rule and expressed in life inside and outside the classroom; and positioning Wabash as an institution that is more systematically looking toward the future in the areas of academic planning, strategic planning, and financial planning.

We have found it helpful to view these traditions and changes through five strengthening themes that capture the critical developments at Wabash over the past decade. These may be thought of as analogous to the through lines in the drama of Wabash over the last decade, lines of action that bridge administrations, strategic plans, capital campaigns, and financial exigencies and provide a lens for viewing how the College has directed the focus of its energies during this time of important transition and yet vital continuity, a time of many challenges during which Wabash has become a stronger institution. The parenthetical identifications indicate where in the *Self-Study Report* the referenced

activity is addressed.

***Theme 1: Wabash College has strengthened liberal arts instruction***

In extending its traditional dedication to student learning that features high academic challenge, meaningful faculty interaction, and diverse learning experiences, the College has developed new programs and efforts to improve Wabash as a liberal arts institution:

- New and renovated academic facilities (Criterion 2)
- Establishment of Coordinator of International Studies (Criterion 2)
- Strategic enhancements to teaching faculty (Criteria 2 and 3)
- Revision of Academic Honesty Policy (Introduction and Criterion 3)
- Use of CILA, WNS, and Teagle Assessment Scholars program to strengthen use of information to improve teaching and learning (Criteria 3 and 5)
- Expanding Asian Studies in collaboration with DePauw University through a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Criterion 3)
- Expanded partnerships with liberal arts and R1 institutions (Criteria 3 and 5)
- Establishment of Faculty Development Coordinator (Criterion 3)
- Writing Study and Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator (Criterion 3)
- Expanded Grant support for teaching and learning and research (Criteria 3 and 4)
- GLCA workshop involvement (Criteria 2, 3, and 4)
- Council for Undergraduate Research (CUR) workshop participation (Criterion 3)
- Development of new academic offerings, such as a biochemistry major, creative writing track, dual degree program in engineering with Purdue University, Chinese language instruction and Asian Studies courses, and international partnerships with Fudan and East China Normal Universities (Criteria 3, 4, and 5)
- Development of clear policies on copyright and institutional research (Criterion 4)
- Business Leaders Program (Introduction and Criteria 4 and 5)
- Use of teaching and learning expertise of the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion (Criterion 4).

***Theme 2: Wabash College has strengthened its student engagement***

High levels of student engagement have always been central to Wabash's commitment to educating the whole person inside and outside the classroom in a close-knit residential experience. Numerous developments over the past decade have strengthened this essential ingredient of the College:

- Rich conversations on the Gentleman's Rule (Introduction, Criterion 1)
- Revision to student orientation and leadership development (Introduction)
- Student residence building projects (Introduction, Criterion 2)
- Athletics fields improvements (Criterion 2)
- Increased immersion study and travel (Criterion 3)
- Review of all-college courses (Criterion 3)
- Increased attention to retention and student mentoring (Criterion 3)
- Improvements in student advising (Criteria 3 and 5)
- Increased student-faculty collaboration in research, scholarship, and creative work (Criterion 4)
- A new model for career development services (Criterion 5).

### ***Theme 3: Wabash College has strengthened its assessment efforts***

The College has further refined its assessment processes including more use of institutional data and more systematic assessments of programs and goals:

- Use of the Mission Statement for academic and administrative assessment (Criteria 2 and 3)
- Use of CILA for wider institutional planning (Criteria 2 and 3)
- Use of CILA to strengthen curricular and co-curricular programming and planning (Criterion 3)
- Expanded use of institutional data derived from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Criteria 3 and 5)
- Revisions to faculty review processes (Criterion 3)
- Review of distribution (general education) requirements (Criteria 3 and 4)
- Support and strengthening of CILA operations (Criterion 4)
- Integration of CILA with the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) in strengthening analysis of educational data across higher education (Criterion 4).

### ***Theme 4: Wabash College has strengthened its budgeting, staffing, and infrastructure processes***

In response to financial exigencies and in support of its strategic plans, the College has significantly revised its financial model, communications, and staffing in ways that enhance the operations of the College:

- Increased attention to safety and legal processes (Introduction and Criterion 1)
- The Board of Trustees has implemented changes to its agenda, planning, and campus interactions and has undertaken a committee reorganization process (Criterion 1)
- Administrative program review (Criterion 2)
- New institutional budget model and modeling process (Criterion 2)
- Strategic plan adoption (Criterion 2)
- Marketing study and Admissions material redesign (Criterion 2)
- Early retirement program (Criterion 2)
- Redesign of aid package principles with reduction in aid fraction percentage (Criterion 2)
- Academic program review and faculty and staff hiring changes (Criteria 2 and 3)
- Information Technology review and infrastructure strengthening (Criteria 2 and 3)
- Library strategic planning and services (Criteria 2 and 3)
- Website redevelopment (Criteria 2 and 5)
- New academic departmental review model (Criterion 3).

### ***Theme 5: Wabash College has strengthened staff and faculty quality of life***

Wabash has developed resources to understand and improve the life and work experiences of its employees:

- William C. Placher Fund established to enhance faculty salaries (Criteria 2 and 5)
- Study of work satisfaction (Criteria 3 and 5)
- Faculty Quality of Life Study and implementation (Criterion 5)
- Parental Leave benefit for faculty and staff (Criterion 5)
- Childcare needs assessment (Criterion 5)
- Expanded fringe benefit options (Criterion 5)
- Adjusting faculty meeting times in response to childcare needs (Criterion 5)
- Mellon-supported improvements to new faculty orientation (Criterion 4)

- Know Indiana excursion experiences (Criterion 4)
- Staff participation in immersion learning opportunities (Criterion 4).

Collectively, these themes represent a way of articulating the significant efforts to strengthen Wabash liberal arts teaching and learning — the College’s central task — over the past decade, and they are woven throughout the narrative of this *Self-Study Report*. The specific initiatives and tactics indicated have together improved the College, while many also remain works in progress that merit further consideration and refinement. To that end, the self-study identifies ongoing challenges and opportunities for further institutional improvement.

Taken together, the matrix of tradition and change and the strengthening themes offer a way to interpret the experience of the last decade. In an environment that poses increasing challenge to the liberal arts sector in general and our distinctive institutional mission in particular, Wabash must apply every resource at its disposal to protect and advance its Mission to educate young men “to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely.” To that end, this self-study process is a critical institutional resource in support of that mission.

## Conclusion

In the chapters that follow we offer a clear and thorough presentation of information about Wabash College in response to the criteria set out by the Higher Learning Commission. Through these materials we certify that Wabash College meets the conditions set forth by the Higher Learning Commission in its document [“Minimum Expectations within the Criteria for Accreditation.”](#) For ease of reference to those categories and requirements we have prepared a supplemental document. Likewise, we have completed the required [institutional snapshot](#) of College data and compiled [Federal Compliance information](#).

While comprehensive, this *Self-Study Report* cannot be exhaustive. When the Accreditation Committee began this process, we thought ourselves fairly well-informed about the workings of the College, and yet in preparing this document we were repeatedly struck at the depth of commitment, efforts, and energies that faculty, staff, and students devote to strengthening the institution. The College mantra — “Wabash Always Fights!” — captures this striving to improve the College’s life. Consequently, the self-study itself is representative of the good works and fundamental aspirations of the Wabash community and of a spirit that motivates the College to not rest in the effort to provide the education our students deserve. In what follows we present evidence of that commitment, investment, and long-term dedication that demonstrates that Wabash meets all the important criteria for reaccreditation and is clearly a College moving through the difficult challenges of the last ten years with attention at once to the best of our tradition and a capacity for change, with foresight, careful planning, and unflinching dedication to the Mission and Core Values, and to the important task of educating young men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively and live humanely.



## **CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY**

*Wabash College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students*

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*Wabash College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students*

Wabash College's Mission Statement and Core Values set the foundation on which the institution operates and provide the measure by which its processes are evaluated. The mission articulates an intellectual vision that is nurtured in a rich residential community committed to a liberal arts education and the development of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. In exploring the reach and influence of this mission, Wabash's commitment to its mission, and the greater integrity of the institution, this chapter demonstrates that Wabash College meets and exceeds the reaccreditation expectations for Criterion 1. Of the five strengthening themes identified in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction, two in particular find their expression in Criterion 1: *strengthening student engagement* and *strengthening infrastructure processes*. Through promotion of its mission and the Gentleman's Rule, Wabash has consistently engaged students in reflection on its defining ideals and practices. And over the past decade the College has strengthened its decision-making processes ranging from the operations of the Board of Trustees to the policies used to protect the integrity of the institution.

In what follows we demonstrate how the Wabash mission is publicly articulated, how it positions the College to serve its diverse constituencies, and how an understanding of the mission extends across all aspects of the work of the College. We also consider the operation of Wabash's governance and administrative structures and how these structures enable fulfillment of the College mission. Finally, we address how the College upholds and protects its integrity through structures that protect the processes, rights, and safety of the community.

### **1A. WABASH COLLEGE'S MISSION DOCUMENTS ARE CLEAR AND ARTICULATE PUBLICLY THE ORGANIZATION'S COMMITMENTS.**

The Wabash College Mission Statement, approved by the Board of Trustees in the fall of 1992, expresses the historic mission of the College and has been used to guide the College's decision making and assessment over the past 20 years. This mission is well-known and publicized at the College and is frequently used in this *Self-Study Report* as the touchstone by which the work of the institution is evaluated:

#### **Mission Statement**

Founded in 1832, Wabash College is an independent, liberal arts college for men with an enrollment of 850 students. Its mission is excellence in teaching and learning within a community built on close and caring relationships among students, faculty, and staff.

Wabash offers qualified young men a superior education, fostering, in particular, independent intellectual inquiry, critical thought, and clear written and oral expression. The College educates its students broadly in the traditional curriculum of the liberal arts, while also requiring them to pursue concentrated study in one or more disciplines.

Wabash emphasizes our manifold, but shared cultural heritage. Our students come from diverse

economic, social, and cultural backgrounds; the College helps these students engage these differences and live humanely with them. Wabash also challenges its students to appreciate the changing nature of the global society and prepares them for the responsibilities of leadership and service in it.

The College carries out its mission in a residential setting in which students take personal and group responsibility for their actions. Wabash provides for its students an unusually informal, egalitarian, and participatory environment which encourages young men to adopt a life of intellectual and creative growth, self-awareness, and physical activity. The College seeks to cultivate qualities of character and leadership in students by developing not only their analytic skills, but also sensitivity to values, and judgment and compassion required of citizens living in a difficult and uncertain world. We expect a Wabash education to bring joy in the life of the mind, to reveal the pleasures in the details of common experience, and to affirm the necessity for and rewards in helping others.

Among other ideals, the Mission Statement expresses the College's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, the close engagement of students and faculty in that process, and the expectation that students take responsibility for their personal and group actions.

In addition to the full Mission Statement, the College, during the development of its 2000-2005 Strategic Plan, *Defining the Liberal Arts in the 21st Century*, articulated in a concise, one-sentence summation of the key principles contained in the Mission as well as set of Core Values. These were adopted by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2000 and were reaffirmed during the development of the [2008-2013 Strategic Plan](#), *The Liberal Arts at Wabash College: Serving the Needs of the Country*.

The concise expression of the Mission Statement — “Wabash College educates men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely” — is widely known by students, faculty, and staff and is part of the everyday communication at and about the College. This coda frames the student experience beginning even before his matriculation, extending through his years at the College to commencement, and lasting on into post-graduate life. The mission is referenced when the President rings in the new class on Freshman Saturday, and it is central to the message delivered by the Dean of the College when he speaks to graduating seniors the morning before commencement at the [Deans' Senior Breakfast](#); it is in every speech the President makes, and it is set to a slideshow of images on the front page of the College's website; it is used in interactions with prospective students and their families as well as in communications to alumni and donors; it is displayed on banners in the lobby of the campus library; and it is on the back of every business card produced by the College.

Further means of making the Mission Statement public include the College's communications and alumni magazine. As is discussed more in Criterion 2, Wabash has recently undertaken a comprehensive examination and recasting of marketing and admissions materials. The mission of the College remains central to those materials, especially the commitment to the development of the whole student acknowledged in the summary statement. Everyday communications also underscore the centrality of the mission and articulate it to publics near and far. These communications include stories about student activities — for instance a group of students spending their [Spring Break in New Orleans](#) to help with post-Katrina cleanup and rebuilding efforts — to the frequent use of the Mission Statement in blogs maintained by the [Communications and Marketing Office](#) and the [Alumni and Parent Relations Office](#), each of which publicizes Wabash



*Dean of the College Gary Phillips speaks to graduating seniors at the Deans' Senior Breakfast.*

stories that are proudly mission-centric. Moreover, *Wabash Magazine*, the College's award-winning alumni journal, frequently articulates how the mission of the College is being carried out in the lives of students, faculty, alumni, and staff. It has on occasion devoted special issues to specific elements of the College's mission while it, more generally, articulates ways that the College pursues the Mission and its Core Values. This has been demonstrated, for example, through issues dedicated to living humanely in the [global world](#), [wellness](#), and [nurturing community](#). The reach of the alumni journal is discussed more fully in Criterion 5.

Electronic Resource

Dehne Marketing  
Assessment  
Executive Summary

Perhaps the best evidence of the mission's ability to publicly articulate the purpose of the College — and evidence of how the mission is integrated in campus life — comes from the assessment report issued from George Dehne and Associates Integrated Services during its recent [marketing study](#) at Wabash: “The stories and experiences we heard in our student interviews point to the value and importance of Wabash's mission.... It is clear ... that the Mission Statement is a guiding principle for students, administrators, faculty, and graduates of Wabash” (p. 29).

Supporting the Wabash Mission Statement is a set of Core Values that further articulate the vision and beliefs of Wabash College:

**Our Core Values**

*A rigorous liberal arts education that fosters*

- An appreciation for the intellectual and physical aspects of a good life
- An understanding of and appreciation for other cultures

*A personal context to teaching and learning that encourages*

- Candid, respectful, face-to-face conversations
- Freedom of thought
- A local scholarly community that creates lifelong relationships

*Individual responsibility and trust that are*

- Based on moral and ethical awareness
- Expressed in the Gentleman's Rule
- Required for leadership and teamwork

*A socially, economically, and ethnically diverse student body characterized by*

- A dedication to the serious pursuit of learning
- A culture of competition without malice
- A few years of residence, a lifetime of loyalty

*A tradition and philosophy of independence that*

- Keeps the College from external control
- Allows the Wabash community to shape significantly its own destiny
- Promotes independence and self-reliance in its students and graduates.

The Core Values identify some of the most important traits of Wabash — the liberal arts curriculum, the Gentleman's Rule, and the philosophy of the College, for instance. These Core Values undergird a deep institutional identity and animate its actions. In combination they inform institutional purpose; they are responsible for the complexion, conscience, and ethos of the College.

The College's Mission Statement, its summation, and Core Values are published annually in the

*Academic Bulletin*, and are prominently posted on the [College's website](#). They also have served as the foundation for strategic plans, including the current 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, *The Liberal Arts at Wabash College: Serving the Needs of the Country*. Their greater influence is seen in the other Criterion chapters of this *Self-Study Report* where they are frequently referenced to explain the principles that guide College decision making, the means for curricular and departmental assessment, and the basis of institutional planning.

**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** The mission of Wabash College is clearly articulated and well-known on campus. It is central to communicating the identity of the institution and is relied upon constantly to express the aspirations the College has for its students and its own operation.

## **1B. IN ITS MISSION DOCUMENTS, WABASH COLLEGE RECOGNIZES THE DIVERSITY OF ITS LEARNERS, OTHER CONSTITUENCIES, AND THE GREATER SOCIETY IT SERVES.**

In its recognition of “our manifold, but shared cultural heritage” and that “our students come from diverse economic, social, and cultural backgrounds,” the College’s Mission Statement recognizes the diversity of its learners. Moreover, through the mission’s goal of “cultivat[ing] qualities of character and leadership” and the “sensitivity to values, and judgment and compassion required of citizens living in a difficult and uncertain world,” the College explains its intent to help “students engage these differences and live humanely with them” while serving the greater society. Many of the means Wabash uses to accomplish this mission, in its teaching and learning, the acquisition of knowledge and promotion of life-long learning, and working with its constituencies, are explored in detail in other chapters of the *Self-Study Report*. For instance, we discuss elsewhere retention initiatives, efforts at globalization, the presence of cultural diversity and international study in the curriculum, and faculty development in diverse teaching and learning practices. These are mission-driven initiatives informed by core values. Here, however, we examine four particular ways the College addresses, manages, and fosters diversity, also animated by foundational principles or documents of the College: the Gentleman’s Rule, the Faculty Statement on Diversity, the diversity of the campus, and our identity as a liberal arts college for men.

### **The Gentleman’s Rule**

Student life at Wabash is marked by a high degree of personal freedom, but also the high expectation to balance that freedom with responsibility to the community. This expectation, one shaped by a Core Value dedicated to individual responsibility and trust, is established in the Gentleman’s Rule, which is identified as Wabash’s single rule governing student conduct:

The Student is expected to conduct himself, at all times, both on and off the campus, as a gentleman and a responsible citizen.

Adherence to this code of conduct is primarily a student’s responsibility. Enforcement of the rule lies with the Dean of Students.

This rule establishes the basis for social interactions at Wabash among all students. To that end, the statement recognizes both the freedom of students and the responsibility they have in their interactions with, and treatment of, other constituencies as well as their obligations to society. As such this is a foundational statement of principle for the College that expresses the meaning of the mission and recognizes the rights and privileges of all citizens via the responsible conduct of students.

Community discussion of the Gentleman's Rule is an important element of student engagement, one that has been strengthened with increased focus on the rule over the past decade. As was explained in some detail in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction, this rule is published annually in the *Academic Bulletin*, is featured on the [College website](#), and is embedded in the student orientation program when, on the students' first night on campus, the Dean and Associate Dean of Students lead a panel entitled "Introduction to the Gentleman's Rule." This panel is the introduction to four years of conversation about the rule and its meaning to not just campus culture but also as a guide to the conduct of an ethical life that extends beyond a student's time at Wabash.

### Talking About the "Ideal"

#### **A Reflection on Introducing Students to the Gentleman's Rule**

*By Jim Amidon '87, Senior Director of Communications and Marketing, August 28, 2006*

"The student is expected to conduct himself at all times, both on and off the campus, as a gentleman and responsible citizen."

That single, simple sentence, which seems to have been written a couple centuries ago, constitutes the only rule of conduct at Wabash College. It seems almost Victorian in tone — "a gentleman and responsible citizen." . . .

Many critics think it's an antiquated holdover from another era long ago; an era void of litigation and judicial conflict. Virtually every college in America once operated on an honor code similar to Wabash's Gentleman's Rule. Few colleges still have those codes, and most that do also provide students with thick handbooks to guide their behavior. The honor code has been relegated to governing academic honesty. At Wabash, though, the Gentleman's Rule is it: the ideal we hold out for our students with hopes that they make the link between the enormous trust we place in them, the freedoms they enjoy, and the responsibilities they alone must shoulder.

Living up to the Gentleman's Rule is not easy for most 19-, 20-, and 21-year-olds. I discovered that a week ago when I sat with 28 freshman students and two of their student orientation leaders for a 75-minute talk about what the Gentleman's Rule really means. I started out our conversation by asking the students — then on campus only 36 hours — to define for me the characteristics of a gentleman. Just as there were 30 different students from 30 different families, there were almost as many definitions. The definitions I liked best included words like "respected," "chivalrous," "ethical," and "honest." Like the rule itself, the words we came up with stand as ideals for the students; targets we want them to shoot for fully knowing they will ultimately fall short at some point.

As I looked into their tired eyes, I knew each student was imagining how he might conduct himself over the next four years — and the years that follow. I could see them wrestling with ethical dilemmas in their minds, when doing the right thing could and would be difficult. We talked a lot about courage and how much courage it would take to confront a fraternity brother, roommate, or teammate when they were in violation of the Gentleman's Rule. When was it okay to speak out, to have those conversations? I guided them through a discussion of what is and is not appropriate behavior under the Gentleman's Rule. When I asked for examples of potential violations, each student was able to offer something: fighting, cheating, stealing, using insensitive language, treating people badly, and so on. That part of the talk was most heartening. It demonstrated to me that these young men, alone for the first time in their lives and now personally responsible for their behavior, do know the difference between right and wrong.

Each student could imagine himself breaking the rule and I could tell they were puzzling with the issue of “but what if I don’t get caught.” Then a bright young man looked up and said, “It doesn’t matter if you get caught; your conscience should be your guide.” And just as they will flunk tests, fumble footballs, and drop lines on stage, they will occasionally fall short of the ideal. It’s understanding when and how they have fallen short, that each young man makes the critical link between trust and responsibility, which will govern every decision they make for the rest of their lives. The Gentleman’s Rule may be a simple sentence, but it stands as a grand ideal for every student who steps on the Wabash campus.

Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that this rule pervades the campus culture, and is the overriding guide in judging what is acceptable and expected behavior at Wabash. In this regard, the rule of conduct is a primary way that students are taught to treat others with respect, respect that is to be extended regardless of political or social orientation, ethnic background, or other characteristics. The Gentleman’s Rule and the Mission Statement summation provide guidance to the institution and its constituents and are a mandate to the College to help students engage their differences and to live humanely with them. It is far from an easy mandate, and students sometimes fail to live up to the high expectations that the Rule presents. The College approaches such failures as educational opportunities to elevate student responsibility by insisting on the rigor, freedom, and ethical awareness required for living in a diverse community with full respect for others.



*Student leaders discuss the Gentleman’s Rule on the first day of Freshman Orientation.*

### **Faculty Statement of Principle Concerning Diversity**

A second important way foundational documents of the College recognize the social, economic, and ethnic diversity of the community is through College codes and policies that articulate expectations of behavior that are congruent with the College’s mission. One such code is the Faculty Statement of Principle Concerning Diversity. This statement, which is in the *Academic Bulletin* and the *Faculty Handbook*, announces the faculty’s intention to promote an inclusive community that is cognizant of and contemplative about the impact of its words and actions:

We, the Faculty of Wabash College, affirm that our community should embrace both diversity and freedom of speech. While in no way wishing to abridge the free exchange of ideas, we believe that comments, written or spoken, and actions that threaten or embarrass people because of their race, gender, religion, occupation, sexual orientation, national origin, physical disability, or ethnic group hurt all of us. Such insensitivity to any individual or group betrays the spirit of the liberal arts. We invite students, staff, and administrators to join us in fostering an environment of mutual respect.

The meaning of the statement and the broader commitment to diversity that is central to a Wabash liberal arts education is explained in more detail in Criterion 3. However, a notable embodiment of the recognition of diversity in society is witnessed in a recent revision to all-college courses adopted by the faculty. (“All-college courses” refer to the two courses that all students must take, one during each semester of the freshman year.) A new all-college course, a freshmen colloquium entitled Enduring Questions (EQ), has as its focus engaging students with fundamental questions about humanity from multiple perspectives and fostering a sense of community through questioning. Such an emphasis challenges students early on in their liberal arts experience to come to terms with diversity and their interactions with the larger world.

Working in conjunction with the Faculty Statement of Principle Concerning Diversity are other policies of the College regarding harassment and non-discrimination. Each of these policies is consistent with the Mission and Core Values of the College and further instantiate the respect and civility expected and required in the community. The Professional Conduct Policy and prohibition against harassment respects and protects the diversity of the community, including its employees, by prohibiting discriminatory harassment on bases such as “race, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion” and other forms prohibited by state and federal law ([See Faculty Handbook, pp. 29-30](#)). The policy goes on to explain sexual harassment and other forms of workplace harassment so as to protect not only the rights of all in the community but also their diverse perspectives and beliefs. These principles and expectations are further articulated by the College’s policy on discrimination ([published on the website](#)) which states: “Wabash College, while exempted from Subpart C of Title IX regulation with respect to its admissions and recruitment activities, admits students and gives equal access to its scholarships, programs, and facilities without regard to race, color, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, or physical or other disabilities.”

In these ways then the College has adopted policies that fortify the mission’s recognition of diversity and its value for a Wabash education.

### **Campus Diversity**

As quoted at the outset of Criterion 1A, the College’s mission recognizes and values the diversity of its learners. Many measures might be used to gauge the College’s enactment of the mission commitment to diversity, and thus the topic is explored in several ways throughout this *Self-Study Report* (See Criterion 3C in particular). In brief, however, it is notable that more than 20% of the student body self-identifies with a racial or ethnic minority, and approximately 60 international students (almost 7% of the student body) are enrolled at the College.

In addition to the Enduring Questions course required of all freshmen and other curricular initiatives and offerings, the College has sought to recognize its commitment to diverse learning through a variety of programming efforts and the availability of resources to recognize and support diversity. A non-exhaustive list of groups and organizations supported by the College, Student Senate, or both includes the Hispanic student organization (Unidos Por Sangre); the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies (MXIBS); the Asian Students Organization; the International Students Association; and 'shOUT, the College’s gay, lesbian, straight student-alliance, as well as various student religious and political groups.

The College makes additional efforts to support diverse groups through administrative appointments and funding, including the Director of the MXIBS and Associate Dean of the College and the programming of the Institute. Another example, drawn from the work of alumni, is the fall 2011 [Chapel Talk by Greg Castanias](#), President of the National Association of Wabash Men, in which he spoke of the importance of inclusion of all Wabash men into the Wabash



*NAWM Board President Greg Castanias chats with alumni at a 'shOUT networking event.*

community. Coming from that presentation, in January of 2012 a [networking event](#) was held to bring alumni together with 'shOUT members to talk about being gay in the work place and to share their Wabash experiences.

A key indication of the level and impact of diverse experiences at Wabash is found in the College's National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data. NSSE shows that 72% of Wabash freshmen and seniors reported "often" or "very often" having had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity. This compares to only 59% of students in the same Carnegie classification and 52% of freshmen and 55% of seniors in the overall NSSE survey. Similarly, 76% of Wabash freshmen and 78% of Wabash seniors report "often" or "very often" having had serious conversations with students who are very different from themselves in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values. This compares to 63% of freshmen and 64% of seniors in a Carnegie class comparison and 54% of freshmen and 56% of seniors in the overall NSSE survey. These comparisons are encouraging in their indication that Wabash students are engaged more frequently than many of their peers in diversity experiences.

The importance of these activities has been demonstrated in the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS), where [increasing levels of diverse experiences](#) show a positive correlation to increases in critical thinking. Not content with these favorable numbers, the College provides faculty opportunities to develop diverse teaching pedagogies intended to increase the likelihood that Wabash students will grow through exposure to difference. Wabash continues to address the broader meaning and implications of student diversity beyond the classroom. Elsewhere in the *Self-Study Report* we consider issues of graduation rate and student experience, which differ between non-Hispanic white and minority students, and the College's efforts to improve student learning.

The other area for considering campus diversity is in terms of the College's trustees, administration, faculty, and staff. While, as was noted in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction, trustee and staff diversity has seen little numerical change over the past decade, there has been meaningful change as two of the head athletic coaches (track and field and basketball) and an upper level administrator (Associate Dean of the College) are racial minorities. There also has been a marked increase in the number of women and racial minorities on the teaching faculty. Of the fall 2011 teaching faculty, 34% were women and 13% were self-identified racial minorities. Of those faculty with five or fewer years at the College, 58% were women and 26% were from a racial or ethnic minority. This is a significant change in both gender and ethnicity from the fall of 2002 when the teaching faculty then counted only 20% women and 9.4% racial or ethnic minorities. One reason for this change is that the Dean of the College has actively encouraged departments to develop ways to ensure that they are reaching a diverse applicant pool when hiring. The College also has had a long-standing program aimed at bringing more diverse faculty to the campus, as well as giving these individuals an opportunity to begin their teaching career in a liberal arts setting. These faculty members have been designated [Owen Duston Visiting Professors](#), positions that generally carry lighter teaching loads but with an expectation that they will engage and support the College's minority students in various ways.

### A College for Men

A final way that Wabash's mission recognizes the diversity of its learners and the greater society is through its status as an all-male institution. Perhaps this claim seems counter-intuitive because as an all-male institution, Wabash has less classroom diversity; after all, there are no female students. However, as an educational option, Wabash recognizes the diversity of its learners — those seeking a unique educational environment — and the greater society, by offering a diverse educational option. The potential value of this diversity — of being one of only four colleges for men in the United States — may be greater today than it was a generation ago given the national conversation about educating

#### Electronic Resources

**Faculty  
Development Plan  
for Understanding  
Diversity  
Experiences**

**Diversity Workshop  
Schedule**

men, in particular men of color. Whether there is a “crisis” in the education of males is a larger and thornier subject, but Wabash is serving a population that is completing high school, attending college, and graduating from college at rates that lag behind those of females. While Education Department data identified 52% of undergraduate students as male in 1976, analysis by the American Council on Education found the number to be approximately 43% in 2007-08. Other analyses have found a lower percentage of 18 to 24 year-old males enrolled in college (34.7% vs. 41.2% of females) with, in 2003-04, 58% of undergraduate degrees conferred upon women.

College completion is a national concern, and Wabash is having notable success. Wabash’s four-year graduation rate of 71% compares favorably to the other three all-male undergraduate institutions — Morehouse (36%), Hampden-Sydney (64%), and Saint John’s University (67%). Wabash’s graduation rate stands near the median (72%) of Great Lakes Colleges Association institutions and is higher than the median of colleges belonging to the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (66%), while those comparison groups include women, whose baccalaureate completion rates exceed that of men. Given its mission and experience, Wabash is positioned to contribute to investigations of the important policy question of how we might best educate young men in our culture while also continuing to strive for greater success for Wabash men who elect a distinctive educational opportunity.

Some of the work done and supported by the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts (CILA) has contributed to these national conversations and assisted in Wabash’s understanding of its potential contributions to the broader discussion. For example, in November 2002 the College hosted a CILA-sponsored conference on the liberal arts education of black males, drawing together Wabash faculty and students, as well as faculty and students from other liberal arts colleges, including Kalamazoo, Morehouse, Albion, Ripon, Carleton, Denison, and Wooster. Another relevant CILA-sponsored conference was a two-day gathering of 30 female educators from Wabash College and Hampden-Sydney in 2005. The conference, [“What Women Are Doing at Colleges for Men: Women Faculty Educating Men in/for the Liberal Arts.”](#) consisted of seven plenary sessions and small group conversations. The meetings addressed the experiences of women teaching in an all-male environment and “critically and constructively examined the ways in which gender does make a difference” in their education of students. And among its many higher education presentations on the WNS, in 2008, at a conference at Saint John’s University, Charles Blaich and Kyle Long discussed what the [WNS reveals about the educational experiences of men](#). Following this work, two CILA researchers trained and mentored Wabash students to interview their peers and male high school students about their views on vocation and what they aspired to become. This work was published as a book chapter in the edited volume *Engaging College Men: Discovering What Works and Why*. The College’s Core Value of diversity informs this cross-institutional investigative work.

Explorations of the meaning of Wabash as a men’s college are undertaken in classes as well where issues of gender are frequently considered — ranging from a Freshman Tutorial on Men and Masculinity to a course on Gender Communication. Wabash also cultivates reflection on the subject of gender and its identity as a men’s college through the work of the Gender Issues Committee and the Gender Studies Area of Concentration, and it has recently discussed the possibility of a cultural diversity or gender studies requirement in the curriculum.

Led by President White, in recent years Wabash has more directly entered the national conversation on male education, and the College likely has yet more to contribute. In October 2006, Wabash and Hampden-Sydney exchanged student delegations to examine the culture and education of each institution. The experience created a link between the colleges and encouraged student reflection on the nature of all-male education. In 2010 President White participated in [a panel discussion](#) with three other presidents of men’s colleges at the American Men’s Studies Association annual conference.

In his remarks President White discussed the insight that all-male institutions can bring to the larger discussion of the challenges of educating males today.

Similarly, in February 2012 President White joined with two other presidents of single-sex institutions at a two day symposium at Hampden-Sydney entitled, “College Men: Making the Grade?” There President White further [made the case](#) for taking young men seriously in order to encourage and challenge them while offering a transformative educational experience. Finally, the 40-year old Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies (MXIBS) makes a distinctive institutional contribution to the two-sided issue of what it means to be male and black. Through its speakers, programs, participation in the annual GLCA Students of Color Leadership Conference, after-school tutoring program, and internship support, students are exposed in fulsome ways to diversity not just as a “think critically” question, but as “acting responsibly,” “leading effectively,” and “living humanely” issues. In these ways Wabash, through its defining mission, contributes to important conversations about educational diversity that serves Wabash and the greater community.

**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** Wabash College’s mission recognizes and values deeply the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves. The College has engaged in valuable, ongoing conversation about the Gentleman’s Rule, and while the rule is tested occasionally via behaviors and communication of questionable character, those instances generate conversations and life lessons that reinforce the community through serious deliberation. The College mission’s commitment to diversity is effectively supported through codes of belief in the form of the Faculty Statement on Diversity, the College’s Professional Conduct Policy, and the harassment policy, and its statement on non-discrimination, each of which encourages understanding of multiple points of view while protecting the beliefs and rights of community members. This commitment to diversity is embodied further in efforts of the College to foster a community peopled by a diversity of races, ethnicities, nationalities, and beliefs and to support the needs of those peoples. From the College’s Core Values to strategic planning, diversity is an important Wabash educational feature. While student diversity and organizations of support are many and faculty diversity has increased over the past decade, trustee and staff diversity still remain limited. Finally, Wabash’s mission recognizes the diversity of its learners and serves the greater society by offering a unique educational experience for men and through the efforts of College leadership and the Center of Inquiry to engage the broader educational community in sharing those experiences on the education of males.



*President Patrick White speaks at a symposium on single-sex education at Hampden-Sydney in February 2012.*

## **1C. UNDERSTANDING OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE MISSION PERVADES THE COLLEGE.**

The community’s expansive understanding of the College’s mission is primarily addressed in Criterion 1A, which demonstrates the broad public discussion and promotion of the mission across a variety of venues. This includes the findings of the recent marketing study that indicated that the value and importance of the mission is broadly understood by students and confirmed as a guiding principle for all members of the Wabash community.

The Board of Trustees readily demonstrates its support for and understanding of the College’s mission through its actions and approval of the Mission Statement, Core Values, and strategic plans, as well

as its leadership in fundraising during the two most recent capital campaigns, the Campaign for Leadership and the Challenge of Excellence. Further, there is clear linkage between the College's mission and strategic plan goals as well as departmental learning goals. Additional examples of how understanding and support of the mission shape College actions are seen in the College's response to the 2008 financial crisis (see Criterion 2), where decisive steps were taken to review and adjust staffing in both the academic and administrative areas of the College, all the while maintaining the mission commitment to liberal arts instruction, high quality student engagement through high impact teaching, and the strength of the College's residential community.

As is addressed more directly later in the *Self-Study Report*, the mission of the College is also articulated throughout students' experiences in a range of programs and activities, from co-curricular activities and academic clubs to philanthropic efforts to campus leadership in the form of Student Senate participation, fraternity officers and residential assistants, and club officers. These experiences are described across Criterion 4 and to a greater extent in Criterion 5.

An understanding and support of the mission pervades the curriculum as well. This is demonstrated in students' understanding of the goals of the curriculum and what they perceive they gain from it. This is also seen in the way the [distribution requirements map to the Mission Statement](#); in how department learning goals [reinforce the ideals of the Mission Statement](#); and in the way course objectives in many individual course syllabi reinforce mission goals. These connections are explored more specifically in Criterion 3 of the *Self-Study Report*.

Finally, the pervasiveness of the mission at the College is seen in yet other ways it is publicly expressed — in nearly every public presentation given by the President, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Dean of the College, and Dean of Students; in almost every Chapel Talk; in the masthead of *Wabash Magazine*; in the 2010-11 theme for the Annual Fund (Stand TALL for Wabash — with each letter of “TALL” standing for a mission element); in every stewardship letter to donors; and in nearly every fundraising appeal. The Wabash mission is voiced, heard, and supported in the actions of the College and is ubiquitous in its association with the work and values of the institution.

## **1D. WABASH COLLEGE'S GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES PROMOTE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES THAT ENABLE THE COLLEGE TO FULFILL ITS MISSION.**

The function of Wabash College governance and administrative structures is best examined by considering the work of the Board of Trustees and the on-campus governance structure, both of which demonstrate that the College has effective, reflective processes and adjusts these processes based on the findings of internal evaluations.

### **The policies and practices of the Board of Trustees support the Wabash mission**

The College is overseen by a Board of Trustees whose Articles of Incorporation, By Laws, committee charges, and membership are published annually in the [Board of Trustees Directory and Handbook](#). The Wabash College Board of Trustees has 36 members, including the President of the College, and approximately 15 additional emeritus trustees, many of whom remain active in the work of the Board and regularly attend Board meetings. Six of these trustees are elected by the College's alumni association, the National Association of Wabash Men. The Board's elected officers include the Chairman, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Chief Investment Officer, Treasurer, and Secretary

of the College. The President of the College and the Chairman of the Board serve as *ex officio* members of all trustee committees.

The Board's work is performed through 11 committees and an Executive Committee made up of the committee chairs plus two additional trustees selected by the Board. The President's Staff facilitates, along with the Chairman of the Board, the committees of the Board of Trustees. In that capacity, and working closely with the chairs of the Board committees, for which they serve as liaisons, they gather, assess, and report information from all areas of the College for the full Board meetings in October, January, and May. In advance of each meeting, trustees receive via electronic communication an extensive binder of materials. The materials include minutes from the previous meeting of the full board and each committee, updates on finances, admissions, and building and grounds, vitae for newly tenured and newly hired faculty, and readings for the session. The readings take many forms; their intent is to help educate the Board on issues important to the College, be they trends in higher education curricula and finances, information on assessment and the work of CILA, or a draft of the reaccreditation *Self-Study Report*. The Board's Executive Committee also meets three times per year by conference call, usually about a month in advance of full board meetings, to address key issues of the College and to help establish the agenda for upcoming meetings.

As the table below demonstrates, the Board committees are structured around the business and mission of the College, addressing issues of academics, student experience, recruitment, and residential facilities along with setting financial policy so as to preserve and strengthen the institution.

| <b>Board Committee</b>   | <b>College Officers Assigned</b>  |
|--------------------------|---|
| Academic Affairs         | Dean of the College and Division Chairs   |
| Admissions and Marketing | Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid and Senior Director of Communications and Marketing/Secretary of the College   |
| Advancement              | Dean for College Advancement  |
| Audit                    | Chief Financial Officer   |
| Budget and Finance       | Chief Financial Officer   |
| Building and Grounds     | Chief Financial Officer, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Dean of the College, and Dean of Students  |
| College Life             | Dean of Students and two Faculty Representatives  |
| Compensation             | President of the College  |
| Investment Policy        | Chief Financial Officer   |
| Strategy Committee       | Chief Financial Officer, Dean of the College, Senior Director of Communications and Marketing/Secretary of the College, and six appointed Faculty Representatives |
| Trusteeship              | Dean for College Advancement and Senior Director of Communications and Marketing/Secretary of the College   |

An interesting note about the communication used by the Board is that for more than a decade the Chairman of the Board of Trustees has written a letter to the College's alumni and friends following each Board meeting. The letters provide a recap of the Board's meeting by annotating the work of each Committee and also recognizing significant accomplishments at the College, for instance new members of the Board, newly tenured faculty, or the status of a capital campaign. [The letters](#) reflect the Board's commitment to transparency and are an effort to communicate clearly about the health and work of the College.

Over the course of the last decade the Board has made meaningful changes to its policies and practices that have strengthened its work. This has included engaging more frequently with faculty and students, restructuring the format of its business, and adopting more formal evaluation processes.

The Trustees have reshaped their work to improve their understanding of issues facing the College and to increase their already high engagement with the campus. For instance, while the Board has traditionally had contact with students via the Committee on College Life and by attending the Annual Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work, now trustees have dinner with members of the junior and senior classes during their mid-winter meetings. Similarly, while Board members are invited to attend Friday classes during their October and January meetings and they have interactions with academic division chairs on the Academic Affairs Committee and the faculty representatives on the College Life Committee, trustees now dine throughout the year with newly tenured faculty and tenure-track faculty who succeed in passing developmental reviews. In these ways trustees continue to engage and increase their familiarity with the campus community while faculty and students in turn learn about and from trustees.

A change to the business of the trustees has been to shorten committee reports during the Saturday morning meeting of the Board in order to have more time to better address strategic issues that cut across Board committees and are of concern to the College. Relatedly, during the current administration it has been the practice to have focused Deep Dive sessions on Friday, the first morning of the meeting. These sessions provide trustees with a thorough and strategic investigation of key issues facing the College. Topics in these sessions have included the financial crisis and its implications, student life issues, curriculum review activities, the College's business model, strategic plan updates and new strategic planning, and accreditation. Several of these sessions are addressed with more detail in Criterion 2 under the topic of future planning.

Through the leadership of the Committee on Trusteeship, the Board has developed clear expectations for the [“Ideal Trustee of Wabash College.”](#) This profile reiterates the College's Mission Statement and provides 14 characteristics that are sought in Wabash College Trustees. The first of these characteristics explicitly identifies that the ideal trustee “supports the mission, core values, history, and traditions of Wabash College.” The remaining qualities focus on the commitment expected of trustees in supporting the work of the College, including efforts to strengthen the College for the future, participating in recruitment, being active in work as a trustee by engaging the campus and making “every effort humanly possible to attend every meeting of the Board.” (At the January 2012 Council of Independent Colleges' Annual Presidents' meeting, a Wabash trustee led a session in which he shared this document as a model for communicating expectations to trustees.)

To strengthen the communication of this message, all new trustees are assigned a mentor who, in advance of the new member's first meeting, engages in face-to-face conversation to address the expectations of trustees, explains the current work of the body, and serves as an ongoing resource for the new member. Finally, new members participate in a full-day on-campus orientation in which they meet with the President and are introduced to each member of the President's Staff and the work in each of six key administrative areas of the College, as well as meeting with faculty and students. All new trustees are further introduced to the workings of the Board's Committees at the beginning of their service by participating, in a rotating fashion, in at least six different committees during their first year on the Board.

The most recent amendment to the College's Articles of Incorporation, approved in 2006, eliminated term limits for Board-elected trustees and established a more robust evaluation process. The Committee on Trusteeship was charged to develop two evaluation processes to be conducted

in alternating years. In even-numbered years, trustees evaluate the work and function of the full Board; in odd-numbered years, trustees evaluate the work of the committees they serve. Results of the evaluations are shared with members of the Committee on Trusteeship (including the Board Chair, Executive Committee Chair, and President), conclusions are drawn, and recommendations for action made. Several of the changes resulting from this process have already been explained above: a more robust orientation and mentoring program; establishment of Deep Dive sessions; changes to Executive Committee structure; and more campus interactions.

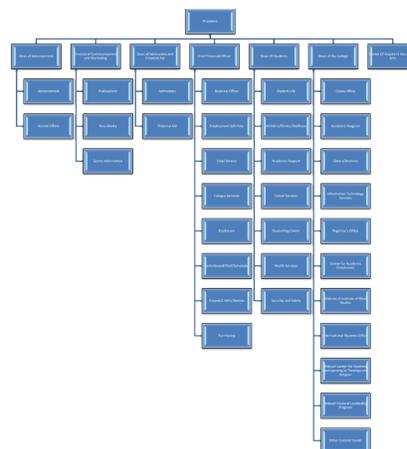
In sum, Wabash College has an active, engaged Board of Trustees that understands the mission of the College and is committed to both supporting it and improving the College. This is seen in a multitude of ways including the close work of the Board with the President, faculty, and staff in strategic planning and other matters, and in the attendance, commitment, and dedication shown by members of the Board. At the same time, the Board welcomes the counsel of College personnel and allows freedom of operation for the President and the administration as well as to the faculty in overseeing the curriculum and in the continuing reminder that it is a policy board, not an operational one.

### **The College has a defined governance structure that contributes to effective decision-making**

Here we examine the College’s on-campus governance and decision-making processes by considering the operation and relationship of President’s Staff, campus committees, academic units, faculty meeting and governance, and hiring processes. These areas provide insight into the locations of decision-making authority, the structure of the organization, and points of strength as well as strain in the system.

#### ***President’s Staff and Organizational Chart***

The President, appointed by the Board of Trustees, leads a senior staff consisting of the Dean of the College, Dean of Students, Dean for College Advancement, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer, and, a recent addition, Senior Director of Communications and Marketing. These senior officers meet weekly as a group to manage the affairs of the College and individually with the President to discuss the activities in their areas of responsibility. As is addressed in Criterion 2, collectively this group has a central role in the assessment processes of the institution. The organizational chart (linked at right) illustrates the relationship of these administrative areas to the College.



**Electronic Resource**  
**Wabash College**  
**Organizational**  
**Chart**

While the occasional committee exists outside of this structure — some ad hoc committees and the Safety Committee, for instance — the chart is a representation of the communication and reporting structure of the institution. It also accurately portrays some of the points of challenge in the current administrative structure. The Dean of the College, in particular, is tasked with expansive responsibilities, ones that have only grown over the past two decades with, for example, increased assessment expectations, more energies devoted to pursuing grant funding and reporting on those grants, and the development and expansion of the College’s Centers of Distinction: MXIBS, the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, and the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program. (Until recently, the Dean of the College also had supervisory responsibility for CILA as well.) Part of the challenge is that while some institutions might separate these

responsibilities, between a Dean of the College and a Dean of the Faculty, for instance (or by using other job titles like Provost or Vice President of Academic Affairs, etc.), at Wabash the oversight responsibilities are rolled into this single position.

To assist with these challenges the College has two Associate Deans, each with a half-time appointment for those duties (one of these staff is also the Registrar and the other is also the Director of the MXIBS). Another aid to the Dean of the College has been the increased use of the three academic division chairs to share in decision-making responsibilities (this was noted in the Introduction and is also discussed more below). There are other pressure points in the organizational chart as well, particularly for the President, Chief Financial Officer, and the Dean of Students, given the lean staffing of administrative departments and the number of areas they are charged with overseeing.

### ***Committee Structures***

Much College business is conducted through an array of committees and appointed positions that touch all aspects of the College's work. These on-campus governance committees fall into four categories: those with elected representatives (10 committees), those whose membership is appointed by the Committee on Committees (14 committees), those whose membership is by administrative appointment (31 committees), and those that are appointed or elected on an ad hoc basis. These committees most often include three faculty members, and for 15 committees there is a requirement that each of the three academic divisions be represented. Five of the committees are single-position offices: Faculty Secretary, Visitor to the Board of Trustees, Senior Colloquium Director, Faculty Athletic Representative, and Radiation Safety Officer. Two other identified committees are the co-chairs that direct the two freshman all-college courses. These co-chairs have status as department chairs (discussed below). When making its annual committee assignments, the Committee on Committees reviews committee representation with an eye toward reducing committee size and encouraging work load equity among faculty. In 2011 the Committee on Committees began a systematic review of the College's committee structure to assess its effectiveness and to propose changes in composition and purpose for faculty consideration. That work continues in the 2012-13 academic year.

Many of the committees (17) also include one or more staff members as regular participants and others (15) have a staff member as an *ex officio* member. Some committees also include student representatives. The division chairs are *ex officio* members for three committees (Academic Policy, Faculty Development, and Honorary Degrees), and the Dean of the College has *ex officio* status on eight committees. The charges of standing committees are published annually in the [\*Faculty Handbook\*](#) (pp 8-15). Membership is approved by the faculty every fall and is published in the [College Directory](#).

While faculty committee assignments are relatively high (numbering three on average), the role and time commitment of the committees vary greatly, as do the types of reporting that they provide to the faculty. Some committees serve a more advisory role (Admissions, Athletics, and Budget for example), others administer events or programs and provide student and community support (Undergraduate Research, Gender Issues, Graduate Fellowships, Multicultural Concerns, Pre-Health, Pre-Law, Environmental Concerns, and more), and others are policy making bodies or provide funding for faculty opportunities (Academic Honesty Appeals, Academic Policy, Faculty Development, and the McLain-McTurnan-Arnold Research Scholar Committee). These latter committees have perhaps the most specific responsibilities, and of those, the Academic Policy Committee (APC) has the greatest role in College governance.

The APC consists of seven faculty members (two elected by each academic division and one elected by the faculty at large), the three division chairs, the Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, the Associate Dean/Registrar, and a non-voting student representative. Nearly all policy matters of a curricular nature — new course approval, revisions to majors and minors, addition of new programs and courses of study, regulations on course policies such as transfer credits and incompletes — come through the APC. The APC also has organized faculty-wide discussions of curricular matters. For instance, the APC hosted a series of conversations about all-college courses that preceded the ad hoc All-College Course Committee and organized a series of conversations about the recommendations brought forward by the ad hoc Distribution Committee. Committees are expected to report on their activities to the faculty as warranted and to also provide a year-end report. These reports do not have a specified form or content and are not consistently submitted. More regularization of year-end reporting and a more systematic form could assist assessment activities at the College and provide a more complete institutional record.

In addition to standing committees, the College appoints or elects ad hoc committees to address special projects. These committees typically have larger memberships, are given special charges, and have higher reporting obligations. Some of the most recently appointed ad hoc committees include a committee to advise on spending savings in the wake of the financial crisis, strategic planning committees, distribution of Lilly Endowment grant funding, and the Quality of Life committee (which later became a standing committee). Ad hoc committees composed of a combination of elected and appointed representatives have included the Governance Committee, the All-College Course Committee, and the Distribution Committee. All of these ad hoc committees are discussed in other portions of the *Self-Study Report*.

### ***Academic Units***

The academic departments of the College are organized into three divisions: Division I: Natural Sciences and Mathematics; Division II: Humanities and Fine Arts; and Division III: Social Sciences. Each division has a chairperson, who is appointed by the Dean of the College in consultation with faculty from the division. The division chairs work with the Dean of the College to serve as the Personnel Committee with respect to staffing and salary decisions in the academic areas of the College. Division chairs participate in weekly meetings with the Dean of the College and have taken on an increasing role in administrative matters, as noted in the Introduction of the *Self-Study Report*. Additional responsibilities include participating in all faculty reviews, participating in faculty hiring, contributing to academic budgeting and salary discussions, working with the Dean of the College on policy changes to the *Faculty Handbook*, serving as a conduit to the Board of Trustees on academic matters, representing the division and the College on recruitment visit days, and providing leadership for their respective divisions. Division leadership includes mentoring of faculty, writing salary letters for the department chairs in their division, working in concert with those department chairs in discussing important College and division issues, leading monthly division meetings, and being engaged in division functions (such as colloquia, lectures, and other events). Beginning in 2012-13, the division chairs will receive a two-course reduction per year for this work (an increase from a one-course reduction previously).

Each division chair hosts a monthly luncheon with the department chairs of their respective division. These lunches are an opportunity to address issues of importance to the departments and the College as a whole; they also often serve as a means to generate the agenda for monthly division meetings. Department chairs also gather monthly (including the co-chairs of Freshman Tutorial and Enduring Questions) to discuss issues of common concern. Others attend this meeting — for instance the Dean of the College or members of other areas — only by invitation and advance arrangement. The department chairs identify their own chair for a two-year term (the “chair of chairs”); and this

is the designee to bring matters of interest and concern forward to the Dean of the College. These are important meetings to share experiences and concerns, as well as challenges and frustrations that affect departments across the College. In recent years, the department chairs have played a significant role in discussing the resources allocated to all-college courses, advocating for the creation of an additional Associate Dean position, voicing concerns about staffing levels across departments, discussing faculty hiring procedures, and engaging in conversation with units of the College such as the Registrar and the Business Office to examine procedures. While the department chairs group serves many functions, it does not, as a unit, have an official charge or position in the organizational structure. Currently department chairs receive no release time for their service.

### ***Faculty Meetings and Faculty Governance***

As stated in the *Faculty Handbook*, “faculty governance depends on active participation in faculty meetings and on faculty committees” (p. 7). The full faculty meets at 4:15 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month during the academic year. These meetings are chaired by the President. The meeting order includes opportunities for faculty committees and some members of the President’s Staff to report. In addition to the approval of the minutes and old and new business, the meeting schedule also includes a question period and the opportunity for a discussion period. Except for unusual circumstances, faculty meetings end at or before 5:30 p.m. The APC generally reviews and discusses proposed changes to the curriculum and new courses prior to bringing them to the full faculty. However, individual faculty and departments may come directly to the faculty with requests or proposals. The faculty may also charge the APC with tasks, such as organizing curricular discussions, or reviewing a proposal, and then returning it with recommendations to the full body. The faculty as a whole makes decisions on new courses and academic policy and program changes, with substantive program changes brought to the trustees for final approval. A recent example of this is the approval of a biochemistry major, that while housed primarily within the chemistry department is now identified as a unique major.

In 2009 the faculty adopted some modifications to faculty meetings intended to increase the amount of information received by the faculty, while also streamlining in-meeting reporting and promoting more faculty discussion. These modifications included encouraging that officer reports (from the President, Dean of the College, Dean of Students, and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid) be submitted to the faculty electronically in advance of the meeting, along with a more detailed meeting agenda. Officers are still invited to provide abbreviated oral reports as occasions warrant. The more substantive change adopted at that time was an adjustment to the order of business to include a “discussion period,” after new business and prior to adjournment, in order to promote more informal discussion of issues. A majority of the faculty must approve the motion to enter a discussion period to address a particular issue. No motions or formal business is transacted in the discussion period but minutes are kept and what is learned from the discussion stands to influence future motions and improve communication in general among faculty and with the administration. Discussion period topics have included the structure of distribution requirements, whether the required minor should be optional, and faculty conduct policies and personnel procedures.

These procedural changes are intimately connected to broader issues and questions about faculty governance. As was noted in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction, in response to a question posed in 2002 by HLC reviewers about committees and governance, the College has had some occasions to explore governance questions. Following the last self-study this question most directly emerged in 2006 when a motion was brought to change the chairing of faculty meetings. Rather than vote on that motion, the faculty elected to form an ad hoc committee to [explore issues of governance](#). Since the Introduction discusses this committee and related governance questions in some detail, it seems sufficient merely to reiterate: (1) there have been significant changes to communication and decision-

making processes, and (2) these are complex issues that are at the intersection of making information available, allowing faculty meaningful influence over decisions, and faculty fully and thoughtfully participating in governance processes. The College, as a whole, can do better at discussing governance issues, including thinking more about how we engage one another, the courtesy we are willing to show in those interactions, and sustaining interest in questions so as to see discussions through to their conclusion. Currently, a committee appointed by the Dean of the College is looking at revisions to faculty grievance procedures, but there has not been an effort to return to the specific findings and recommendations of the Governance Committee report nor has there been an effort to revisit the chairing of the faculty meeting.

### ***Hiring Processes***

The hiring process demonstrates the overall effectiveness of the College's organizational structure and the decision-making processes used. All staffing changes require the approval of the President. As positions open, either newly created positions or due to retirement or resignation, positions are reviewed (discussed in Criterion 2) and [job descriptions](#) and qualifications are developed. With respect to faculty positions, the Personnel Committee assesses College-wide needs and approves positions with mission and strategic planning goals expressly in mind. Applicants are reviewed against the advertised qualifications. (The hiring of faculty is addressed in more detail in Criterion 3B.) It is not unusual when a job opening occurs for departments and the College administration to use the occasion to reevaluate how work is organized. This has been the case with the recent opportunity for changing the nature of staff support in Teacher Education, combining what was an administrative assistant position and part-time student-teacher supervision, into a salaried coordinator position. A similar process was used in reviewing the Advancement Office in preparation for a search for a new Dean for College Advancement; in recognition of the importance of comprehensive marketing in the College's strategic plan and in consideration of the need to focus the attention of the Dean for College Advancement on fundraising, the Public Affairs Office was moved from under the Dean for College Advancement to become a direct report to the President, and the office was renamed Communications and Marketing.

To assist with and improve some of these structures, the College is in the process of developing an online employment application process that will be used for all staff hiring. (It is anticipated that this application process will be ready in fall 2012.) In conjunction with this change, the College will review its hiring practices and update these as needed. For example, a more formalized process for degree verifications will be in place beginning in fall 2012. While the College has long required transcripts during the faculty hiring process, it has not always maintained those transcripts in personnel files. Beginning in fall 2012 all transcripts will be verified and maintained in personnel files.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** On the whole, Wabash's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes in advancing the mission of the College. The Board of Trustees works in support of the mission, effectively leads the College on matters of policy, and has engaged in evaluative processes to refine and improve its work. The Board is substantively engaged with the campus and demonstrates its commitment to strengthening the institution. The College has a clear leadership structure in the form of the President and the President's Staff and their relationship to College offices. There are challenges based on the high demands placed on some administrative offices. The College relies on many committees to carry out its work, perhaps too many for an institution its size. However, the committees also serve a variety of important functions in both shaping and monitoring the work of the College and supporting an ethos of shared responsibility and accountability, which contributes to a productive teaching and learning environment for students, faculty, and staff.

In order to clarify the role of committees and better understand their benefits and accomplishments, the Committee on Committees should complete its overall review of committee effectiveness and a more formal and standardized year-end reporting process should be considered. The increased use of division chairs in administrative decision making has resulted in more faculty participation in governance and more transparency by bringing faculty more directly into decision making. Department chairs provide important contributions to the College as well, and it could be valuable to clarify and formalize the role of the department chairs group in the administrative structure of the College. Faculty meeting structures provide important opportunities for faculty to engage in governance and to address questions by engaging senior administrators in dialogue on important matters. The College should, however, continue to consider issues of governance and, equally so, our capacity to interact with one another thoughtfully through sustained participation in governance questions while treating one another with courtesy and compassion. Finally, the reflections on and changes to the hiring processes demonstrate the collaborative nature of process improvement at the College. The refinements to transcript verification that have been proposed will be completed before the start of the next academic year.

## 1E. WABASH COLLEGE UPHOLDS AND PROTECTS ITS INTEGRITY.

The College's Mission Statement, Core Values, and recent strategic plan articulate the philosophies on which its integrity is based. As we describe throughout this *Self-Study Report*, the College's work is guided intimately by these documents, and thus, the institution's work is tethered tightly to concerns over integrity. In addition, the College's integrity is a function of its effectiveness in complying with federal and state guidelines for institutional procedures, disseminating to its constituencies specific expectations about appropriate conduct, and maintaining processes for grievance resolution. In this section, we review ways that the College speaks to each of these fundamental goals. How an institution articulates and protects the integrity of its operational processes is a reflection of its Core Values. These strategies are generally effective in upholding the College's integrity, while in other areas of the *Self-Study Report* we review additional programs and processes for ensuring that the College and its people continue to act with the highest level of integrity.

### Electronic Resources

#### Audited Financial Statements

2009-10

2010-11

### Compliance

The College insures compliance with federal and state standards and expectations. Financial matters are overseen by the Chief Financial Officer, who is directly responsible for state and federal fiscal policy compliance, and by the Audit and Budget and Finance committees of the Board of Trustees. The College contracts for an [annual fiscal audit](#), in accordance with the Financial Accounting Standards Board guidelines, and that audit is reported to the Board of Trustees' Audit Committee, which reviews the audit carefully, summarizes its results for the entire Board, and reviews the performance of the auditing firm. All Trustees, Officers of the College, and staff that have budgetary responsibility annually sign a [new financial conflict of interest statement](#). The Board has a written [Whistle Blower Policy](#) that states explicitly that "The Audit Committee shall not retaliate, and shall not tolerate any retaliation by any person against a College employee who, in good faith, makes a Complaint or provides assistance to the Audit Committee or the President or his designee(s) in connection with the investigation of any Complaint."

The College also has structures in place that ensure appropriate policies for access to and compliance with federal grants and their processes. Specifically, the Dean of the College's Office maintains policies regarding, among other things, ethical treatment of [human subjects](#) and [animals](#) for the purposes of research, appropriate use of [copyrighted information](#), [research misconduct](#), and student and employee immigration. Many of these policies are discussed in greater detail in Criterion 4. In accordance with

the Higher Education Act renewal, the College posts [consumer information](#) that is required annually on its website and submits annually required IPEDS information. The annual [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) announcement is made through the Registrar's Office, is published annually in the *Academic Bulletin*, is discussed with new students and their parents during freshman orientation, and addressed with faculty and staff in a session each fall. [Intercollegiate athletics policies](#) are reviewed and the standards for conduct required by the NCAA are maintained by the Faculty Athletic Representative and the Faculty Athletics Committee; recommendations for compliance and change are made by this Committee to the President of the College.

Safety procedures and compliance to safety requirements are the joint responsibility of the Dean of the College's Office, the Director of Safety and Security (who reports to the Dean of Students), and the College's Safety Committee. The Associate Dean of the College and Registrar and the Director of Safety and Security annually update the College's [Health, Safety, and Security Handbook](#), which describes for the entire community safety procedures, regulations, and recommendations, and which includes the College's sexual harassment, sexual assault, and non-discrimination policies. It also includes the annual audit of crimes as required by the Clery Act and the fire safety report as required by the Higher Education Act. All students, faculty, and staff receive a hard copy of this document when they first join the institution, and it is available on the College's website.

The Safety Committee, which reports to the Dean of the College, has oversight for compliance with EPA, OSHA, IDEM, and Nuclear Regulatory policies and maintains the [College's Emergency Plan](#), Chemical Hygiene Plan, and Blood Borne Pathogens Plan. This committee meets monthly and oversees many of the required safety plans for the campus, including emergency planning and working with local public safety officials. For example, after conversations between this committee and the local fire department and [subsequent fire drills](#) in academic buildings, the College has removed parking from the East side of the oval drive around the Mall in the center of campus. This enables the fire department and its trucks to have more effective access to emergency equipment in the event of a fire. Members of the Safety Committee also participate in the Montgomery County Crisis Team. Finally, the Committee played a substantial role in the decision to hire in 2009 a Director of Safety and Security.



*Members of the Safety Committee debrief with Fire Department personnel after a tornado drill in the Allen Center.*

### **Dissemination of Policies and Procedures**

The College also upholds its integrity by disseminating actively its academic and employment policies and procedures and by reviewing them regularly.

The integrity of curricular activities is maintained by vetting, disseminating, and updating the [Academic Bulletin](#), which contains the College's academic policies and procedures. The *Bulletin* is published annually, with paper copies distributed to all new students and to all faculty every fall and an electronic copy posted to the Wabash website. The Registrar's Office manages an annual update of the *Bulletin*, one that involves implementing all faculty-approved changes to course offerings and major, minor, and/or general educational requirements and soliciting from academic department chairs additional changes, including removal from the *Bulletin* descriptions of courses that are not to be taught in the coming year(s). The sections of the *Bulletin* entitled "[Curriculum](#)" and "[Academic Policies](#)" describe the degree requirements and policies used in implementing the curriculum. These are implemented by the Registrar's Office, with any exceptions to these faculty-determined policies requiring the approval of the Curriculum Appeals Committee (a subcommittee of the Academic Policy Committee, with the Registrar and Dean of Students serving as *ex officio* members).

In order to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the College's academic program, academic departments generally undergo a review every five or six years. These reviews, which are explained in some detail in Criterion 3, typically involve an internal self-study and an outside comparison. Depending on the department's needs, these reviews may be quite focused or more general in nature. Since the last Higher Learning Commission review, CILA grant funds have been deployed to help departments with assessment activities and provide implementation funding for some of the changes initiated as a result of the review process. The Wabash National Study project, also funded through the CILA grant, has provided the College with information as to the overall learning in our liberal arts setting (See Criterion 3), and has provided foundational information for projects such as the College's retention initiative.

The *Academic Bulletin* also includes statements of the College's policies regarding student conduct (the Gentleman's Rule) and academic dishonesty, the faculty's statement of principle concerning diversity (discussed in Criterion 1B), and the College's philosophy regarding athletics. Such explicit communications of principles ensure that students, like other College constituencies, understand how the College's integrity is protected.

In addition to stating policies and procedures, the *Academic Bulletin* and the *Health, Safety, and Security Handbook* provide information about other useful resources. For example, the *Academic Bulletin* includes a description of the Schroeder Center for Career Development (whose work is described in Criterion 5) and recommendations for courses and processes that lead to careers in law, medicine, engineering, and teacher education. The *Health, Safety and Security Handbook* includes phone numbers and contact information for on-campus offices (e.g., Counseling Services) and also off-campus providers (e.g., local hospitals and mental health providers). As noted above, hard copies of both documents are given to new students every fall and are posted annually to the Wabash website. Additional student information is also posted to the website.

**On the Web**

**Faculty Handbook**

**Staff Employment Guide**

**Department Chair Handbook**

The College maintains both a *Faculty Handbook* and a *Staff Employment Guide*, which articulate the College's policies regarding benefits, rights, and responsibilities of its employees. The *Faculty Handbook* is updated annually, with changes circulated to the Faculty in advance of its posting to the College website. Recent changes include additions to the parental leave policies, modifications to faculty development fund support, and minor adjustments to the faculty review procedures. The *Staff Employment Guide* describes benefits to faculty and staff and states explicitly the College's policies regarding alcohol/substance use; harassment; and electronic media, services, and communication. In addition, harassment training is offered to faculty and staff every two years and is overseen by the Director of Human Resources. The Fringe Benefits Committee, which includes both faculty and staff representation, works with the Director of Human Resources in evaluating changes in employee benefits.

Finally, the Dean of the College's Office maintains a *Department Chair Handbook*, which includes hiring procedures, personnel review procedures and calendars, departmental review guidelines and schedule, and calendars of due dates.

### **Grievance Procedures**

The College takes grievances seriously and articulates procedures for students, faculty, and staff to express such grievances so that they may be addressed appropriately.

For students, complaints are directed to the Dean of Students or Associate Dean of Students, although it is not unusual, and is encouraged, for students to direct their questions and complaints

informally and directly to the individual or office involved. If the student is not satisfied with the response, the complaint can be taken to supervisors, department chairs, division chairs, a dean, and, eventually, the President. For academic matters, a student may file requests or complaints with the Curriculum Appeals Committee. As will be discussed in further detail later in the *Self-Study Report*, students also now have a formal mechanism by which to appeal charges of academic dishonesty. This appeal process stands as the College's most formally articulated channel through which students can initiate a process for disagreement resolution; other processes are effective but are less formalized and arise at the student's instigation upon action by the Dean of Students' Office. The latter reflects the long-standing ethos of the College that favors individual responsibility and face-to-face conversation. An opportunity for the College in the future is to make more public for students the channels by which they can voice their dissatisfactions and, if evidence of problems with the process arise, to develop a different process by which those dissatisfactions are addressed.

Procedures and policies regarding faculty and staff grievances and/or complaints are outlined in the *Staff Employment Guide* (pp. 23-24) and the *Faculty Handbook* (pp. 27-29). The current faculty grievance process covers actions (grievances) that are "judged by a faculty member (or group of faculty members) to have constituted discrimination on the basis of sex and which affects directly and adversely the faculty member's academic freedom, professional standing, or economic position," or that is "judged by a faculty member (or group of faculty members) to affect directly and adversely the faculty member's academic freedom, professional standing, or economic position."

The current procedure calls for a committee of five tenured faculty (not including division chairs or the department chair of an individual filing a grievance) to hear and offer findings regarding the grievance. Three of these committee members are elected at a special faculty meeting, with the additional two being appointed, one each by the President and the individual filing the grievance (i.e., the "principal"). A Grievance Committee considers written statements by the principal and by the administration, and the principal has the opportunity to testify, present documents, and/or call witnesses to testify on his or her behalf. The committee reports its findings and recommendations to the President, with whom the final case decision rests.

In light of conversations over the past two years and some dissatisfaction with this grievance procedure, a review of it began in the summer of 2012 by an ad hoc committee made up of the President, Dean of the College, the three division chairs, three appointed department chairs, and the Director of Human Resources. The ad hoc committee will survey faculty about the grievance process effectiveness, collect information about GLCA institutional practices, and present its findings and any recommended alterations to the faculty in fall 2012. In addition, a review of the [staff grievance process](#), which largely parallels the current faculty committee structure and is infrequently used, will follow. In fall 2012, the President will appoint a committee composed of the Director of Human Resources and bi-weekly and salaried staff representatives of the six administrative divisions of the College. The committee's findings and recommendations will be shared with College staff.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** The College disseminates effectively its philosophies, policies, and practices so that all constituencies understand expectations and how to best uphold the College's integrity. The development of a number of new policies has strengthened the College's compliance to its own and others' standards. Still, the College must stay mindful of procedures by which students and faculty/staff can file grievances and complaints. Student procedures are less formalized than they might be. Such informality fits with the College's emphasis on individual responsibility and student agency and has, to date, been effective, as far as one can tell. The College should, however, consider conducting regular and systematic assessment of the effectiveness of these procedures and to ensure that the informal channels are well understood by students so that changes

can be made if warranted. Faculty grievance procedures are well articulated, yet there are questions regarding their effectiveness. The recently convened committee is considering alternative methods of grievance resolution.

## **CONCLUSIONS FOR CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY**

In this chapter we have examined how Wabash College meets the reaccreditation expectations for mission and integrity. In the process we have illustrated two of the strengthening themes identified in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction: *strengthening student engagement* and *strengthening infrastructure processes*.

One way Wabash has strengthened student engagement over the past decade has been through perpetual engagement with students over the meaning and performance of the mission of the College. To this end, the Mission Statement and Core Values of the College are clear. The mission also is widely-known, prominently publicized, and central to the work of the institution, providing the measure by which much assessment is conducted. Through its mission and supporting documents, the College recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves. The College does this through reflection on the meaning of the Gentleman's Rule, by fostering and respecting diversity on its campus, and through its mission as a liberal arts college for men. These elements of the College are strong. Nonetheless, persistent communication about the Gentleman's Rule will always be required, opportunities for additional diversity should be cultivated, and the College can contribute even more to the societal question of how most effectively to educate college-aged men. These needs acknowledge that student engagement is a continuing priority for the College and not something that can be addressed once and considered complete. Instead, Wabash is reflective about such engagement and thus living and promoting the mission — including awareness of it, its regular application, the guidance provided by the College's Core Values, further facilitating the diversity promoted by the mission, and a continuing focus on the Gentleman's Rule — will remain a focus of the work and communication undertaken by the College.

The infrastructure processes of the College have been strengthened over the past decade while more can be done in this area. The College's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes in advancing the mission of the College. The Board of Trustees works effectively and has constructively reflected on its practices. The College has a clear organizational structure while the demands placed on administrative personnel, including division chairs, merits consideration as does the number, structure, and reporting mechanisms used by committees, and continued questions of faculty governance. Finally, the College makes ample efforts to protect its integrity and has further developed and articulated policies to do so. In these ways, the College has improved its operational processes in manners that protect its integrity and further its mission.

### **Strengths**

- The mission of Wabash College is clearly articulated and well-known on campus;
- The Gentleman's Rule helps instill in students a high degree of personal freedom and also an understanding of societal responsibility;
- A high percentage of Wabash students report (through NSSE survey data) a high level of

diversity experiences;

- Wabash College is contributing to and leading important conversations on the education of men;
- The Board of Trustees works in support of the mission, works effectively and appropriately with administration to lead the College, and has engaged in evaluative processes to refine and improve its work. The Board is clearly engaged in leading the College and demonstrates its commitment to strengthening the institution;
- The on-campus community enjoys a good and productive relationship with the Board of Trustees and the Board of Trustees provides the administration, faculty, and staff with vital and necessary freedom in operations;
- The College has strengthened its compliance policies.

## **Challenges**

- Trustee and staff diversity remains limited except in some key leadership positions in athletics and in admissions and financial aid;
- The high demands placed on some administrative offices, including the President, Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, and the Chief Financial Officer, merit monitoring. The broad areas of oversight and thin staffs could eventually threaten to compromise performance of necessary tasks and limit assessment capabilities;
- The increased use of division chairs in administrative decision making has resulted in more faculty participation in governance and more transparency by bringing faculty more directly into decision making. However, these changes have created their own strains as the work demands on division chairs are high.

## **Recommendations**

- Wabash should continue to seek opportunities to participate in and lead where possible the national conversation about how to best educate young men;
- The Board of Trustees should continue its reorganization of committee roles and responsibilities to further its ability to support forward thinking and strategic planning;
- In order to clarify the role of committees and better understand their benefits and accomplishments the Committee on Committees should complete its overall review of committee effectiveness and a more formal and standardized year-end reporting process should be considered;
- The College should consider formalizing the role of the department chairs group in the institution's organizational structure;
- Proposed refinements to the transcript collection and verification process should be implemented as quickly as possible;

- The College should continue to consider issues of governance — what the faculty’s role in governance is, what it means to have meaningful influence over decision making, and the faculty’s capacity for such work;
- The College should consider a regular and formalized assessment of its student complaint procedures so that it might understand their effectiveness and the extent to which the processes and channels are easily known and understood by students;
- The College should complete its review of grievance procedures for faculty and staff and make process changes based on the findings of this work.



## **CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE**

*Wabash College's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities*

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During the past decade, Wabash College has had the dual experience of freedom and plenty that comes with a rich pool of financial, personnel, and programmatic resources, as well as the anxiety and restriction of a new reality brought on by the economic distress of a deep and prolonged recession accompanied by the sharp drop in stock market values occurring in 2008. Prior to 2008, the College was active and strategic in developing and allocating its resources and engaged in a variety of assessment and planning efforts (strategic planning and annual reviews of faculty productivity, for example). However, the lens of efficiency and effectiveness became even more focused after the financial impact of the 2008 stock market crash became clear. It is true that Wabash retains an endowment and financial position that might be the envy of many colleges; but it is equally true that the College's financial resources have been significantly diminished. As mentioned earlier in the *Self-Study Report*, Wabash remains distinctive in the high percentage of its operating budget that comes from endowment. This was a benefit that made the College less tuition dependent in the 1990s and the first part of this millennium, but with the loss of income when the markets crashed, the College has had to rethink its planning on every level. As a result, the College's assessment and evaluation processes have become more intense, and its allocation of precious resources — human as well as financial — far more intentional. We now consider more carefully the relative contributions of all programs, all positions, and even all individual tasks, weighing tradeoffs and opportunities, to ensure that we can not only fulfill the College's mission successfully but also enhance the experiences of our students, staff, alumni, and the College's wider publics.

In this self-study chapter we spend considerable time discussing the ramifications of the financial downturn of 2008 and the manner in which the College responded to that crisis because it represents a key event, if not turning point, in the College's recent history that has enormous implications for the operation of the College looking toward the future. While not all planning and evaluation processes at the College have been configured as a function of that crisis, there are two reasons to discuss the recession at length. First, the crisis influenced all areas of the College, both in the present and looking to the future. Fewer financial resources threatened academic programs and staffing and, ultimately, compelled the College to achieve as much or more with less and fewer. Second, we believe that the response to the economic crisis provides evidence of the College's ability to respond to significant challenges to its work, of its willingness and ability to be flexible and responsive in meeting those challenges, and of positive changes to the College's strategies that make them more sustainable. Such changes have increased the College's resilience to future shocks, in whatever form those shocks might come, and, thus, have improved our ability to continue to fulfill our mission. Of the five strengthening themes identified in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction, one is particularly relevant to Criterion 2: *Wabash College has strengthened its budgeting, staffing, and infrastructure processes*. Across this Criterion, evidence is marshaled to show how, in response to financial exigencies and in support of its strategic plan, the College has altered its financial model, communications, and staffing in ways that enhance its operations.

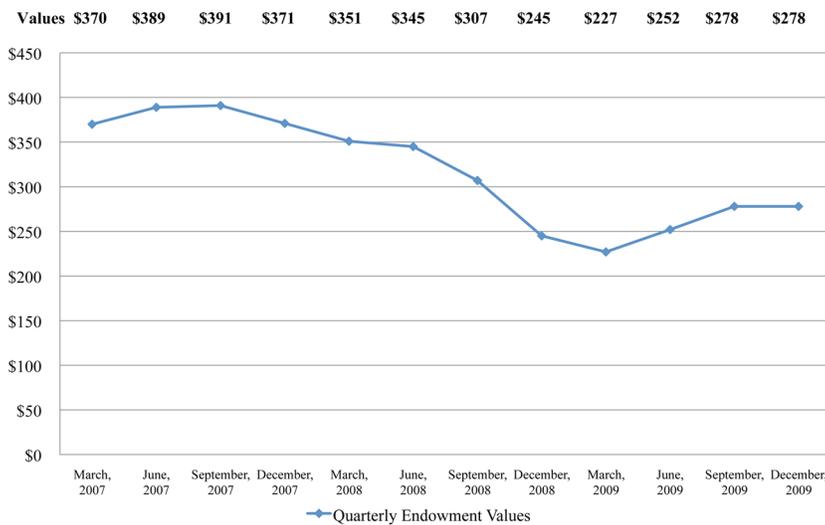
### **The financial crisis and the College's response**

The severe economic downturn that in 2008 reverberated across the country and around the globe presented a powerful exigency to Wabash and other institutions of higher education. The

way the College has responded to that crisis reflects some of the most important ways the College demonstrates fulfillment of Criteria 2A and 2B; it also reflects something essential about the mission-grounded ethos of teaching and learning Wabash promotes. The implications of these efforts are such that they merit detailed and separate attention to explain a set of actions that collectively reveal important changes in how Wabash is prepared to deal with an uncertain future.

In September 2007, the Wabash College endowment stood at nearly \$390 million, giving Wabash one of the largest endowments-per-student in the country. A year and a half later, in March 2009, that same endowment totaled \$230 million, a 40% drop. Such a precipitous decline in value affected, in turn, the actual and projected 12-quarter rolling average of endowment value, the average that the College uses as a standard by which to draw funds in support of operations. Such a strategy shields the level of endowment draw from short-term and relatively minor fluctuations in endowment value. However, the evaporation of 40% of the endowment's value constituted a different matter altogether. As is evidenced in the charts below, such a drop in value projected out to alarming declines in the 12-quarter rolling average across multiple years of budgeting and, thus, significantly less income from the endowment to fund the College's work.

**Endowment Values - 12 Quarters - 2007-2009**  
( in Millions )

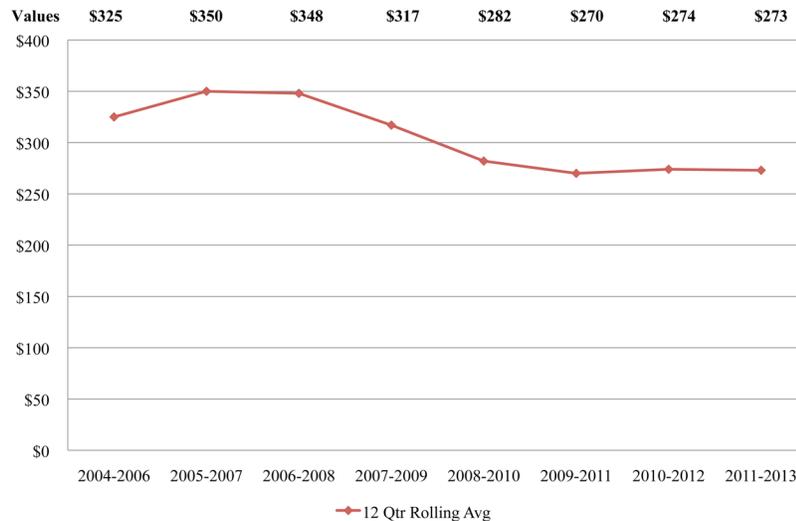


**Electronic Resources**

**Endowment Values Chart**

**Projected 12-Qtr Average Chart**

**Projected 12 Qtr Rolling Avgs**  
( in Millions )

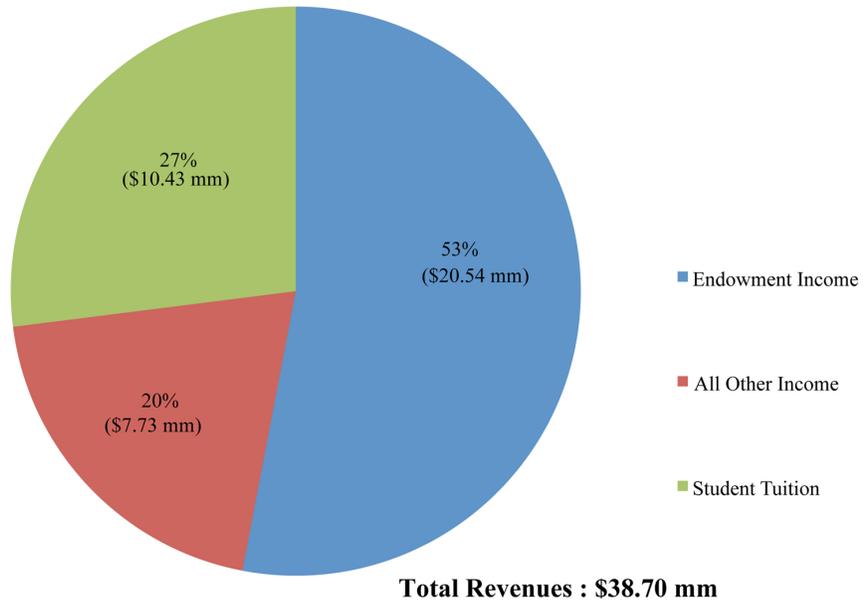


*(Future projections generated in December 2009)*

This drop in endowment value and resultant decrease in endowment revenue available for operations was particularly problematic for Wabash since more than 50% of the College's operating revenue has traditionally come from endowment draw. Given the Wabash Board's policy of drawing between 4% and 6% of the endowment's 12-quarter rolling average to fund operations, it was not conceivable to continue business as usual; not with the endowment draw yielding \$20 million in 2008-09 and projected to yield only \$16 million annually from 2011 to 2015.

**Electronic Resource**  
**2008-2009**  
**Revenues Chart**

## Revenues 2008-2009



Of course, the stock market's retreat affected not just the endowment value and draw. Other sources of revenue were affected as well. For instance, the number of alumni donors to the College's unrestricted annual fund fell 9% (from 4,079 to 3,696) from 2007-08 to 2008-09 and retreated further still for the 2009-10 fiscal year. On the student side, the percentage of students without documented "need" for financial assistance fell from 26% in 2007-08 (a number that was itself lower than the 29% and 35% figures of the previous two years, respectively) to just 20% in 2009-10. This percentage has remained at 21% for the past two years. Relatedly, in the past three entering freshman classes, an average of 68% of students had demonstrated financial need exceeding 50% of tuition cost. In the three years prior, that average was 61%. In short, the College was faced with less revenue coming in and projections of continued lower revenue across multiple years, without a corresponding decrease in expenses to compensate. Moreover, Wabash was in a period of greater demand for financial aid, student work-study, and loans.

The College's response to the crisis was measured, strategic, and, to date, effective in maintaining and even improving the quality of its academic and non-academic programs. Such a response involved each and every area of the College; demanded re-consideration of the goals outlined in the 2008 Strategic Plan and the anticipated capital campaign; catalyzed new strategies of, among other things, student recruitment, student billing, and departmental budget accountability; and included both reduction of faculty and staff size as well as increased efficiency at the individual, departmental, and cross-College levels. Indeed, in the face of such economic adversity, the College continues to fulfill its mission and meet the goals of its strategic plan; the plan's flexibility has been a key to the College's success. Such work has necessitated creative thinking about a number of program areas, including

admissions, financial aid, and budgeting, in order to create a viable financial model that is less endowment-dependent and thus less vulnerable to economic perturbations.

As the College worked to understand its new financial reality and its ramifications, College administrators communicated directly and effectively with faculty, staff, and students about the nature of the economic downturn, its potential implications for the College, and the progress of the College's decisions about how to respond. For example, the President and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) [met with faculty and staff](#) for two different meetings in December of 2008 and January 2009 to review the prevailing economic model and its implications for the future. In February 2009 the President extended an open invitation to students to attend a similar meeting, an invitation 125 students accepted in order to discuss the financial challenges that faced the College. As the economic situation stabilized and the College's course of action became clearer, the President [sent a letter](#) to the entire campus describing decisions that had been made and additional responses that were still being considered. The President followed this memo by meeting with faculty in May of 2009 to discuss the current state of affairs and to specifically address the possibility of reducing the number of faculty positions. [Email communication](#) about the College's progress in making necessary financial decisions continued throughout the summer and fall of 2009.

As the President and Deans were keeping faculty, staff, and students abreast of the financial situation, they were also working closely with the Board of Trustees to ensure that the Board had all relevant information at its disposal in order to make the most informed decisions about the College's future. Indeed, the financial crisis dominated the meetings of the Board of Trustees starting in October 2008 and proceeding forward for over a year, with the CFO presenting three different times during that span and each member of the President's Staff describing to the Board the ways in which their department's activities were affected in light of the strain on the College's financial resources. For much of 2009, the President and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees [wrote regular letters](#) to College constituencies describing the economy's effect on the College and the responses being made. In sum, as the College faced this economic challenge, the administration worked diligently to place useful information about decisions and procedures before and in the hands of those most affected by the challenges.

The administration and Board of Trustees opted for a measured approach to cutting costs, rather than taking more drastic actions, coupled with the exploration of new methods for increasing revenue and changing the way endowment funds were invested. In 2008, the College (a) was heavily invested, compared to colleges with endowments of comparable value, in global equity funds; (b) was lightly invested in funds that were not directly tied to stock market performance, what the College refers to as "diversifying strategies"; and (c) had a smaller percentage of endowment funds in fixed income or cash funds. Such a profile made the College highly vulnerable to stock market fluctuations. After the stock market plummeted in 2008, the Board of Trustees' Investment Policy Committee reviewed the investment strategies in place. In January 2009, the Trustees took immediate action to reduce the College's exposure to stock market fluctuations by shifting significant dollars from large cap equity funds to real assets, like commodities such as land, gas, and oil. They also continued to review judiciously and make adjustments in investment managers and portfolio allocation. During the May 2009 meeting, the Investment Policy Committee and the CFO explained the need to stabilize endowment investments in lower risk opportunities but to also allow the endowment the opportunity to rebound if or when stocks recouped their losses. As such, the Board committed to a measured shift away from higher risk investments but with a careful eye on economic trends and investment opportunities on which the College could capitalize. As of December 2011, the College's investment portfolio had already shown evidence of this shift. Only 55% of the College's endowment was invested in global equity funds, (compared to 74% in 2008) with 10% in real assets, 21% in

cash/fixed income, and 13% in diversifying strategies. Such an investment profile makes the College's endowment less susceptible to stock market fluctuations, both favorable and unfavorable, than it was four years ago.

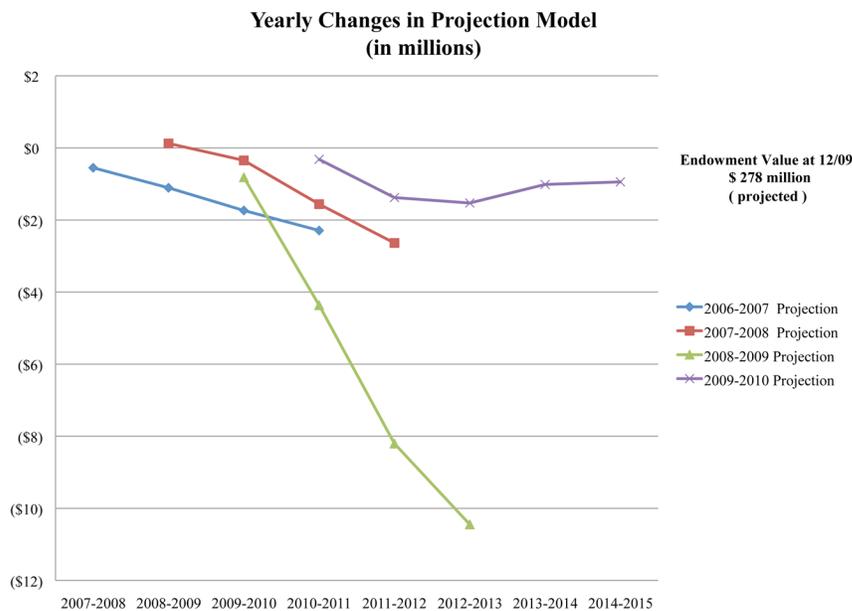
Recalibrating investment strategy was one way to protect the long-term future of the College, but it did not address the immediate revenue challenges facing the institution. Thus, reducing expenses became an important part of the College's immediate and long-term response to the financial crisis. Among the variety of immediate measures that the College took to reduce expenses were suspending athletic field building projects, freezing faculty and staff salaries for 2009-10, and convening a "Registration and Fees" group, a cross-College group of middle managers who brainstormed and implemented strategies to increase the efficiency and timeliness of course registration and bill payment.

In order to identify additional cost-saving and efficiency promoting strategies, the President [appointed four ad hoc committees](#) to consider Energy and Utilities, Printing and Postage, Academic Events Coordination, and Transportation and Motor Pool. These committees found a variety of ways to reduce costs, both in the short- and long-term, ranging from multiple-year advance purchasing of natural gas to keeping the football team on campus for pre-season camps (to reduce transportation costs) to encouraging greater use of electronic communication by shifting to a mass email service provider through which departments and offices could easily send electronic, rather than print, newsletters. This work and a host of other efforts resulted in a 10% reduction in College operating expenses for the 2009-10 year. Overall spending has not increased significantly since that time thanks to additional, longer-term cost-saving initiatives. For instance, the President initiated a full Administrative Program Review in which all administrators and budget managers were asked to assess all tasks in which their departments engaged, identify which staff positions accomplished each task, and investigate ways to combine responsibilities, trim task lists, and generally increase the efficiency of each department's work. This review has led to on-going efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness in four broad areas: Campus Automation, Employment Self-Help (the College's self-funded work study program), Budgeting Processes, and Database Colleague Advancement. A committee of faculty and staff were appointed to investigate and make recommendations within each of these areas, and that work continues. In a broad way, the work of these committees is to initiate meaningful change to the ways the College conducts business in areas that touch numerous College constituencies and that can have long-term stabilizing effects on the College's service to its students, alumni, and staff.

As the College worked to reduce expenses in both the short- and long-term, it considered carefully personnel costs. In 2009-10 such costs accounted for 59% of all expenses (this includes salaries and benefits paid to sub-contracted campus services employees). To reduce personnel costs by 10%, [a target called for by the President](#), the first step for College administrators was to vet carefully each faculty and staff position that came open during the 2008-09 year and whether or not it was necessary to refill those positions. Such scrutiny resulted in 15 positions remaining unfilled for the 2009-10 year. Next, during the summer of 2009, the College created [an early retirement incentive program](#) in hopes of reducing the College's personnel expenditures by faculty and staff choice rather than by non-voluntary termination. All faculty and staff 55 years of age and older were eligible for the program. The program offered faculty, salaried staff, and bi-weekly employees a base of three months' salary (or 13 weeks) plus an additional month of salary for every two years of service at the College (up to a total of 15 months or 65 weeks of salary). All benefits were paid out during a 23 month distribution period and other College benefits (including the College's tuition benefit and retirement plans) remained active for these individuals. Thirty-two faculty and staff opted for this early retirement package (12 faculty, 11 salaried staff, and nine bi-weekly employees).

After these decisions were made, the academic Personnel Committee reviewed all tenure-track positions in order to decide upon an effective faculty size (both broadly and within each department and across divisions) moving forward. Similarly, College administrators considered carefully each staff position in their areas in order to make the same difficult decisions about the necessary size of their staffs. These considerations led to a reduction in full-time faculty and staff from 237 in 2008-09 to 206 in 2011-12 (a 13% decrease). Importantly, all but three of the reductions resulted from allowing voluntarily vacated positions to remain unfilled (the reduction in faculty size is discussed more fully in Criteria 2B and 3B). Notably, the moderate economic rebound of 2010 allowed the College to add positions in targeted ways in areas of most acute need, such as admissions, athletics, and certain academic departments. These new positions were primarily part-time or internship positions, positions that were less costly but deemed vital in meeting the educational needs of students. After these additions in personnel are taken into account, the overall number of individuals employed at the College has been reduced by a net of four persons (261 to 257) from 2008 to 2012; however, the adjustment to more part-time staff and to hiring younger faculty persons to replace more experienced and expensive faculty was financially beneficial. Indeed, expenditures on staff salaries dropped from \$14.5 million in 2008-09 to \$13.6 million in 2011-12. This response to the need to reduce personnel costs is characteristic of the way in which all College divisions have responded to the financial situation: collectively, quickly, and deliberately, with a response shaped by mission goals that has paid off as the course of the financial crisis took shape and situations improved.

As indicated by the CFO's presentation to the Board of Trustees in January 2010, the stock market rebounded appreciably in the second and third quarters of 2009, which tempered the early, pessimistic projections about endowment value, the 12-quarter rolling average, and endowment draw. In short, the dire projections for the budget shortfall for 2010-2013 that were derived from the late 2008 endowment values (green line below) were revised upwards (purple line below) in light of the 2009 rebound and projected benefits of initial cost-saving efforts, even factoring in the cost of early retirements.



**Electronic Resource**  
**Yearly Changes  
in Projection Model  
Chart**

As a result, athletic field renovations resumed in 2009 (due not only to revised projections but also to generous donors who supplied additional funding for the project), faculty and staff salaries were raised again in 2010-11, and no further personnel reductions were proposed. However, such

revised projections and restoration of projects did not mean that the College was returning to *status quo ante*. Indeed, even with more optimistic projections, the previous endowment-heavy budget model still remains untenable. As an example, the College was forced in 2011-12 to draw 6.53% of the endowment's 12-quarter rolling average value in order to cover its operational and debt-related expenses; this exceeded the Board's guidelines for endowment percentage draw of 6% and is judged unsustainable. As such, the College is continuing to explore ways to permanently temper its expenses and to develop new revenue streams. As President White articulated throughout the crisis, it is not possible for the College either simply to cut or fund-raise its way out of the dilemma. While endowment draws at 6% or above were necessary temporarily, especially with added draw for long-term maintenance of buildings and grounds and resumed debt payments, this level of endowment draw cannot be sustained indefinitely. At the 2012 May Board meeting, Trustees discussed launching a new strategic planning effort that will, among other things, squarely address the issue of a sustainable endowment draw and the need for additional revenues.

The College's focus on new revenue has taken multiple forms. Most obviously, the College (a) initiated in 2010 a capital campaign that targeted important, and often costly, programs and efforts; (b) is exploring ways to increase net tuition revenue, including considering increasing tuition and redesigning the amount and types of financial aid offered to students; and (c) through market research and communication consultants, is working to maximize the effectiveness of its student recruitment practices. Each of these efforts is addressed in turn.

After the 2008 economic downturn, the College experienced the aforementioned dip in the number of alumni donors and total dollar amounts of these donations. By 2010, however, a small-scale survey of alumni suggested that a capital campaign targeting specific initiatives could be successful. Thus, the [Challenge of Excellence](#) (COE) was born as a focused effort to provide the College with resources with which it could meet its strategic plan goals. The campaign, which began on July 1, 2010, targets contributions to Financial Aid for students (Strategic Goal 1, initial tactic C), Support for Faculty Teaching and Scholarship (Strategic Goal 2, initial tactic A), Immersion Learning and Study Abroad (Strategic Goal 3, initial tactic B), and Business Experiences and Career Development (Strategic Goal 1, initial tactic D). The COE has been successful in mobilizing the generosity of the Wabash community. As of April 30, 2012, the Challenge of Excellence had raised \$56.6 million toward its \$60 million goal (with 30% of that amount in deferred gifts and 9% in Annual Fund giving), and is expected to surpass that goal before August 2012, projecting a completion of the campaign nine months early. Importantly, according to the Interim Dean for College Advancement, while each of the four targeted giving areas has received substantial restricted support, 60% of the promised gifts are unrestricted, giving the College substantial flexibility to distribute contributions across the four areas. The impact of this campaign on teaching and learning at the College is discussed more fully in Criteria 3 and 4.

The College is also exploring ways to increase its [net tuition revenue](#), and indeed, such revenue has become a focal point of the new budget model. The College's net tuition revenue, which stood at \$9.4 million during 2008-09 and \$9.6 million during 2009-10, is, on a per-student basis, among

On the Web

Challenge of Excellence  
Case Statement

Strategic Plan



*Professor Melissa Butler addresses alumni, faculty, staff, and students during the kickoff of the Challenge of Excellence.*

the lowest of all GLCA and NCAC schools. As it moves to increase such revenue, the College has considered both ways to decrease the tuition discount rate and whether and by how much to increase the cost of tuition. With regard to the discount rate, the College's financial aid policy was complicated greatly in 2008 when SallieMae discontinued the Signature Select loan program on which the College depended heavily, especially when packaging financial aid for lower income students. Given that the College is not a participant in other predominant federal financial aid and self-help programs (like Perkins Loans or the College Work Study programs), it implemented from the endowment its own subsidized loan program, Wabash Loans, to offset this shortfall. Over the past four years, the College has invested more than \$4 million in its students through these loans, with the distribution value rising from just over \$500,000 of endowment investment in 2008-09 to more than \$1.5 million in 2011-12. The increase in loan dollars and in the amount of Employment Self-Help (ESH) packaged in students' financial aid has been effective in decreasing the financial aid discount in recent years, from an average of 57% for the entering classes of 2006-2008 to an average of 52% for the past three entering classes. The table below displays the discount rate and loan/ESH rates for all students, as well as the impact of such rates on net versus gross tuition revenue.

In addition to this reduction in discount rate, the College has reduced the number of students studying off-campus (a move discussed in more detail in Criterion 3C) and has developed a new financial process for off-campus study. Whereas the College formerly paid the entire cost of all study abroad programs, many of which are more expensive than Wabash tuition and fees, the College now pays the cost of the study abroad program up to the cost of Wabash tuition. Students pay tuition costs in excess of Wabash tuition and program room and board costs. Collectively, such changes in policy and strategy have helped increase net tuition revenue by more than \$1 million per year from 2008-09 to 2010-11 (See Table below). Of course, the cost of tuition is also a critical component of such revenue, and that figure has risen 23% in the past five years to a current level of \$31,800, a figure which still positions Wabash as the second least expensive college in both the Great Lakes Colleges Association and North Coast Athletic Conference, groups that include institutions with comparable programs, such as DePauw, Denison, Kalamazoo, and Wooster. In short, the last three years have seen novel strategies for increasing net tuition revenue that have been successful in the short-term.

|                                | <b>Actual<br/>2008-2009</b> | <b>Actual<br/>2009-2010</b> | <b>Actual<br/>2010-2011</b> | <b>Projected<br/>2011-2012</b> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Gross Tuition Revenue          | \$24,315,000                | \$24,777,000                | \$25,786,000                | \$28,201,000                   |
| Net Tuition Revenue            | \$9,426,000                 | \$9,634,000                 | \$10,982,000                | \$11,798,000                   |
| Financial Aid Discount % (all) | 53.18%                      | 53.72%                      | 50.46%                      | 50.74%                         |
| Loan/ESH Discount % (all)      | 4.33%                       | 4.93%                       | 5.46%                       | 5.79%                          |

Importantly, the College has thus far accomplished these changes in net tuition revenue without sacrificing the quality of the freshman classes that have matriculated at Wabash. Indeed, entrance SAT scores and high school GPAs of the 2006-2008 classes are barely distinguishable from those of the 2009-2011 classes, and the more recent classes have actually included a higher percentage of ethnic minorities and international students.

| <b>Year Groups</b> | <b>HS GPA</b> | <b>Top 10%</b> | <b>Average SAT</b> | <b>Average ACT</b> | <b>Diversity</b> |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 2006-2008          | 3.61          | 36%            | 1171               | 25                 | 19%              |
| 2009-2011          | 3.58          | 37%            | 1155               | 25                 | 27%              |

One consequence of the reduction in grant aid and the associated increased packaging of loans in students' financial aid packages has been an increase in the average debt with which students are graduating from Wabash. Though the last three years have witnessed a smaller percentage of total students borrowing money from the College, the average debt for those who have borrowed has risen. For instance, the average loan burden for freshmen in the 2006-2008 entering classes stood at \$5,793 but rose to \$7,621 for the freshmen in years 2009-2011 with the percentage of freshmen borrowing money also rising across that time span from 69% to 76%. Further, the average debt of Wabash graduates rose from \$21,423 in 2008 to \$28,383 in 2009 and has remained elevated since that time.

A 2012 comparison of the average Wabash student's debt to that of students at 14 other liberal arts colleges suggested that Wabash student debt is comparable but near the high end of this comparison group. Indeed, [among the 15 schools](#), Wabash students graduated with the sixth highest average debt among those who borrowed money, and the school had the fifth highest percentage of students borrowing from any loan program. Such increased student debt is a function of multiple factors, including the federal government's increase in maximum loan amounts (for example, from \$2,625 to \$3,500 for annual subsidized Stafford Loans to freshmen) and the cutback of State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI) funds, which the College has offset through a combination of loans, ESH, and merit aid; however, the outlay of Wabash Loans also has contributed to such debt.

This increased use of Wabash Loans to meet the financial need of students is regarded as a worrisome investment of endowment dollars, and as such the Board of Trustees and senior administration decided that beginning with the class entering in 2012, the College will move away from its guarantee of meeting 100% of every student's demonstrated need. This move does not mean that the College will not meet the full need of many, or even all, of its students. It does, however, give the College flexibility in how it works with families to meet the needs of students, including the flexibility of asking families to bear a slightly higher burden of college cost, when that burden can be reasonably borne.

#### Electronic Resources

**GDAIS  
Audit & Assessment**

**Positioning  
Market Research**

**Pricing  
Market Research**

Recognizing the need to increase net tuition revenue while retaining valued diversity and academic quality of the student body, the College is actively working to maximize the effectiveness of its student recruitment practices. Such work has benefited greatly from input by two consulting firms: George Dehne and Associates Integrated Services (GDAIS) and Mindpower, Inc. Dehne and Associates conducted an [audit and assessment](#) of the College's marketing strategy and made recommendations about recruitment strategies (including redesigning the College website with prospective students foremost in mind) and the need for additional information-gathering efforts. Based upon these recommendations, the College expanded and mobilized its Integrated Marketing Committee, and contracted with GDAIS to conduct market research regarding the pricing and positioning of the College. The marketing research included a web-based survey of Wabash students and alumni, telephone calls to students who expressed interest in the College but who did not enroll, and phone interviews with college-bound students who expressed no interest in the College. The pricing research targeted parents and included interviews with parents of current students, of admitted students who did not enroll at the College, of students who inquired about Wabash but who were not admitted, and, finally, of students who expressed no interest in the College. Based on the results and analysis of the research, the College is now crafting a marketing strategy (with Mindpower) to open additional markets for student recruitment and target specific populations of high school students who are likely to be interested in and benefit from a Wabash education. Importantly, this new marketing strategy is guided explicitly by the first goal of the strategic plan.

The [positioning research](#) suggested that the Gentleman's Rule and athletic culture should be points of emphasis for student recruitment and that college-educated parents, in particular, value the learning

environment that Wabash has to offer. As such, GDAIS recommended that the College target particular cities and even sections of cities that have a high concentration of college-educated (possibly liberal arts-educated) parents who are heavily involved in their sons' academic lives. The [pricing research](#) suggested that the value such parents place in their sons' educations and in the sorts of experiences offered by Wabash is likely to offset concerns about tuition costs. In fact, according to this research, the College's tuition figure is not a major obstacle to recruiting students.

To animate further this marketing strategy, GDAIS recommended that the College partner with a marketing firm to rebrand and refocus its message to prospective students. Consequently, the College has engaged Mindpower, Inc., an Atlanta-based agency, for this purpose. Representatives from Mindpower reviewed the GDAIS recommendations, reviewed admissions literature, and met with students, faculty, and staff during multiple campus visits. In addition, the President and Director of Communications and Marketing visited Mindpower for a day-long workshop. As a result, Mindpower recommended an emphasis on a theme: "Wabash takes young men seriously," using language from President White's speeches to prospective students. Mindpower found this characterization of Wabash resonating from both Wabash constituencies and the GDAIS research. Therefore, the College has begun to produce new recruitment materials as of the spring of 2012, beginning with postcards designed to attract the attention of prospective students who are presently sophomores and juniors in high school. The full set of material emphasizing this new marketing theme will be in use in fall 2012.

In sum, the College has been and continues to be challenged by its own and the nation's changing economic environment. The response to that challenge has extended to all areas of the College, has been strategic, deliberate, and thoughtful, and reflects both the ability of the Wabash community to react effectively to such challenges and a willingness to assess and adapt its processes to improve its position for the future. In addition, changes in policy and practice that have occurred since 2008, as well as changes that will come from the work of standing committees convened as a result of this crisis, will make the College less vulnerable to such shocks in the future.

In continuing the theme of Wabash improvement of budgeting, staffing, and infrastructure processes, we now turn attention to a broader consideration of the College's use and assessment of resources across the past decade and the evaluation and assessment procedures that enable us to fulfill our mission. Note that this broader consideration will necessarily include reference to the College's new financial situation because, as noted in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction, the new financial reality affects the way work at the College post-2008 now proceeds.

## **2A. WABASH COLLEGE REALISTICALLY PREPARES FOR A FUTURE SHAPED BY MULTIPLE SOCIETAL NEEDS AND ECONOMIC TRENDS.**

Certainly Wabash's actions in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis show both the ability to plan realistically and to respond concretely to needs and economic trends. Moreover, there is broader evidence of how the College meets the expectations of this criterion component in the ways College personnel stay apprised of higher education developments and practices, the way internal processes of the College reflect awareness of key trends, and how planning emphasizes global and technological advances and priorities.

**FOUR YEARS AT  
WABASH WILL  
CHANGE YOUR LIFE.  
SERIOUSLY.**

Some people choose a college for its location. Or its name. Or its party-school reputation. If you choose Wabash, you are choosing something different. You're asking to be challenged — and you're electing to sacrifice a little of your social life for a lot of grueling intellectual exertion. Ultimately, you're choosing to become a different kind of person.

No wonder 84 percent of Wabash men who apply to medical school are accepted. Nearly 80 percent who apply to law school are accepted. And one in eight Wabash graduates holds the title of President, Chairman, or CEO.

Seriously.

WABASH  
COLLEGE

## Wabash College and its personnel take active steps to learn about contemporary trends that affect their work

The first step for the College to prepare for its future is to ensure that it is informed about societal and economic trends that can affect that future. To this end, College administrators and their offices are active members of regional and national organizations and conversations about their work and the variety of trends (e.g., demographic, technological, strategic, and financial) that have an impact on their ability to accomplish the College's mission. In staying apprised of important developments, they also subscribe to major paper and online journals such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Insidehighered*, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *Diversity & Democracy*, and more.

### On the Web

#### Great Lakes Colleges Association

Personnel in each of the six areas of the College (academics, student affairs, advancement, admissions, communications and marketing, and business office) are active in conversations sponsored by and with colleagues in the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA). For instance, consortial listserves allow individuals in similar positions at different GLCA colleges to ask questions, trade information and experiences, and provide advice efficiently and discreetly. The GLCA also sponsors annual meetings that allow individuals who share senior administrative roles at the different institutions, including Presidents and heads of all College areas, to meet to share common experiences and to plan improvements. Importantly though, such meetings are not reserved for senior administrators. For instance, information technology personnel recently visited Wabash for a two-day workshop on current concerns about and strategies in information access and security. This workshop has been staged for years, has rotated to various institutions, and was recently granted support by the GLCA. Similarly, GLCA administrative assistants visited Wabash in fall 2011 to dialogue regarding unique problems, strategies, and solutions for their work. Numerous Wabash faculty have attended the GLCA Academic Leadership Initiative (GALI) and have made use of the GLCA's New Directions Initiative and Pathways to Learning opportunities (discussed more in Criteria 3 and 4). In all of these ways the GLCA has provided an effective means by which the College and its personnel at all levels remain aware of professional issues and trends that affect their work.

In addition, each College area is active in other national and regional organizations. President White attends regularly the President Meetings of the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and presented on responding to the financial crisis at that meeting in 2010. He also attends Annapolis Group meetings, as well as meetings of the GLCA and Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI). He serves on the Executive Committee of both these boards and is currently the President of the North Coast Athletic Conference. Similarly, the Dean of the College serves as the current chair of the GLCA Dean's Group and, to stay informed about academic trends, is affiliated with the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS), the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the ICI, the CIC, and the Annapolis Group. Also, College leaders and representatives in IT Services, the Library, and the Registrar's Office, for example, participate as officers in or attendees to regional and national professional organizations associated with their work, such as the Consortium of Liberal Arts Colleges (CLAC), the Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI), and the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS), in order to stay abreast of the fields.

The College is also a member of the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), the Central Association of College and University Business Officers (CACUBO), the National Association of Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), the National Conference on Race & Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE), and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA). Importantly, Wabash staff have made strategic and vigorous use of these memberships. For instance,

the Director of Safety and Security and Freshman Orientation Director have completed on-line webinars sponsored by NASPA. The Dean of Students, Associate Dean of Students, and Coordinator of Student Engagement and Retention all have attended the national meeting of NASPA. That organization's annual conference on assessment and retention has been of particular value given the College's recent retention initiatives (to be discussed in Criterion 3). Finally, the Human Resources Director sits on the board of the College and University Professional Association-Human Resources.

To help protect its financial health, the College employs a Chief Investment Officer (CIO) whose primary role is to work closely with the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees and the College's investment advisors (the Fund Evaluation Group) to maintain the investment strategy decided upon by the Board. The CIO carefully monitors the performance of different funds and fund managers and makes recommendations to the Board's Investment Policy Committee. That committee retains ultimate authority for deriving investment policy for the College; however, the CIO's close monitoring of investment performance and the monitoring of financial trends by fund managers provides multiple layers of information about financial activity that affects the value of College assets. In the last two years the Investment Policy Committee has engaged in monthly phone meetings to keep careful tabs on the shifting investment world.

Similarly, the Advancement Office engages in a variety of strategies to understand trends in database management, alumni giving, and communication. For example, staff of the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations have traveled to other colleges, like Valparaiso, to learn about Best Practices in Database Management, and to Mt. Holyoke and Amherst to establish benchmarks for alumni and reunion giving. In addition, the Dean for College Advancement and many of his salaried staff are members of District V of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and attend this group's national and regional conferences each year. Even more specifically, the College's Advancement personnel have attended conferences targeting specific aspects of their work: young alumni engagement, use of new media for advancement purposes, and homecoming and reunion planning. Relatedly, the database managers in the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations attend annual training conferences for Datatel management, and the Major Gifts and Annual Giving staffs have traveled to a recent conference on planned giving. Indeed, Major Gifts staff members have consulted with outside firms (e.g., Pentera) and with the Planned Giving Associations to stay apprised of cutting-edge strategies and policies in their areas. Overall then, College personnel remain very active in their efforts to learn from others in higher education about policies and practices that affect their work and allow for the College to effectively plan for the future.

The College does not, however, rely solely on its academic counterparts or academic organizations for information. It also strategically recruits consulting firms to help it stay abreast of important trends. In March 2011, at the urging of the Campus Automation Committee, which was put in place in response to the 2008 economic crisis, the College engaged Datatel to assess the extent to which it was maximizing use of the "Colleague" system of database solutions. A Datatel business advisor visited campus and talked with a variety of Datatel users and members of the President's Staff and produced a [set of observations](#) and recommendations for changes to Datatel use. These recommendations comprised five broad areas — Business Process Reengineering, Increasing Automation, Governance and Policy Responsibility, Improving Institutional Reporting, and New Solutions — and included a variety of specific suggestions ranging from increased training for staff in Advancement to increased use of a Datatel Student Retention Alert program in hopes of identifying early and supporting effectively students who are at risk for attrition. The recommendations in this report are under consideration, and some have already been implemented. For instance, the College has moved to an electronic budgeting process and advisors now have access to all of their academic advisees through Datatel's "My Advisees" function. Additional changes to Datatel use, including more effective

tracking of student organization membership and on-line course registration through Datatel's eAdvising suite, are also being considered.

Such consultation with Datatel is only one of a number of examples of the way in which the College employs outside companies to assist with its awareness of current trends and future planning. As mentioned earlier in this criterion, the College also has contracted with GDAIS and Mindpower regarding its marketing strategies and website design; the architectural firms of Hastings & Chivetta about campus planning and Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf regarding a possible student center; Master's Computer Consulting, LLC to assess staffing and budget allocations, particularly within the realm of IT Services; and Aparatus, an information technology consulting and management firm with expertise in sophisticated financial modeling of tuition and financial aid costs, to name a few.

### **Wabash College's internal planning processes reflect an awareness of and forethought regarding contemporary financial, demographic, and societal trends**

The College has improved its internal planning processes in significant ways. The most obvious change over the past decade has involved the manner in which budgets are constructed. As noted previously, the economic crisis of 2008 catalyzed significant changes at the College; however, budget planning processes changed significantly even before that crisis, with the arrival of a new President and CFO in 2006. More specifically, the budget planning process has become a collaborative venture among all members of the President's Staff, includes projections for College expenditures and revenues for the current year and for four years out, and concludes later in the fiscal year when critical information about expenses and revenues from the current year are more complete and, thus, are more accurate representations of the monies that the College can allocate to different programs and departments.

Under the previous budget planning model, the President and CFO determined area and departmental budgets based upon the previous year's figures and budget requests that were filed in the fall of the year. For example, the budget requests for 2005-06 were filed in November of 2004, and budgets were constructed based upon these requests and 2003-04 budget allocations. Unfortunately, such a process tended to be insensitive to a variety of potential fluctuations including, but not limited to, the number of students in the incoming class, faculty/staff salary base, and changes in programming that happened after the budget planning process was completed. As a result, budgets were sometimes not fully grounded in the most current information, which made it difficult for the budgets to function as tools for effective planning and managing resources. Further, the individuals responsible for the allocation of individual accounts did not have ready access to information about those accounts; instead, that information was the responsibility of a single employee who would provide information upon request. Such a practice tended to lead to overspending on budgets as a result of a lack of precision in tracking account expenditures and difficulty in obtaining accurate, timely information. Also, because the budgeting process was siloed, there was a marked lack of conversation among the President's Staff regarding the assumptions that underlay budgetary projections in the different departments. As such, those projections frequently missed the actual marks, leaving individual departments and areas with budget expenditures exceeding what the College could afford in a given year. The new College administration was already working to address this lack of accuracy, transparency, and accountability in the budget process, a process that had contributed to a sizeable structural budgetary shortfall, even before the stock market decline of 2008.

Fortunately, budget accuracy, transparency, and accountability have increased for multiple reasons. First, individual account managers now have immediate access to account information via the College's AskWally system, and the Business Office updates the general ledger monthly (rather

than quarterly, as was done previously) so that managers have more real-time information about their accounts. Also, the College now uses a [detailed budget spreadsheet](#) to estimate expenses and revenue three times each year: in January (for the Board of Trustees meeting), in February when the endowment draw has been set, and again in May after information about faculty/staff salaries and incoming class numbers and aid fraction are known. Such information makes obvious the assumptions on which budgetary projections are based, and senior administrators adjust the assumptions when necessary. With such information in hand and the increasingly reliable nature of the projections, especially as the year progresses, budgets are allocated “top down,” carving the expense budget among the different areas of the College in a way proportional to years past and to programs added or eliminated. Such decisions are also made collectively by all members of the President’s Staff. In turn, the senior staff person for each area uses departmental budget requests, which are now submitted in April, to partition that area’s budget allocation among its various departments. In addition, the CFO’s staff runs monthly summaries of area accounts, provides information comparing expenditures for current versus previous years (projected and actual), and reports those summaries routinely at President’s Staff meetings. This collective and informed planning process has led to more realistic budget allocations and more accountability among both the President’s Staff and department and division chairpersons for staying within budgetary restraints.

On the other hand, with the timing of the budget planning process now pushing closer to the end of the previous fiscal year, difficulties can be created for departments that depend on budgetary information in order to decide upon building and renovation projects (e.g., IT Services) and/or must plan large purchases some time in advance (e.g., library purchasing, computer equipment). In the coming years, the College will need to work to maximize the need for accurate and responsible budget construction with individual departments’ needs for timely information.

Admissions Office planning provides another example of the way in which the College’s planning processes facilitate effective achievement of its mission. As one example, in 2006 Admissions produced a planning document called [“Recruiting Towards 2010.”](#) which invoked the College’s Mission Statement and Core Values and discussed the office’s effectiveness in meeting the goals of the College’s previous strategic plan (the 2000-2005 plan) as well as its own previous planning document, “Plan 2003.” “Recruiting Towards 2010” describes the impressive increases in number of applications, number of alumni referrals for prospective students, the ethnic diversity of the student body, and in achieving a goal of a 50% acceptance rate. Concurrently, the document identifies important challenges, including concerns about incomplete applications, the financial aid fraction, and maintaining the academic profile of the class, and recommends strategies for meeting those challenges in the coming years. More generally, the document is an important example of the way the planning processes of different areas of the College function to reflect on their efforts to fulfill the College’s mission and how those efforts might change in the future to facilitate more effectively that mission.

**Electronic Resource**

**Admissions Plan  
“Recruiting  
Towards 2010”**

### **Wabash’s planning documents reflect an emphasis on globalization and technological advances**

Like many other colleges, Wabash works to position its students to be leaders in an increasingly global and diverse society, one in which information travels widely and quickly and in which cultural competence is paramount. As evidence of this commitment, the College’s Core Values include “an understanding of and appreciation of other cultures,” and the strategic plan articulates a commitment to recruiting students from diverse backgrounds and a goal to “provide . . . the skills, knowledge, and experiences our students will need to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely in a constantly changing global society.”



*President White and the Wabash delegation are welcomed by administrators at Fudan University in Shanghai.*

The College continues to address the challenges promised by such planning. For instance, the Multicultural Concerns Committee sponsors programs that encourage cultural competence and understanding and that facilitate a positive experience for our students of color. And as will be discussed more fully in Criterion 3C, the College has increased the number of immersion courses, short-term (usually seven-to-10 day) study experiences away from campus (typically abroad) with other students, faculty, and staff; at the same time, the College has, as a result of the financial burden that such study places on the budget, decreased the number of students who participate in off-campus study for an entire semester. Over the course of four years, approximately 50% of both students and faculty will have participated at least once, and a number of students more than once, in an immersion course. To address such needs, the Challenge of Excellence campaign includes an emphasis on study abroad experiences, and the success of this campaign suggests that the College will be able to make good on its goal to provide greater opportunities

for students to experience globalization first hand. For example, the College's newly-established Asian Studies Program is already providing significant opportunities for students and faculty to engage with Chinese people, history, literature, and language. And in order to strengthen the overall efforts to infuse global issues and experiences in the curriculum, to support faculty development of new and diverse pedagogies, and to assess the effectiveness of international studies opportunities for students, the Dean of the College has appointed a faculty member to serve as Coordinator of International Studies. The College's commitment to fostering leaders for a global society has momentum for the coming years, as is discussed further in Criterion 3C.

Along with globalization, among the most obvious trends in higher education is the use of new technologies, and the College has devoted substantial resources to updating and planning for changes in technological demands and expectations. The most obvious manifestations of this commitment come from the work of Information Technology Services (IT Services) and the strategic planning of Lilly Library.

#### Electronic Resource

### Campus Automation Report Spring 2011

Guided by an effective plan to enhance automation, security, and efficiency, IT Services has significantly improved the technological environment at Wabash over the past five years. In 2010, Master's Computer Consulting performed a [systematic assessment](#) of the College's results on the Educause CLAC and GLCA IT surveys from 2008-09. That assessment revealed, quite broadly, that (1) Wabash is a technology-rich environment, one in which the number of students per campus computer is lower than at comparable institutions while the College's IT Services expenditure per student is almost double the average CLAC school's expenditure; (2) the College is light on IT Services staff, with a higher than average student-to-staff ratio and a high percentage of student staff to professional staff; and (3) compensation for IT Services staff lags behind that of other institutions. This information, along with other information collected by IT Services itself and provided by the Datatel consultant (previously mentioned), led the President's Staff to prioritize campus automation and, in turn, to appoint a committee of faculty and staff to review IT Services programs and to make recommendations for future action. This group produced [a report](#) in spring 2011 in which it made five key recommendations: (1) create a Chief Information Officer position at the executive level; (2) improve long-term IT Services planning; (3) represent IT Services in College-wide strategic planning; (4) plan and oversee renovation or replacement of IT Services facilities to improve information security; and (5) address staffing needs for more effective services. Each of these broad recommendations includes action steps that range from short-term to long-term suggestions.

Within the context of this self-study, such work provides evidence that the College takes seriously technological advancement and security and is forward thinking in these areas.

Importantly, such thinking is already bearing fruit as IT Services has crafted a [three-year technology “road map”](#) and is tracking carefully its progress on each project described therein. These projects cluster into seven broad categories: information security, back-up, and disaster recovery; facilities maintenance and upgrades; office efficiency and productivity; academic and instructional technology; outreach and marketing; planning and assessment; and miscellaneous projects. Progress on specific projects in the last three years has been impressive, and includes consulting with AT&T and Spohn Consulting regarding the campus network’s vulnerability to external infiltration; exploring off-campus backup systems (in collaboration with other Indiana colleges); renovating student computer laboratories; redesigning the IT Services website; implementing a new Datatel reporting system (a project originating with the Datatel consultant); and continuing to upgrade College computers to Windows 7 and MacOS Lion operating systems. Within this road-map, projects are prioritized, allocated to a particular area of IT Services, given a target date for completion, and tracked for progress, moving from “Future” to “Plan” to “Active” to “Closed.” Such tracking reveals real and ongoing progress in meeting the information technology needs of the campus, including implementing a print management system for students which has reduced environmental and financial costs of printing; launching a redesigned website (in August 2011); upgrading classrooms with the latest instructional technology, including high definition projectors, touch screen controls, and mobile whiteboard systems; and automating and streamlining components of the ESH system.

Since 2008, the College has moved forward with needed IT infrastructure improvement, including upgrading the server room, disaster redundancy, and data security; adding needed staff; improving Datatel integration across campus; improving data backup capacity; and accelerating strategic planning efforts. Overall, the College gives evidence of focusing on IT Services with both immediate and long-range plans for improving the security of College information and communication, while maintaining appropriate access to such information and ensuring that teaching and learning, as well as administrative functions of the College, are served effectively by the latest and most effective technologies.

Assisting with technology advancement is the Technology Advisory Committee (TAC), a committee comprised of faculty and staff whose mission is to “consider how the faculty and staff of Wabash College can best use technology to define effective liberal arts education in the 21st century in a manner that is consistent with the strategic plan.” This committee works as a conduit between IT Services and faculty, staff, and students, bringing to that office concerns and questions but also encouraging these constituencies to help with IT Services-led initiatives. For example, during 2009-10 the TAC spearheaded a consideration of the College’s computer replacement policy, one that led IT Services to provide faculty with the option of delaying computer replacement beyond the standard three-year cycle. Also, in 2011-12 the committee encouraged faculty, staff, and students to participate in IT Services-driven conversations about the effectiveness of and alternatives to the Moodle system (the College’s open-source course management software). And for 2012-13, the committee is piloting innovative classroom technology use such as iPads to facilitate digital student learning. In addition to embodying the commitment of the College to staying aware of and promoting in its faculty and staff technological advances, this committee’s work also suggests a support of innovation and change in and outside of the classroom.

Along these same technological lines, in 2011 the Lilly Library adopted a three-year [strategic plan](#), which positioned the library as the continuing “intellectual steward” of the College — an important



*Significant upgrades were made to Wabash’s server room during summer 2011.*

Electronic Resource

Lilly Library  
Strategic Plan

purpose in light of economic concerns and questions about the continued viability and relevance of print collections and the libraries that house them. In the face of such concerns and questions, the library's strategic plan creatively re-envisioned library collections and spaces so that students, faculty, and staff continue to have superior "access to and assistance" with the information resources, whatever the format, that are needed to continue "the full exercise of freedom of inquiry" that is integral to the Wabash College liberal arts experience. Similar to the discussion of IT Services, here we address library planning, while in Criterion 3D we attend more fully to the teaching and learning impact of the library and this plan.

Importantly, each goal of the library's strategic plan includes an explicit commitment to the use of and/or assistance with new technologies. The first goal of the plan involves providing access to the intellectual resources the College community needs with Sub-goal B of the plan stating that the College will "Identify digital as the content format of choice when appropriate" and "Replace print copy with comparable e-content when available." This transition from print to electronic resources has been in process for a decade, as evidenced by the increase in the College's digital subscriptions from 536 (in 2001-02) to nearly 20,000 (in 2010-11). However, it is important to recognize that the library is also committed to assessing carefully the necessity of print subscriptions and continuing to provide those when warranted. The second strategic plan goal includes commitments to technological advances that will improve the Wabash community's access to both print and electronic resources. Indeed, the plan commits to redesigning the library website, exploring "Discovery layer" technology, and developing web-based guides for students to facilitate their exploration of the library's resources. The plan's third goal commits the library to promoting among faculty, staff, and students the use of "information resources and educational technologies" and providing systematic instruction and guidance to facilitate such use. The fourth goal imagines redesigning library spaces to apply information and educational technologies to scholarship, coursework, and collaborative work among students. Finally, the fifth goal includes a promise of creating a digital commons by which to preserve and celebrate the "intellectual accomplishments and property of the College." Overall then, the library's strategic plan is committed heavily to investing in electronic resources for the College, helping students, faculty, and staff stay informed about how to best use such resources for coursework and/or scholarship, and to crafting the College's own electronic resources in ways that will facilitate and preserve the College's intellectual environment. On this latter point, it is important to note that each of these strategic plan goals is linked explicitly to the College's

mission and current strategic plan. Additionally, each goal includes associated outcomes and a process of implementation by which it may be achieved. As such, the document serves not only as a glimpse of the College's commitment to staying abreast of and using technological trends, but it is also an impressive example of a planning document that does more than establish goals. It lays out a map, grounded in the mission, by which the goals might be realized, outcomes benchmarked, and mechanisms examined to understand and change course, if necessary.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** The College and its personnel participate in important developmental activities to stay at the forefront of advances and trends in their duties. Indeed, the College is wired in to an impressive network of information sources, both within and outside of academia. These activities and subsequent internal reflection have contributed to improvements in College processes including more accurate, transparent, and collaborative budgeting. There is



*Lilly Library's strategic plan calls for it to invest in new technologies for students.*

substantial evidence that areas of the College are forward thinking about such trends, especially with regard to the use and promotion of technology inside and outside of the classroom. An area of continuing challenge for the College will be to meet its goal to produce global citizens, those who are aware of and function in multicultural, diverse societies. Although the resources the College invested in traditional off-campus study were cut back after 2008, a number of different mechanisms to restore those opportunities are in place. Fifty percent of the study abroad positions earlier cut have been added back through endowment funds raised by the Challenge of Excellence campaign and by modest administrative charges assumed by students. The College continues to refine elements of the budgeting process and data access and to consider ways to improve IT Services staff compensation.

## **2B. WABASH COLLEGE'S RESOURCE BASE SUPPORTS ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND ITS PLANS FOR MAINTAINING AND STRENGTHING THEIR QUALITY IN THE FUTURE.**

Wabash College's resource base includes its financial resources, buildings and grounds, and the people who are at the heart of the College, and these resources are necessarily interconnected. As discussed above, the financial challenges that the College has faced have impacted plans for improving the physical environment, for aspects of the academic program, and for the allocation and support of personnel to various campus roles. The College's financial model already has been discussed at some length. In this section, we first focus attention briefly on evidence that the College employs effective means of financial resource development. We then turn attention to the way in which personnel resources, particularly faculty, have been adjusted in recent years. Finally, we consider "bricks and mortar" projects, projects that have been strategic, impressive, and mission-driven.

### **Wabash College has a history of effective financial resource development**

As with most colleges, the development of financial resources has become particularly critical in light of the 2008 market crash and the continuing weakness in the U.S. and global economies. Not only did the value of the College's endowment drop nearly 40% during an 18-month period, but considerable grant monies, including sizeable awards from Lilly Endowment Inc. in 2000 and 2006, were approaching depletion at about the same time.

Fortunately, by nearly any measure, the College's development of financial resources has been effective, even given the economic turmoil and uncertainty. The College's Annual Fund has continued to grow, surpassing \$3 million of total gifts in each of the last five years, despite a drop in the total number of donors as compared to pre-2008 totals. Capital campaign efforts have been similarly successful. The Campaign for Leadership (which ran from 1998-2003, a robust economic period) raised more than \$136 million in gifts and pledges. As expected, alumni and trustees accounted for the vast majority of the total giving to the College, but two-thirds of faculty and staff also contributed to the campaign. More than 70% of these gifts were outright, rather than deferred, gifts; substantial numbers and amounts of unrestricted gifts were targeted as new money for the endowment; and student scholarships and faculty pedagogical and scholarly development were the most popular targets of giving. As noted in the [final campaign report](#), it was the most successful in Wabash's history and "transformed the institution." The impressive success of the present targeted campaign, The Challenge of Excellence, carried out in a much different economic environment, has already been described and evidence of its present and future impact on Wabash is referenced throughout the *Self-Study Report*.

Supplementing fundraising efforts, Wabash has successfully applied for additional grant funding that has bolstered College resources and supported important programs. As is discussed across the *Self-*

Electronic Resource

**Campaign for  
Leadership  
Final Report**

*Study Report*, but most particularly in Criteria 3 and 4, these awards include not only faculty research awards, such as National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health grants, but also grants from private foundations to support the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts, the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, health and wellness programming, the Teacher Education Program, new faculty orientation, student retention efforts, student advising, Asian Studies, immersion study, classroom instrumentation, and other College initiatives. Historically, Wabash has been wary of receiving federal grant funding for institutional needs, but in the last five years the College has facilitated indirect cost awards on federal grants to faculty and has pursued additional federal support for student and faculty research and other activities. A full-time Grants Coordinator in the Advancement Office assists faculty and staff in the application and reporting process for institutional and individual grants. Despite increasing competition for corporate and foundation support, the College looks to improve an already impressive record of external funding to sustain programs and improve the College.

All told, effective fund-raising efforts combined with the previously described efforts to increase net tuition revenue to produce an operating budget of more than \$34 million for 2011-12, of which approximately 48%, rather than 53% as was the case in 2008-09, came from endowment draw.

### **Wabash College allocates its personnel resources effectively**



*Wabash has a College-wide commitment to maintain maximum, high quality student engagement in classes, labs, and studios with the lowest possible student/faculty ratios.*

As noted above, among the most important challenges to the College over the past four years has been how it has accomplished and strengthened its mission while simultaneously reducing costs. Such cost reduction efforts necessarily included consideration of personnel, as personnel costs represent the largest single College expense. Faculty lines, in particular, were scrutinized carefully via the 2009 Comprehensive Faculty Review. As a result, the number of full-time faculty positions, both continuing and temporary, decreased from 101 in 2008 to 85 in 2010. The relatively large number of faculty just four years ago was supported not only by a healthy endowment and frothy economic times, but also by Lilly Endowment grant support (in the form of the grant to sustain CILA). These funds supported Lilly Teaching Fellows, who brought special skills to the College and also helped fund sabbatical and leave replacement positions that supported department reviews and special faculty projects (such projects are discussed in Criteria 3 and 4). Given the soft money that funded these lines, the temporary positions that pushed faculty numbers to 101 were unsustainable, even in the absence of the economic problems that peaked in 2008. As Wabash's need to reduce personnel costs in light of the 2008 crisis became clear, the College contemplated the possibility of reducing the number of continuing faculty lines from 82 to 71. Fortunately, patience in responding, thoughtful consideration, and residual grant funding, including a three-year no-cost grant extension by Lilly Endowment, softened the economic blow and enabled the College gradually to reduce total faculty size without negative effect on student learning. This last claim is supported by Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS) and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) longitudinal data that are discussed in Criterion 3.

Decisions about which faculty lines to continue or remove were made only after evaluating and weighing numerous factors, including the College's mission, the goals of the 2008 Strategic Plan, the nature of the curriculum and the faculty size needed to support it, and, especially, impact upon the student learning experience. Also, the Dean of the College and the division chairs, who collectively comprise the College's Personnel Committee, waited until after the early retirement program ended

before making any additional personnel decisions. After these retirement decisions, the Personnel Committee examined each department and faculty position to determine faculty and individual department sizes that best met the College's teaching and learning needs and desires. Such needs were expressed in 12 considerations that the Personnel Committee used to guide its work:

#### **Consideration in the Planning of Present and Future Faculty Positions**

- The overall mission of the College to provide students with an excellent, high quality liberal arts education for the 21st century;
- College-wide commitment to maintain maximum, high quality student engagement in classes, labs, and studios with the lowest possible student/faculty ratios;
- The 2008 strategic plan goals to strengthen interdisciplinary and international teaching and learning at the College;
- The historic strength of the College in attracting and retaining students;
- The financial needs and opportunities of the College;
- The needs and interests of the students attracted to departments and programs across the College;
- The need for a diverse faculty;
- The need to support three strong academic divisions;
- The need to support general education and all-college courses;
- The need to support majors and minors;
- The potential of individual faculty members to contribute to the College's mission;
- AAUP guidelines regarding renewal of appointments.

The College recognized that maintaining the lowest possible student/faculty ratio was particularly important to maximize high impact teaching practices (like faculty-student research collaboration and investment by faculty in students both inside and outside of the classroom) expected at Wabash and verified as strongly effective by the WNS. Likewise, the historic strengths of the College in attracting and retaining students was an important acknowledgement that students often come to and remain at Wabash because of particular academic programs (e.g., biology and chemistry programs that facilitate a pre-medical school focus) and that cutting such programs may have a detrimental impact on admissions and retention of students.

The outcome of this process was a [faculty that was reduced](#) by approximately 15 positions, a reduction which included only two non-voluntary departures of continuing lines. The art, biology, mathematics and computer science, and classics departments were each reduced by one person by leaving vacant a faculty position opened by either early retirement or voluntary departure from the College. The Personnel Committee also chose not to refill one position in history and another in religion, positions that were left vacant by an unsuccessful tenure review and by the untimely death of a professor, respectively. Unfortunately, the necessary reduction in personnel costs could not be achieved only by such measures, and thus two tenure-track faculty were discontinued at the College, one in the music department and one in modern languages and literatures (German). Ultimately, this resulted in setting the number of continuing (tenure-track) lines at 75, a number that has since been increased to 78 (explained below).

In spite of this reduction in faculty, improved economic circumstances and creative, focused, and strategic planning have maintained the quality of the academic experience at the College. For instance, the mathematics and computer science department now offers fewer small, upper level courses but has maintained the core of its major curriculum. The psychology department changed its accounting of the senior capstone experience (from a 5.0 FTE allocation across the year to a 3.5 FTE allocation) and has added a large general education course (Psychology 105: Fatherhood); in

addition to the obvious contribution of more student seats in general education courses, the two moves combined to allow the department to maintain its core major courses while also contributing more actively to the College's two freshman all-college courses. And the classics department reduced the total number of upper level Greek and Latin courses, reshaped the Greek and Latin majors, and added a series of new 100 level courses that have added important distribution course resources that have eased pressures on high demand areas such as history and religion. These represent a small number of examples when, in fact, all academic departments have had to reevaluate their curricular offerings (scope and schedule), personnel allocations, and overall mission effectiveness. This also is a dynamic process, one that receives regular on-going attention in assessing educational practices and resource allocation. As a result, and as the examples below further illustrate, departments have had to become more flexible. They have developed synergies and collaborations with other departments (and in a few special cases other institutions) through cross-listing of courses counting toward the major and minor.

The College is moving forward in a tactical and strategic manner in determining how to fill newly vacated positions and where to add resources as circumstances permit. This approach views every faculty line as a College position first and foremost. This involves making appointments in support of the strategic plan, calculating student needs, and engaging in long-term curricular planning. For example, the Mellon Grant for Asian Studies provided funding for a new faculty line beginning in 2011 that spans Chinese language and history. Also, in 2011-12 the College announced the addition of tenure-track positions in classics, economics, and religion, and part-time appointments in art (equivalent to 1 FTE), biology (equivalent to .66 FTE), and music (equivalent to .83 FTE).

The tenure-track additions in economics and classics were made possible by two new endowed chairs, as a part of the Challenge of Excellence campaign. Thus, in 2013 the classics department will advertise for a new tenure-track line, one designed to strengthen both the classics and history departments and to meet strategic plan goals of greater interdisciplinary teaching and learning. This line is a result of the combined efforts of the Dean of the College, the classics faculty, and the College's Advancement Office to identify a generous alumnus, who is funding this continuing position. As the possibility for such a hire began to take shape, the Personnel Committee was careful to enter the conversation with the same considerations that drove the 2009 vetting of faculty positions. Indeed, the cumulative value to the College of such a position was foremost on the minds of those involved in crafting the position, and thus, the new position will be charged explicitly with contributing to both departments. With the addition of the new tenure lines and limited increased use of part-time faculty, overall FTE levels in 2013 are projected to be similar to those of 2000-2006.

This same broad perspective on the value and contribution of each faculty position now characterizes all conversations regarding either new positions or vacancies. Departments that hope to hire a sabbatical replacement or to replace a faculty member lost to voluntary or non-voluntary departure are asked to craft a rationale for such replacement and to make a case for how that position can most



*With the addition of new tenure lines and limited increased use of part-time faculty, overall FTE levels in 2013 are projected to be similar to those of 2000-2006.*

effectively speak to the considerations used for determining faculty positions. Such a practice is an important change for a college at which sabbatical replacements and filling of open faculty lines have long been the default, and that change has been met with some faculty displeasure. However it is a necessary change that best ensures continued fulfillment of the College's mission, one that prioritizes impact upon student learning both within and beyond particular departments.

Importantly, evidence supports the claim that Wabash continues to fulfill that mission. The student/faculty ratio remains at a low 11/1, and the proportion of large-to-small classes has changed almost imperceptibly from 2008 to 2011. It seems that the removal of small classes in certain programs has been met with the addition of other such classes elsewhere, and the addition of large classes in some departments has been met with an almost equal reduction of class size in other departments. In sum, as the Dean of the College explained in a [Deep Dive session](#) to the Board of Trustees, class size and the student/faculty ratio remain at levels that support the good pedagogical practices that have traditionally characterized Wabash. Also, as is reviewed in detail in Criterion 3, on national survey assessments (e.g., CIRP, WNS, and NSSE) Wabash students continue to report highly favorable experiences at the College.

The described method for assessing personnel was not limited to academic faculty lines; each administrative area of the College engaged in a similar review process focusing upon mission effectiveness, resources, and synergies. That is, as was explained in the opening section of this Criterion chapter, administrators and budget managers in each area gauged how many personnel were needed to accomplish the area's tasks and how the responsibilities of those personnel might be adjusted to maximize the efficiency of each position. Such considerations guided the 2009 Administrative Program Review and led initially to a reduction in staff size of approximately 14% (compared to a 13% reduction in continuing faculty lines). The departments affected included Admissions, Advancement, Athletics, IT Services, Lilly Library, and the Business Office. For instance, prior to 2008, the College supported one administrative assistant for each academic building (six total); after early retirement decisions and the non-voluntary departure of one assistant, the College supported only four such full-time assistants and asked three assistants to split time between two academic buildings. This strategy proved difficult for the assistants and for the departments they assisted, even with adjustments made to redistribute the work load using ESH student workers. Fortunately, the College has now invested resources in additional hourly and internship staff to assist in a number of areas, including administrative assistants (three new part-time positions were created). As such, and to reiterate, the total staff numbers in 2012 approximate those of 2008 (257 versus 261, respectively). However, today's staff is allocated more strategically across areas (slightly more athletic staff, who serve an important role with admissions) and represent fewer costly full-time and experienced staff persons and more less expensive part-time and less experienced staff.

### **Wabash College facilities reflect the College's commitment to maximizing the educational experience of its students, both in the classroom and outside of it**

The Wabash College campus features nearly one million square feet of building space across 60 wooded acres. The campus consists of 25 major academic, athletic, and administrative buildings, plus eight College-owned fraternity houses, five residence halls, several small independent houses, four administrative houses, and a campus center that contains the College's food service, bookstore, mailroom, and grill. All College-owned facilities are structurally sound, well maintained, and reviewed regularly by campus services and the Board [Committee on Building and Grounds](#). An [overview and tour](#) of the contemporary and historic campus was developed in 2011 by emeritus Professors of Chemistry David Phillips and John Zimmerman.

**Electronic Resource**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**Building & Grounds**  
**Committee Report**

## Electronic Resources

**Honeywell  
Energy Audit**

**Sodexo  
Sustainability  
Report**

Over the past two decades, the campus has been significantly transformed and, as was discussed in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction, the College continues to evaluate and improve the campus in order to best meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff. Such evaluations occur through the aforementioned work of Campus Services and the Board Committee on Building and Grounds, as well as through campus planning, strategic plan initiatives, and capital campaigns. Campus Services engages in long-term planning and maintenance and monitors issues ranging from environmental controls to building interiors and finishings. This includes enhanced sustainability opportunities identified in a [2010 Honeywell energy audit](#) (which itself followed upon a consultancy carried out by Honeywell in 2007) and a 2011 visit from a [Sodexo sustainability expert](#). The Honeywell report provides a basis for future strategic thinking about energy use and sustainability by identifying [facility improvement measures](#) for the College's consideration. Likewise, the Sodexo site visit reviewed current campus sustainability efforts and made suggestions such as developing a utility dashboard to monitor energy consumption. These reports provide important information that is being taken into account in ongoing campus planning and improvements. In recent years the College also has enlisted two external consulting firms to assist with elements of campus planning, adopted a strategic plan that contains commitments to continue to enhance residential, academic, and athletic facilities, and undertaken a focused campaign for athletic fields.



*Trippet Hall was one of many facility improvements completed during the Campaign for Leadership.*

At the time of the last self-study, which occurred during the Campaign for Leadership, the College was in the midst of several major building projects. This included the construction of Hays Hall, the \$30 million home of the biology and chemistry departments that was completed in 2003; the 2004 renovations to Goodrich Hall, which houses the mathematics and computer science and physics departments; the new \$2 million home of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies (dedicated in November 2002); the \$20 million Allen Athletics and Recreation Center (dedicated in January 2001); and the completion of Trippet Hall (dedicated in October 2002), which houses the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts and Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium, a dining room, 18 rooms for overnight guests of the College, conference rooms and meetings spaces, and also the offices for Admissions, Financial Aid, and the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program.

In addition to these projects, over the past dozen years all College-owned fraternities were either newly constructed or renovated and an independent residence hall was renovated at a total cost of more than \$37 million. The fraternity building projects were the result of the Fraternity Partnership, an agreement the College entered into in 1998-99 with its on-campus fraternities. This partnership included a commitment by the College to raise funds for renovations while the fraternities (current and previous members, along with regional and national organizations) worked to raise supplementary funds. The contribution of the College and fraternity to each project varied widely, with the College raising substantial funds and also borrowing against cash reserves for portions of its outlay. By 2009, five new houses (Phi Gamma Delta, Tau Kappa Epsilon, Phi Delta Theta, Kappa Sigma, and Sigma Chi) had been constructed and four had been renovated (Lambda Chi Alpha, Phi Kappa Psi, Delta Tau Delta, and Beta Theta Pi).

As fraternity renovations proceeded, independent men's residences were improved as well, albeit not as comprehensively. College Hall underwent a \$2.65 million renovation, and Cole Hall, which previously housed the Delta Tau Delta fraternity, had recently undergone renovation as a fraternity

house. Despite these substantial improvements, the variety and condition of independent men's housing remains a high priority for the College moving forward into the next strategic plan and capital campaign.

According to results from the College Senior Survey, it appears students have taken notice of the improvements as the percentage of seniors indicating they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with student housing facilities is trending up, reaching a high watermark of 59.6% of respondents in 2011. According to 2011 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) comparisons, this percentage is reliably higher than the percentage of seniors at comparable institutions who report similar levels of satisfaction. To help maintain the quality of these facilities and maximize the value of the College's investment, a fraternity cleaning initiative has been adopted, a program by which fraternity cleaning efforts are regularly assessed and student responsibility for the care of their living units evaluated. Fraternities that do not meet established standards must pay for a cleaning service; their progress is monitored by Campus Services and reviewed three times per year by the Board Committee on Building and Grounds.

In support of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan Goal 4, which identifies as an aim to "build or renovate, as appropriate and feasible, academic, athletic, and residential facilities," the College has worked with the firm Hastings & Chivetta on campus planning. The firm visited campus during the fall of 2007 and met with administrators, faculty, and students to identify specific areas of interest. During the summer of 2008, the firm returned to campus to talk with representatives from a number of College departments, including Food Service, Advancement, Athletics, Academics, and Student Affairs on five major topics: athletic facilities, independent men's housing, campus infrastructure, expansion/land acquisition, and information technology. This work led to a number of recommendations, some of which have been acted upon and others not. For instance, the firm [drew up plans](#) for improving the campus entry gates and monuments that signal the boundaries and entrances to campus; crafted plans and drew up bid documents for new athletic facilities; explored possibilities for the placement of new independent men's housing; considered the wisdom of renovating the existing student center or building a new center on the same or different location; and recommended that the College replace the IT Services wing of Baxter Hall to accommodate the office's growing needs and security concerns. With the financial challenges facing the College during the course of this planning, the College chose to put on hold most of the recommendations. However, because of their importance for recruiting, the President moved forward with construction and renovation of athletic fields after a one-year delay.

#### Electronic Resource

### Hastings & Chivetta Campus Planning

Since 2001, the centerpiece of athletics and wellness at the College has been the 175,000 square-foot Allen Athletics and Recreation Center, a stellar facility for indoor track, swimming, basketball, and wrestling, as well as exercise and recreation. However, some outdoor facilities were in need of particular attention. Thus, over the past three years the College has pursued a \$6 million project to upgrade substantially football, baseball, soccer, and tennis facilities. The College's football stadium is now fitted with a new artificial surface; a beautiful new baseball stadium has been built to the west of Knowling Fieldhouse; and a new soccer field with permanent bleachers and multi-purpose fields for athletic practices and intramural activities have been added. Additionally, both indoor and outdoor tennis facilities have been renovated.



*Wabash Ballpark was dedicated in spring 2011 and was part of a \$6 million improvement to outdoor athletics facilities.*

The football, baseball, and soccer facilities are being funded in part by generous, targeted alumni donations and were seen as critical to keeping the College competitive in recruiting prospective students. Indeed, the relatively poor state of these facilities was regarded by Admissions staff as an obstacle to recruitment, which made such renovations of paramount importance for the College. After the College's finances were carefully considered, the administration chose to move forward with these projects in 2010, with the new football surface in place for the fall 2010 season and the baseball and soccer stadiums completed for the 2011 seasons. Reports from Admissions' staff and athletes themselves suggest that the fields are achieving the recruitment goal of making Wabash a more attractive and welcoming place for the students we want to draw while they also have brought field spaces in line with peer institutions.

In addition to these projects, since the last reaccreditation review the College has demonstrated its commitment to maximizing educational experiences via improved physical facilities in other significant ways, including:

- Undertaking significant renovations to Baxter Hall, the home of the economics, history, political science, and psychology departments. Baxter renovations included refurbishing nearly all classroom space, improving building technology, and significantly improving psychology laboratory space (external grant funding helped support this last improvement). Most notably, one traditional lecture style classroom was reconfigured to become a more flexible space that supports lecture, small group work, and class conversation. A second room that served as a seminar room was renovated to become a dual purpose space, one that doubles as a research laboratory for psychology students and faculty and as a seminar room for multiple courses;
- Remodeling the offices and classroom on the second floor of the Fine Arts Center, which houses the rhetoric department. The renovation includes a more flexible classroom configuration and increased ease of student movement for group activities, an attractive space for student studying, and improved energy efficient lighting and décor;
- Renovating IT Services, which included a new server room, office enhancements that improve work space, and a secondary data center located in Hays Hall to better protect the College's data and provide redundancy for core IT functions;
- Renovating the first floor and basement of the Lilly Library to provide more quiet and collaborative learning spaces for students and better computer access. The open first floor computing facility is now the most popular of all campus computer labs while the former lab, which was an enclosed basement space, has been converted into valuable climate controlled storage and workspace for the College Archives. Renovations also reintroduced natural light and provided a significant upgrade in energy efficient lighting. The campus Media Center was relocated from the library basement to the first floor to accommodate a



*The Wabash Media Center was relocated to the first floor of Lilly Library in summer 2012.*

substantial increase in student and administrative use;

- Equipping most classrooms with a “smart cart” that includes a computer and projector. The standard design has allowed for greater consistency and increased ease of technology use across classrooms. Computers are equipped with a “freeze” mode that resets equipment settings each time they are restarted. This has minimized problems by preventing idiosyncratic settings that are prone to baffle the next user of the equipment and that can delay class;
- Renovating the second floor of the Armory to provide a 24/7 computer lab with 38 stations;
- Adding the 1832 Brew Espresso Bar in the library. This change, along with the other library renovations, has further enhanced the library as a welcoming campus learning environment and social spot. For many students, the library first floor has become a de facto student union;
- Constructing a new building on the site of Kingery Hall, an original academic building, for the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, a Lilly Endowment-funded program that is nationally recognized in the area of pedagogy. Since its inception the Wabash Center has partnered with more than 900 teacher-scholars from across the country and North America;
- Remodeling the Business Office in Center Hall;
- Upgrading Center Hall heating and cooling infrastructure serving the President, Dean of the College and Dean of Students offices, the Business Office, faculty offices in the religion, philosophy, and English departments, and several classrooms;
- Reconfiguring campus parking in order to improve campus safety; parking is no longer permitted along the east side of the Campus Mall. This has improved building access needed by emergency fire and safety vehicles. To offset the loss of parking, a new 38-space parking lot was added in 2011;
- Continuing improvements undertaken in the summer of 2012 include replacing the Fine Arts Center roof, repairs to building exteriors, and lighting upgrades to Detchon Hall and Center Hall that will improve energy efficiency. The ongoing installation of energy efficient lighting across campus is an example of a way the findings of the campus-wide energy audit conducted by Honeywell is being employed.



*The Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion.*

On the whole, Wabash College facilities are in excellent condition, and strategic planning and capital campaign contributions have resulted in a host of improvements over the past decade that have enhanced living and learning environments as well as spaces used for athletics, teaching, administration, faculty, and staff. Knowing that a decision to defer maintenance is often one of the first choices made in hard economic times and recognizing the value of its excellent facilities, the College has moved to ensure an aggressive maintenance program. A comprehensive and detailed survey of maintenance needs across the campus by the Campus Services Director and the CFO has

produced an estimated annual need of over \$2 million in ongoing capital maintenance and updating projects. This survey has been reviewed by the Board of Trustees through the Building and Grounds Committee. While in the past these needs have been funded ad hoc through a reserve fund and annual surpluses, the College administration is now including maintenance as an ongoing annual cost in the budget. The estimated \$2.5 million in annual needs will not be fully funded immediately, but during this coming year the budget reflects \$2 million in maintenance. By taking on this need that is often deferred at many colleges, Wabash is taking active steps to protect its excellent facilities and to plan for the necessary costs of the College.

In addition, further improvement to the amount and quality of the housing stock for independent students remains a College priority and is the subject of ongoing discussion and planning. New construction is a future possibility while three residence halls await renovation, and the College is considering carefully the future of several small, College-owned houses available to upperclassmen students. While a popular housing option, use of these houses is inefficient and upkeep is expensive.

The other potentially significant building project that continues to receive periodic attention is the construction of a new student center. The College has considered this possibility multiple times over the past two decades and is still debating how to address the question of need and design. The Sparks Center currently serves as the student center, housing independent dining, the bookstore, the mailroom, the Scarlet Inn, and a limited number of meeting rooms. The building has historic and sentimental value; however, a new student center could provide additional spaces to host large events, offer office space for campus organizations, allow more options for socializing, and provide more meeting rooms. At the same time, there are questions about the facility's use, impact upon fraternity house dining practices, its relationship to existing buildings such as Lilly Library and the Armory, and its potential placement and footprint. In fall 2011 the College [engaged a firm](#) to meet with groups of students and faculty to consider broadly such questions in a preliminary fashion. No decisions have been made, but the College will continue to review information in the process of campus planning and in the development of the College's next strategic plan and capital campaign.



*The Frank Hugh Sparks Center serves as the Student Center at Wabash.*

#### Electronic Resource

#### Student Center Housing Study

Additional space needs and wants were discovered during the process used to develop the present strategic plan and have emerged during ongoing department reviews. These discussions identified a variety of new concerns about building spaces including, but not limited to, the need for an additional multi-purpose room for dining and public events (presently the Allen Center is used for meals larger than 100 guests and Detchon Hall for smaller events), the need for additional classroom and office space, concerns about the long-term viability of Baxter Hall, and the need for additional fine arts space, including more dedicated rehearsal space, a percussion studio room, and more storage space.

**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** The College has done well to grow and allocate effectively its financial, personnel, and building resources, particularly given the trying financial circumstances marking the 2008-2012 period. However, resource development presents a significant and continuing challenge for the coming years. As noted throughout this Criterion, the College is devoted to becoming less dependent on current endowment, while working to strengthen the endowment and Annual Fund (unrestricted gifts). The President has charged the Advancement Office with the task of increasing the Annual Fund from its current record of over \$3.1 million to \$4.0 million. This will not happen immediately, but two new positions have been added to support this drive. In addition, the College's strength in the success of the Challenge of Excellence campaign gives confidence that future fund-raising initiatives, including a major capital campaign in the next decade, will be successful. Further, new marketing strategies, which look to increase net tuition revenue, are critically important to support the near-future operation of the College, its programs, and its people.

With regard to faculty and staff positions, the College responded effectively in trying times and now seems better positioned, with a more realistic sense of the care with which the College must consider its resources, to allocate faculty and staff lines strategically in ways that maximize their value for the College in service of its mission. At the same time, the College must continue to monitor areas of stress and demand in faculty and staff positions, including the long-term impacts experienced by departments and programs with faculty reductions and the possible implications of increased use of contingent faculty. Many valuable building projects have improved the campus while the College is also taking the important step of funding ongoing maintenance in the operating budget at the amount of \$2 million annually. Still, the College has additional work to do to fulfill its goals of providing improved independent men's housing and a potential student center, projects envisioned in the current strategic plan.

## **2C. WABASH COLLEGE'S ONGOING EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES PROVIDE RELIABLE EVIDENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS THAT CLEARLY INFORMS STRATEGIES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS.**

The College engages in a variety of assessment and evaluation processes in order to gauge the effectiveness of the services it provides and to inform changes to policy and strategy. Such processes are in evidence in all areas of the College, including administrative offices (which are discussed in this Criterion and also Criterion 5) and at the level of individual academic departments and programs (which are addressed in Criterion 3A). The evaluation and assessment practices of the College incorporate valuable self-examination that has led to College improvements, but they are sometimes initiated in a piecemeal fashion that lacks cross-College coordination, which can diminish the consistency, efficiency, and pervasiveness of such efforts.

The College's assessment practices focus on assessment activities in four primary forms: strategic planning, institutional data and reports, annual department-based assessment, and reaccreditation self-studies and improvement projects. Much assessment work is focused on measuring progress toward strategic goals and the hard work undertaken to address the College's budget. These efforts have moved assessment closer to the ground while attending to the most pressing strategic issues. Meanwhile, the standing Accreditation Committee has served in a tactical way to keep issues of monitoring and assessing progress before the President and his staff by directing issues back to senior staff for consideration and action.

Wabash regularly engages in strategic planning, and though formats of recent plans have varied,

each has been linked explicitly to the College's Mission and Core Values and has included specific initiatives for program development or improvement. As such, strategic planning has provided a focus for improvement efforts at the College and a means by which to evaluate resource needs and allocations. To this end, the 2008 Strategic Plan is regularly referenced across this *Self-Study Report*, often providing the impetus and justification for initiatives and activities. Strategic planning is addressed in a yet more direct and detailed fashion in Criterion 2D. Relatedly, as the College moves to the Higher Learning Commission's Pathways program of reaccreditation, we anticipate that the self-study and improvement projects that are part of that program will better coordinate and inform strategic planning and decision making. Foreshadowing this possibility, the Board of Trustees' May 2012 Deep Dive session focused on accreditation, the 2012 Wabash self-study, and upcoming institutional strategic planning.

Institutional data are collected each year as part of the College's assessment practices. Wabash participates in CIRP's first year of college survey, freshman and senior Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) surveys, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and also often engages in special assessment initiatives, such as the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS), the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) pre-tenure faculty survey, and the Great Places to Work survey. Summaries of these surveys' results are disseminated on campus and to the Board of Trustees. Again, the *Self-Study Report* discusses the use of these data in multiple places, showing their connection to and use in College assessment and improvement projects. The self-study also recognizes the need for better coordination of data and assessment management to increase awareness of these data and greater efficiency and regularization of their use.

A third area of regular assessment is in College departments with each individual department, academic and administrative, regularly assessing their processes and reporting the outcomes of those assessments to the President's Staff. To this end, each senior staff person works with his area to monitor the effectiveness of their work, and then meets with the President each week to discuss programs and effectiveness. Thus, much assessment responsibility has been delegated to the individual senior officers with the President's Staff continuing to monitor goals and progress in their own areas and bringing before the entire staff issues where cooperation and collaboration are needed.

For example, the Enrollment Management Group (composed of the Dean of Students, Dean of the College, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, and the Director of Financial Aid) has taken on the task of monitoring and planning for College-wide retention efforts. In addition, the senior administrators provide updates to the Board of Trustees three times each year, and these updates are intimately tied to the College's mission and are central to the College's overall assessment work. In addition to regular reports to Board committees that the President's Staff supports (Academic Affairs, College Life, Budget and Finance, Building and Grounds, Admissions and Marketing, Advancement, Investment, and Trusteeship), at each Board of Trustees' Deep Dive session, one or more members of the President's Staff reviews the recent work in his area and how it relates to College mission and goals. Notably, the [Deep Dive at the January 2012 meeting](#) of the Board included all senior administrators collectively updating their area's progress toward 2008 Strategic Plan goals and objectives; in essence these were area assessment reports. In these ways, the administration and trustees remain intimately aware of the effectiveness of work at the College and maintain accountability for such effectiveness at all levels of the institution.

Departmental assessment is regularized among academic departments, with departments doing self-studies every five or six years. These self-studies involve some combination of internal analysis and external consultation and result in an action plan that guides department changes. Further assessment of departments occurs through an annual Assessment Meeting with the Dean of the College and

yearly activity sheets submitted by continuing faculty. Criterion 3A discusses both of these efforts in more detail.

Departmental assessment is also a regular part of the activity of administrative offices. Here we briefly address such activities by IT Services, Advancement, and Admissions, while assessment activities by the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations and Communications and Marketing are discussed in Criterion 5. As part of its assessment practices, IT Services tracks carefully the number of help desk requests it gets on each day of the year and has graphed those requests for the last 11 years. Such tracking has revealed a consistent spike of requests during early fall months and few such requests in the spring, information that has helped the office plan its activities and deploy its resources. IT Services also solicits faculty and student input in an annual survey on the use of its services. The summary of this survey is publicized broadly (including on the door of the Director of IT Services) and is used for annual and multi-year planning and to inform initiatives and conversations with students and faculty (this is discussed more in Criterion 3D). For example, the creation of the [new Armory computer lab](#) arose directly out of student demand and use of survey data. Finally, IT Services developed a departmental plan in the form of a three-year technology road-map that was discussed in Criterion 2A.

Similarly, the College's Advancement and Admissions offices have annual assessment routines that inform the effectiveness of their efforts. (An explanation of the process used by Advancement is [available here](#).) In addition to tracking the total number of dollars given and the number of donors to the College, Advancement disaggregates its data along a variety of different dimensions. For instance, the office's [annual report](#) includes a description of how individual donations cluster in amount blocks (e.g., how many donations above and below \$1,000), how many donors from the previous year donated to the College in the current year, how many donors for the current year did not donate in the previous year, how many donors increased their donation by a sizable amount, and which reunion classes were the most active (in terms of donors and amounts) for a given year. In addition to such tracking of the number of new and continuing donors and amounts of donation, the office also tracks the effectiveness of different solicitation techniques, reports that effectiveness in its annual summary, and uses the information for planning. For instance, the 2011 report suggests that direct mailings (e.g., of calendars and letters of solicitation) generated more than 1,100 gifts that totaled more than \$450,000, numbers that were up by 92 gifts and more than \$50,000 from the previous year.

The effectiveness of electronic communications, including "click through" rates on links and phone-a-thon results, are also tracked and inform subsequent efforts. As examples, the 2011 report recommends (1) that the office target phone-a-thon efforts to cell phone numbers due to the increased success in calls to cell phones, and (2) that the 2012 fiscal year Annual Fund consider more video campaigns, a strategy that is suggested by the decreased "click through" rate on emails in 2011 that did not include a video link. The Advancement Office's [tracking of and report](#) about the Campaign for Leadership also reflects similar care and precision in understanding the effectiveness of practices. This information is reviewed annually to determine appropriate steps to improve departmental effectiveness.

Such careful tracking of effectiveness is also characteristic of the College's Admissions and Financial Aid efforts. (An explanation of the Admissions assessment process is [available here](#). And an explanation of the Financial Aid assessment process is [provided here](#).) Assessment is dynamic and ongoing throughout the admissions cycle. Admissions staff persons participate in three staff retreats per year (in May, January, and March) to review data, establish direction, and/or set admissions goals for a year or phase of the admissions cycle. The retreats are timed so that staff can assess the success of the previous admissions cycle (in May), take stock of "mid-point" success in the cycle (in January),



*Basketball Coach Antoine Carpenter talks with a prospective student and his father during Honor Scholarship Weekend.*

and assess needs for the last few months of a cycle (in March). In addition, staff members provide to the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid weekly reports of successes and difficulties at recent events (e.g., college fairs, “W” or “Wabash” nights in cities around Indiana and the Midwest, scheduled visits to high schools). In these ways, the office keeps a close eye on contact numbers by admissions and athletic staff (note: athletic staff are among the College’s most important recruiters as upwards of 70% of matriculating students report that a coach was among their first contacts with the College), on number of applications at particular dates each year, and on attendance at on-campus admissions event. Comparisons of such annual numbers to previous years’ data are then disseminated almost weekly to the President, his staff, the Enrollment Management Committee, the Financial Aid Committee, the Faculty Admissions Committee, and (three times each year) to the Board of Trustees.

This tracking of progress often leads to rapid adjustment to strategies. For example, during the spring of 2012, registration for the College’s Honor Scholar Weekend, an important predictor of eventual class size, was lower in February than in previous years. In response, the Dean of the College and the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid coordinated efforts to enlist faculty, coaches, and admissions staff to make direct personal contacts with prospective attendees who had not yet registered for the event. As a result of such a collaborative effort, attendance at the 2012 Honor Scholarship Weekend rebounded and was comparable to previous years. The College ultimately expects to surpass its targeted class of 250 and has secured 270 active deposits for fall 2012.

Such thoughtful assessment of prospective student responsiveness from year-to-year has no doubt contributed to the Admissions and Financial Aid Office’s success in meeting or exceeding enrollment goals each year. Indeed, this office has consistently met goals regarding class size, academic preparedness, and ethnic diversity. Further, as noted previously, the success at meeting such goals has persisted in the face of the economic challenges encountered by the College and the nation and even as the College has reduced its financial aid fraction.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Wabash College has a defined set of assessment practices that includes strategic planning, collection and use of institutional data, department reviews, and reaccreditation self-studies and improvement projects. As a result, assessment and evaluation are a regular part of the culture of nearly every area of the College and include effective feedback loops by which assessment efforts lead to change in practice and policy. Such quality is demonstrated in this section in the work of IT Services, Advancement, and Admissions, but is also in evidence across other areas of the College including academic departments, Lilly Library, Alumni and Parent Relations, and Communications and Marketing.

At the same time, we recognize the potential for improvement in this area as assessment efforts are not consistent across all areas of the College and are not always perceived as leading to change. Broadening and thickening the culture of assessment beyond its present reach to include all areas of the College is a goal for the future. Relatedly, individual assessment efforts are not always as coordinated as they could be or perhaps need to be. Indeed, the faculty/staff or program-driven nature of the assessment processes can, and often does, produce overlapping but uncoordinated efforts. For instance, as noted above and referenced throughout the *Self-Study Report*, the College has a healthy collection of institutional data regarding freshmen and seniors; relatively few individuals on campus, however, understand what those data include, how those data might be useful to assessing programs

and departmental initiatives that warrant assessment, or even how to access the information. Instead, program and department directors sometimes develop new methods of assessment, devoting energy to the creation of these methods when existing information might be equally valuable for such purposes.

Also, colleagues are not always aware of the assessment work and its implications in other areas. For example, how does the assessment work of the academic departments inform understanding of student learning across the campus? One explanation for the lack of coordination is that there is no particular office or group with responsibility for guiding the assessment efforts and initiatives on campus by understanding what information exists, by identifying particular areas of interest, calling the College's attention to them, and then enlisting the collective knowledge of the community to assessing and thinking about those areas. While the Accreditation Committee has historically played an important role in monitoring and communicating assessment activities across the College, we recognize the potential benefits of an Institutional Research Office, supported by the Accreditation Committee, as a direct report to the President or Dean of the College as a way to better coordinate existing and future assessment efforts (this is a subject returned to in Criterion 3). The College is actively reviewing "top-down" assessment procedures and improved assessment coordination through [external consultation](#).

## **2D. ALL LEVELS OF PLANNING ALIGN WITH WABASH'S MISSION, THEREBY ENHANCING THE COLLEGE'S CAPACITY TO FULFILL ITS MISSION.**

Despite the improvement that the College can make in coordinating and communicating the good work of assessment continuously being done at Wabash, the centrality of the Mission and Core Values in driving assessment work is abundantly clear. From the College's current strategic plan, to planning work done by Lilly Library and the Admissions Office, to the goals of academic departments (discussed in Criterion 3), the Mission and Core Values imbue planning in all areas of the College and within different departments in each area.

To further facilitate such mission-driven planning, the Accreditation Committee parsed the College's Mission Statement into nine individual components and encouraged all departments and areas to map their goals to these ideals. Such "mission-mapping" has provided a context for the Dean of the College's annual assessment meetings with academic departments, and was employed in the strategic planning conducted by Lilly Library staff. It was also an activity undertaken by the ad hoc Distribution Committee in reviewing the alignment of the College's distribution requirements with the Mission Statement. The important 2009 Administrative Program Review also began with all departments assessing their ongoing work and ways to economize and optimize that work directly in relation to mission-based goals.

Many of these and other mission-driven initiatives will be discussed in greater detail in other areas of the *Self-Study Report*. In this section of the document, however, we focus attention on the two strategic plans that coincide with the timeframe under review: *Defining Effective Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century* (2000-2005) and *The Liberal Arts at Wabash College: Serving the Needs of the Country* (2008-2013). The pursuit of these plans demonstrates how key planning efforts at the highest levels of the College align with the Wabash mission and enhance operations. They are also a useful test of the College's effectiveness in marshaling and allocating resources to meet its planning goals and, in the case of the current plan, enabling the College nimbly and effectively to respond to institutional challenges.

Electronic Resource

Strategic Plan:

Defining Effective Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century

*Defining Effective Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century* (2000-2005)

*Defining Effective Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century* was initiated in May 1998 when Andrew Ford, then president of the College, and the Board of Trustees began work on what was initially known as “Plan 2003,” an effort to identify and analyze critical issues faced by the College in the approaching new century. Out of those early discussions emerged more conversations between and among trustees, faculty, and students; a strategic planning workshop; the development of resource scenarios; and a series of breakfast meetings. A key step in this process was a gathering of the faculty during the 1999 Thanksgiving break in which faculty brainstormed about the future of the College. Subsequently, a group of faculty took on the task of drafting an initial plan, which the Board, staff, faculty, students, and alumni continued to contribute to and refine. The [final version of the strategic plan](#), which consisted of three broad strategies, 14 strategic objectives, and a timeline for implementing specific tactics, was approved by the Board of Trustees at its May 2000 meeting.

By the time of the College’s last reaccreditation visit, implementation of the plan was well underway, and the [2002 Self-Study Report](#) comments extensively on the planning process, implementation, objectives, tactics, and progress of that plan (pp. 29-32 and 87-93). That treatment demonstrates the significant, mission-driven investment in human capital made to advance *Defining Effective Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century*. Progress toward the plan was further monitored by the half-time appointment of a faculty person charged with implementing the objectives of the plan. To do so, this individual worked in consultation with the President’s Staff to prioritize objectives, map the plan’s specific tactics to the 14 objectives, recruit and assist faculty and staff committees charged with implementing tactics, track the scores of updates submitted by the committees, and report to the President’s Staff and the Board of Trustees about [progress on the plan](#).

The individual charged with organizing the strategic planning initiatives was later appointed Director of Inquiries for the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts (CILA). At the same time, three years into the effort, momentum on many of the plan’s initiatives seemed to wane, at least the systematic tracking of plan progress seemed to disappear. In hindsight, one explanation might be that with 14 initiatives and multiple tactics for each, the plan called for more committees to carry forward the work than the College could reasonably support over a lengthy period, while at the same time conducting its regular business.

Notwithstanding these limitations, when one looks back at reports on that strategic plan — the *2002 Self-Study Report* and the continuing strategic plan updates — and reflects on events and accomplishments at the College during that time period, it is easy to identify important ways in which the plan significantly advanced the mission and work of the College. In fact, many of those advancements are seen in this *Self-Study Report* in the form of efforts and programs that have come to fruition as a permanent part of the fabric of the College. For instance, during the course of the plan, the College began the Lilly Teaching Fellows program, which funded temporary faculty positions for young scholars who could provide fresh perspectives and ideas on campus. These positions supported areas of need, were essential to the development of College writing assessments, and provided crucial support for department reviews. The strategic plan also encouraged expanding global educational opportunities, which provided early momentum for the immersion learning courses so important to the College and student learning today (Initiative 2). In addition, the Center for Academic Enrichment (Initiative 9); the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work (Initiative 1); and the Wellness Program all emerged from the strategic plan. Also consistent with the strategic plan, Wabash sought improvements in the Schroeder Center for Career Development (Initiative 10) and expanded commitment to community service (Initiative 11). And perhaps the most notable development is that of CILA itself, which grew out of that strategic plan (Initiative 8 and Initiative 12).

At the same time, assessment mechanisms to determine plan success and the resources and authority to pursue plan initiatives were not always clear or systematic. For instance, much work was done to gather data on and learn about student retention (Initiative 3), but at the time the work did not mature into a particular program (although perhaps it foreshadowed the rich retention activity at the College today). Also, [two extensive studies](#) of living unit conditions and the relationship of living units to the promotion of academic success (Initiative 1) were undertaken with the idea that they would serve to advise the Dean of Students and Dean of the College on future housing decisions, especially for independent men. But it is not clear the extent to which that occurred (although those reports did later contribute to the First Year Experience Study Group's assessment and the significant changes that have occurred since 2009 in the shaping of the freshman year academic experience). In this regard the feedback loop in the plan and the path to implementing recommendations was often unclear, especially when such recommendations were generated by faculty and ultimately required broader institutional endorsement to make them a reality. Some of these shortcomings were structural while others may reflect changes in the communication and monitoring of plan progress after May 2003.

Thus, ultimately, *Defining the Liberal Arts in the 21st Century* was both a successful plan and one that proved unwieldy over the longer-term, given the difficulty in tracking its progress, the multitude of committees and groups required to support it, and, in some cases, the lack of accountability and follow-up with elements of the work produced. To be sure, however, the plan was inclusive in its development and execution, and it reflected the mission, character, and values of the College. The whole of this process may indicate the basis for one of the questions posed by the College in 2002 for the accreditation self-study reviewers: "How might strategic planning be made an efficient, effective, and inclusive process?"

### ***The Liberal Arts at Wabash College: Serving the Needs of the Country (2008-2013)***

The development and administration of the present strategic plan has similarities to as well as key differences from its predecessor. The public origins of the plan were sown in an [April 2007 Chapel Talk](#) given by President White. In his talk, the President charged the College to consider four broad areas in crafting a new strategic plan: our students as rising citizens of the world; our faculty as preservers and creators of true and effective liberal arts education; our College as a civil community of constant learning; and our responsibilities to the future and the larger world. In turn, committees of faculty, staff, and students were convened to explore each of these four areas. The committees met numerous times during the 2007-08 academic year, each with the charge of producing a thesis statement and central principles for action that could guide further conversation and planning in their assigned area. To accomplish these tasks, the committees gathered information in a variety of ways, including: meeting with CILA Director Charles Blaich to discuss data from the WNS; surveying current students and alumni about the value of their Wabash education; meeting with local community groups and officials to discuss ways to facilitate a more mutually beneficial relationship between town and gown; and assessing best practices at other colleges (e.g., Albion College's method for promoting town/gown relationships).

In December 2007 all faculty and staff were invited to an afternoon of sessions to explore and respond to the ideas that had been crafted by the planning groups. Utilizing ideas from these community-wide meetings and the groups' thesis statements and central principles, the President, his staff, and members of the Board of Trustees engaged in additional conversations during the spring and summer of 2008 and produced a draft of the strategic plan in August of that year. Conversations between the President and members of the Board of Trustees continued over the summer and early fall. Subsequently, individual department meetings and academic division meetings were devoted to discussing the draft plan and its specific goals. The Board of Trustees discussed and then formally

On the Web

**Strategic Plan:**

**The Liberal Arts at  
Wabash College:  
Serving the Needs  
of the Country**

adopted the plan during its October 2008 meeting. Strategic plan implementation teams, which were populated by faculty and staff, were convened to prioritize and animate in even more specific, programmatic terms, the initial tactics described in the plan. Ultimately, the process proved again to be inclusive of all institutional constituencies although the final authoring of this plan rested more in the hands of senior administration.

As for the plan itself, it offered five strategic goals and 16 initial tactics grounded in the College's Mission Statement and Core Values. That is to say, [the plan's goals](#) targeted specific areas that facilitated the College's ability to accomplish its mission in a way consistent with its values. As an example, the College's Core Values suggest that Wabash is committed to a "socially, economically, and ethnically diverse student body..." and Strategic Goal 1 includes affirmation of the intention to "Attract, support, retain, and prepare qualified young men . . . with broad interests, abilities, and talents . . . [and who] come from diverse backgrounds." The other strategic plan goals map similarly onto specific components of the Mission and Core Values. For example, Strategic Goal 2 targets a faculty of "scholars who . . . are energized by a sense of community," a thought that embodies the Core Value of a "personal context to teaching and learning that encourages a local scholarly community"; and Strategic Goal 3 invokes the Mission Statement specifically in encouraging a curriculum that can foster students' abilities to "think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely in a constantly changing global society." Strategic Goal 4 focuses on the importance of the residential experience that is promoted in the mission, and Strategic Goal 5 aligns with the mission's interest in citizenship and living humanely. Importantly, the last four years have witnessed not just substantial but impressive progress in meeting these goals, progress made possible by a flexible plan that could be advanced at a time of great economic challenge. That progress is briefly highlighted below and, with more detail, in different areas of this *Self-Study Report*.

*Strategic Goal 1: Attract, support, retain, and prepare qualified young men who want to be taught by Wabash faculty and whom Wabash faculty want to teach: young men with broad interests, abilities, and talents who have a solid work ethic; are independent, self-reliant, and intellectually curious; have a sense of integrity and commitment to service; and come from diverse backgrounds.*

This goal, which speaks to the diversity, quality, and mental characteristics of the student body as identified in the Mission Statement, identified four initial tactics, each of which the College has made progress toward fulfilling. This includes the College's work with outside consultants to redesign its website, rebrand its image, and rethink, quite broadly, marketing strategy and materials (initial tactic A). The College continues to consistently attract 250 or more new students each year, such that enrollment in the 2011-12 academic year was 910, comfortably within the size targeted by this plan (initial tactic B). The College has included in the Challenge of Excellence campaign a specific initiative to increase monies for student financial aid (initial tactic C), and as indicated in the fourth tactic, the College also has added new curricular programs such as Asian Studies (primarily addressed in Criterion 3) and a new dual degree engineering program with Purdue University (discussed more fully in Criterion 5). The student body continues to be richly diverse in socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic terms. While retaining our historical strength and commitment to Indiana students, Wabash is also increasing its appeal to students and families outside



*John Bogucki in Professor Marcus Hudson's Shakespeare course.*

the State.

*Strategic Goal 2: Attract, develop, support, retain, and encourage excellent faculty who will enhance the mission and core values of Wabash College: committed scholars who pursue teaching excellence as their highest priority; are energized by a sense of community and collegiality; and are passionate about student engagement.*

With regard to this goal and the three initial tactics that were identified, the College has allocated endowment funds, as catalyzed by a generous gift from late Wabash alumnus and professor William C. Placher, Jr., to increasing faculty salaries (initial tactic A) and has steered faculty to CILA for funding for sabbatical work (initial tactic B). Such work has benefitted the College greatly by, for instance, investigating the College's freshman year experience, as well as course and curriculum development opportunities for specific departments (e.g., psychology and rhetoric). These specific efforts and others are discussed in Criterion 3. While the College has articulated through the Placher Fund a means and a measure to support increased faculty salaries and has attended to the benchmarks of GLCA and ACM institutions, the College has yet to articulate clearly "desired outcomes and other criteria to measure progress under this Goal" (initial tactic C). Work arising out of the Dean of the College's spring assessment meetings with departments concerning high impact teaching practices and over the summer and fall 2012 to articulate some of the key signs of valuable student-faculty engagement will help shape desired outcomes in the area.



*William C. Placher was an esteemed teacher, scholar, and theologian.*

*Strategic Goal 3: Provide through faculty leadership and engagement in the liberal arts curriculum the skills, knowledge, and experiences our students will need to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely in a constantly changing global society.*

The College has implemented programs consistent with each of the five initial tactics identified in this goal. Consistent with the first identified tactic, the Freshman Year Experience has been thoroughly studied and refashioned so that all Freshman Tutorials occur in the fall semester and a new required all-college spring freshman course, Enduring Questions (EQ), has been added to stimulate intellectual growth and engagement with the liberal arts. The Wabash student experience has been enhanced through changes to August orientation and pre-arrival responsibilities, and the College has reenergized conversations about the nature and quality of academic advising. In terms of student engagement with faculty (initial tactic B), as discussed elsewhere, the number and variety of immersion study trips has increased, and faculty-student research collaboration remains a focus of the College, as manifest in substantial funding for such collaboration and by a faculty committee that oversees the annual Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work, an event that is a testament to the College's emphasis on such collaborative teaching and learning experiences. In accordance with the third tactic under this goal, the College created the position of Coordinator of Writing Across the Curriculum and supported a two-year position for an additional faculty person with expertise in both oral and written communication. Finally, the College has used CILA resources actively and in a targeted fashion to understand the effectiveness of its and other institutions' programs (discussed in Criteria 3, 4, and 5) and has energized the Schroeder Center for Career Development in ways that are benefitting students (addressed in detail in Criterion 5).

*Strategic Goal 4: In furtherance of Goals 1 through 3, build or renovate, as appropriate and feasible, academic, athletic, and residential facilities that are designed as integral parts of the Wabash College community and liberal arts experience.*

With regard to Strategic Goal 4, the College has realized the first of the initial tactics, partially realized the second, and continues to discuss the third. As addressed in this Criterion chapter, athletic facilities have been constructed and renovated, and academic buildings have received substantial attention as well. The College has done some work to renovate independent men's housing while more opportunities and needs exist. Some of the progress in this area was indirect or unintentional as the withdrawal of recognition of a fraternity — which had recently been renovated — opened up additional higher quality independent living space. The College has renewed conversations begun before 2008 regarding a new student center. The economic crisis of 2008 put on hold the College's work on this goal. Building projects for independent men's housing and addressing the need for a campus center remain high priorities for the College in the next strategic planning period.

*Strategic Goal 5: In furtherance of Goals 1 through 4, study and formulate recommendations concerning the application of intellectual capital in support of Crawfordsville and Montgomery County.*

The link with and proper support for Crawfordsville is an area of College interest and action;



*Emeritus Biology Professor William Doemel serves as Executive Director of the Montgomery County Free Clinic.*

however, the effects of the economic turndown are perhaps most evident here as the College has necessarily focused its energies on stabilizing its finances and maintaining vibrant core instructional strengths. Nonetheless, as Criterion 5 notes, College faculty, staff, students, and administrators are active members of the surrounding communities, participating in numerous community activities and non-profit organizations. The establishment of the [Montgomery County Free Clinic](#) is an example of this [creative engagement](#). Further, the President has appointed key staff members to local nonprofit boards while serving on the Montgomery County Economic Development commission himself. Also, the College's recent collaboration with Crawfordsville to advance a Stellar Communities revitalization grant has created new opportunities for Wabash to play a lead role in strengthening the community. The President focused his fall 2011 comments to the Board of Trustees on this strategic goal

as a way of catalyzing further the College's efforts; and the College, including alumni constituencies, is ready to move in even more intentional ways towards supporting Crawfordsville and Montgomery County.

Progress towards meeting these strategic plan goals is communicated regularly to the Board of Trustees so that the Board can make informed decisions about where to allocate the College's future resources. Indeed, Board meetings are characterized by continuous reference to and consideration of the plan and its links to the Mission Statement. As noted previously, the January 2012 meeting of the Board included presentations by each senior administrator regarding how programs in their area were speaking to the mission and the strategic plan. This, too, represents something of a practical change from the prior strategic plan in that not only are the pursuit of five strategic goals more manageable in scope for the College, but the number of plan-related committees has been kept to a minimum and plan oversight and implementation has come through more of a top-down structure in which senior administrators have had primary responsibility for monitoring plan progress.

**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** The previous five years have included a renewed emphasis on mapping specific practices to the College's goals and mission. Strategic planning efforts have consistently kept such goals and mission at the forefront, and one can also see evidence of such mission-driven efforts at the level of individual departments and areas (e.g., the library, admissions, advancement, and academic departments). However, as with assessment and evaluation practices discussed above, there is some unevenness across areas of the College in terms of establishing explicit and assessable goals for the future. A challenge for the coming years will be to engage each area of the College in such area-level and mission-driven planning.

The current strategic plan has been successful both in terms of attaining its goals and serving as a means by which senior administrators have navigated an extraordinarily challenging economic period. The plan has strengthened the present and future of the College, contributing to marketing and recruitment of students, retaining and supporting faculty, building academic and co-curricular programs, and strengthening ties to the greater community. It is clear that the trustees and senior-level administrators have kept the strategic plan and its goals foremost on their minds. Such awareness and objective consideration of progress will be essential as the College moves to its next strategic planning phase. It is also worth considering how such awareness and consideration can be better extended to the broader College community. It is possible that in the current plan faculty and staff have been less often reminded of the goals of the plan, have been potentially less aware of progress on these goals, and thus may be less able to see the plan's important role in shaping and improving their own work, as well as initiatives and decisions at the College. Thus, with the next strategic planning phase on the horizon, the College might find ways to maintain community attention on the current plan and its goals.

## **CONCLUSIONS FOR CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE**

The previous 10 years can be accurately, if roughly, categorized into two periods: the one prior to the 2008 economic crisis and the one following it. As this chapter of the *Self-Study Report* indicates, these two periods contrast sharply not only in terms of the financial resources that the College had available but also in terms of the mentality and focus of the College in driving specific policies and practices. Prior to 2008, the College's financial success allowed for a relative confidence and even complacency in resource management. It was a robust economic period that saw significant resources from a capital campaign and major external grants flow to the College. Endowment values grew, and the Board did not reduce the draw at a time of relative plenty as now, in retrospect, it would have been wise to do. At the time, a majority of operations could be funded with endowment draw, which lessened anxiety regarding the size or expense of the entering freshman class, new faculty lines were created and faculty sabbatical replacements were nearly assured thanks to generous grants and the research support of CILA, and there was less reason to be concerned with maximizing the efficiency of task allocation within College departments and areas. Such complacency left the College in a precarious financial position well before the 2008 stock market drop. The economic collapse across the country and subsequent plummet in endowment values brought into clear focus the less-than-optimal manner in which some elements of the College had been functioning.

Fortunately, by the time of that drop, planning and assessment practices were already changing, and the College's administrators and planning documents and procedures were flexible and nimble enough to respond thoughtfully and effectively to the economic challenge. The 2008-09 economic crisis was painful for the College. At the same time, we see a silver lining to that crisis in the way Wabash has navigated it. First, the crisis has put on display the effectiveness of administrators,

indeed the wider community, and the College's planning practices for dealing with such instability. Indeed, the College has maintained the quality of its work and has not relaxed its push towards progress in a number of areas. Second, and perhaps more importantly for going forward, the response to this crisis has resulted in structural changes that make the College's programs and practices more sustainable in the future. The College heads into its next decade leaner, wiser, and with a keener understanding of the need to develop new sources of income, allocate existing resources more strategically and efficiently, and evaluate regularly the quality of its work vis-à-vis the College's mission. There is certainly work to be done to implement across the College practices that reflect this new understanding, but there is already substantial momentum and conversation, much borne out of necessity, on which the College can capitalize. These changes underscore why *strengthening the budgeting, staffing, and infrastructure processes*, while also revising the financial model, communications, and staffing in order to improve the operations of the College, were identified in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction as a principal theme of the work of the College in recent years.

### **Strengths:**

- The College thoughtfully and reflectively responded to the 2008 financial crisis in ways that minimized or contained the negative economic impact on the institution. The actions demonstrated the responsiveness of the institution, its commitment to its Mission and Core Values, and its ability to engage a community-wide effort to effectively address resource challenges;
- Despite adversity, the College is continuing to fulfill its mission in new and better ways. Such success has necessitated creative thinking about a number of program areas, including admissions, financial aid, and budgeting, in order to create a financial model that is less endowment-dependent and thus less vulnerable to economic fluctuation;
- The College demonstrates strengths in administration and staff development activities that advance the work of College offices through networking, consultations, and remaining apprised of relevant, area-specific developments;
- The College is utilizing more collaborative and systematic budgeting processes and planning that are, in turn, producing more realistic, accurate, and transparent budgets that are better used as management tools;
- The College has a thoughtful, detailed technology plan and a forward looking strategic plan for Lilly Library;
- The College has significantly upgraded many facilities including a number of academic buildings, fraternities, IT Services, and athletics spaces, such as those for football, baseball, soccer, and tennis, that have brought with them student recruitment benefits and benefactor investment;
- Assessment and evaluation are a more deeply embedded part of the culture of nearly every area of the College and include effective feedback loops by which assessment efforts lead to change in practice and policy. This quality is demonstrated in the work of Advancement, Admissions, academic departments, Lilly Library, IT Services, Alumni and Parent Relations, Communications and Marketing, and other areas;
- The College has made significant progress towards achieving the key goals of the present

strategic plan, *The Liberal Arts at Wabash College: Serving the Needs of the Country*.

### **Challenges:**

- The College must continue to explore ways to manage its endowment resources by reducing the draw and to generate new revenue streams that will shift the College away from being so heavily reliant on the endowment. Relatedly, the College must decide on the proper role of the endowment in budgeting, both in the short-term and long-term;
- In building from the success of the Challenge of Excellence campaign, the College must explore ways to increase the percentage of alumni who give to the College and to discover new friends of the College outside the alumni cohort who can contribute to the resource base;
- As the College continues to locate its proper tuition pricing point and seeks additional net tuition revenue, the rising percentage of students taking out loans and the rising debt burden of Wabash students represents a challenge and a concern that the College must keep in mind;
- While the accomplishments of IT Services has contributed greatly to the technological development of the campus, in comparison to other schools Wabash has a higher than average student to IT Services staff ratio and lags behind in comparable staff compensation;
- Despite improvements in physical spaces, the College continues to face constraints related to the condition of independent men's housing, the student center (Sparks), Baxter Hall (home of behavioral sciences departments), and the amount of classroom, meeting, and office space;
- While assessment and evaluation are central to the culture of most areas of the College, such practices are not consistently coordinated across all areas and are not always perceived as leading to change. Further broadening and deepening of the culture of assessment to include all areas of the College through effective coordination remains a challenge for the future.

### **Recommendations:**

- While the budgeting process has, on the whole, improved significantly, the College should continue to refine elements of it. For instance, the College would do well to (a) provide in a more timely manner planning information for special projects and large purchases, and (b) continue to improve account management access, particularly access to budgets drawn from endowment funds;
- The College will need to monitor the combined impact of changes from efforts to increase net tuition revenue, changes in pricing and student aid, and new market initiatives in student recruitment on the academic and demographic profile of incoming students;
- Increased coordination of assessment efforts can produce efficiency and clarity in process while decreasing areas of overlap and repetition. Program and department directors sometimes develop new methods of assessment, devoting energy to the creation of these methods when existing information might be equally valuable for such purposes. To this end, the College can make better use of its healthy collection of institutional data in undertaking assessment;

- Assessment efforts need to become more coordinated and regularized with the clearer identification and empowerment of an office of Institutional Research that in coordination with the Accreditation Committee can guide assessment efforts and initiatives across the campus;
- As the College embarks on another strategic planning process, it can consider ways to improve reporting of plan progress to all constituencies. The design and implementation of the present plan has lent itself to impressive accountability and awareness at the highest levels of administration but somewhat less attention and awareness from faculty and staff at large.



## **CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING**

*Wabash College provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission*

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Wabash College has a deep commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. That commitment is underscored in the foundational documents of the College — the Mission Statement, Core Values, and Preamble to the Curriculum — and demonstrated in the everyday work of the institution. Of the five strengthening themes identified in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction, three are particularly relevant to Criterion 3: *strengthening student engagement*, *strengthening assessment*, and *strengthening liberal arts instruction*. Across the discussion of Criterion 3, these themes permeate the evidence for understanding how Wabash College meets and exceeds the reaccreditation expectations for the Criterion.

### **3A. WABASH COLLEGE'S GOALS FOR STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE CLEARLY STATED FOR EACH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND MAKE EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT POSSIBLE.**

As part of its commitment to student learning and effective teaching, Wabash College continues to refine the delivery of its educational goals and strengthen its assessment of them by working to foster a culture that intentionally, systematically, and routinely assesses student learning and effective teaching. To that end, the College works to instill not only a culture of continuous assessment but also of educational accountability, grounded in its commitment to the liberal arts, and the College's Mission Statement, Core Values, and Preamble to the Curriculum. Assessment at Wabash focuses on student learning under the continuing scrutiny of a faculty committed to improvement through self-reflective teaching. As the whole of this Criterion chapter demonstrates, assessment of how the College meets its student learning goals occurs in many forms, including periodic examination of department and program learning goals, department and program reviews, annual assessment meetings with the Dean of the College, College-wide curriculum reviews, requirement-specific assessments, systematic evaluation of faculty, use of institutional data, and institutional reaccreditation. Such efforts are a regular feature of the work of the College and were praised by the evaluation team that conducted the 2002 campus visit for reaccreditation:

The current assessment program does an outstanding job of assessing quality among departments and majors and has established a solid framework for assessing the Wabash approach to general education. The program includes an effective 'feedback loop' for using assessment data to guide institutional change. One unique strength of the Wabash assessment program is the requirement that each student must pass a senior comprehensive examination in his major and minor. Those students who don't pass the examination (which includes both written and oral components) after a second attempt do not graduate with their class. Thus, the examination is taken quite seriously by both students and faculty. ([Report of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit, p. 7](#))

Over the last 10 years Wabash has maintained many of its assessment practices while others have evolved to reflect department changes, new campus initiatives, and the availability of new data and better tools, resources, and practices supported by the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts (CILA). Thus, assessment is a fluid and dynamic process and methods and foci of assessment change

as situational factors warrant and, in particular, as the community develops greater aptitude for assessment. The mechanisms of Wabash academic assessment span the departmental and institutional levels. The two layers allow for focused, micro-level assessment of student learning in locations that directly affect student outcomes, and institutional level reflection for more comprehensive efforts and programs. Wabash practice has established a cycle of assessment, reporting, and action with the underlying goal of making information accessible and employable and actions accountable throughout the College community.

In examining student learning outcomes and their means of assessment, this Criterion component is organized around four topics: how and where student learning goals are articulated; department-focused efforts to assess achievement of student learning; institutional level assessments of student learning; and the use of institutional data to assess student learning.

### **Wabash College clearly identifies its learning goals at the course, department, and institutional level**

Wabash College's learning goals at the institutional level are articulated in the College's Mission Statement and the faculty's Preamble to the Curriculum. The [Mission Statement](#), which was reproduced in full in Criterion 1, was adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1992. It has been used to guide and inform decisions of the College consistent with the historic mission it has pursued for the past 180 years. It is the foundation for not only academic assessment activities but assessment initiatives undertaken across the College.

In its brief form — “Wabash College educates men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely” — the mission encapsulates principles embedded in a Wabash education inside and outside the classroom. Across its fuller form, the mission identifies learning goals central to the College:

Wabash offers qualified young men a superior education, fostering, in particular, independent intellectual inquiry, critical thought, and clear written and oral expression. The College educates its students broadly in the traditional curriculum of the liberal arts, while also requiring them to pursue concentrated study in one or more disciplines. Wabash emphasizes our manifold, but shared cultural heritage. Our students come from diverse economic, social, and cultural backgrounds; the College helps these students engage these differences and live humanely with them. Wabash also challenges its students to appreciate the changing nature of the global society and prepares them for the responsibilities of leadership and service in it. . . .

The College seeks to cultivate qualities of character and leadership in students by developing not only their analytic skills, but also sensitivity to values, and judgment and compassion required of citizens living in a difficult and uncertain world. We expect a Wabash education to bring joy in the life of the mind, to reveal the pleasures in the details of common experience, and to affirm the necessity for and rewards in helping others.

Planning and programming at the College is closely aligned to the Mission Statement with all academic department, program, and all-college course assessments consisting of learning goals and their relationship to the College's Mission Statement. Thus, the mission provides institutional level learning goals that are manifest and fulfilled through the work of departments and individual courses.

Serving in concert with the College's Mission, the [Preamble to the Curriculum](#), adopted in 1973, expresses the faculty's commitment to liberal arts education and the values represented in a Wabash

education:

We, the Faculty of Wabash College, believe in a liberal arts education. We believe that it leads people to freedom, helps them choose worthy goals and shows them the way to an enduring life of the mind. With its ideals in view, we have designed our curriculum according to the following principles:

The graduate in the liberal arts has pondered ideas as they come to him out of the ages of human thought. He has watched their myriad forms in the great works of philosophy, history, theology, mathematics, arts and literature.

He has seen how the natural sciences try to answer the crucial questions of man, and he has himself taken part in their meticulous labor.

He has shared the endeavor of social science to probe the nature of man and the world he builds, and he has practiced its methods of coping with human conflicts and social needs.

In the study of foreign civilizations and people, he has found himself not only the creature of his time and place but a citizen of the world-wide human community.

He has learned to read, to write, and to speak clearly and creatively, and he has begun to acquire the skills that will qualify him for increasing leadership in his vocation.

We the faculty believe that these principles are indispensable to the teaching to which we devote our careers. And we believe that to follow them will enable the graduates of Wabash College to judge thoughtfully, act effectively, and live humanely in a difficult world.

The Preamble to the Curriculum not only articulates the principles and methods of a liberal arts education, but it also expresses the faculty's belief in the importance of that education in promoting thoughtful, effective, and humane living. In practice, it means that the diverse course offerings across the College have in common a focus on critical thinking, careful reading, clear speaking and writing, and directed analytical and creative practice, among other points of emphasis. The nexus of these qualities may be found in all departments and programs and are most clearly expressed in the general education requirements for all students.

Through the College's general education requirements — its all-college courses and the distribution system — students engage the learning goals expressed in the Mission Statement and Preamble. Comprising a little less than one-half of a student's course work, students meet these requirements by selecting courses from across the curriculum and in an array of disciplines. As part of its work reviewing distribution requirements in 2010-11, the ad hoc Distribution Committee examined the fit of the curriculum with stated institutional goals found in the Mission Statement and Preamble to the Curriculum. The committee found [a consistent relationship](#) between the guiding documents and values and the curriculum, providing a positive assessment of the curricular requirements of the College.

The Distribution Committee also facilitated a process to develop draft rationales for the present distribution requirements so that their goals would be more explicit to students, advisors, faculty, and parents. Among the requirements, the *Academic Bulletin* currently provides only Freshman Tutorial and Enduring Questions (Wabash's two all-college courses) with an explanation of purpose; the remaining requirements are simply listed. The draft rationales allow for better assessment of

what distribution requirements do and are intended to do. To facilitate completion of this process, in April 2011 the Distribution Committee moved that the Academic Policy Committee (APC) should determine a method by which to develop, refine, and adopt rationales for all distribution requirements. This motion was adopted and the APC is currently working on the task. This work is particularly timely and important given the demographic shift in the faculty over the last five years in that it creates a new opportunity for the faculty to interrogate, assess, clarify, and affirm the connection of the general education curriculum with the College's foundational documents.

To further clarify the goals of a Wabash education, all academic departments and programs have articulated learning goals that are supported by their teaching and activities, and that reflect specific items in the College's Mission Statement. [These departmental and program goal documents](#), which also include learning outcomes, locations where goals are met, and assessment activities and strategies, are used to make informed decisions about programs. Department learning goals were first developed in the 1990s, but with changes in faculty demographics and program foci, each department (including the Teacher Education, Freshman Tutorial, and Enduring Questions programs) revisited their goals document in 2010-11. This allowed departments, particularly those with high faculty turnover, to reconsider their learning goals and renew their commitment to their most valued ones. The table below shows the frequency with which particular learning goals are named across the twenty department and program learning goals documents. The five most frequently identified goals were acquiring disciplinary knowledge; gaining analytical thinking in the form of analysis and/or interpretation; practicing effective communication (in written and/or oral form); demonstrating independent intellectual inquiry in the form of student research; and manifesting expanded cultural understanding and the study of other cultures.

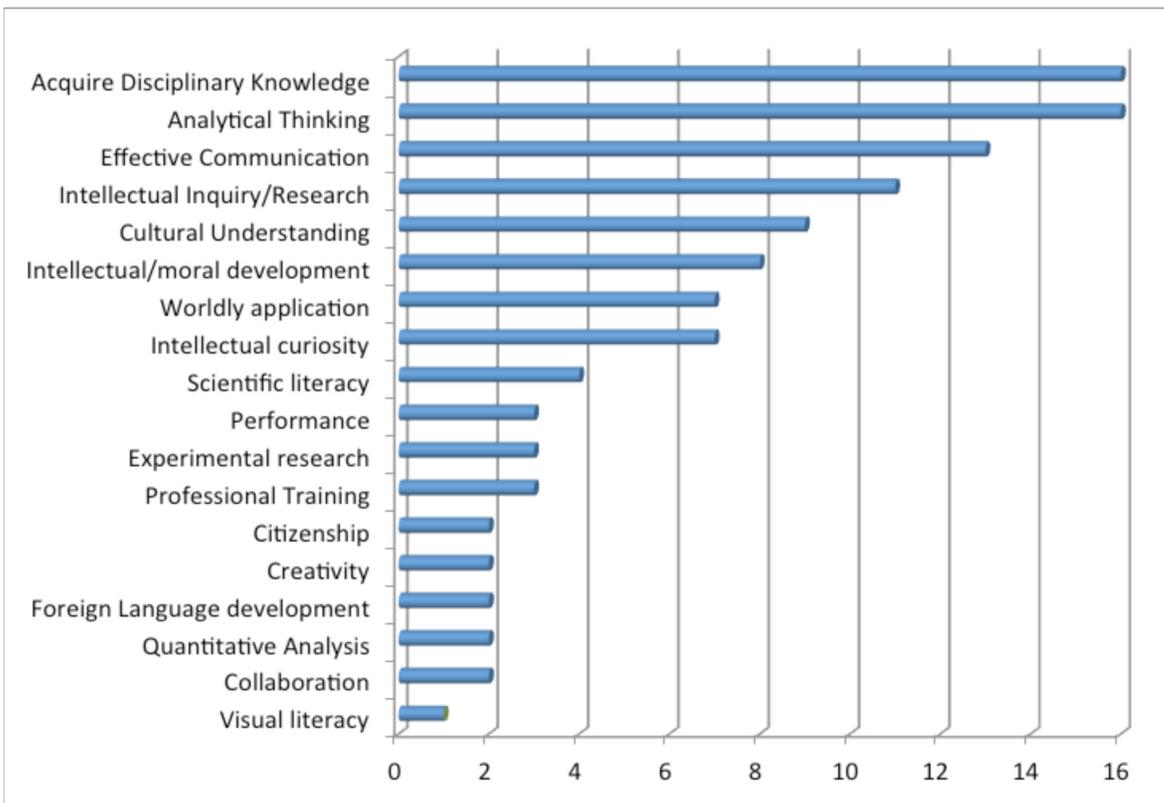
**Electronic Resources**

**Draft Rationales for Distribution Requirements**

**Faculty Mtg. Minutes 04-04-11**

**Faculty Mtg. Minutes 04-19-11**

**Department Learning Goals and Their Frequency**



Academic departments and programs communicate learning goals to students and other constituencies in various ways, including on department websites, in the *Academic Bulletin*, and in course syllabi. It is via this latter method, on course syllabi, that students most directly encounter learning goals at both the department and course level.

An examination of syllabi from 346 classes offered in 2011-12 revealed that in 64.7% of the syllabi faculty explicitly listed department and/or course learning goals. More specifically, course learning goals were provided on 57.8% of the syllabi, and 28% of course syllabi included department learning goals (five departments or programs routinely include learning goals on their syllabi). As the faculty continues to discuss the curriculum and general education goals, and as departments continue to engage with their learning goals, we expect the frequency with which these goals are explicitly stated will increase further.



*Kealoha Widdows holds the John H. Schroeder Interdisciplinary Chair in Economics.*

Each academic department, program, and all-college course also has considered how their learning goals, as captured in learning outcomes and teaching practices, reflect particular commitments found in the Mission Statement. For assessment purposes, the Accreditation Committee parsed the Mission Statement into nine components and 23 sub-components. Mission mapping by departments illustrates high consistency of department and program activities with the mission and the centrality of mission commitments to department learning goals. Multiple departments and programs identify their goals and activities as reinforcing every mission commitment. At least 50% of departments and programs identify alignment with 20 of 23 mission commitments and at least three-quarters of them identify commitments to intellectual inquiry, critical thought, and clear written and oral expression; offering education in the traditional curriculum of the liberal arts with concentrated study in one or more disciplines; helping students to engage and live humanely with differences; challenging students to appreciate the changing nature of global society and preparing them for leadership and service in it; encouraging the adoption of a life of intellectual and creative growth and self-awareness; and a sensitivity to the values, judgment, and compassion required of citizens living in a difficult and uncertain world. [The results](#) show not only the variability in how departments and programs inflect the mission in their work, but also consistency and overlap in the mission's overall alignment across departments. This consistency and overlap in expression of mission goals reinforces for all students and faculty the foundations upon which the Wabash liberal arts learning experience is based.

Responses by students to instruments such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) offer a basis for understanding students' perception of how well Wabash has contributed to their personal attainment of these learning goals and mission commitments. These results provide evidence that the goals of a Wabash education — at both the department and institutional level — are generally perceived by students as valuable and achieved. Wabash results are consistently superior when compared to the all-NSSE participant average, Carnegie Classification, and Great Lakes private colleges (these results compare Wabash students to all students—male and female—at other institutions).

#### Electronic Resource

#### Department Goal Statements

## Student Perceptions of Meeting Learning and Mission Goals

(2011 NSSE Results; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ )

| Goal   | Wabash Seniors | NSSE Comparison |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| Acquiring a broad general education              | 3.90 ***       | 3.24            |
| Thinking critically and analytically             | 3.87 ***       | 3.37            |
| Writing clearly and effectively                  | 3.71 ***       | 3.11            |
| Speaking clearly and effectively                 | 3.65 ***       | 3.01            |
| Learning effectively on your own                 | 3.55 ***       | 3.07            |
| Understanding people of other backgrounds        | 2.98 ***       | 2.67            |
| Developing a personal code of values and ethics  | 3.26 ***       | 2.76            |
| Understanding yourself                           | 3.45 ***       | 2.85            |
| Solving complex real-world problems              | 3.20 ***       | 2.84            |
| Analyzing quantitative problems                  | 3.34           | 3.11            |
| Contributing to the welfare of your community    | 2.80 ***       | 2.51            |
| Acquiring job or work-related knowledge & skills | 3.05           | 3.07            |

*Results reflect mean comparisons of responding students.*

**Strengths, challenges and recommendations.** Wabash College has clear student learning goals that make assessment possible at the institutional, department, and course levels. In the next year the College will conclude its process of drafting and adopting distribution requirement rationales, which will further accentuate the relationship of the distribution system to institutional-level goals and more publicly articulate the goals and values of the specific distribution requirements. In the coming years, departments, through the regular cycle of review, will continue to examine their learning goals as well as the fit of their goals with the College mission, department offerings, and student outcomes. It is expected that departments will revisit their goals annually, take advantage of institutional data where helpful in assessing how well goals are met, and engage in reflective revision of processes to improve student learning and teaching. Finally, departments can continue to work to more consistently publicize learning goals, underscoring their centrality to programs and heightening their visibility to students and other constituencies.

### Wabash College engages in department-focused assessment of student learning and effective teaching

Academic departments utilize a variety of methods to assess student learning and effective teaching, including course performance, senior capstone projects, senior comprehensive examinations, course evaluations, senior exit interviews, alumni surveys, and other information gathered at the institutional level, such as Wabash National Study (WNS) and NSSE data. Placing much of the assessment of student learning at the department level increases responsibility for and ability to affect directly student outcomes, program improvement, and long-range planning.

In addition to the previously discussed development of departmental and program goals, two important elements of department-focused assessment of student learning and effective teaching are the use of department and program reviews and annual department assessment meetings with the Dean of the College.

#### *Department and Program Reviews*

As part of its assessment work, each academic department or program at Wabash College undergoes a

review every five or six years. The full schedule of reviews is as follows (and [is available here](#)):

|                               | 2002-03                        | 2003-04          | 2004-05 | 2005-06           | 2006-07                           | 2007-08                           | 2008-09                        | 2009-10           | 2010-11             | 2011-12                   | 2012-13                | 2013-14          | 2014-15                           | 2015-16                            | 2016-17           | 2017-18             |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Deans Level Assessment        |                                |                  |         | All Campus Review |                                   |                                   |                                |                   |                     | All Campus Review         |                        |                  |                                   |                                    | All Campus Review |                     |
| Departmental Reviews          | Mathematics & Computer Science | Physics          | Art     |                   | Economics                         | Biology                           | Mathematics & Computer Science | Physics           | Art                 | Music                     |                        | Biology          |                                   | Mathematics & Computer Science     | Physics           | Music               |
|                               | Theater                        | Modern Languages | Music   |                   | Psychology                        | Chemistry                         | Classics                       | English           |                     | Religion                  | Religion               | Chemistry        | English                           | Theater                            | Art               | Religion            |
|                               | Classics                       | Religion         | Speech  |                   |                                   | Modern Languages                  | History                        | Rhetoric          | Philosophy          |                           |                        | Modern Languages | Classics                          | Philosophy                         |                   |                     |
|                               | History                        | Philosophy       |         |                   |                                   |                                   |                                | Political Science | Theater             |                           |                        |                  | Rhetoric                          | Political Science                  |                   |                     |
|                               | Psychology                     |                  |         |                   |                                   |                                   |                                |                   |                     |                           |                        | Economics        | History                           |                                    |                   |                     |
|                               |                                |                  |         |                   |                                   |                                   |                                |                   |                     |                           |                        | Psychology       |                                   |                                    |                   |                     |
| Program Reviews               | Teacher Education              |                  |         |                   | Freshman Tutorial (Freshman Year) | Cultures & Traditions (Soph Year) | Teacher Education              |                   | Distribution Review | Teacher Education (NCATE) | Off Campus Study       |                  |                                   |                                    | Teacher Education | Off Campus Study    |
|                               |                                |                  |         |                   |                                   | Off-Campus Studies                |                                |                   |                     |                           | Areas of Concentration |                  | Freshman Tutorial (Freshman Year) | Enduring Questions (Freshman Year) |                   |                     |
| Support Centers of Excellence |                                |                  |         |                   |                                   |                                   |                                |                   | Library             | IT                        |                        | Library          | IT                                |                                    |                   |                     |
|                               |                                |                  |         |                   |                                   |                                   |                                |                   |                     | Center of Inquiry         |                        |                  |                                   |                                    |                   | Center of Inquiry   |
|                               |                                |                  |         |                   |                                   |                                   |                                |                   |                     | MXIBS                     |                        |                  |                                   |                                    |                   | MXIBS               |
|                               |                                |                  |         |                   |                                   |                                   |                                |                   |                     | Wabash Center             |                        |                  |                                   |                                    |                   | Wabash Center       |
|                               |                                |                  |         |                   |                                   |                                   |                                |                   |                     | Pastoral Leadership       |                        |                  |                                   |                                    |                   | Pastoral Leadership |

The assessment cycle layers department reviews, all-college course reviews, and area of concentration reviews with periodic all-campus reviews. While the form of departmental reviews has been designed to be flexible enough to meet the needs of each department, the [Department Chair Handbook](#) (pp. 7-10) provides guidelines to assist departments with the review process and to insure engagement in assessment activities of benefit to the students, department, and College. Department reviews have generally involved a comprehensive internal self-study with a focus on improving student learning outcomes or revision to curriculum and teaching practices, followed by an action plan. During the most recent cycle of reviews, CILA support allowed departments to propose innovative designs, including reviews that featured site visits to other institutions and targeted reviews that focused on a specific element of a department or program. As is observed in [an overview of the last round of department reviews](#), regardless of format, department reviews have significant features in common: they are designed to assess teaching and learning practices so as to improve student learning and experiences and to improve teaching through strengthening of classroom pedagogy and curricular structures. In many instances, the review has provided a framework for continuous, multi-year assessment of aspects of department work. Here, several representative reviews are highlighted to demonstrate the range of review models developed by departments, the types of student learning assessments that have been undertaken, and subsequent actions based on review findings.

In the last round of reviews, departments including classical languages and literatures, economics, mathematics and computer science, political science, and psychology incorporated site visits into their reviews. The site visits allowed for assessment of how other similarly situated or aspirational institutions and departments have structured their curricula and programs and improved pedagogical practices.

**Electronic Resource**

**Psychology Department Review**

For example, given that the most recent psychology department review occurred in the midst of major personnel shifts precipitated by three retirements, the department sought to establish a forward-looking vision that would define the model 21st century psychology department. The review included visits to other liberal arts colleges, interviews with students, assessment of graduated students'

graduate school experiences and post-Wabash careers, and careful consideration by department faculty of departmental goals, skills, and training. Early in the review, the department concluded that it was not sending as many students to graduate school as it desired or expected. As such, the review began by working with CILA to identify liberal arts colleges which send a larger number of students to graduate school than would be expected based on the institution's academic profile. This involved developing a dataset that was used to identify schools from which the Wabash psychology department could learn the most. As a result, the department review featured visits to four colleges and resulted in curriculum revisions based in part on knowledge gained through those visits. The changes in the revised curriculum included altering the senior capstone experience and enhancing the senior research project, developing a new literature review course, revising introductory level and advanced level courses, and laying the groundwork for a new emphasis in neuropsychology that was supported by two new hires in the department. In sum, it was a data-driven study focused on learning outcomes and student experiences and needs that shaped future hiring and has served as an example of new model department reviews.



*Psychology Professor Neil Schmitzer-Torbert works collaboratively with a student intern in his neuro-science lab.*

Other departments have recently conducted more targeted reviews, focusing on a particular program element and the student learning that takes place in it. These innovative reviews meld department and individual faculty visions and interests in assessing student learning and re-imagining curricular offerings. For instance, biology revised the introductory course major sequence (BIO 111 and 112); theater explored the parameters of a film studies program; history examined its approach to the teaching of world history; and rhetoric revised its public speaking course.

Using the rhetoric review as a specific example, the department received CILA grant support for faculty leave time to study the relationship of public speaking to democracy, citizenship, and civic engagement. The department's work included hosting [a colloquy](#) of other scholars also interested in what it means to teach public speaking as a liberal art. In turn, the faculty wrote a new text for the public speaking course and redesigned the class to focus on issues of civic engagement and public deliberation. The course changes have been assessed using a modified version of the Carnegie Foundation's Political Engagement Survey. In the initial comparisons of the final year of the former version of the course (spring 2010) and the first year of the course revision (2010-11), data analysis found significant additional gains in students' foundational political knowledge and knowledge of current events; general communication skills; and skills in collaboration and political analysis. As such, the review work includes data-driven research on teaching and learning, the type of which is helping departments change the view of assessment from the work of compliance to critical investigations of student learning and teaching pedagogies.

Other departments have blended more traditional review mechanisms with innovative practices so as to produce both holistic program assessment and focused revision on particular program components. These assessments have consisted of a self-study that identifies review questions and a visit by an external review team, but also other means of engaging in student learning assessment and curricular revision. For example, the English department identified four curricular areas of focus for their most recent review: creative writing, composition, major curriculum, and linguistics. The review also

#### Electronic Resource

### Rhetoric Department Review

#### Electronic Resource

### English Department Review

included three visits to creative writing programs and assessments of introductory and core courses in literature. As a result of that self-study, all freshman composition courses are now full-credit offerings (whereas before there had been a mixture of full- and half-credit courses offered), a new 200-level writing course has been created, a new 300-level critical methods course has been added to the major, and a major track in creative writing was approved by the faculty.

#### Electronic Resources

**Physics  
Department  
Review**

**Dual Degree  
Engineering  
Partnership**

In the case of physics, the department conducted an extensive multi-year self-study that reviewed all elements of the program, including curriculum, facilities, and resources. In particular, the review featured extensive data collection on best teaching practices in upper-level physics offerings. This work culminated with the department hosting a national conference on upper-level physics education research. This first-time conference, which featured 20 participants, brought together established, emerging, and prospective researchers from all over the United States to talk about issues central to upper division physics teaching and research. Subsequently, the departments brought forward a proposal to streamline some of its course offerings, creating greater efficiency and making it easier for students to enter the major and choose courses that meet their needs. At the same time, the changes increased department flexibility and its ability to contribute to all-college courses. Another expression of the department's ongoing effort to meet student needs and to meet a current strategic plan goal to provide new curricular opportunities was the establishment, in conjunction with the mathematics and computer science department, of [a dual degree program](#) with Purdue University's College of Engineering, which we discuss in Criterion 5.

#### Electronic Resources

**Biochemistry  
Major**

**Chemistry  
Department  
Review**

Finally, all departments have used the review process to focus on potential curricular innovation in the service of student learning, as is demonstrated by reviews undertaken in chemistry, art, and modern languages and literatures. For instance, based on information gathered during its self-study, the chemistry department focused on the first-year experience, biochemistry, and physical chemistry. Subsequently, the faculty approved the addition of a [new major in biochemistry](#) that was fashioned on comparison with other GLCA schools and the guidelines for biochemistry majors offered by the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

#### Electronic Resources

**Digital Media  
Project**

**Art Department  
Review**

As part of its review, the art department proposed "Designing a Model Program: Integrating Digital Media" to examine the benefits a position in new media would provide to the department and to the College in general. The proposal was enacted in the form of a two-year, CILA grant-funded position devoted to new media. The review was followed with a reflective 2010 report, "[Art Department Review: Triage and Beyond: A Five-Year Plan](#)," that examined the impact of staffing changes and offered strategies for the future of the department post-2008. This report set the stage for transformation in teaching, interdisciplinary links with film and digital instruction, and new course trajectories in architecture, all in support of strategic plan curricular initiatives to strengthen interdisciplinary teaching and learning.

#### Electronic Resource

**Modern Languages  
and Literatures  
Department  
Review**

The department of modern languages and literatures conducted a series of investigations that included detailed departmental reports reviewing language placement and lower level foreign language curricula, as well as approaches for incorporating cultural studies into the department curriculum. Subsequently, the department made minor revisions to intermediate language courses (including changes in course sequencing and changing how students register for foreign language tutorials) and reshaped major requirements to include cultural studies, with changes to the focus and content of some courses. The senior seminar and written comprehensive exams were also modified to place a greater emphasis on in-depth individualized research projects. In full, this work provided important support for strategic plan initiatives encouraging the exploration of interdisciplinary connections and set the stage for the anticipated Asian Studies Area of Concentration that is supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It also has prompted conversation with the history department

about a potential area of concentration in Hispanic Studies.

**Strengths, challenges and recommendations.** The range of review activities reveals a faculty committed continuously to assessing and improving student learning through reflective analysis of teaching and departmental practices and an interest in innovating departmental curricular designs so as to enhance student learning and advance strategic plan goals. As department reviews continue in the next cycle, one improvement possibility is for departments to do more post-implementation assessment of changes in order to more clearly evaluate impacts on student learning. To that end, departments would provide an interim report two or three years post-review that reflects on actions and outcomes related to their previous review and uses the spring assessment meeting with the Dean of the College as an opportunity to review impacts of teaching and learning changes. A challenge going forward is how to sustain the innovative designs for review instituted in the last cycle — including site visits and release time — given that CILA grant funding, which generously funded leaves and visiting positions to support that work, ends in 2014. Another challenge is to utilize better the array of data sets (e.g., NSSE, WNS, CIRP) held by the College to ensure that good, high impact teaching practices that contribute to positive student outcomes remain robust and improve. Discussion among faculty of high impact teaching practices has begun (see below) and will remain an ongoing concern for all departments given the demographics of the faculty and that the College is not anticipating staff size increases in the near future.

#### ***Annual Assessment Meetings with the Dean of the College***

An important element of the feedback loop that connects department efforts to institutional level review of student learning and effective teaching is the annual assessment meeting each department has with the Dean of the College. These conversations address departmental activities from the previous year, assessment outcomes, and anticipated activities and initiatives. The annual [Dean's assessment meeting](#) is also an occasion to discuss challenges and opportunities departments are facing. Records of these meetings are kept by both the department and the Dean's Office and revisited annually. Thus while academic assessment is largely driven by the faculty, there exists in the structure a mechanism for the Dean of the College to discuss with academic departments other assessment options and actions for consideration, especially those that extend beyond individual departments or divisions to the entire College.

These annual assessment meetings focus on various aspects of student learning and departmental teaching, particularly teaching innovations, department activities (to assist in further meeting departmental goals and objectives), and evidence collected by the department (to help the College understand how it is meeting institutional goals and enhancing student learning). For example, in 2010-11 these meetings focused on two assessment-related activities already discussed: department reviews and renovated department learning goals. Individual conversations varied depending on the stage of the department in the review cycle, but they generally addressed how the most recent review was acted upon and planning for the next review. Conversations about department learning goals addressed the meaning of the goals, their importance to department curricula, how they are assessed, and, in particular, means of making the goals both more visible to constituencies and central to the educational and assessment work of departments. In 2011-12, the annual meetings again focused on two issues related to student learning: the use of high-impact teaching practices as identified in the Wabash National Study and how department writing statements have been utilized in reviewing and improving the teaching of writing.

To facilitate the conversations, faculty were provided with information on [high-impact teaching practices](#) from the findings from the WNS. Also, copies of Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa's *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, an important work with major national

#### **Electronic Resource**

#### **Notes from the Dean's Assessment Meetings**

impact which utilized the research of the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts, were distributed to department chairs as a resource for departments to continue to reflect on their high impact teaching practices. In the conversations, the Dean and departments focused on 100- and 200-level courses and the impact of increases in class size caused by the very large 2011 matriculating class, as well as those pedagogical strategies designed to foster engagement and deep learning.

### **Wabash College engages in institutional level assessment of student learning and effective teaching**

Complementing department level assessment efforts, the College evaluates student learning and effective teaching at the institutional or all-college level. While efforts to review and assess the framework of general education requirements, including undertaking broad curriculum review, are addressed in Criterion 4B, here the focus is on program-specific assessments that evaluate student learning and effective teaching across the College. Four specific examples of assessment activities focused on student learning and effective teaching are evaluations of Freshman Tutorial and the first-year experience; Cultures and Traditions and Enduring Questions; writing across the curriculum; and senior comprehensive exams. These are systematic means used to evaluate student learning and assess educational offerings and teaching practices that impact each Wabash student across the arc of his freshman to his senior year.

#### **Electronic Resource**

#### **Freshman Year Experience Study Group Report**

#### ***Freshman Tutorial and the Freshman Year Experience Study Group (FYESG)***

The Freshman Tutorial program is a long-standing and successful program that introduces new students to the academic expectations of Wabash while assisting with their transition to College life. This all-college course is dedicated to seven goals:

- Development of college-level academic writing skills;
- Development of college-level critical reading and thinking skills;
- Development of college-level oral expression skills;
- Facilitating first-year students' adjustment to the College;
- Development of intellectual curiosity;
- Reinforcing listening and valuing of diverse viewpoints;
- Creating a joy and passion for life-long learning.

As demonstrated in the [Freshman Tutorial program goals](#) document, these goals are met through a variety of first-year activities and have been evaluated in multiple ways, including in-class assessments, institution-wide assessment of writing, early alert and retention data, end-of-semester evaluations by students and faculty, and senior exit data. Led by the two faculty co-chairs, expectations are established, maintained, and fostered through regular staff meetings that focus on course goals and strategies for working with first-semester students. Veteran tutorial instructors provide additional faculty mentoring, and resources on teaching strategies and assignment ideas are made available to all faculty teaching the course.

In an expanded assessment of the entire first-year, the FYESG, a group of 14 faculty, staff, and students, convened in spring 2007 at the request of the Dean of the College. Over the course of nine months, members of this group met frequently, engaged in a five-day retreat, visited other liberal arts institutions, and organized an on-campus symposium on the first-year experience hosted by CILA. During these activities, the FYESG generated questions and goals related to a successful first-year program; reviewed published research on first-year programs; gathered first-hand information and data on first-year programs on eight college campuses; gathered information on Wabash's current first-year programs through interviews, reviews of published information, and on-line questionnaires

for students and faculty; and within the context of this information, assessed the overall strengths and weaknesses of Wabash's first-year program. The result was [a comprehensive examination](#) of student experiences, student learning, and teaching practices.

The study group concluded that Wabash's first-year students are happy and successful overall, and verified many productive College practices in recruiting, orienting, and educating first-year students. However, the study group also concluded that the first-year program could be coordinated more effectively to support the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of Wabash students. As a result, the study group issued a substantial report and a series of recommendations. The work generated productive campus conversations that resulted in a number of changes to the first-year experience and have had ongoing, sometimes serendipitous, impacts, including:

- A new [freshman website](#) was created to establish an earlier bond with incoming students and to communicate important information and requirements to them. Updated annually, the site provides a Freshman Checklist of everything incoming students need to do in advance of matriculation: selecting housing and freshman tutorial preferences; signing up for Employment Self-Help (ESH); completing loan and financial aid paperwork; submitting health records; reading the FERPA policy; and completing foreign language and math placement exams. In this way Wabash is reaching out to students earlier with important information while placing it in an easily accessible, centralized location. The pro-active effort is designed to decrease student anxiety and to efficiently collect necessary information before arrival to campus. It also has allowed for adjustments to the orientation schedule that have reduced the amount of time spent collecting basic information and taking placement tests;
- Writing was elevated as the primary course goal and increased resources have been directed toward improvements in writing instruction. This has included the use of summer workshops for tutorial instructors that have been led by the campus Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator and a more intentional approach to writing instruction with some portion of almost every bi-weekly staff meeting focused on writing. The result has been the achievement of greater consensus among tutorial instructors on the types and amount of writing to be introduced in tutorials;
- To improve the overall experience of first-year students, changes have been made to the freshman advising system and to advisor training. As was the case previously, whenever possible, tutorial instructors serve as the academic advisor to the students in their tutorial section. Except in unusual circumstances, first-year faculty do not teach freshman tutorial and, regardless, they are not assigned as advisors. And as is discussed further in Criterion 3C, advisor training has been assessed and expanded and is now a collaborative effort among faculty, the Registrar's Office, and the Dean of Students;
- All freshman tutorials have been placed in the fall semester and scheduled at a common time. This has allowed for better scheduling of classes, an asset at a small campus with few repeat course offerings. It also has allowed for the development of occasional common freshman sessions on Tuesday mornings during a designated open hour in the campus



schedule. For instance, in one session a national expert on plagiarism spoke to all first-year students while in another convocation students were educated on the social norms of substance use for young males and common perceptions of those norms. The time slot also has been used in other unanticipated, productive ways for post-class advising, informal conversation, film screenings, and other extensions of the classroom;

- To encourage early academic engagement and to establish expectations for academic work and critical reading, a program has been implemented in which all incoming Wabash freshmen complete a summer reading assignment related to their freshman tutorial;
- To assist with the intellectual, social, and emotional development of first-year students, some freshman tutorial sections now utilize upper class mentors. These mentors serve a variety of functions, depending on the preferences of the tutorial instructor, including co-coaching some lessons, modeling assignments for tutorial students, serving as a tutor for writing and speaking assignments, assisting with aspects of student advising, and serving as a resource on issues related to the transition to college life;
- To assist with the unique demands faced by student-athletes, for the past four years the Faculty Athletic Representative has conducted academic advising sessions with sports teams near the start of the school year. The sessions discuss the responsibilities of student-athletes, coaches, and faculty regarding the academic obligations of student-athletes. In fall 2011, sessions were conducted with freshmen athletes from the football, soccer, baseball, basketball, tennis, and track teams;
- To improve the quality of living conditions of first-year students, and the capacity of independent housing, the study group recommended that the College address independent men's housing. At about the same time the report was issued, College Hall underwent a \$2.6 million renovation, and subsequently Cole Hall, which had a \$4 million renovation as the Delta Tau Delta chapter house, transitioned to independent housing with an emphasis on freshmen students, providing independent students new, improved housing options. Further, the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan adopted as one of its goals the building or renovating, as appropriate and feasible, "residential facilities that are designed as integral parts of the Wabash College community and liberal arts experience."

The study group made other recommendations that have been subsequently pursued in alternate formats and, in some cases, remain possible for additional future consideration. For instance, the study group recommended the creation of an additional all-college course to be taught in the spring semester of the freshman year. The course was envisioned as a way to continue to develop skills, particularly writing, with an introduction to the liberal arts experience. Certain of the ideas contained in it were incorporated in the new Enduring Questions (EQ) course, which was implemented three years after the report.

Other ideas have not been adopted but have generated discussion and represent possible future changes for Wabash to consider. For instance, through 2009 an ad hoc Freshman Year Experience Working Group continued to discuss FYESG recommendations such as bringing in new students for summer registration sessions and, as a result, further changing the nature of fall orientation. Another FYESG recommendation that remains on the table for potential future discussion is engaging in a candid discussion about what is the best time and way to conduct fraternity rush and pledging. Finally, while not anticipated by the study group, some tutorials have creatively incorporated immersion travel experiences as part of the course experience as ways of extending the classroom,

deepening learning, and strengthening student/faculty and student/alumni engagement.

**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** The Freshman Tutorial program and First Year Experience Study Group are illustrative of the systematic and reflective efforts to assess Wabash student learning and teaching effectiveness and to use the results of such study to further refine and improve those efforts. As the time to review the program again approaches, there are several changes that stand to be assessed, including the move of all tutorials to the fall, the impact of increased writing instruction, the use of summer reading, the impact of changes in advisor training, the value of immersion travel experiences, and the use of peer mentors. The introduction of the spring EQ all-college course also invites assessment of the full first-year learning trajectory of Wabash students, a study that will utilize WNS data over the period 2006-2012.

### ***Cultures and Traditions and Enduring Questions***

Since 1973, Wabash College has required all students to take two all-college courses. A second focus of institutional assessment over the past decade was the review of this second all-college course with an emphasis on its goals, the student experiences it provided, its implications for teaching, and how it should be administered. The ultimate result was the decision to change the format and focus of this second course by replacing Cultures and Traditions (C&T) with Enduring Questions (EQ). The review of C&T and the crafting of the new EQ course demonstrate the reflective processes undertaken by the faculty in determining a curriculum that meets the needs of students and the College's efforts at assessing course impacts and student learning.

From 1973 until 2010, C&T was a two-semester requirement for all sophomores that involved studying the arts, philosophies, religions, sciences, and social theories created by several cultures, Western and Eastern. Taught by faculty drawn from disciplines across the College, the class focused on critical reading, class discussion, and student writing. The course also provided students, faculty, and alumni with a shared experience based on the common syllabus and readings used in the course and plenary lectures.

Shortly after the last reaccreditation self-study, an increasing number of faculty raised questions about C&T, its goals, and its effectiveness. The questions prompted the beginning of an extended review of the course and its place at Wabash. During this time, the course co-chairs continued to assess the course in a variety of ways, including mid-term and final evaluations of students, evaluations by the teaching faculty, annual committee reports, and open meetings to discuss the course and its syllabus. Additional reviews sought to reflect on the focus and value of the course, refine the sometimes contentious process for selecting course readings (in a public session of all interested faculty), and search for answers about and solutions to the growing discontent of a segment of faculty who no longer volunteered to teach the course or did so reluctantly. Following site visits by faculty to schools with similar programs, the governance structure for the course was altered by creating [a steering committee](#) of five members that ultimately would be responsible for determining course content. After a three-year trial, the faculty voted in 2006 to retain the steering committee structure as a permanent feature of the course's administration.

Through the course of administrative changes, questions persisted and an additional review of C&T occurred during the process of the Academic Program Review, the first of the two large-scale curricular reviews undertaken during the past decade. Subsequently, the curriculum architecture



*Professor Cheryl Hughes teaches a section of Cultures and Traditions.*

proposal of spring 2007 suggested replacing C&T with a spring freshman year course. This generated new discussion of C&T, including the formation of a C&T discussion group which articulated for the faculty [the values](#) served by the course.

The faculty elected to not pursue changes in the structure of all-college courses at that time, but concerns returned to the fore in fall 2009 when the College announced its intent to reduce total faculty and staff by 14% due to the severe economic downturn and the loss of endowment income. Faculty continued to voice their concerns about the course — the perceived lack of autonomy in and ownership over the course, the inflexibility of the schedule, the feeling that specific content must be taught, and discomfort at teaching outside one’s area of expertise — and, in particular, questioned the high amount of FTE resources devoted to the course.

Responding to a motion from department chairs to reduce the number of semesters devoted to all-college courses from three to two, the APC organized a series of conversations to determine how to proceed. These discussions occurred in faculty meetings, division meetings, and cross-divisional meetings with diverse groups of faculty. In addition, several open meetings with students were organized. The conversations served as a model for robust faculty curricular discussions as the faculty was thoughtful about staffing implications, the goals of all-college courses, and their assessments of C&T. After the conversations, an APC-administered faculty survey on all-college courses and graduation requirements, and a series of focus groups with students (conducted by Teagle Assessment Scholars), the APC advanced a motion supporting the change. After overwhelmingly adopting the APC motion, the faculty elected a committee to begin planning a new all-college course and gave the committee broad latitude to think about its goals, content, and placement.

**Electronic Resource**

**All-College  
Course  
Discussions**

The All-College Course (ACC) Committee worked efficiently and deliberately over spring and summer 2010, meeting regularly and gaining input through open meetings and an invitation to the community to submit suggestions for course readings. The committee produced a framework for the course that was eventually entitled Enduring Questions (EQ). EQ is a spring semester course for first-year students; class sections contain approximately 15 students and meet at a common time. As explained by the ACC Committee, the course seeks to foster (a) student engagement with fundamental questions of humanity from different epistemological perspectives and with texts (broadly defined) from multiple disciplines, and (b) a sense of community starting with the freshman class and extending throughout the College. In so doing, the course confronts students with the central liberal arts questions of what it means to be human and how we construct knowledge and understandings of ourselves, our relationships, and our world.

The course goals, which are explained in the [course syllabus](#), reflect the learning goals broadly held for a Wabash education and the faculty’s hope of inspiring reflective thinking by students. Specifically, the course goals include promoting critical thinking and listening, developing discussion and writing skills, fostering intellectual and social relationships, and spurring further thinking about enduring questions of lifelong learning congruent with a mission goal to shape the life of the mind.

Moreover, the course addressed concerns that had been raised about C&T by reducing the required faculty resources needed to sustain it and also providing more instructor autonomy. The course syllabus is about 75% in common, thus retaining a shared experience, but instructors design the remaining days by spending more time on selected texts, devoting additional class days to skill development, or adding additional readings of their own choosing. Instructors also have more latitude in how components of the course are weighted in determining grades. The course proposal specified in detail the philosophy of the course, its administration, its rationale, and also sets out a plan for systematic assessment.

The EQ assessment plan is impressive in its rigor and scope. The plan will result in collecting more detailed information on this course than any other that has been offered at Wabash. It is a reflection of faculty commitment to use assessment to improve student learning. The plan, which consists of four parts, is explained in detail in the spring [2011 Enduring Questions Assessment Report](#). Assessment begins with pre-course and post-course surveys that mirror portions of the WNS, NSSE, and the Defining Issues Test (DIT) on moral reasoning. Using these scales provides an effective basis of comparison given the first-year data previously collected on Wabash students who entered the College between 2006 and 2008. The effort is also both an example of how College assessment efforts use data, and an assessment that is leveraging data collected in other contexts (WNS and NSSE). Second, on a rotating basis EQ sections complete assessments of specific texts in the course. Third, students complete an end-of-semester course evaluation. Finally, the teaching faculty meet regularly to discuss and evaluate texts and works recently taught. Moreover, the inaugural teaching staff met multiple times in advance of the start of the course to prepare by reviewing texts and met regularly after the semester to review outcomes, evaluate the semester, and to share data and experiences with the next teaching cohort.

As is explained in more detail in the Enduring Questions Assessment Report, the first semester pre- and post-course assessments revealed favorable differences in students in the areas of moral reasoning, political and social involvement, and racial understanding. The findings were particularly significant based on comparisons to first-year results on the WNS. There, political and social involvement and promotion of racial understanding were areas that Wabash freshmen had shown decreases over the course of their first-year, a decline widely experienced by students at a variety of institutional types. In contrast, EQ assessment shows that the College's 2011 freshmen displayed growth, rather than decline, in these areas. Such results have positive implications for the College in terms of meeting its mission's commitment to leading effectively, acting responsibly, and living humanely. Student text evaluations showed clear patterns on which readings were viewed as most effective at meeting stated course goals. In turn, student recommendations on which readings should be retained were consistent with their evaluations of effectiveness. The final course evaluations provided a first set of data in the longer term effort to assess the impact of the course. On five out of six questions relating to achievement of course goals, more than 70% of students either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the course had achieved the stated goal (only goal 6, being inspired to ask new questions, rated below 70%). The evaluations also point to areas for continued examination and improvement as the course develops in coming years. This includes continued refinement of skill development, as only 48% of students responded that the course helped them become better writers and 65% of students responded that the course helped them become better discussants, and monitoring the time commitment required of the course given that 61% felt the readings took too much time and 56% felt there were too many out of class activities. The co-chairs took the evaluations into account when planning the [spring 2012 syllabus](#) for the class.

After five years, the course will undergo a full review. Following the review, the full faculty will discuss the results in evaluating the effectiveness of this all-college course offering. At that time, review of the course would fold into the normal assessment cycle for all-college courses, departments, and programs.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** The creation of Enduring Questions has reinvigorated faculty interest in all-college courses with enthusiasm for the course high and most faculty eager to teach the class. The course reaffirms faculty commitment to the liberal arts and models concretely to all students the value of life-long learning. Moreover, the process used to review C&T and craft the new EQ course shows both the reflective processes of the faculty in determining a curriculum shaped to meet the needs of students and the College, and also efforts at assessing course impacts and

Electronic Resource

Enduring Questions  
Course Proposal

student learning. In the coming years, continued assessment of the course — and its ties to Freshman Tutorial — will be essential in the College’s consideration of the importance and impact of the overall freshman experience, all-college courses, and general commitment to learning assessment.

### *Assessment of Writing*

A third focus of institution-wide assessment has been a more sustained, intentional, and organized effort to assess the teaching of writing so as to further improve student learning and enhance teaching effectiveness. Writing always has been an important feature of the Wabash education, a foundational communication skill, but until recently there was not a clear, centralized “home” for addressing College writing concerns. However, recent changes have made the teaching of writing more intentional through both more extensive assessment and the development of new initiatives as the result of these assessments. The work is an exemplar of an effective feedback loop that can be replicated in assessing other components and goals of the Wabash academic program: collection of information, assessment of its meaning, revision of practices based on the evidence, and continuous monitoring for improvement.

The precipitating event for a more intentional approach to writing was the 2007 hire of a two-year Lilly Teaching Fellow as a Visiting Assistant Professor of English to promote writing in all departments. Out of this hire, the Wabash Writing Study was developed and what was known on campus as the “Year of Writing” (2008-09) was launched. During this time, the College engaged in comprehensive reflection on the teaching of writing through conversations, workshops, and assessment activities. The success of these efforts led to the creation of the Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator position responsible for spearheading continuing efforts in the area.

The Wabash Writing Study, which also was supported by funds from Lilly Endowment Inc. granted to CILA, examined writing practices at Wabash, investigated student and faculty writing values, and assessed various approaches to writing education employed by other small liberal arts colleges. Through a series of faculty and student surveys, interviews, and focus groups, the study produced a quantitative and qualitative description of the culture of writing at Wabash, including identifying areas for innovation and refinement in how Wabash supports student writing, addresses education about plagiarism and citation use and misuse, and in general meets the needs of entering students.

Specifically, the efforts to assess Wabash writing practices included participation in two studies examining college writing, The Citation Project and the Teagle Writing Study. [The Citation Project](#) is a national study that has responded to educators’ concerns about plagiarism and the teaching of writing by focusing on how students use sources in their papers in freshman-year writing courses. The Wabash results were consistent with the overall findings from the study: “students tend to use short, easily-findable sources from the Internet, that they tend to quote out-of-context, and that they do little summary, paraphrase, or other integrative work with their sources.” Similarly, the Teagle Writing Study was a comparative analysis of hundreds of student papers from six participating small liberal arts colleges. The data revealed that Wabash senior papers are significantly more advanced than freshman papers with Wabash papers improving significantly over the four years in all seven of the categories measured by the study: mechanics, grammar, word choice, paragraphs, evidence, purpose, argument, and reach. Of the participating colleges, Wabash’s students entered with the lowest SAT writing scores while the writing of Wabash seniors was scored at significantly higher levels than their SAT scores would predict. These results at once provided evidence of positive outcomes of writing instruction at Wabash and identified areas for future improvement, for instance in striving for greater gains in the category of “complexity and intellectual reach.”

Ultimately, the Wabash Writing Study and associated efforts produced five outcomes that support

student learning and effective teaching:

- Produced a report on how Wabash faculty and students view academic writing;
- Contributed to the creation of a new, sophomore level writing course (ENG202: Writing with Power and Grace);
- Facilitated the development of the Wabash institutional writing statement;
- Contributed to the revision of the Wabash academic honesty policy;
- Resulted in the development of “The Write Stuff,” an ongoing series of writing workshops for students.

A second element of Wabash’s writing assessment, the “Year of Writing,” featured a series of activities that have had ongoing implications for student learning and effective teaching. One feature of the effort was a series of guest lectures on source use, writing and technology, and the deep structures behind most academic writing. Also included was a source use study, featuring a survey of 120 freshmen and a visit by a leading scholar on issues of plagiarism and academic honesty.

A central outcome of the “Year of Writing” was that each academic department produced a writing statement in an effort to clarify for students and advisors the broad and variegated culture of writing at Wabash. The statements were developed with the goal of making explicit the assumptions and expectations about student writing in various academic fields and departments. The work of producing the statements encouraged departments to engage in serious conversations about how they approach writing, their departmental expectations, the strengths and weaknesses of their efforts, and future needs.

Subsequently, the individual departmental writing statements were used to craft a campus writing statement that affirms the value Wabash places on writing and codifies previously implicit expectations. [The statement](#), which was placed in the *Academic Bulletin* and across the website upon its adoption by the faculty, articulates and affirms the common expectations Wabash has for student writing and underscores the seriousness with which the College regards this mission-critical goal, namely to be able to communicate clearly and effectively.

The [Coordinator of the Writing Across the Curriculum](#) program, a position created in 2009, is charged with coordinating and supporting the College’s efforts to promote the effective teaching of writing. The Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator has worked in conjunction with a variety of College constituencies in refining and developing writing assessments and has done so at administrative, all-college, faculty, and student levels. Particularly important points of contact have included work with the Director of Academic Support Services, the co-chairs of all-college courses, department chairs, the Teaching and Learning Committee, and students. Working with [Teagle Assessment Scholars](#) through CILA, the Coordinator has acquired experience working with colleagues at other liberal arts institutions in using information to assess and strengthen student learning and faculty teaching.

Both the departmental writing statements and the source use study have been utilized by the Coordinator of Writing Across the Curriculum to locate areas for future writing initiatives.

#### Electronic Resources

**Wabash Writing Activities and Assessment**

**Departmental Writing Statements**



*Professor Crystal Benedicks is the Coordinator of Writing Across the Curriculum.*

On the Web

2012  
Academic Honesty  
Guide

For example, examination of the writing statements suggested that source use and its relationship to academic honesty is unevenly taught while the source use study revealed divergent student understandings of academic honesty. In response, a series of workshops for faculty and students was organized to address these topics. Subsequently, these conversations contributed to the decision to revise the [Academic Honesty Policy](#). The final revision was the outcome of an extended, multi-year conversation involving a variety of constituencies — students, the Dean of Students, the Dean of the College, the Teaching and Learning Committee, and faculty as a whole. The revamped policy, adopted in spring 2011, focuses on source use and is intended to promote student education on matters of academic honesty and plagiarism. It also revised disciplinary procedures and created a Faculty Appeal Panel to review student concerns and to review any violation of the policy that would result in student expulsion. After the adoption of the policy, the Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator produced the [Academic Honesty Guide](#), a packet of educational materials on academic honesty and source use for faculty to use in their classes.

An additional element of writing assessment came in the form of the previously mentioned English departmental review, which resulted in a change to offering only full-semester courses in freshman composition so that more students with lower writing proficiency receive [a full-course experience](#) in writing instruction. Utilizing SAT data generated by CILA, this decision to teach only full-semester composition courses was supported in a 2011 study of English department placement practices.

Going forward, the Coordinator of Writing Across the Curriculum will work with interested departments to develop classes that focus more thoroughly on writing within that discipline. That work is part of [a comprehensive five-year plan](#) for Writing Across the Curriculum, which is presently in a draft form that is under consideration. The draft plan recognizes, values, and retains important elements of the Wabash experience for faculty and students — such as faculty autonomy — while developing means for continued faculty development and assessment. At the core of the plan is continued support for all-college courses, providing support for individual departments, and working with cohorts of faculty to improve the teaching of writing. An important component in working with the all-college courses will be working with course co-chairs to continue to refine course writing goals and working with course staffs on faculty development.

Beyond this, a new program is being developed to work with six-to-eight person cohorts of interested faculty on an annual basis who desire to teach more writing or teach writing better in their department courses. Each cohort will consist of faculty from a particular academic division, working through the divisions on three-year cycles. The Coordinator also will continue to study student and faculty practices, stay abreast of curricular conversations and their implications for writing instruction, continue the partnership with the Writing Center in sponsoring student workshops, monitor the effectiveness of changes in the academic honesty policy, and develop educational materials as needed on source use and plagiarism for faculty and students.



*Professor Eric Freeze teaches a creative writing course.*

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Since the last self-study Wabash College has developed a coherent and comprehensive approach to improving student writing, committed resources in support of it, and encouraged increased community-wide reflection on writing instruction and expectations. The effort will require continued monitoring and changes in practice based on what

future assessments yield. The approach to assessing writing also provides a model for augmenting future assessment of essential skills during the next cycle of reviews. Similarly comprehensive strategies could be developed for quantitative skills, oral communication, and foreign language development. Such efforts would build from recent curriculum conversations and even work by the Admissions Committee to examine entering math scores, helping the College to articulate what it sees as core elements of general education and proficiency and the expectations held for all Wabash students as grounded in the mission.

### ***The Senior Comprehensive Examination***

A final example of a College-wide mechanism to evaluate student learning is the senior comprehensive exam. Passing the exam is a graduation requirement for all seniors. The exam, which consists of both a written and oral component, provides a capstone of student academic achievement to the major, the minor, and all-college requirements.

Written comps consist of two days of testing in the student's major field and can take many forms. For instance, in chemistry the written exam includes a hands-on laboratory component, an experimental design essay, a section of questions based on primary literature articles, and sections covering the five major areas of the discipline. In psychology and economics, students are asked, among other topics, to exhibit their knowledge of and abilities in statistics. And in rhetoric, a student takes a one-day written examination and devotes the second day to a significant oral presentation that exhibits skill in rhetorical analysis.

The oral comprehensive examination is more standardized. It is 50 minutes in length and the exam committee is composed of one instructor from the major department, one from the second major, minor, or area of concentration, and one at-large. Generally, it consists of three sections, in which each of the examiners closely questions the student on his knowledge of the field, looking for both depth of understanding and clarity of oral presentation.

The comprehensives are no mere exercise. Students are assigned one of four grades: distinction, high-pass, pass, or fail. If a student fails any portion of the comprehensives, he will be given an opportunity to retake it; but should he again fail, he will not graduate with his class. The comprehensive exams also have a significant effect on the determination of a student's final honors. For instance, a student must receive distinction on his comprehensives to be awarded *summa cum laude*. Distinction is awarded to very few students, on average about 10% of students each year, about the same portion of students who fail an element of the exam on their first attempt.

In 2010 the oral exam was moved from a two-week period in February when students and professors were in the midst of their regular schedule of classes to the second week of January, prior to the start of the spring semester. The move to consolidate the written and oral parts allows for solitary focus on the exams for both students and faculty and has, somewhat serendipitously, elevated the exam's status as a focused academic event in the trajectory of a Wabash student's career. Now, seniors begin returning to campus shortly after New Year's Day and by their accounts experience a class-wide camaraderie as they prepare. As one student explained in *The Bachelor*, the student newspaper:

“[The] two weeks leading up to and through [comprehensive exams embodied all of] the expected characteristics of a Wabash education. “It meant studying for 10 days straight (and possibly more) over what you have learned during your four years here. It meant coming back to Crawfordsville two weeks before underclassmen.... [And] it also represented the best of this place.... Those two weeks of comps were a perfect microcosm of why each and every one of us came to this school, and why we will graduate: we don't see a challenge as an obstacle, but as an opportunity, and an

#### **Electronic Resources**

**Oral Comps  
Survey Report**

**Student and Faculty  
Oral Comps Survey**

opportunity that we are better men for having taken... Comps is the greatest thing I never want to do again.”

— Brandon Alford, *The Bachelor*, January 20, 2012, p. 5.

An ad hoc committee tasked with assessing the changes to comprehensives administered a survey and found broad support for the alterations, saw evidence of good understanding of comps by students, and brought forward several ideas to refine the experience. About 50% of the senior class responded to the survey with 99% supporting the change in schedule to just prior to the start of the spring semester. Responding faculty also overwhelmingly supported the change, with 85% finding the new placement an improvement. In general, students explained the oral exam as an opportunity to demonstrate their communication skills and to integrate their Wabash learning from across their courses and draw from their campus experiences. In terms of improvements, students suggested the College review student services provided during the time leading up to exams while faculty suggested adjustments to exam scheduling. In both cases suggestions were acted upon in improving exams in 2011 and 2012.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** The College will continue to monitor comps results to see if any new patterns emerge based on changes to exams. However, to this point the change has been deemed very successful. More importantly, during the next self-study cycle the College should consider studying the overall benefits of senior comprehensives and its format, particularly as related to the minor exam, which is frequently a subject of criticism among a portion of the faculty.

As is demonstrated by College-wide examinations of Freshman Tutorial and the first-year experience, C&T and EQ, student writing, and senior comprehensive exams, Wabash College engages in institutional level assessments of student learning and effective teaching. These examples are indicative of the thoughtful reflection devoted to examining College processes for teaching and learning in ways that impact every Wabash student across his four years at the College. The examples also provide both an agenda for continuing College-wide assessments and a template for efforts in examining other programs and educational goals.

### **Wabash College uses institutional data to assess student learning and effective teaching**

While examples of the College’s approach to assessing student learning have been explored in detail in this Criterion section, at a more general level positive educational assessment data provide further evidence of excellence in student learning and teaching effectiveness. Data that point to weaknesses



*Professor Bobby Horton in a psychology class.*

in student learning and faculty teaching effectiveness present opportunities for the institution to further assess and develop means for improvement. Moreover, Wabash is beginning to employ more pronounced systematic efforts to use these data as tools to evaluate student learning and teaching so that ongoing improvements can be made and sustained over time.

Educational data is collected yearly. It consists of such elements as the WNS, the NSSE, the senior College Student Survey (CSS), and the freshman Cooperative Institutional Research Association (CIRP) survey. These data are discussed at various points in the *Self-Study Report*. Here WNS results are highlighted as a reflection of assessment of student learning and effective teaching.

The [Wabash National Study](#), a four-year longitudinal study of student experiences and learning outcomes that was developed at the Center of Inquiry and used by 49 institutions, has provided the College with a snapshot of student performance and a trove of valuable information that the College has made use of in multiple ways. An examination of the first four-year cohort of the WNS (2010 graduates) yielded positive evidence of high student learning and effective teaching. In both the first and fourth year of enrollment, the WNS examined how often students experienced “high levels of good practice” across four good practice scales and 13 supporting measures. The good practice scales consisted of “good teaching and high-quality interactions with faculty,” “academic challenge and high expectations,” “diversity experiences,” and “NSSE deep learning.” The supporting measures included faculty interest in teaching and student development, quality non-classroom interactions with faculty, teaching clarity and organization, frequency of higher-order exams and assignments, challenging classes and faculty expectations, higher-order learning, integrative learning, and reflective learning.

For the first cohort of Wabash students, across all four good practice scales and the 13 specific measures, students in both the first and fourth year reported more frequently experiencing “high levels of good practices” than were found in the all-institution average for participating schools. (Charts summarizing the Wabash WNS results may be [found here](#).) Moreover, in 22 of the 34 instances, Wabash student reports were 10 percentage points or more higher than the all-institution average.

**Electronic Resources**

**2010 Cohort  
Wabash National  
Study Data on  
Wabash Students**

**During First Year of College (Spring 2007 — First Cohort)  
The proportion of students reporting high levels of good practices:**

| <b>Good Practice Scale</b>                               | <b>Wabash College</b> | <b>Other 10 Small Institutions</b> | <b>All Other Institutions</b> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Good Teaching and High-Quality Interactions with Faculty | 69%                   | 39%                                | 32%                           |
| Academic Challenge and High Expectations                 | 35%                   | 14%                                | 12%                           |
| Diversity Experiences                                    | 10%                   | 5%                                 | 4%                            |
| NSSE Deep Learning                                       | 35%                   | 23%                                | 20%                           |

**During Fourth Year of College (Spring 2010 — First Cohort)  
The proportion of students reporting high levels of good practices:**

| <b>Good Practice Scale</b>                               | <b>Wabash College</b> | <b>Other 10 Small Institutions</b> | <b>All Other Institutions</b> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Good Teaching and High-Quality Interactions with Faculty | 72%                   | 60%                                | 51%                           |
| Academic Challenge and High Expectations                 | 50%                   | 30%                                | 23%                           |
| Diversity Experiences                                    | 16%                   | 10%                                | 7%                            |
| NSSE Deep Learning                                       | 55%                   | 42%                                | 35%                           |

In the preliminary data from the second four-year cohort (2011 graduates), student reports held steady in good practices reported for “academic challenge and high expectations,” “diversity experiences,” and “NSSE deep learning,” while there was an 8% increase in the proportion of fourth-year students reporting “good teaching and high-quality interactions with faculty.” And similar to findings with the first cohort, a higher proportion of Wabash students reported experiencing “high levels of good practice” across all 13 specific measures in the fourth-year and in 12 of the measures

in the first-year as compared to the other 14 small institutions in the study and as compared to the all-institution average. Importantly, in 24 of the 34 instances, Wabash student reports were 10 percentage points or more higher than the all-institution average.

Electronic Resources

**2011 Cohort  
Wabash National  
Study Data on  
Wabash Students**

**2011 (Second Cohort) vs. 2010 (First Cohort) Wabash graduates  
The proportion of students reporting high levels of good practices:**

| Good Practice Scale                                      | Wabash<br>1st Year<br>2nd Cohort | Wabash<br>1st Year<br>1st Cohort | Wabash<br>4th Year<br>2nd Cohort | Wabash<br>4th Year<br>1st Cohort |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Good Teaching and High-Quality Interactions with Faculty | 54%                              | 69%                              | 80%                              | 72%                              |
| Academic Challenge and High Expectations                 | 27%                              | 35%                              | 49%                              | 50%                              |
| Diversity Experiences                                    | 15%                              | 10%                              | 16%                              | 16%                              |
| NSSE Deep Learning                                       | 36%                              | 35%                              | 53%                              | 55%                              |

The data reveal that the level of good teaching practices reported by Wabash students consistently changed in an upward trajectory from the end of their first-year of college to the end of their fourth-year of college. Graphs for the first cohort illustrate the relationship of the change Wabash students experienced to that of students at all small institutions in the initial round of the WNS (charts summarizing the Wabash WNS results may be [found here](#)).

The positive results of the WNS extend beyond student self-reports to also include [outcome measures that assess students' growth](#) in areas including critical thinking, moral reasoning, need for cognition, leadership, well-being, and openness to diversity. The first cohort of Wabash students showed statistically significant growth in six of 10 categories. Moreover, Wabash students performed better than the small institution average and all-institution average in seven of the 10 categories and recorded the largest growth in the CAAP Critical Thinking score, Need for Cognition score, Diversity scale, and Psychological Well Being scale. The results demonstrate the general effectiveness of the Wabash education and map in a telling way onto the school's abbreviated Mission Statement: to educate men to think critically (CAAP Critical Thinking score), act responsibly (Defining Issues Test), lead effectively (Responsible Leadership scale), and live humanely (Defining Issues Test).

Many initial steps toward reflection on the meaning of these data, and accompanying efforts to further improve student learning and effective teaching, already have been put in place. For instance, in spring 2012 the Dean of the College's annual departmental assessment meetings identified reflection on the good teaching practices from the WNS as a point of focus. In particular, the Dean brought focus to some signs of a downward trend in first-year results across the three years of data and began to work with departments to reflect more on high impact teaching practices in 100- and 200-level courses in response to higher than normal enrollments anticipated in those courses. There are also other examples of the use of data across campus:

- Charles Blaich, the Director of Inquires at CILA and principle researcher on the Wabash National Study, has presented portions of the data to multiple campus audiences including an opening year faculty workshop;
- Results from the WNS have been shared with the APC and with all faculty through division meetings;
- Results from the WNS have been shared with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees;

- A member of the Accreditation Committee introduced students to the study data in a Chapel Talk;
- Teacher Education has collected data on student evaluations of good teaching practices in their 100- and 200-level courses in order to better understand the teaching and learning that goes on in their classes;
- EQ is using the data as part of its assessment efforts for student learning in the new all-college course;
- The ad hoc Retention Committee has used the WNS data to help formulate retention strategy;
- A faculty team is presently using WNS data to address weaknesses in reported diversity experiences by organizing faculty workshops, supported by Teagle Assessment Scholars, to develop explicit and appropriate pedagogies to improve diverse teaching and learning experiences across all academic divisions.

These examples are illustrative. Certainly more opportunities exist for the use of these data—and more will present themselves with the close of the WNS after the graduation of the class of 2012 (the third cohort) — but these are exciting developments at Wabash in regards to the use of data to formulate strategies to improve student learning and teaching at the College. They reflect an embrace of assessment leading to improvement in those teaching and learning areas directly reflective of the College’s Mission and Core Values.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** In the coming years and with the end of this version of the WNS, the College will need to consider more fully the significance of the three years of data and seek to use meaningfully the data in continuing to assess the overall educational program and prospects for additional improvements. For instance, the preliminary outcome data for the second cohort is positive — showing statistically significant growth in five of 10 outcome measures and exceeding the small college and all-institution average growth in six of 10 measures — but not as strong overall as the first cohort results. What accounts for the difference in results? Are we seeing effects of change in faculty size and demographics? The three-year data set will also allow for the consistency of the data to be more carefully scrutinized.

Furthermore, while these data point to positive outcomes for a significant number of Wabash students, they also make us aware that not all students have the same experience or report having high impact teaching practices to the same degree. In other words, the data are an invitation to probe the curriculum and our students’ experiences for improvements to be made. To this end, retention assessment is an area the College has begun earnestly to address, in particular with respect to students of color and first generation students. And it will be worth monitoring the levels of high impact practices at a time of transition in terms of the number of Wabash faculty and the demographic shift in the faculty (discussed in Criterion 3B). It is important to the institutional mission that Wabash insures its traditional quality while targeting areas for improvement. The broader point here is that the College is committed to purposeful data gathering and use to improve, and that means being prepared to acknowledge weaknesses wherever they may exist, developing strategies for improvement, and employing resources among faculty and staff and through CILA as an expression of excellent liberal arts thinking and engagement consistent with the highest aspirations of the College.



*Chemistry major Edward Evans discusses a laboratory problem with Professor Richard Dallinger.*

### ***Conclusions on Criterion 3A***

Wabash College has made significant strides in this review period to articulate clearly its goals for student learning outcomes as well as to assess the achievement of student learning and the level of effective teaching at the institution. It has been aided substantially by the emergence of CILA as a vital assessment resource to the College. Over the next several years, further opportunities for growth and improvement exist, including finalizing distribution requirement rationales, continuing to engage in department reviews that focus on teaching and learning, continuing assessments of College-wide learning, and making more and pointed use of institutional data to help with these efforts.

This is a unique time for assessment of student learning and effective teaching at Wabash for at least four reasons:

- The recently implemented curricular changes and continued discussion of other possible changes make assessment practices more important than ever in evaluating student learning and student learning outcomes;
- In the most recent round of department reviews many departments adopted innovative review designs that were underwritten by Lilly Endowment grant funding through CILA. Departments must evaluate the impact of changes adopted as a result of those reviews while the College will need to address whether and how such reviews can continue to be supported with the depletion of the grant funding that underwrote many of the efforts;
- Wabash has more institutional data available to it than ever before. The College is making efforts to use these data effectively, efforts that should continue to evolve in the coming years. The College will continue to explore ways of coordinating and making more effective institutional research;
- Finally, in the wider context of the institutional response to the 2008 recession and a refocusing by the College on core activities and values, there have been significant changes in faculty demographics, changes that offer potential and pose challenges for assessment. With the significant changes in the collective experience of the faculty comes a need for more faculty development regarding expectations for student learning and effective teaching and the benefits and uses of assessment in evaluating effective practices. At the same time, there is also renewed potential for greater assessment activities with a refashioned faculty that is coming of age in an era of increasing assessment expectations.

### **3B. WABASH COLLEGE VALUES AND SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE TEACHING.**

On the Web

**Faculty  
Handbook**

A commitment to effective teaching in service of student learning stands at the epicenter of the work of Wabash College. As the matter is explained in the opening pages of the *Faculty Handbook*:

The education of undergraduate men, from the acquisition of knowledge and skills to the development of qualities of mind and character, is central to the mission of the College. The maintenance of an excellent faculty is crucial to that mission. For Wabash College, a community of teacher-scholars sustains excellence. Effective teacher-scholars support the mission of the College through excellent and innovative teaching, continued scholarship and creative work, and leadership in the life of the community.

First and foremost, faculty continuously achieve excellence in teaching in all its forms and

settings, whether in lectures, in small group or individual discussions, in laboratory or studio work, or in office conferences. *Wabash faculty are reflective about the processes of teaching and learning, annually assessing student outcomes, and improving their effectiveness as teachers* (emphasis added). While faculty focus primarily on their own disciplines, their interests and abilities extend beyond a particular field, leading to involvement in all-college courses, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and the broader intellectual life of the College (p. 3).

The value the College places on effective teaching is illustrated in a multitude of ways, some of which are detailed in this Criterion core component. But, in actuality, the commitment to effective teaching is central to virtually everything Wabash does, extending from the trustees to the faculty. Effective teaching and learning is embodied in the Mission Statement and Core Values of the institution and is supported via faculty development, faculty/student engagement, fundraising, alumni engagement, and many more activities. One further, concrete measure of the centrality of effective teaching is the support found for it in the College's 2008-2013 Strategic Plan and the \$60 million Challenge of Excellence campaign.

Among the five strategic goals articulated in *The Liberal Arts at Wabash College—Serving the Needs of the Country*, two are explicitly dedicated to effective teaching in the form of attracting, developing, supporting, and retaining faculty who pursue teaching excellence as their highest priority and who will provide leadership in delivering the skills, knowledge, and experiences of a liberal arts curriculum.

Some of the means to support this commitment to teaching are found in the [case statement](#) for the Challenge of Excellence campaign, which includes among its four goals “support for faculty and faculty excellence in teaching, scholarship, and creative activity” and “resources for global education through immersion learning and study abroad.” To this end, among its commitments, the Challenge of Excellence campaign identifies providing faculty the “necessary resources of time, classroom and laboratory support” for excellence in teaching and the means “to develop interdisciplinary courses, explore innovative pedagogy, and acquire the necessary laboratory and classroom equipment.”

In examining the value Wabash College places on effective teaching and the support provided for it, this Criterion component demonstrates that Wabash possesses a highly qualified faculty that determines curricular content and teaching strategies; that the College evaluates teaching and recognizes teaching effectiveness; and that Wabash strongly supports faculty development in teaching in numerous forms.



*The Case Statement for the Challenge of Excellence campaign.*

## **Qualified faculty determine curricular content and strategies for instruction**

### ***Faculty Hiring***

The Wabash College hiring process is designed to attract, develop, support, and retain qualified faculty who are dedicated foremost to teaching excellence. Accordingly, [the hiring process](#) (*Department Chair Handbook*, pp. 13-21) is a thorough, multi-faceted evaluation of job candidates that seeks to determine commitment and competence to liberal arts teaching, particularly in the student-centered environment of Wabash. As was addressed in Criterion 2B, following the 2009 Comprehensive Faculty Review, the hiring process was revised in several ways, including the requirement that each search begin with a [hiring rationale](#) that is developed by the requesting department and vetted with the Personnel Committee. For approved searches, a detailed job posting

is developed that explains the nature of the position and the required application materials (including transcripts, teaching philosophy, and references). After reviewing applicants, the department ranks short-listed candidates (generally six to 10 applicants) and brings those files and the position rationale to the Personnel Committee for review. After this process, approval for on-campus interviews is granted. An intermediate step that is used frequently by departments is to conduct informal short-list interviews at professional conferences in advance of campus interview invitations.

Every candidate who interviews for a tenure-track position meets with multiple constituencies over the course of approximately a day and a half. This includes a public presentation of scholarship to a mixed audience of students, faculty and staff and meetings with groups of students, individual faculty from the department that is hiring, an external committee of three faculty, division chairs, the Dean of the College, and the President. Most departments also arrange a separate teaching presentation and the candidate has a campus tour and a library visit. The interview concludes with an exit interview with the relevant department chair. Upon the conclusion of campus interviews for a position (for tenure-track searches there are typically three interviewees, but occasionally four), the department chair collects feedback from students, department faculty, external faculty, and any community members who attended the public presentations. The relevant division chair provides the department chair with written feedback from the Personnel Committee, each of whom also attend the public presentations and meet with the candidates. Subsequently, the department discusses and ranks the candidates. The department chair and division chair discuss the candidate rankings with the Dean, who determines the outcome of the search, consults with the President, and makes an offer to the top candidate. The process is designed to assure that the candidate is a fit for the department and the College.



*History Professor Stephen Morillo.*

The hiring procedure is substantially similar for temporary appointments, except that meetings with other division chairs and the President are not required and the number of candidates performing on-campus interviews is variable. Also in light of the Comprehensive Faculty Review, and reflective of the occasional challenges of locating qualified term and part-time appointments in a rural location such as Crawfordsville, the College has developed [new guidelines](#) for the advertising of contingent faculty positions. These guidelines encourage additional avenues of search in order to take advantage of community resources and expertise including the hire of emeritus faculty, practitioners and professionals with specialized training, and making contact with area graduate programs.

While hiring pools can be variable by discipline and nature of position, a measure of the success of Wabash hiring practices and an indication of the overall qualifications of the faculty is that in fall 2011, 100 percent of our continuing full-time faculty held a Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree.

#### ***Faculty Size, Distribution, and Demographics***

As the accompanying tables illustrate, the [shape of the Wabash faculty](#) has changed considerably since the last accreditation review. These changes reflect the recalibration of staffing levels discussed in Criterion 2B as well as changing demographics as related to experience and diversity.

In 1994, the College adopted a goal of at least three full-time faculty in each department. By the time of the 2002 self-study this goal had been realized. In the years following, faculty size continued to grow, primarily due to CILA grant-supported Lilly Teaching Fellows, hires intended to support department reviews and other special projects, but also due to some increase in the number of tenure lines. However, since 2008 staffing levels have changed, including the reduction from three to two full-time faculty lines in art, music and German and from two to one full-time line in French.

At its peak, the number of tenured and tenure-track positions at the College was 83 (fall 2008) with a total of 90.33 full-time equivalents (FTE) of class-room instruction that year. By the fall of 2011 the College had determined staffing was to be set at 75 tenure lines with a total of 80 FTEs of class-room instruction. Under this calculation, the number of leave replacements was expected to fluctuate between five and eight annually, depending on the number of faculty who might elect a full year's sabbatical leave.

| <b>Total Faculty Positions by Year</b> | <b>Fall 2000</b> | <b>Fall 2005</b> | <b>Fall 2008</b> | <b>Fall 2010</b> | <b>Fall 2011</b> |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Tenured & Tenure Track                 | 74               | 79               | 83               | 72               | 74               |
| Term Appointments                      | 15               | 16               | 18               | 13               | 14               |
| Total Faculty Positions                | 89               | 95               | 101              | 85               | 88               |

| <b>Full-Time Equivalent Faculty</b> | <b>Fall 2000</b> | <b>Fall 2005</b> | <b>Fall 2008</b> | <b>Fall 2010</b> | <b>Fall 2011</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Tenured & Tenure Track              | 66.33            | 70               | 71               | 66               | 66.33            |
| Term Appointments                   | 15               | 16               | 18               | 13               | 14               |
| Part-Time Faculty                   | 0.67             | 0.67             | 1                | 3.84             | 3.67             |
| Staff                               | 2.33             | 0.33             | 0.33             | 2.16             | 0.33             |
| Total *                             | 84.33            | 87               | 90.33            | 85               | 84.33            |

*\* Note: Differences between the total number of Tenured and Tenure-Track faculty positions and the Tenured and Tenure-Track FTEs identified above reflect sabbatical leave replacements and release time for College projects.*

As is demonstrated in the charts, to this point the number of term appointments has not dropped as much as anticipated. Moreover, the rise in the number of part-time positions, which are still quite low in comparison to many other institutions, has cushioned the FTE decline. With the addition of tenure-track lines in Asian studies (filled for fall 2011), religion (filled for fall 2012), classics (anticipated fall 2013), and economics (anticipated fall 2013) and part-time appointments in art (equivalent to 1 FTE), biology (equivalent



*Professor Glen Helman teaches an advanced philosophy course in his Center Hall office.*

to .66 FTE), and music (equivalent to .83 FTE), overall staffing levels in 2013 are projected to be similar to that of the 2000-2006 period. In accordance with the staffing analysis done in the Comprehensive Faculty Review and the three recent tenure line additions, tenure lines at the College are now distributed as follows:

**Tenure Track Lines by Department and Year**

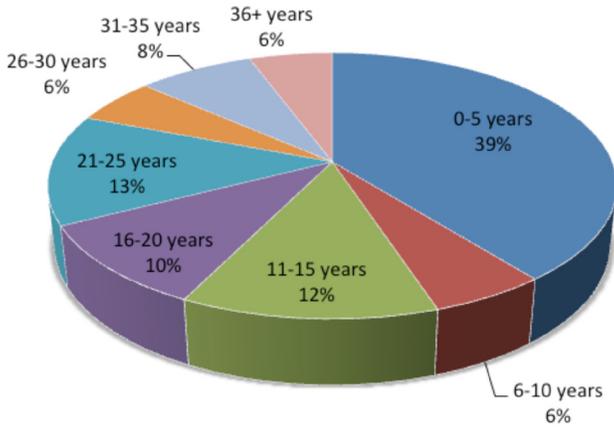
| <b>Department</b>                | <b>2000</b> | <b>2008</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2013</b> | <b>Net Change<br/>(2008-13)</b> |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Art                              | 3           | 3           | 2           | 2           | -1                              |
| Biology                          | 7           | 7           | 6           | 6           | -1                              |
| Chemistry                        | 7           | 6           | 6           | 6           |                                 |
| Classical Languages & Literature | 3           | 3           | 2           | 3           |                                 |
| Economics                        | 5           | 5           | 5           | 6           | +1                              |
| Education                        | 1           | 2           | 2           | 2           |                                 |
| English                          | 6           | 7           | 7           | 7           |                                 |
| History                          | 5           | 5           | 4.5         | 4.5         | -0.5                            |
| Mathematics & Computer Science   | 6           | 7           | 6           | 6           | -1                              |
| Modern Languages & Literature    | 5           | 8           | 7.5         | 7.5         | -0.5                            |
| Music                            | 2           | 3           | 2           | 2           | -1                              |
| Philosophy                       | 2           | 3           | 3           | 3           |                                 |
| Physics                          | 3           | 3           | 3           | 3           |                                 |
| Political Science                | 4           | 4           | 4           | 4           |                                 |
| Psychology                       | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           |                                 |
| Religion                         | 5           | 5           | 4           | 5           |                                 |
| Rhetoric                         | 3           | 3           | 3           | 3           |                                 |
| Theater                          | 3           | 3           | 3           | 3           |                                 |
| <b>Total *</b>                   | <b>75</b>   | <b>82</b>   | <b>75</b>   | <b>78</b>   | <b>-4</b>                       |

*\* Note: The difference in totals in this chart compared to the number of Tenure and Tenure-Track positions identified earlier in the Faculty Positions by Year chart reflects three instances in which a tenure line was held by a term appointment for a year prior to the position being filled through a tenure-track search.*

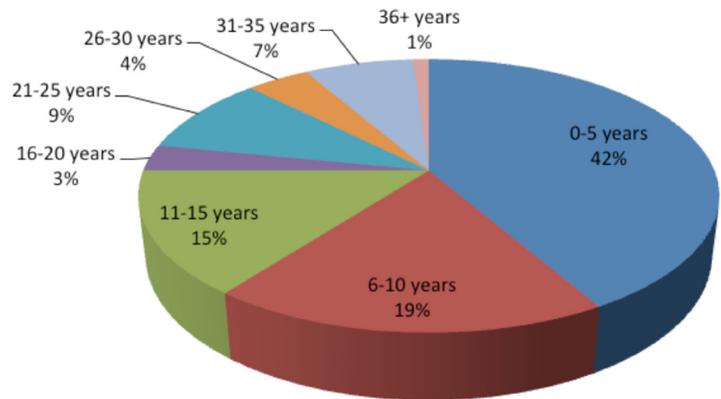
Despite the changes, in fall 2011 the fraction of courses taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty was 80%, a number comparable to the level over the last several years. Term appointment faculty teach 15%, and part-time faculty and staff currently teach 5% of course offerings. The 84.33 FTEs in fall 2011 put the effective student/faculty teaching ratio near 11/1, up from 10/1 in recent years. The addition of three tenure lines in 2013 will potentially move the ratio back toward a more favorable 10.4/1. Moreover, as was addressed in Criterion 2B, departments have worked to adapt to these changes by adjusting course offerings while class sizes and the student/faculty ratio continue to support student-faculty interactions at high quality levels.

As illustrated in the following pie charts, the recent changes in faculty also have translated into significant changes in overall faculty experience. Since 2000, 58% of the faculty is new to the College. Moreover, as the charts illustrate, there are now significantly more faculty members with ten or fewer years at the College, and there has been a significant drop in the number of faculty with 21 or more years of experience at Wabash.

## Years of Experience at Wabash (2000)



## Years of Experience at Wabash (2011)



Concurrent with these changes in faculty demographics, the number and percentage of women on the faculty have increased while the racial and ethnic diversity of the faculty overall has remained relatively constant.

| Faculty Diversity          | 2006<br>(% and number) | 2010<br>(% and number) | 2011<br>(% and number) |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Self-Identified Minorities | 11% (10)               | 13% (12)               | 13% (12)               |
| Women                      | 24.7% (22)             | 30% (27)               | 33% (32)               |

When looking at those on the faculty with five or fewer years of experience, 23 (58%) are women and eight (26%) are from a racial or ethnic minority. Thus gender and racial and ethnic diversity are increasing as a percentage of the most recent faculty cohorts. Over the last 40 years the gender balance among Wabash faculty has shifted dramatically from effectively an all-male faculty prior to 1972 to today's proportions. Both the number of women earning doctorate degrees and the number of women in Wabash applicant pools has increased. The College also continues to utilize the Owen Duston Visiting Assistant Professorship as a means to bring more diverse faculty experiences and interests to the College.

### *Faculty Oversight of Curriculum*

As is explored in other areas of the *Self-Study Report*, including Criterion 1D, Criterion 3A, and Criterion 4B, the Wabash College faculty exercises significant control over the policies and regulations governing the curriculum. This oversight is primarily provided through Faculty Meeting, the Academic Policy Committee (APC), and its subcommittee, the Curriculum Appeals Committee, but also is seen



*Rhetoric Professor Jennifer Abbott is one of 32 women on the faculty in 2011-12.*

in elected and appointed ad hoc committees addressing curricular issues. Through these structures faculty review, adopt, and enact changes to courses, programs, and procedures. Changes over the past decade have included the placement of senior comprehensive exams, the all-college course structure, faculty meeting times, transfer credit policies, the course incompleteness policy, academic honesty procedures, and others. Departments and programs have authority over the structure of their own curricula including the requirements for departmental majors and minors. Generally, individual faculty members determine the content and instructional methods for their own courses, although all new regular and permanent offerings to the curriculum are reviewed by the APC and are voted on by the entire faculty. Finally, the Board of Trustees exercises ultimate authority over the curriculum and approves major changes when they occur, such as the recent addition of the new biochemistry major.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** The College needs to continue to monitor and review staffing levels in departments and programs. Specifically, the art and music departments are below three full-time faculty members (although there will be three FTE in the departments), as are majors in French and German. French, in particular, is supported by one tenure line plus a two-thirds FTE contingent hire. The College also will have to continue to assess its position on and attitude toward the increased use of contingent faculty, which are still employed infrequently. The College has adopted equity guidelines that insure adequate salary and teaching and scholarship support for the relatively few contingent faculty currently employed.

In terms of the changing demographics of the faculty, there has been the equivalent of a generational shift at the College, affected by staff reductions and amplified by the recent early retirement program, which at once creates challenges and opportunities. The challenges include maintaining College expectations of teaching excellence, scholarship, and service in a time of transition; providing effective mentorship and faculty development; and navigating the stresses of reallocated faculty work across departments and programs. In addition, the economic realities of dual-career families and employment — and broader quality of life issues associated with Crawfordsville — continue to have an impact on all hiring. The opportunities presented by these changes are also plentiful, including a remaking of the faculty in important ways that may foster new thinking about and reflection on the curriculum, interdisciplinary opportunities, enhanced assessment activities, and changes in faculty diversity. Increased cooperation with neighboring DePauw University in support of faculty and staff hiring is a new avenue being explored. With so much change in a relatively short period of time, faculty development and mentorship will demand close attention as will the maintenance of high impact teaching practices that have yielded historically strong student NSSE evaluations. Encouraging ownership of the curriculum goes hand-in-hand with fostering commitment to the College's mission and values and an awareness of the economic challenges that face the entire community. These are long-term challenges that will require deliberate attention on the part of senior faculty leaders and administrators for the maintenance of an excellent faculty.

### **Wabash College evaluates teaching and recognizes effective teaching**

As previously indicated, Wabash College makes effective teaching its highest expectation of faculty responsibility. That expectation is best expressed in the introduction to faculty responsibilities in the *Faculty Handbook* that was cited at the outset of this Criterion component. Teaching is formally assessed in the second, fourth, and sixth years of a faculty member's tenure-track appointment, as well as less formally in a first-year advisory review. Non-tenure track faculty on continuing appointments are evaluated in their second year in a fashion modeled after the customary second-year review. These are rigorous, evaluative, and clear processes that help the College determine whether to reappoint or tenure faculty and serve as the basis for developmental conversations. Each of these processes is described in detail in the *Faculty Handbook* (pp. 16-26).

Faculty reviews are part of the larger process of institutional assessment and accountability with a particular emphasis placed on self-assessment and self-reflection. The College's serious evaluation of teaching and its recognition is amplified by the public nature of these reviews. This public dimension, with requests for comments from the community, the involvement of students, and the participation of faculty outside the home department, elevates the expectations of teaching performance and effectiveness to the level of a community value. It also underscores the commitment of the faculty as a collegium in support of a shared liberal arts mission.

To meet the standards for continuing appointment, faculty must show continued growth and future potential that provide confidence in sustained performance and development as an excellent and innovative teacher, a creative and productive scholar, and a valued member of the Wabash community. Tenure is an expression of this confidence, based on educational judgment, not simply a reward for achievement, with each successive review requiring higher levels of confidence from the evidence presented. As such, promotion to associate professor "acknowledges that the faculty member has demonstrated unusual merit and skills of special value to the curriculum of the College" (p. 25). Moreover, the *Faculty Handbook* explains that the "acceptance of tenure heightens the faculty member's commitment to continued excellence and performance and obligates him or her to participate in the affairs of the College with greater responsibility and effectiveness" (p. 17).

The review process for tenure-track faculty begins with a first-year advisory review conducted by the department chair. In this review the department chair discusses the faculty member's performance with him or her, emphasizing teaching and learning, and reviews plans for research and creative works and service to the College community. After the department chair has discussed the results of the review with the faculty member, the department chair discusses his or her report of this review with the appropriate division chair, and a summary of both discussions and the report is provided to the Dean of the College.

For faculty reviews at the second-, fourth-, and sixth-year, the Personnel Committee presents its findings to the President, who makes the final decision about continuing appointment in all cases. For each review the faculty member submits a series of documents including, foremost, a reflective statement on teaching, scholarship, and service (including work as a faculty advisor); projections of teaching or learning plans; evidence of scholarly or creative work; and teaching artifacts related to instructional goals. Reviews are undertaken primarily by the department, which reads the faculty member's portfolio, and independently assesses the faculty member's teaching (including the use of teaching observations), scholarship or creative work, and service.

Departmental review committees consist of the department chair and tenured members of the department. In the case of small departments, interdisciplinary hires, or instances when other members of a department are pre-tenure, additional tenured faculty are appointed so that the department review committee has at least three tenured members. The results of the department's findings are conveyed to the Dean of the College and division chairs.



*Art Professor Elizabeth Morton engages her students in class and in her professional curatorial work at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.*

Two important pieces of the review are student feedback and faculty and staff letters of support. Since the College eschews standardized course evaluations, interviews with and letters from a significant number of students in the faculty member's classes are a crucial part of the review process (this student participation is discussed more in Criterion 5A). In the second-year review, the focus of which is primarily developmental with respect to progress as a teacher and department member, interviews are conducted by the department chair and the appropriate division chair while the Dean of the College contacts students for written assessments; but in later reviews, all of the division chairs as well as the Dean take part in probing student perceptions of the faculty member's teaching. This is done through personal interviews and solicited student written evaluations. Also in the fourth-year and tenure reviews, faculty letters of support or comment are solicited by the Dean of the College, and the candidate may request specific letters.

Finally, during the tenure review, the Dean requests comments from alumni on the work and teaching effectiveness of the faculty member and seeks external reviews of scholarship or creative work. Alumni are identified by the Dean's Office and the faculty member. The faculty member identifies four possible outside reviewers for his or her creative work, also providing a brief rationale for the selections. Two of these individuals are selected by the Dean and appropriate division chair to review the faculty member's work as part of the tenure review.

While the faculty review process is substantially the same as it was at the time of the previous self-study, some new efforts to explain expectations have been added to the review descriptions, and there have been minor modifications to materials and processes. In particular, there are new limits on the length of review statements and supporting materials meant to address the proliferation of review portfolios and to provide more focus for the faculty member under review and review committees. The use of supporting documentation as direct evidence in support of the review statement is explicitly encouraged. Also, the time-line for identifying and contacting external reviewers of research or creative work has been moved earlier; and, when supplying reviewers with the faculty member's work, the Dean now sends the evaluators instructions that the College is seeking an assessment of the quality, originality, and significance of the work.

**Electronic Resource**

**COACHE Survey  
Wabash Results**

In 2005-06, the College participated in Harvard's Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey, a project designed to assess the quality of pre-tenure work life. [That survey](#), in which 91% of eligible Wabash faculty participated, revealed complex perceptions of tenure requirements. Responding faculty evaluated the clarity of the Wabash review process in the 79th percentile (mean of 3.91) and slightly above peer institutions (3.85). Wabash also ranked in the 86th percentile (3.96) in the clarity of evidence that is used to make tenure decisions. However Wabash ranked in only the 14th percentile in clarity of tenure standards (2.76), a finding that was reinforced across perceptions of clarity of expectations in: scholarship (21st percentile; 3.32); teaching performance (50th percentile; 4.17); student advising (21st percentile; 3.33); performance as a campus citizen (29th percentile; 3.50); and performance as a member of the broader community (14th percentile; 2.66). Yet, Wabash respondents highly rated the reasonability of expectations in: teaching performance (93rd percentile; 4.69); student advising (79th percentile; 4.07); performance as a colleague (86th percentile; 4.18); and performance as a campus citizen (93rd percentile; 4.26). Thus, the results seem to at once suggest that many of the Wabash expectations should be made clearer and also that the expectations get high marks for being reasonable.

Recognizing that anxiety about tenure is customary, that assessment of faculty perceptions of the tenure process is a complicated matter, and that the survey coincided with a transition in administrations, the Dean of the College responded to the survey results by instituting several measures to bring greater clarity to tenure standards. The Dean of the College now meets with all

second-year, fourth-year, and tenure review candidates together in the spring prior to the beginning of the review cycle to review in detail the process and timeline for the reviews. Relevant department and division chairs also attend. The meeting allows for a public airing of questions and concerns and a focusing upon the evaluative criteria to be employed. The public discussion enables the Dean to underscore the importance of the self-reflective teaching statements, and the *Faculty Handbook's* stress upon self-assessment as part of a sustained trajectory of self-improvement as developmentally central to the faculty review process and what it means to be an excellent teacher/scholar. The College does not specify scholarship or creative work amounts but instead emphasizes the faculty member's responsibility to demonstrate "the qualities, continued growth, and potential that give confidence in sustained performance and development" (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 16). After each review is complete the candidate, department chair, division chair, and Dean meet to debrief the review process and findings and to clarify areas for continuing improvement as part of the faculty member's development trajectory. A document summarizing the conversation and all recommendations is prepared and signed by all in attendance and is placed in the faculty member's file in anticipation of the subsequent review.

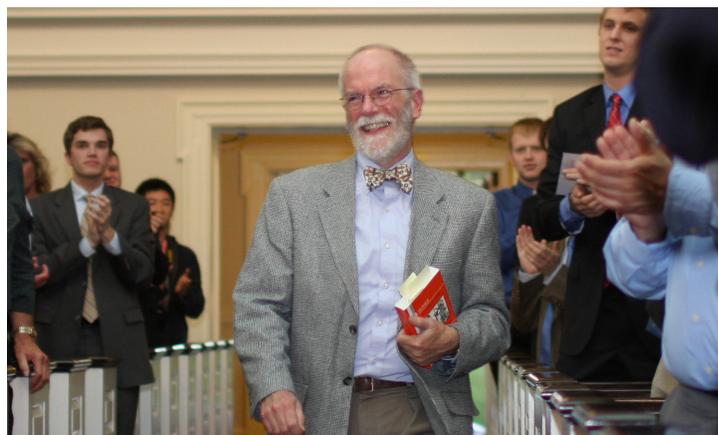
Evaluation of teaching and recognition of teaching effectiveness also occurs through means beyond the tenure review process. Each year, faculty members submit an activity sheet that chronicles their activities in teaching, scholarship, and service. The exercise provides an annual reflection point for faculty and is used as the basis of salary reviews involving department chairs, division chairs, and the Dean of the College. Thus, it marks another occasion in which faculty, through conversation, evaluate their teaching and is pivotal in the awarding of merit raises. Faculty also perform individual evaluations of their teaching through course evaluations, which are used as a basis for self-assessment and course revision. A third broad evaluation of teaching takes place in the annual department assessment meetings with the Dean, which often focus on topics related to teaching (e.g., department writing statements and high impact teaching practices). Fourth, departments evaluate their teaching and learning during the course of department reviews, which specify that departments review student learning and outcomes, department goals and curriculum, and pedagogy and means of assessment as a regular element of the department self-study preparation. Fifth, further evaluation of teaching comes in the form of the review for promotion to full professor. As with other reviews, the first consideration in this promotion is excellence in teaching and the review portfolio requires reflection on and evidence of teaching accomplishments, along with research or creative work and College service, since tenure.

Finally, the College utilizes two other significant mechanisms for recognizing teaching effectiveness: endowed chairs and a College-wide teaching award. The College has a number of endowed chairs and professorships that recognize foremost teaching effectiveness and whose selection involves identifying leading faculty teachers. These include:

- [The Eugene N. and Marian C. Beesley Chair](#) is awarded in recognition of teaching and counsel in the preparation of leadership in the world of business. As explained by a former President of the College, the Beesley professor is "a member of the faculty whose commitment to teaching, interest in students, and enthusiasm for learning may be expected to contribute significantly to the character and quality of the Wabash College community;"
- The [Daniel F. Evans Associate Professor in the Social Sciences](#) is a three-year appointment in recognition of admirable and effective teaching and scholarship and is granted to a faculty member whose "intellectual leadership promises to affect the quality of instruction in his or her disciplines and across the College;"

- The [Charles D. and Elizabeth S. LaFollette Distinguished Professor of Humanities](#) recognizes exemplary teaching in philosophy, literature, religion, or history;
- The [Norman E. Treves Professor of Biology](#) recognizes a faculty member's commitment to science education and belief in the importance of science in a liberal arts education;
- The [Anne and Andrew T. Ford Chair in the Liberal Arts](#) is a five-year appointment in recognition of a tenured faculty member's excellence in his or her discipline, understanding of that discipline's role in the broader context of the liberal arts, and commitment to students;
- The John W. Bachmann-Edward Jones Chair in Economics (to begin in 2013) will provide academic leadership for the College's business leadership development programs, including summer experiences such as the business immersion program;
- The Theodore Bedrick Professorship in Classics (which moves to a tenure-line in 2013) will recognize excellence in the teaching of classics.

The most prestigious recognition of effective teaching at the College comes in the form of the [McLain-McTurnan-Arnold Excellence in Teaching Award](#). The Dean of the College reveals the recipient as one of the final honors at the annual April Awards Chapel, making it one of the most anticipated recognitions of the evening. The award can only be won once in a faculty member's tenure at the College and is greeted with a rousing response from faculty and students alike. In announcing the award, the [Dean of the College salutes](#) the faculty member's teaching accomplishments, drawing from comments of praise offered by students, alumni, and colleagues.



*Classics Professor Joseph Day receives a standing ovation after receiving the McLain-McTurnan-Arnold Excellence in Teaching Award.*

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Wabash College has in place effective processes to evaluate and recognize teaching. However, given that it has been several years since the College has participated in a survey designed to assess pre-tenure work-life, the College should initiate another such survey in order to assess current perceptions and the impact of changes to the tenure review process.

### **Wabash College supports faculty development directed at improved pedagogies, innovative practices, and teaching suited to varied learning environments**

Support for faculty development aimed at teaching pedagogy, learning practices, and curricular innovation is part of the fabric of the College and its many forms are exhibited across this *Self-Study Report*. Insofar as they are separable, this section focuses on faculty development efforts aimed at teaching with Criterion 4A discussing faculty development opportunities that primarily facilitate

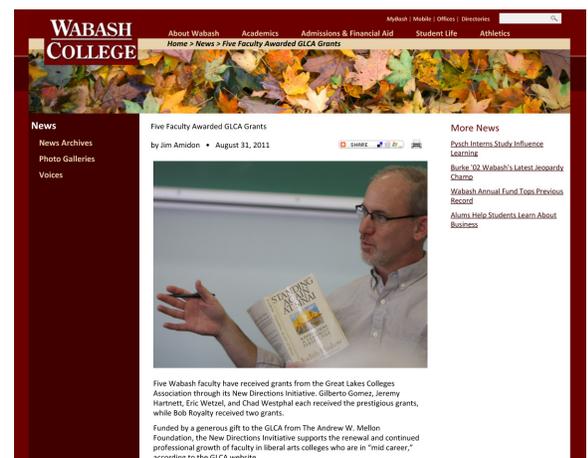
scholarship and creative work. Faculty development support occurs across the College in multiple departments, committees, and venues rather than existing in a centralized program or structure. Markers of how the College supports faculty development related to teaching include the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee, the appointment of a Faculty Development Coordinator, and a range of examples illustrating support for unique and innovative teaching opportunities and courses and curricular development and revision.

A primary locus of faculty development in regards to teaching is the efforts of the Teaching and Learning Committee. This important standing committee sponsors a variety of programs on an annual basis aimed at improving teaching pedagogies and encouraging reflection on teaching practices. The focal point of the committee's work is the annual Teaching and Learning Workshop, held each August in the week prior to the start of the fall semester. This workshop, which is attended by faculty in large numbers, examines an issue of faculty-wide interest and is directed at the exchange of ideas and strategies for classroom practice. In recent years the event has focused on topics such as teaching academic integrity, retention and student engagement, teaching writing, leading discussions, and team-teaching and interdisciplinarity. The workshop generally consists of a plenary session or presentation and small group work that involves sharing of syllabi, assignment prompts, and/or classroom strategies. This signature event, which is energizing to both new and returning faculty and often initiates a series of academic year activities, is an excellent start to each academic year, underscoring the College's commitment to teaching and learning and the shared faculty enterprise of teaching at the College.

The faculty development work of the Teaching and Learning Committee continues throughout the year. The committee hosts a series of sessions that address issues of common concern for teaching. For instance, during the "Year of Writing," the committee focused its work on writing instruction, including hosting the opening workshop, three visiting speakers, and a series of seven "The Way I See It" lunches. In another year, the committee focused its work on a series of conversations about the Wabash College Academic Honesty Policy. In 2011-12 teaching and learning topics included, "Should we assign research papers to freshmen?" "Do teachers need coaches?" and "How can we prompt deep revision in student writing?" Building from a session on the use of peer teaching observations, the committee also piloted a Peer Observation Program to encourage peer review of teaching in a supportive, pedagogically oriented form. The Teaching and Learning Committee is presently working to develop a more sustained program with a greater degree of longitudinal consistency. To assist with this effort, a Teagle Assessment Scholar was brought to campus in May 2011 to consult on the programming used by the committee. For 2012-13 the committee is considering ways to foster discussion of NSSE and WNS data to assist in the College's commitment to further enhancing the use of high impact teaching practices and hosting discussions on student-faculty engagement, which will provide the topic for the opening workshop.

In 2011 the College also appointed a Coordinator of Faculty Development. Many faculty at Wabash take on additional important leadership roles as part of their service to the College, but this position is one of the few that carries a course release, a sign of the importance of this work. With the creation of this new resource, faculty have increased awareness of development opportunities with the faculty development coordinator regularly highlighting relevant conferences, workshops, and essays on teaching pedagogies. This new work also includes a still developing new website (*pictured at right*) devoted to [Teaching and Learning at Wabash College](#).

Working closely with the Dean of the College, the Coordinator of Faculty



Development serves as the Campus Facilitator of the [GLCA New Directions Initiative](#). This four-year, Mellon Foundation grant to the GLCA focuses on the renewal and professional growth of “mid-career” liberal arts faculty. The program is designed to encourage innovative thinking and evolution of faculty work, including an express purpose to stimulate innovation in pedagogy by providing opportunities for faculty to expand knowledge of best practices in existing and new areas of study. In the first two years of the grant, [Wabash faculty had 11 proposals accepted](#) and received funding in excess of \$60,000. Teaching-oriented proposals included a religion professor learning Arabic as part of an approach to revise his teaching of “Introduction to Hebrew Bible;” four political science and rhetoric faculty exploring interdisciplinary approaches to deliberation and civic engagement; a classics professor’s project on street life in Rome, which developed into the basis of an immersion course; a biology professor exploring new pedagogies in teaching global health; and a history professor using the grant to gain proficiency in teaching African history by working with a trained African historian and team-teaching two courses with this same scholar.

Among other tasks, the Coordinator of Faculty Development is a conduit for information to faculty about other GLCA-sponsored workshops and grant-supported activities designed to enhance pedagogical or professional development. These GLCA workshops have addressed topics such as mentoring new department chairs, vocational discernment in consideration of academic administration and institutional leadership, pedagogical research and practice, collaboration with teaching faculty at international liberal arts institutions, and program assessment of GLCA-sponsored domestic and international studies programs. On average five Wabash faculty per year participate in such programs with the cost of faculty participation in these programs covered by the Dean of the College.

Additional specific examples of faculty development opportunities that involve improved pedagogies, innovative practices, and teaching in varied learning environments are found across the College. A partial listing of such projects and opportunities, some of which are addressed elsewhere in the *Self-Study Report*, includes:

- In spring 2011 an assistant professor of art history was granted leave time to [curate an exhibit](#) on African Art while working with Wabash students on site at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. This followed up the professor’s previous collaboration with students on [an acclaimed documentary](#) focusing on Nigerian woodcarver Lamidi Fakeye;
- As discussed in departmental reviews in Criterion 3A, through CILA grants and sponsored release time a variety of teaching and learning projects have been explored in recent years, including exploring film studies offerings, courses on new media, revising the public speaking course to focus on civic engagement and deliberation, creating a new entry level classics course, assessing second language acquisition, promoting Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) conversations across the campus, preparing faculty to teach the new all-college course Enduring Questions, supporting Teagle Assessment Scholar projects, and increasing the emphasis of modern language courses on culture while revising intermediate language pedagogy. These are select examples of faculty development support with far reaching implications for pedagogy and student learning;
- The College actively encourages faculty participation in development programs such as those offered by the Teagle and Carnegie foundations. Multiple faculty members have participated in such programs, providing insights into assessment pedagogies and opportunities for course and teaching development. For example, Wabash had [two faculty selected](#) to participate as Carnegie Scholars in the highly selective Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship

of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) program. These faculty focused on practices and techniques of integrative learning and practices of liberal education. Similarly, in 2012 [two faculty were selected](#) as Teagle Pedagogy Fellows as part of the new [GLCA Lattice for Pedagogical Research and Practice](#) initiative. Under this program, the faculty representatives will engage faculty at their own campus and other GLCA colleges to help generate interest in exploring different modes of pedagogy to enhance student learning. In fall 2012, two other Teagle Fellows will visit Wabash as part of this program, further encouraging cross-institutional connections;

- The Dean of the College regularly supports faculty participation in the Council for Undergraduate Research (CUR) by sending newer faculty especially to grant preparation workshops to gain practical experience for seeking external grant support;
- The College encourages and supports multiple forms of independent study and collaborative research. Many such initiatives are addressed more fully in the Criterion 4 discussion of the acquisition and production of knowledge, but it is also the case that these projects reflect the use of alternative pedagogies, collaborative practices, and teaching in multiple environments. Examples include independent studies with advanced students, the use of summer research internships with individual faculty members, and applying to the Undergraduate Research Committee for [funds to support collaborative research](#) between faculty and students. Over the past decade many such projects have been supported, leading to independent study projects, conference presentations, and publications featuring the joint work of students and faculty. The [Celebration](#) of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work is a public celebration of Wabash collaborative teaching and scholarship;
- In addition to faculty development funds directed primarily at research, faculty can apply to the Faculty Development committee for Coss Course Development Funds. Through these grants faculty may receive a stipend of up to \$1,000 and course materials of up to \$500 and may apply for funding to cover one course of adjunct instruction in order to provide release time for new course development. While the grants may address any subject, in particular faculty are encouraged to develop proposals in the areas of internationalization, diversity, and the use of new technology. Coss Funds also have supported faculty work with scholar/teacher mentors at other institutions here and abroad. For example, a theater professor traveled to New York City to work with a CUNY graduate school advisor on melodrama; and a political science professor traveled to Berlin to engage a noted holocaust scholar at the Center for Research on Antisemitism.



*Trustee Fred Ruebeck listens as a student explains his research at the 2012 Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work.*

**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** Wabash College supports faculty development of improved pedagogies and innovative practices; such development opportunities at the College are plentiful. Future goals and priorities in the area should include developing more centrally accessible and known resources for teaching development, promoting faculty engagement with staff and resources at the Wabash Center for the Teaching of Theology and Religion, reflection on how to sustain the Faculty Development Coordinator position, and leveraging the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee and other committees in faculty mentoring and additional assessment of teaching practices. Although the ongoing work of the Center of Inquiry is funded through a special endowment, the College also will need to locate alternative sources of funding for faculty and

curriculum development once support through CILA funding expires.

### **3C. WABASH COLLEGE CREATES EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.**

The Wabash College Mission Statement explains that “The College carries out its mission in a residential setting in which students take personal and group responsibility for their actions. Wabash provides for its students an unusually informal, egalitarian, and participatory environment which encourages young men to adopt a life of intellectual and creative growth, self-awareness, and physical activity.” This commitment to a participatory and residential environment is grounded in the College’s Core Values, which affirm “a personal context to teaching and learning that encourages candid, respectful, face-to-face conversations; freedom of thought; [and] a local scholarly community that creates lifelong relationships.” These promises make attention to learning environments at Wabash a particularly important element of student learning and effective teaching. That importance is found across this *Self-Study Report* in discussion of College facilities and their contributions to educational experiences (discussed in Criterion 2B), the close relationships between faculty, staff, and students in the promotion of life-long learning and acquisition and production of knowledge (discussed in Criterion 4), and how the College works with and learns from its students for the betterment of the institution (discussed in Criterion 5). Thus, at Wabash it is the environment — the learning environment, the living environment, the social and relational environment — that makes so much of what the school does possible and effective, a College recognized for changing lives. This section examines and evaluates the College’s learning environments through a discussion of student perceptions of the Wabash educational environment, by considering how Wabash provides an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring, and by explaining the advising system and revisions to it.

#### **Assessment results inform improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and student services**

As was discussed in Criterion 3A and 3B, Wabash engages in continuous assessment of student learning and effective teaching. Evidence of the impact of assessment results is seen across the discussions of department reviews, specific requirement and skill reviews, use of institutional data such as the WNS, and teaching reviews. An additional marker of assessment results, one with particular insight into Wabash’s ability to create effective learning environments, is the data produced by NSSE, an instrument Wabash administers to first-year students and seniors on an annual basis.

NSSE is one of the most widely used educational surveys, administered on an annual basis at hundreds of colleges and universities. The survey obtains student feedback regarding their participation in academic activities and their perceptions of institutional environment and educational gains. The year-to-year data offers an assessment of institutional effectiveness via NSSE’s five Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice. Wabash uses NSSE as an indirect measure of student learning and experiences that helps us understand student perceptions. We offer here an institutional snapshot of student assessment of teaching and learning over the past decade.

#### **Electronic Resources**

#### **2011 NSSE Results for Wabash**

NSSE offers a strongly positive picture of Wabash student learning and teaching practices and the ability of Wabash to create effective learning environments. According to the 2011 NSSE Benchmark Comparisons, in the 10 measures, composed of the five first-year scores and five senior-year scores, Wabash placed in the top 10% of all 2011 NSSE institutions in Level of Academic Challenge (LAC), Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI), Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE), and Supportive Campus Environment (SCE). Only in Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL) did Wabash score

near the median. It is also notable that student responses were more favorable in the senior year on four of the five benchmarks, with the only exception being Supportive Campus Environment (which still rated in the top 10% of all 2011 NSSE schools). The same relationship of first-year and senior-year scores is found across Wabash data since 2005.

**Wabash College Students Compared with:**  
(2011 NSSE Results; \* = p<.05; \*\* = p<.01; \*\*\* = p<.001)

|                |        | NSSE '11 |     |             | NSSE '11 |     |             |
|----------------|--------|----------|-----|-------------|----------|-----|-------------|
|                | Wabash | Top 50%  |     |             | Top 10%  |     |             |
| First Year     | Mean   | Mean     | Sig | Effect Size | Mean     | Sig | Effect Size |
| LAC            | 63.9   | 56.7     | *** | .56         | 60.6     | **  | .26         |
| ACL            | 51.5   | 48.0     | *   | .21         | 52.1     |     | -.04        |
| SFI            | 45.7   | 39.3     | *** | .33         | 43.6     |     | .10         |
| EEE            | 38.8   | 30.5     | *** | .62         | 33.7     | *** | .37         |
| SCE            | 74.8   | 67.4     | *** | .40         | 71.2     | *   | .20         |
| <b>Seniors</b> |        |          |     |             |          |     |             |
| LAC            | 68.8   | 60.5     | *** | .61         | 64.0     | *** | .36         |
| ACL            | 56.6   | 56.2     |     | .02         | 60.1     | **  | -2.0        |
| SFI            | 60.4   | 49.3     | *** | .51         | 55.9     | *   | .20         |
| EEE            | 64.5   | 46.7     | *** | 1.01        | 55.3     | *** | .55         |
| SCE            | 71.5   | 64.9     | *** | .35         | 68.7     | *   | .15         |

*Note: Each benchmark is an index of responses to a set of NSSE questions. For comparison and evaluation purposes, each response set is placed on a 100-point scale with the score representing student responses. As NSSE's "Interpreting the Benchmark Comparisons Report" explains, "a benchmark score of zero would mean that every student chose the lowest response option for every item, and 100 would mean every student chose the highest response to every item."*

NSSE's Multi-Year Benchmark Report presents a longitudinal picture of effective learning environments at the College. The picture affirms the overall quality of student experience while also allowing for the identification of patterns and changes that represent points for future focus in assessment efforts. In 2005 and 2007 Wabash exceeded the mean of the top 10% of scores for NSSE schools in all benchmark categories. From 2008 to 2010 all Wabash results were above the mean of the top 10% of scores except for the annual results for Active and Collaborative Learning and the 2008 first-year student score for Student-Faculty Interaction.

| NSSE Benchmark Scores             | Year | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Level of Academic Challenge       | FY   | 65.8 | 67.5 | 64.5 | 64.7 | 64.2 | 65.9 | 63.9 |
|                                   | SR   | 72.4 | 69.2 | 69.0 | 72.0 | 69.7 | 69.4 | 68.8 |
| Active and Collaborative Learning | FR   | 53.0 | 52.9 | 49.3 | 46.7 | 48.2 | 51.1 | 51.5 |
|                                   | SR   | 63.0 | 58.1 | 59.3 | 58.6 | 60.7 | 58.0 | 56.6 |
| Student-Faculty Interaction       | FR   | 59.2 | 59.1 | 50.7 | 48.7 | 52.3 | 54.9 | 53.3 |
|                                   | SR   | 73.7 | 70.0 | 65.8 | 69.4 | 68.0 | 65.9 | 63.7 |
| Enriching Educational Experiences | FR   | 43.5 | 41.0 | 36.7 | 37.8 | 38.4 | 37.1 | 38.8 |
|                                   | SR   | 70.6 | 63.4 | 66.4 | 65.1 | 64.8 | 63.2 | 64.5 |
| Supportive Campus Environment     | FR   | 77.3 | 76.1 | 70.1 | 70.2 | 70.5 | 72.8 | 74.8 |
|                                   | SR   | 72.7 | 72.4 | 70.7 | 72.5 | 69.8 | 69.9 | 71.5 |

On the whole, the results present a confirming picture of student engagement at Wabash that is consistent with the statements the College makes about the high quality of student/faculty engagement and the portrait of Wabash educational life featured in Loren Pope's *Colleges That Change Lives*. These data speak to the quality of education students have received over the past decade and the productive and supportive educational environment that has been constructed and maintained despite strains on institutional resources the past four years. At the same time, opportunities for improvement exist by examining the higher level of fluctuation in Student-Faculty Interaction and, despite regularly placing among the top 10% of institutions, the somewhat downward slope of results in this benchmark category. Likewise, the data present the College with an opportunity to consider why since 2008 its results in Active and Collaborative Learning have been below the top 10% of participating institutions and on occasion near the median of NSSE schools, and to investigate in a more granular fashion who among the student body is more likely to have these positive experiences and who not. Preliminary efforts to consider these findings were made by a team of Wabash participants at a February 2012 Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium workshop. The team analyzed item level responses in both Active and Collaborative Learning and Student-Faculty Interaction and have [developed a plan](#) for future study and dissemination of the data to campus.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** As Wabash's efforts to improve student learning and effective teaching continue, the College will seek to improve its culture of assessment, including greater use of the bountiful data collected on an annual basis. In fact, one future action might be to reduce the number of surveys students take and to move to a new pattern of periodic data collection. A second needed institutional step is the centralizing of data management through an office of institutional research or similar structure. The College is currently considering establishment of a staff position whose central purpose would be to help coordinate across the campus efforts to improve learning and teaching through the systematic use of information. The Dean of the College recently brought in an institutional researcher/Teagle Scholar consultant to advise on the most effective structure given Wabash's size and character. (The consultant's report can be [accessed here](#).)

There are also many positive signs for data use, discussed more specifically in the concluding section of Criterion 3A as well as across Criterion 5, while additional steps for the College to take include making data more readily available for faculty and staff in a central, secure location; more frequently using the data in discussions of student learning and teaching effectiveness, including discussions of curriculum and proficiency; further unpacking WNS and NSSE data in considering who is experiencing the best learning practices and who is not, and how these best practices can be extended across the student body; and exploring, in particular, HERI data for its implications in academic issues and not just for its meaning in student affairs as it is used presently. Importantly, however, the latter use underscores the wider application of information at all levels of institutional planning. There is substantial potential to cultivate even greater faculty interest in examining and working with this data in an environment of assessment that leads to improved student learning and faculty teaching. Both these data and Wabash's other regular efforts to reflect on the Wabash education will play important strategic and tactical roles in continuing to strengthen the use of high impact pedagogical practices, supporting curricular innovation and development, strengthening the institutional culture of assessment, and addressing evolving student proficiency needs. These activities can be formative for the College at a time of significant transition and change.

### **Wabash College provides an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring**

Wabash College makes ample efforts to provide supportive environments for all learners and the diversity they bring. These efforts range from the curriculum to co-curricular activities and student

organizations, and also include College initiatives that are designed to support diverse learners. The foundations of the emphasis Wabash places on productive environments for diverse learners and learning is located in the College's Mission Statement and Core Values and the Faculty Statement on Diversity. As explained in the College's Mission Statement, "Wabash emphasizes our manifold, but shared cultural heritage. Our students come from diverse economic, social, and cultural backgrounds; the College helps these students engage these differences and live humanely with them." Further, the Core Values of the College affirm that Wabash provides "a rigorous liberal arts education that fosters . . . an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures." Moreover, the Core Values express the College's commitment to "a socially, economically, and ethnically diverse student body." Finally, the [Faculty Statement of Principle Concerning Diversity](#), which was reproduced in full in Criterion 1B and is published annually in the *Academic Bulletin*, expresses the faculty's commitment to upholding the "spirit of the liberal arts" by "fostering an environment of mutual respect" for teachers and learners of all backgrounds, beliefs, and orientations.

It is formidable labor to accomplish this goal of a community that respects and values diversity of all forms, and thus the College's support of all learners and respect for their diversity requires regular reflection and evaluation. Here we consider the College's efforts to address cultural diversity, internationalize the curriculum, encourage diversity among students and co-curricular organizations, and provide a supportive environment for all learners through attention to student retention.

### ***Cultural Diversity and International Study in the Curriculum***

Strategic Goal 3 of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan is dedicated to further developing the curriculum in ways that will enhance the skills, knowledge, and experiences of Wabash students to live the mission of the College in a constantly changing global society. To that end, the plan is committed to providing new opportunities in immersion learning as well as to increase foreign language course offerings. The Challenge of Excellence campaign makes these commitments tangible by identifying new resources for global education as one of the four foci of the gifts initiative. The campaign's case statement details the College's goals in interacting with the global community and institutionalizing and endowing immersion courses that combine travel and on-site learning to enhance critical thinking skills and build competence in operating in new, unfamiliar settings. Specific means of achieving these goals are discussed in the following sub-sections, including foreign language proficiency and expanded language offerings, the use and development of areas of concentrations, enhancing off-campus study and immersion learning, faculty development in diverse teaching and learning, and the work of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies (MXIBS).

#### Language Proficiency

As part of its distribution requirements, proficiency in a foreign language is required of all students who are native English speakers. A student meets this requirement either by passing an elementary sequence in a foreign language (101 and 102) or passing any single course above the 102 level. Students have traditionally satisfied this requirement by taking courses in French, German, Greek, Latin, or Spanish. However, the College also has sought to offer students other opportunities for foreign language study. For instance, the department of modern languages and literatures has occasionally offered Portuguese when staffing allows. The College also has entered into a valuable collaboration with DePauw University to share resources and opportunities related to the study of less commonly taught languages. This exchange has included the opportunity for several Wabash students to complete a minor in Russian at DePauw and also for students to study Japanese and Chinese there, including the recent completion of the first minor in Japanese by a Wabash student through coursework at DePauw. In partially fulfilling the goals of the strategic plan, in fall 2010 Wabash began offering elementary and intermediate Chinese through the hire of a two-year visiting instructor. The College has renewed that position for an additional two years and, most significantly, has made a

tenure-track hire in Chinese and history, with the position split between the departments of modern languages and literature and history. This position, which is initially funded by a Mellon grant to the College, is part of Wabash's development of a new program in Asian Studies.

#### Areas of Concentration

A second curricular element of diverse teaching and learning at Wabash is observed in areas of concentration. An area of concentration (AOC) has the same status as a minor and is composed of a set of courses in a particular area of cultural study as well as a capstone experience that is taken during the senior year. Wabash presently offers areas of concentration in Gender Studies, International Studies, Multicultural American Studies, and Teacher Education and is planning to explore further potential AOCs in Black Studies and Asian Studies. These academic areas offer students additional opportunities for diverse cultural exposure and support a diversity of learners.

- The AOC in [Gender Studies](#) is an interdisciplinary initiative that involves the study of social, cultural, and biological factors that constitute femininity, masculinity, and sexual identity. The program has not been heavily subscribed but individually courses in gender studies make valuable contributions to the curriculum, and they enjoy high student enrollment. The courses, and the associated work of the Gender Issues Committee, enrich the campus environment and support co-curricular activities as well;
- The AOC in [International Studies](#) is offered with a focus on either Latin America or Europe. The AOC is designed to provide students with a well-rounded understanding of another culture including improved language proficiency and a semester of off-campus study;
- The AOC in [Multicultural American Studies](#) focuses on the diversity of the United States as a nation composed by diverse ethnic, racial, and religious groups. Drawing from courses across multiple disciplines, the AOC explores themes such as identity, group interaction, group representation, and the ways that family, the arts, and rituals contribute to cultural and community life;
- Wabash has long had an AOC in [Teacher Education](#); in fact preparing teachers was one of Wabash's original aims. The AOC in Teacher Education is an interdisciplinary initiative that involves the study of education theory, philosophy, and human development while situating the study of education in a liberal arts context. The program, which has previously earned NCATE accreditation, offers secondary (grades 5-12) licensure in more than a dozen subjects and mixes traditional classroom experiences with extensive fieldwork in preparing Wabash students to be teachers. The program also includes a "ninth semester" option that supports students who need an additional semester to complete student teaching requirements and a tuition free "[4 + 1 Option](#)" for Wabash students in the natural sciences. The program's [Chicago Urban Education & Cultural Experience](#), a requirement for students working toward grades 5-12 licensure, provides students in education with a valuable diverse learning experience by offering Wabash students an opportunity to participate in an urban setting with a range of ethnic, racial, and cultural experiences. The immersion experience is particularly valuable because many Wabash students have not experienced urban living; they might have traveled to Chicago or other cities to visit tourist attractions, but this immersion learning opportunity provides time in diverse schools and the cultural experience of living in the city, using public transportation, touring ethnic neighborhoods and the like while getting a feel for diversity that is characteristic of urban life.

In addition to these areas of concentration, the College is contemplating the pursuit of other diverse

learning opportunities in Black Studies and Asian Studies.

- The AOC in Black Studies was first advanced in April 2009. While interest was high in the AOC, its development was affected by several factors, including questions about appropriate oversight and the availability of courses required for the AOC. The new [MXIBS 2012-2017 strategic plan](#) identifies completing the development and implementation of an AOC in Black Studies by 2013 as one of its objectives. Given the interest in this area of study, the historic standing of the MXIBS on Wabash's campus, and the importance of this area of study in crafting an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring, this work is likely to be a priority for the College;
- The College is also considering an AOC in Asian Studies, launched through a \$700,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and in collaboration with DePauw University. An AOC in Asian Studies would build on Wabash's previous course work on China and Japan. The Mellon grant provides the College with the opportunity to expand, enrich, and organize previous offerings and build critical interdisciplinary teaching connections between Wabash and DePauw. The grant supports the initial tenure-track hire in Chinese language and Asian history mentioned previously, as well as the continuation of the visiting position in Chinese language.

It also provides for important faculty development and co-curricular development. For four consecutive summers beginning in 2011, four different faculty from Wabash and four from DePauw will participate in a two-week Asian Studies summer seminar at the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii. Faculty will subsequently enhance their workshop experience the following year with travel to China, Japan, or Korea; develop new courses that will advance Asian Studies; and will possibly team-teach these courses with DePauw counterparts. These efforts also will be aided through [newly established affiliations](#) with two Chinese institutions, Fudan University and East China Normal University. As part of this affiliation, in 2012-13 Wabash will host a visiting scholar from Fudan University who will teach courses in religion, rhetoric, and history, and assist with faculty exploration of the potential Asian Studies AOC. Further opportunities exist to enable Wabash students to continue their studies through the Shanghai Summer School where, for the first time in summer 2012, three Wabash students are enrolled in language and culture studies. The Asian Studies initiative is a source of pride for Wabash, and is actively supported by the large contingent of Chinese and other international students studying at Wabash and alumni, both Asian and American, who see in Asian Studies an important new direction for the College. Relatedly, the development of Asian Studies has also had the serendipitous benefit of attracting the interest of Chinese educators to the Wabash liberal arts educational model and the resources and experience of CILA in assessing teaching and learning. In February 2012 the Fudan Dean of Social Sciences visited the Wabash campus to investigate the Center's work.

#### Off-Campus Study and Immersion Learning

The College has developed a range of opportunities for diverse learning, including traditional semester long off-campus study (OCS), rich immersion learning experiences, the annual Ecuador program, and special scholarship awards. Collectively, these opportunities allow approximately 50% of each graduating class to have a diverse learning experience away from campus. The International Office is the epicenter of international student activity. The presence of international students (approximately 7% of the student body) provides a distinctive contribution to campus life in curricular and co-curricular ways.

Electronic Resource

**MXIBS  
Strategic Plan  
2012-2017**

The [International Office](#) handles most administrative functions for OCS and international students. As was explained in Criterion 2, in providing these opportunities Wabash has used a financial model that has maximized student ability to participate but also has come at significant added expense to the College. That is, Wabash traditionally sent tuition to foreign universities and permitted students to take all of their financial aid with them. However, the financial crisis of 2008 put strains on traditional OCS opportunities that the College continues to work to address, including through the Challenge of Excellence campaign. The result has been that the number of full-semester OCS experiences dropped from approximately 60, the average number from 1993 to 2008, to approximately 44 (with eight of these slots now supported by endowed funds raised through the Challenge of Excellence). A full description of the International Office and review of the history and impact of OCS and immersion learning is available in [a report from the Director of the International Office](#).

#### Electronic Resource

#### All-Time Immersion Trips

In addition, the College conducts approximately 10 [immersion learning experience trips](#) each year. These seven-to-10 day trips are embedded in “immersion courses,” regularly scheduled classes in which travel to a destination that will extend and enhance the classroom is designed as part of the course. Trips have ranged from Paris (studying historical memory) to Montana (studying fly fishing as a liberal art) to Kenya (studying varieties of Christianity) to Chicago (studying the practices of inner city public school teaching) and a variety of educationally important destinations in between. Proposals for these trips are reviewed by the Off-Campus Studies Committee and recommended proposals are forwarded to the Dean of the College and division chairs to make final funding decisions. These trips have involved travel to more than 15 foreign countries and nearly an equal number of U.S. cities. The College customarily covers 95% of the student cost in these trips, making them available to the entire student body. More than 50% of the present faculty, drawn from every department, division and program, has participated in one or more of these experiences. And each year on average 135 students (or 15% of the student body) enroll in a course with an immersion learning component.

Through direct hands-on, face-to-face experience, immersion learning courses provide students with high quality faculty engagement. WNS data show that such high impact practices bolster student learning with positive outcomes in the areas of critical reasoning, moral reasoning, and diversity and intercultural awareness. The positive impact of immersion learning upon students has been



*Kyle Bender poses with students at a school during a summer 2011 immersion trip to Kenya.*

[corroborated by the experiences of faculty](#), who continue to explore ways to maximize the educational experiences and assess immersion learning. For instance, modern languages faculty have shared their view that learning experiences in the target culture enable students to gain an increased appreciation for the social, cultural, historical, scientific, and architectural environment of a place; refine research skills and language skills; and contribute to growth in self-confidence and self-awareness. Higher education assessment data reinforces these perceptions by indicating that students who study abroad are more likely to persist to graduation, enjoy higher GPAs, and demonstrate improved knowledge of diverse cultural practices. Other analyses indicate that [positive learning gains](#) are associated with shorter term along-side or as alternative to traditional term semester study abroad experiences. For reasons such as these, immersion learning and off-campus study are supported as a strategic plan goal and are a point of focus in the Challenge of Excellence fundraising campaign.

A particularly unique learning experience is the College’s [Summer](#)

[Study in Ecuador Program](#). Since 2005, the annual four-week summer program has allowed approximately 15 students per year, some of whom may come from DePauw University, to experience a homestay with host families in Quito, a short-term intensive Spanish language and Ecuadorian culture course (72 contact hours) with Ecuadorian faculty, and a two-week interdisciplinary educational module led by Wabash faculty. More than a dozen Wabash faculty have led summer programs and a group of 20 Wabash faculty travelled to Ecuador in 2004. Recent courses have involved teaching and service in the rainforest of Ecuador (by teacher education students) and exploration of the ecology of the Amazon River basin (by biology faculty and students). The 2012 course studied Afro-Latino literature, history, and culture. The impact of the course is reviewed annually by the [Ecuador Summer Study directors](#).



*Teacher Education students spent four weeks in and around Quito during Wabash's Summer Study in Ecuador Program.*

In addition to these opportunities, students have other means to experience diverse learning. Three examples are the [Kenneth Rudolph Award for Summer Study in Europe](#); the [Givens Award for the Study of Western Art in Europe](#); and [Dill Grants](#), endowed funds that support select independent study, service or internships. Each of these awards funds off-campus summer experiences for two-to-four students annually.

#### Faculty Development in Diverse Teaching and Learning

In order to provide an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity that they bring, the College also has invested in a number of faculty development opportunities that will increase the teaching of diverse subject matter. Many of these efforts have been mentioned in this Criterion including participation by up to 16 faculty members (approximately 20% of the faculty) in two-week Asian Studies summer seminars at the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii; developing the teaching of diverse content and diverse teaching strategies through faculty development seminars on teaching courses in Black Studies and gender issues; the [Owen Duston Visiting Professorship](#), which for more than 20 years has succeeded in bringing diverse teaching and learning experiences and perspectives to the faculty; and immersion learning courses that provide important faculty development by allowing faculty to revisit and engage the cultures they teach, or learn anew in the company of students and other faculty. In addition, a number of faculty have undertaken individual development opportunities that support diverse teaching and learning. This includes three different faculty members serving as the director of the GLCA Japan Program and faculty using the GLCA New Directions Grant to provide new diverse teaching experiences related to African History, Arabic language in religion courses, or the Beijing Opera.

These experiences and others are important because when the faculty have diversity experiences they are more likely to contribute to diverse teaching and learning practices. Wabash recognizes this need. Despite overall strong results on the WNS and NSSE, student responses regarding exposure to diversity could be improved further. In reflection of this possibility, a set of faculty attending a WNS workshop in 2011 focused on survey results related to our students' openness to diversity and ideological challenge. As part of an Arthur Vining Davis Foundations grant in support of retention and with Dean of the College encouragement, these faculty [have initiated a project](#) to reflect on issues of diverse teaching. A group of faculty convened in spring 2012 for a series of lunches and a workshop during which they collectively investigated the College's diversity data and considered changes to existing courses and the development of new courses that speak to diverse learning environments.



*Some of the attendees at the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies pose for a picture following the gala celebration.*

### The Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies

The [Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies](#) (MXIBS) has a storied 40-year history at Wabash College as a distinctive, multi-faceted educational and cultural center. The MXIBS offers cultural, social, and co-curricular programs and contributes in varying ways to an academic engagement with the African American experience, one that has included curriculum development, research, a regular lecture series, and service outreach to the Crawfordsville community. The contribution to the academic life of the College, however, is not limited just to support for Black Studies courses; it is a partner in serving the broader College mission of educating students in the liberal arts and in advancing the College's strategic goals of strengthening the global and cross-cultural awareness of all Wabash students and engaging the diverse communities of Crawfordsville and Montgomery County.

As an academic and cultural resource, the MXIBS aims to create a living and learning environment that fosters an appreciation of the diverse and rich African American heritage, life, and culture. It does so in the context of the College's mission of engaging and educating students, primarily students of color but not limited to them. In collaboration with other College offices, leaders, and programs, the MXIBS also supports the recruitment, retention, and development of students of color, indeed of all students, while advancing the College's mission.

Following a two-year program review, in July 2011 the College [hired Michael Brown](#) as the new director for the MXIBS. The new director also holds the title of Associate Dean of the College. This reflects the creation of a new campus leadership position that is consistent with the College's broader goals related to student diversity and retention. The Director is assisted by the MXIBS Advisory Board, which carried out the [most recent program review](#) of the institute. In 2011 the MXIBS had a [40th Anniversary Celebration](#) that proved an important time for program renewal, one that brought together alumni, current students, and administrators, faculty, and staff to discuss the future of the organization.

The mission of the MXIBS continues to include advancing the engagement of the African American experience in the life of the College through curricular and co-curricular programs while supporting, nurturing, and teaching the students of the MXIBS to elevate their presence, leadership, and teaching role in the life of the College. The recent program review has identified the important contributions made by the MXIBS and also has provided recommendations for moving forward in terms of pursuing the Black Studies AOC, re-initiating a Scholar-in-Residence program, continuing to develop professional affiliations, and clarifying the leadership structure and appropriate staffing level of the MXIBS. These recommendations have been refined further in the MXIBS strategic plan, a document that will guide the ongoing work of the Institute. Grounded in the College's Mission Statement and Core Values, the plan sets as strategic objectives establishing the MXIBS as an integrating voice for topics pertinent to persons of African descent; providing institutional leadership on matters of

#### Electronic Resources

**MXIBS Program  
Review March 2011**

**Review Appendices**

**MXIBS Strategic  
Plan 2012-2017**

diversity, in particular in the area of teaching and learning; promoting and supporting development of leadership, particularly among students of African descent; promoting success and a high quality of life for MXIBS members; and developing infrastructure to support these objectives.

#### Diversity among Students, Co-curricular Organizations, and Faculty Committees

Respect for diverse learning environments at Wabash College is also demonstrated by the diverse composition of the student body, student organizations, and College committees. As was discussed in Criterion 1B, the level of student diversity at Wabash College is high, particularly given its geographic location, recruitment pool, and standing as a liberal arts college for men. The effectiveness of the College in providing a diverse learning environment is further seen in the graduation rate of minority students, which exceeds the state, national, and four-year private college average as calculated by the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* [College Completion Study](#) and underscored by a recent visit by a Teagle Scholar to the College to review the retention program and [institutional research](#) at the College. Importantly, diversity at the College is also reflected in the number of enrolled international students, currently numbering 60 (approximately 7% of the student body) from more than a dozen countries.

Students have formed a number of [organizations](#) that further enhance the diverse learning environment of the College. These organizations are formed around race and ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and other interests. For example, the MXIBS contributes to the understanding of diversity in the greater community in myriad ways that enhance diverse learning environments at the College. This includes sponsorship of the KQ&K mentoring and tutoring program for elementary and middle school children, the annual Kwanzaa Celebration, the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration, ice cream socials, and the publication [X-Position](#). Other organizations that support diverse learners include [Unidos Por Sangre](#); the [Muslim Students Association](#); the [International Students Association](#); Asian Student Association; Newman Center; [Wabash Christian Men](#); ['shOUT Club](#), Wabash's organization for gay and bisexual students and others who support them; and Students for Sustainability. The organizations provide interested students and community members locations in which to build relationships and create greater visibility and awareness across campus. Organizations regularly hold activities including sponsoring speakers, hosting programs, and planning service learning events, fund raisers, and dinners.

Serving in conjunction with student organizations, the College sponsors diverse learning and interests in a number of ways. These committees, offices, and actions include the International Students Office, the MXIBS Advisory Board, the Gender Issues Committee, the Multicultural Concerns Committee, and the Environmental Concerns Committee. These staff and faculty groups support students and the work of the College in an array of ways from increasing awareness to sponsoring speakers to fostering curricular and co-curricular opportunities. For instance the Gender Issues Committee hosts the Bankart Gender Lecture Series, and in January 2012 the National Association of Wabash Men held its [first-ever networking event with LGBT alums](#), working in conjunction with 'shOUT. Other notable College-wide ventures that support diverse learning include the partnering of student and College groups the past several years to host an annual [Multicultural Festival](#); the work of [Wamidán](#), the Wabash world music and dance ensemble; participation in the [GLCA Students of Color Leadership Conference](#); and the Mellon grant-supported [Mid-Autumn Festival](#), among others.

#### Student Retention Initiatives

Wabash recognizes that despite its efforts more can and should be done to improve the educational and campus experiences of diverse learners. As a result, the College continues to seek ways to improve its support for diverse learners and learning inside and outside the classroom. A particularly ambitious effort in this regard has been the work of the ad hoc Retention Committee. In the spring of 2009 a

group of Wabash faculty, staff, and administrators began considering retention within the context of a disparity in graduation rates between Caucasian and minority students. Specifically, while the four-year graduation and freshman retention rates at Wabash average around 68% and 87% respectively, both of these measures of retention vary by ethnicity. Latino students (80%) are less likely than African American students and Caucasian students (88%) to return for their sophomore year. And in terms of graduation rates, approximately 57% of Latino students graduate in four years, but only 45% of our African American students graduate over the same time frame, compared to 69% of Caucasian students. While, as noted previously, these persistence rates compare positively to other men's colleges and place us at the median of GLCA and ACM consortial schools, Wabash is not satisfied.

With these figures in mind, a team of faculty attended a CILA retention workshop in order to examine Wabash's WNS data for predictors of retention and to gain a better understanding of why students stay at or leave Wabash. The Retention Committee discovered that students who earn lower GPAs during their first and/or second semesters are at least twice as likely to leave the College. Relatedly, students who earn fewer than four credits in their first semester are three times more likely to leave after their freshman year than are those who earn at least four credits. It also was found that student persistence at Wabash has as much, or even more, to do with the quality of the relationships that the student forms with other students along with staff and faculty in the very early stages of his career. Thus, analysis suggests that the single best predictor of whether or not a student returns to the College for his sophomore year is the student's report of "faculty interest in teaching and student development," a scale from the WNS. However, African American students report lower levels of "faculty interest in teaching and student development" and "quality of peer relationships," and report less satisfaction overall with relationships at Wabash than do Caucasian students. Ultimately, all students succeed more often when they succeed early and have people around them — students, faculty, and staff — that they believe care about and engage them.



*Alumnus Keith Veal volunteers as a mentor in one of Wabash's retention program initiatives.*

**Electronic Resources**

**CIC-Walmart  
College Success  
Award**

**Arthur Vining Davis  
Foundations  
Retention Grant**

Working with constituencies, including the Dean of the College's Office, the Dean of Students' Office, Financial Aid, and the MXIBS, the Retention Committee began working to collect additional information and to develop a series of programs intended to enhance the academic performance of at-risk students. To support such programs, the College employed CILA grant funding, a Council of Independent Colleges and Walmart Foundation "[College Success Award](#)," and an [Arthur Vining Davis Foundations grant](#). The goal of these efforts is to increase overall retention at Wabash but, in particular, that of minority and first generation college students (the latter of whom continue to make up a significant portion of the Wabash student body). The work dovetails with the strategic plan goal to attract, retain, and graduate qualified students and is part of the Challenge of Excellence campaign, while also reflecting the mission of educating men who reflect the multiple faces of American life.

The support programs are designed to work with the distinctive Wabash culture, including its high expectations for student engagement, its all-male composition, and the implications of its small

institution size in terms of the number of faculty and professional student service staff members. As part of the program, the College has developed an early alert system to centralize detection of students struggling with the transition to college and to identify these students before they fall too far behind academically. The system was devised after visit teams travelled to two institutions that have had particular success at student support for and graduation of minority students. To oversee this system and other retention efforts, the College established the position of [Coordinator of Student Engagement and Retention](#). Several other related initiatives are also part of the effort, including using focus group interviews with African American and Latino freshmen to assess elements of the program and obtain suggestions for improvement; the development of an alumni mentoring system; a comprehensive review of the student advisement system (which is addressed in more detail in the next section); the establishment of a student-to-student peer mentoring program; initiating through the MXIBS the Robert H. Johnson Leadership Program; offering small grants to faculty to develop programming aimed at support for students of color; and faculty development workshops on cultural competence. The Retention Committee also has trained a cohort of upperclassmen to be focus group leaders in order to assist with student focus groups that are used as part of the grant and for program assessment. As the committee's [timeline illustrates](#), the program is unfolding over the course of five years with the continued development of support programs and the regular collection and analysis of student data.

The aim is to further imbed systems within the Wabash College culture that are responsive and supportive of diverse students — students of color, first generation students, students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds — and to equip faculty and staff with the knowledge and experience needed to enable all to succeed.

***Strengths, challenges and recommendations.*** Wabash College makes significant efforts to create a learning environment that respects all learners and the experiences they bring as well as to provide a diversity of learning opportunities. The range of opportunities and efforts is rich with potential while the College can continue to reflect on its program assessment, particularly in terms of pedagogical impact and student experiences. The College should continue to consider ways to enhance its foreign language offerings and pursue possible establishment of AOCs in Black Studies and Asian Studies. In terms of OCS and immersion learning, the College needs to continue to assess its resource needs and complete a plan that ensures opportunities, particularly for OCS, matching the expectations the College has established in its strategic plan. Additional opportunities also exist for assessing the impact of these diversity experiences on student learning and on the student body as a whole. For instance, a mechanism for evaluating the impact of OCS as a student returns to campus would be useful. Similarly, immersion students and faculty could offer evaluations that would be valuable for assessing trip impacts and for planning future immersion trips. The College must continue to respond to the MXIBS Advisory Board's program review, implement the MXIBS strategic plan, and determine how to maximize academic and social support via the MXIBS and the necessary and proper level of staffing for the Institute given the important role its Director plays as Associate Dean of the College. Finally, the College should continue with its retention efforts while monitoring the impact of new initiatives on overall retention and, in particular, for at-risk students.

### **The Wabash College advising system supports student learning and academic success**

Academic advising is an important concern of Wabash College, as is evidenced by the identification of advising as an explicit faculty responsibility and component of faculty reviews. Moreover, overall student satisfaction with academic advising and support of academic needs is relatively high, as is examined in Criterion 5D. At the same time, student evaluation of support for non-academic and social needs rates comparatively lower, suggesting something of a divide between academic advising

and holistic developmental advising, a not uncommon division. Thus, as an extension of the work of the FYESG and as part of the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations grant-supported retention initiatives, the College has engaged in focused reflection on and devoted new resources to holistically assessing student advising. This review is intended to determine how well the advising system meets the needs of all students, with particular emphasis on minority students and others who report lower levels of engagement.

At Wabash it is expected that faculty serve as academic advisors, assisting students with their academic planning. Additionally, some members of the administration and staff, including some Lilly Library staff, the Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, and the Associate Dean of Students, engage in academic advising, often as a consequence of occasional teaching. While students are expected to be responsible for their curricular choices and monitor their degree progress, students are not permitted to register for courses until they meet with their advisor, who is chosen by the student. The Registrar also monitors academic progress and provides advising feedback in the form of course recap cards that are made available to students and faculty, by reviewing student academic standing prior to the senior year, and again at the start of their eighth semester. Students also have access to their academic progress and the ability for program evaluation through the online system, Ask Wally. The Registrar provides additional important advising assistance in the form of [regular advising lunches](#) that keep faculty abreast of policy changes, alert faculty to registration processes, and remind faculty of course requirements and scheduling nuances that can impede student degree progress.

An expanded review of the advising system was launched in spring 2011 in response to WNS and NSSE data pointing to differential levels of student engagement. This work began with a campus advising audit by an experienced consultant from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and attendance at the NACADA Summer Institute. At the week-long program, the participating Wabash team, which consisted of four faculty and three staff persons, reflected on advising goals and crafted advising mission (focused on promoting individual development and helping students achieve goals) and advising vision (focused more broadly on increased retention and enhanced student engagement) statements along with expected student and faculty outcomes for academic advising. Evoking the College's Mission and Core Values, the draft mission statement holds that "Advising at Wabash is a teaching and learning process that involves meaningful relationships between advisors and students. The mission of advising is to promote intellectual, personal, and career development so that students can identify, pursue effectively, and achieve realistic academic, personal, and career goals." The overall goal of the advising vision statement is to increase the level of student engagement during the advising process, engagement that will facilitate a positive Wabash experience and increase the likelihood of student academic success and retention.

A number of steps have been taken to enhance developmental advising and to create a community where advisors can share best practices and ideas. First, the advising vision and mission statements were disseminated to the 2011-12 freshman advisors for use and discussion. The mission will be discussed further in summer and fall 2012 with the intent of moving toward formal adoption in the near future. Second, a new evaluation of academic advising was given to freshmen. The results will be assessed and monitored over the course of the next two years, with new evaluations undertaken in 2012-13. Third, a freshman advisor Moodle site, which was first used extensively in advance of the arrival of freshmen in fall 2011, was created. Finally, the advisor training program was expanded and modified to be more intentional and educational. This includes seeing advisor training as an extended process, developed over the course of training sessions that extend throughout the year. In 2011-12, training sessions focused on special needs and strategies for advising students of color and international students; the ins-and-outs of advising for course registration; discussion of academic support services; information on counseling services; and education on career services. In short, steps

have been taken to become more extensive and intentional in the training of freshman advisors so that they can implement and promote developmental advising strategies for students toward the end of improving student engagement and success.

The changes to advisor training will be monitored in the coming years while additional changes will be tested and implemented. Also, as part of the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations grant implementation another group of faculty and staff will have the opportunity to attend a NACADA program in Summer 2012.

### 3D. WABASH COLLEGE'S LEARNING RESOURCES SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING.

The College utilizes a diversity of learning resources to support student learning and effective teaching. These resources include Academic Support Services and Career Services, both of which are addressed in Criterion 5, as well as supporting offices and committees ranging from the Center for Academic Enrichment (which, among many responsibilities, provides logistical support for immersion learning) to the Lecture Planning Committee and the Visiting Artists Committee to the Multicultural Concerns Committee. Here, however, we focus on the services provided by two principal learning resources that are vital across all aspects of the College: the Lilly Library and Information Technology Services.

#### Lilly Library

The mission of the Lilly Library is to provide collections and services supportive of the curriculum and the larger Wabash mission by fostering the development of critical thinking, intellectual inquiry, and lifelong learning skills. To that end, the library staff, in partnership with faculty, facilitates student development of essential literacies fundamental to liberal arts education by acquiring, managing, and delivering scholarly and creative resources for use by students, faculty, and staff. As such, Lilly Library serves as the physical and virtual gateway by which the Wabash community accesses the information resources required for research, scholarship, and creative work. This includes providing the resources necessary to facilitate the attainment of institutional teaching and learning objectives; promoting the growth of literacies essential to academic achievement and life-long learning; providing a dynamic and welcoming learning environment; and supporting the systematic collection and preservation of the College's intellectual property and institutional record.



*Students use Lilly Library for a wide range of purposes, including group study tables.*

In serving in these capacities, the library's staff regularly monitors and reviews expenditures, collections, and services as well as how the larger community engages with library resources. This includes maintaining [a set of dashboard indicators](#) related to collections, expenditures, services, and staff, administering surveys to assess library use and services, and the development of [a strategic plan](#) that will guide its work. As discussed in Criterion 2, the library strategic plan offers five goals that consider how its key objectives intersect with the foundational College mission, via the same mapping activity undertaken by all academic departments, and advances the goals of the current strategic plan. Rather than detailing the particulars of library planning, here the focus is on how the operations and services of the library provide important support for student learning and effective teaching.

#### Electronic Resources

**Lilly Library  
Dashboard**

**Lilly Library  
Strategic Plan**

One sign of the work, progress, and evolution of the library is how it has kept the fluid environment of the digital age in sharp focus as it has planned for the future. Accordingly, changes in information use and technology are evident in how library expenditures, collections, and personnel roles have evolved in recent years. While seeking to balance cost-effective access to e-resources in conjunction with sustaining print collections that retain value in the Wabash curriculum, a reduction in the duplication of print and electronic journal subscriptions since 2008 has increased the availability and variety of digital serial resources. Thus, in reflecting the preferences of students and faculty for materials in an electronic form, the number of physical subscriptions has declined significantly and the number of digital subscriptions has risen exponentially. Relatedly, today almost 100% of interlibrary loan articles arrive in electronic format. Also, when compared to a decade earlier, the size of the media collection has nearly doubled, and the microforms collection has more than doubled. Changes in how patrons interact with library resources are seen similarly in the number of circulation transactions, which are at about two-thirds their level from the start of the new century.

Taken as a whole, it is evident that the information-seeking behaviors and habits of library users continue to evolve. As a result, the library has changed its strategies for resource allocation and community interaction. Electronic collections will continue to be the focus of library growth, but maintaining print collections (including adding new scholarly monographs that remain valued in a print format) and institutional archives (so as to preserve the College's historical record) remains an important responsibility of the library. As the role of the library changes, so too will the responsibilities of the library staff, with increasing personalization of services, collaboration with the community, and continued focus on the development of the library as a quality learning space. On this last point, the standing of the library as an engagement center of the community is seen in part by the growth in the number of visitors to the library per week, which has more than doubled over the course of the past six years.

As part of the library's evolving place in the community and reflecting the goals and objectives of its strategic plan, two particular points of emphasis are worthy of additional comment: increased attention to instruction and facility improvements. The library is placing emphasis on increased collaboration with faculty in course work where the development of information literacy is a critical component. Increasingly, these collaborations have taken place in Freshman Tutorial classes. As part of its focus on collaborative teaching, the library staff engages in more than 60 library instruction sessions per year. Moving forward, working collaboratively to do more to facilitate teaching and learning will be among the library's highest priorities. To assist with these efforts the library also has developed a series of instructional workshops offered throughout the year on a rotating basis.

Another element of increased instruction is ease of material access. A redesign of the [Lilly Library website](#) has sought to increase ease of use in online discovery and make research assistance more accessible. The revised website has been streamlined to facilitate easy searching of primary databases and the library catalog while also directing users to library resources according to field of study. From the front page, one can access more than 30 video tutorials addressing subjects from how to use particular databases to proper citation formats. From the homepage there is also an introductory portal to each academic division. These tabs are supported further by disciplinary portals that identify key resources for each department and the location of supporting library materials. Additional assistance is found in the linked [Library Research guides](#) that have been developed to assist with the identification and use of resources for each department and program.

The library also has engaged in facility improvements, as discussed in Criterion 2B. This has included relocating the library computer lab, installing energy efficient lighting fixtures, creating significant new storage and work space for the College Archives, and contracting to add an espresso coffee bar.

Relocation of the Media Center to the main floor was completed in summer 2012, and repurposing space on the lower level of the library to provide technology enhanced collaborative learning spaces and presentation practice facilities for students is anticipated. The Library Advisory Committee is scheduled to begin investigating design possibilities in fall 2012 and, based on their findings and recommendations, across 2013-14 the project would be developed and implemented.

Finally, in order to determine how well it is meeting the needs of the community, the library has engaged in multiple surveys to assess user needs and perceptions of library services, including the [2005 LibQual survey of library service quality](#), internal surveys on [facilities use in 2006](#) and [2009](#), and the [2012 Measuring Information Service Outcomes](#) (MISO) survey. The overall effectiveness of the library in meeting the needs of the community is evidenced in the percentage of students, staff, and faculty indicating they are “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with a variety of library services:

| Service or Resources                     | Students | Staff | Faculty |
|--|----------|-------|---------|
| 1832 Brew (coffee and espresso bar)      | 95%      | 95%   | 97%     |
| Off-Campus Access to Online Resources    | N/A      | 90%   | 86%     |
| Circulation                              | 97%      | 100%  | 100%    |
| Databases                                | 98%      | 97%   | 100%    |
| Ease of Locating Materials               | 91%      | 93%   | 98%     |
| Group Study Spaces                       | 88%      | 100%  | 90%     |
| Input into Library Decision-Making       | 91%      | N/A   | 89%     |
| Interlibrary Loan                        | 96%      | 100%  | 98%     |
| Support for Faculty’s Scholarly Research | N/A      | N/A   | 93%     |
| Support for Students’ Scholarly Research | N/A      | N/A   | 98%     |
| Library Web Site                         | 98%      | 98%   | 93%     |
| Overall Library Services                 | 98%      | 98%   | 97%     |
| Public Computers                         | 95%      | N/A   | N/A     |
| Quiet Study Spaces                       | 94%      | 100%  | 93%     |
| Reference                                | 94%      | 100%  | 95%     |
| Research Guides                          | 92%      | N/A   | 92%     |
| Research Instruction                     | 92%      | N/A   | 92%     |

*Data comes from 2012 MISO Survey*

Taken as a whole, the survey results confirm the value placed on library services by the community and identify few, if any, areas of clear weakness. However, based on the survey the library has identified some areas for future review and improvement including access to online resources from off-campus; expanding e-book collections; examination of group study spaces; reviewing community input into library decision making; and research instruction for courses.

**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** Despite working in a difficult economic climate in which total library expenditures are nearly flat compared to a decade ago, the library is nonetheless making progress toward its identified goals in strengthening teaching and learning at Wabash College. Moving forward, in close partnership with IT Services, the library will continue to strive to improve acquisition of and access to information resources, focusing library instruction on student use rather than content type, redefining the scope of the archival program, and taking a collaborative approach

to space utilization in planning and managing continuous improvement of the library's facilities and program. The library also should continue to monitor and assess progress on its strategic plan and examine the comparative data across institutions that participated in the MISO survey when those data become available.

### **Information Technology Services**

Unsurprisingly, technology has become ever more integrated into the functions of the College. The extensive planning undertaken in information technology was discussed in Criterion 2. Here we focus more directly on the role of information technology in support of student learning and effective teaching. Wabash Information Technology Services is committed to helping the campus make the most of available technology, which it does through substantial technology support in the service of student learning and effective teaching and extensive efforts to understand technology use and needs across the campus.

Wabash students have access to [a wide range of technology resources](#), including campus-wide wireless networking, high speed Internet service, and more than 380 computers dedicated to student use. Wabash has a fully-funded replacement policy, ensuring that Wabash students always have access to the latest technology. Some 97% of Wabash students have their own computer with 95% of these computers being laptops. All students also receive a technology orientation session during Freshman Orientation, and workshops are offered throughout the year on using campus technology.

Further, teaching assistance is provided through unlimited access to [Atomic Learning](#), an on-line learning system that offers self-paced courses for many computer programs and technologies. When problems arise, the IT Services Help Desk is available for assistance. The College does not assess a general technology fee nor are there access charges for connecting to the network, data charges, or support costs. The school also provides each student with 600 pages of free printing to campus printers each semester. Additional features of IT Services that enhance teaching and learning include:

- All community members are supplied with a Wabash College email account. The account is provided to new students in mid-May of their senior year in high school so that they can begin accessing online student resources;
- Wabash's state-of-the-art wireless network allows Internet access from anywhere on campus, including classrooms, the library, athletics complex, student residences, and most outdoor areas. The wireless network, which includes 223 active access points, operates at Wireless-N speed, the fastest available;
- IT Services has partnered with Dell, Apple, Microsoft, and Mathematica to acquire a discount for students, faculty, and staff on technology purchases. In addition to Dell and Apple hardware discounts, this support extends to the purchase of the Microsoft Office Suite and Mathematica software at an extremely low cost;
- Wabash has six public computer labs. Two of these labs are open 24 hours a day while two others are available from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.;
- College computers are equipped with a range of commercial software, including the Microsoft Office Suite, Mathematica, SPSS, Photoshop, Illustrator, Internet Explorer, Firefox, computer programming languages, and a variety of course and discipline-specific applications;

- IT Services has made available an innovative “virtual computer lab” system through which all of the software available in the computer labs can be accessed directly from a student’s own computer, whether he is at his campus residence or remotely at home over breaks;
- A variety of equipment is offered for short-term checkout, including laptops, digital still cameras, video cameras, and data projectors;
- IT Services provides useful information on technology and technological developments to the campus through monthly [“Tech Talks”](#). Recent sessions have addressed data center and Media Center renovations, tablet computers, campus technology updates, introduction to software and services, and other topics;
- The [Technology Homepage](#) provides access to tutorials and support ranging from password changes to Moodle support.

Furthermore, IT Services provides support that advances curricular efforts and the broader intellectual climate of the College. Tangibly, this support is provided in the 55 classrooms that are equipped with computer and video projection capabilities. IT Services also supports the Moodle course management system, which is used extensively by faculty in teaching, ranging from delivery of course materials to communications to testing and grading functions. More than 3,000 total courses (including archived courses from previous semesters) and 200 active organizations utilize Moodle.

An additional specific example of the services provided through IT Services is the work of the Wabash College Media Center. Newly relocated on the first floor of Lilly Library, the Media Center offers multi-media services, technical support, video production, and instructional technology support to the entire Wabash community. The state-of-the-art facilities include video editing workstations, a large format color printer, document scanners, slide and negative scanners, CD/DVD burners, and a video production studio. The Media Center also supports the broader administrative work of the College by recording public lectures, developing promotional materials for campus events, providing curriculum support by managing electronic media reserves, and live broadcast streaming of dozens of events each year.

A necessary pre-requisite to providing effective technological support is understanding the needs of the campus. To assist with this process, IT Services conducts focus group discussions of services and an annual technology survey to evaluate satisfaction with campus technology. The survey typically yields strong results with, using the [2010-11 survey](#) as an example, 90% of students providing an overall assessment of campus technology as “excellent” or “good.”



*Femi Oluyedun uses one of the many publicly accessible computers in Lilly Library. Wabash offers more than 380 computers for student use.*

**Electronic Resources**

**2011 Student  
Technology Survey**

**2011 Faculty-Staff  
Technology Survey**

The [faculty-staff survey](#) yielded similar results with an overall approval rate of 96% for campus technology. As a whole, the faculty-staff survey reflects a positive assessment of technology at Wabash:

| <b>2011 Faculty-Staff Technology Survey</b>   | <b>Percent Responding “Excellent” or “Good”</b> |
|---|---|
| Overall, how would you rate the quality of your office and departmental technology equipment? | 91.7%   |
| Overall, how would you rate the quality of Wabash’s classroom technology?                     | 90.1%   |
| Overall, how would you rate Wabash’s website?   | 70.7%   |
| Overall, how would you rate the quality of Wabash’s network service?                          | 94.1%   |
| Overall, how would you rate the quality of Wabash’s technical support services?               | 88.9%   |
| What is your overall assessment of technology at Wabash?                                      | 96.2%   |

Apart from the consistently high results, two responses are worthy of note: the overall evaluations of the Wabash website and quality of technical support services were at a five-year low as compared to previous survey results. Given this evaluation, the Wabash website redesign was launched in August 2011, and future evaluations of it bear watching. In terms of the evaluation of technical support, the overall evaluation is still high but the result suffers in comparison to previously effusive evaluations that ranged from 95% to 99% satisfaction. It will be worth monitoring future responses while acknowledging the high demands that are placed on a limited IT Services staff, the amount of staff turn-over in recent years, and the proliferation of new and different devices that students and faculty bring to the College.

Another useful feature of the annual survey is its effort to poll the community in helping to prioritize potential technology initiatives. From the 2010-11 survey we see the issues of greatest interest to students, faculty, and staff:

| <b>Potential Initiative</b>                                   | <b>Students</b> | <b>Faculty</b> | <b>Staff</b> |
|---|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Increase Internet bandwidth                                   | 85% (1)         | 71% (6)        | 55% (9)      |
| Provide more support for student personal computers           | 75% (2)         | N/A            | N/A          |
| Improve disaster resistance and recovery of critical services | 75% (3)         | 87% (2)        | 89% (1)      |
| Offer on-line registration for classes                        | 68% (5)         | 86% (1)        | 44% (10)     |
| Expand green IT practices for printing and energy use         | 61% (10)        | 81% (3)        | 58% (8)      |
| Improve access to Wabash website from hand-held devices       | 67% (7)         | 47% (11)       | 55% (7)      |
| Update look and feel of Wabash website                        | 57% (15)        | 79% (4)        | 72% (2)      |
| Improve security of campus wireless network                   | 64% (13)        | 74% (5)        | 63% (3)      |

*(Note: Responses indicate percentage of respondents identifying the topic as either a “high” or “medium” priority and its overall rank among surveyed items.)*

Consistent with the survey results, several recent initiatives have sought to address expressed community priorities. This has included remodeling the College website (discussed in Criterion 2), improving disaster resistance and recovery, and expanding green practices. Internal reviews identified the Wabash College data center, the area that houses the College’s servers, network storage, phone

system, and core networking equipment, as being at risk. [Renovations](#) undertaken in summer 2011 addressed concerns in a number of ways, including reducing water threat by raising server racks off the floor, moving the air handling unit, installing fire suppression capacity, replacing wiring, improving security, and installing additional data racks for future needs. Most importantly, the system reliability was significantly upgraded through the use of high availability servers, virtual server technology, installation of redundant core components, and the creation of a secondary data center to assist disaster recovery in Hays Hall.

Similarly, in fall 2011 the College launched a new [Print Management System](#). Under this program students receive \$25.00 per semester toward printing on campus printers. A student's account is charged according to the type of printing he does (\$0.05 for single-sided black and white; \$0.08 for double-sided black and white; \$0.15 for single-sided color). Students may purchase additional prints via a print card from the bookstore. The primary goal of the program is to reduce print waste; a second goal is to limit total paper purchase. In the spring 2011 technology survey, 46% of faculty and 31% of students identified "expanding green IT practices for printing and energy use" as a high priority. In addition to capping the number of "free" prints, the system provides a regular reminder to students of the financial and environmental costs of printing, which helps to reduce print volume for students who don't reach their initial print allotment. The initial study in advance of implementing the system estimated that approximately 25% of student printing was "waste printing" — printing that was abandoned, duplicate prints, "joke" printing, and the like. In the first semester under the system, print volume dropped 41% (by 208,000 pages) while the increased use of double-sided printing reduced paper consumption by another 35,000 sheets. Trouble reports and printer downtime in computer labs dropped by 80%, abandoned print jobs dropped more than 95% and some student organizations, such as the Student Senate, shifted to distributing meeting materials electronically, resulting in a savings of thousands of pages.

The clear environmental benefits of the program were tempered by the perception of some faculty that the system may have indirectly contributed to reduced course reading, created pleas by students that they were unable to print assignments due to the limits of the system, and increased distractions due to more computers (and even the occasional use of cellphones) used to access readings during class. It seems clear, however, that students were generally over-conservative with their printing given how few students exhausted their print allotment in the first semester of the program (only 76 students or 8.5% exceeded the initial \$25.00 limit). A faculty group will be invited soon to participate in an assessment of the print management system's first-year of operation. The group will examine the print-statistics as well as assess the in-class impact of the system and discuss possible changes to the program to minimize any negative impact.

In continuing to pursue services that can enhance student learning and effective teaching, in fall 2012, IT Services, in conjunction with two College committees, will launch an [iPad Pilot Project](#). The goal of the pilot program will be to assess the value and effectiveness of iPads in the classroom and for student use. Three classes, totaling about 50 students, were selected for the pilot project based on proposals submitted by teaching faculty. For the courses selected, an iPad is being provided for the instructor and each student in the course to keep for the entire semester. Faculty and students who participate in the program will participate in a range of assessment activities.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** IT Services plays a key role by helping the campus make optimal use of technology for teaching and learning. Moving forward, it should continue to survey the needs and priorities of the campus and address questions and concerns about technology use. This should include evaluating the comparative data from the MISO survey when it becomes available. IT Services will also continue to monitor technology developments and assess implemented

#### Electronic Resources

**Biochemistry  
iPad Project**

**Freshman Tutorial  
iPad Project**

**History  
iPad Project**

changes such as the Print Management System and the iPad Pilot Project. Because of IT Services critical importance, the College will have to monitor staffing and budget needs to maintain its operational efficiency.

### **CONCLUSIONS FOR CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING**

In this chapter we have provided evidence that Wabash College meets the reaccreditation expectations for student learning and effective teaching. The College has set learning goals for students as defined by its mission, its majors and programs, and its courses. The College makes significant efforts to assess attainment of these learning goals and has evidence that students recognize and value these learning goals. The faculty has thoughtfully considered the curriculum, adopted changes that address fundamental elements of a student's learning and development across his academic career, and pursued extensive efforts to assess core requirements. Moreover, Wabash creates effective learning environments to enhance student learning and support a diversity of learners. These learning environments are enhanced by a respect for diversity, a commitment to a variety of learning opportunities, and constant efforts to improve student experiences. National survey data underscore the effectiveness of a Wabash education in both student perceptions and student outcomes. The curriculum and student learning are administered by a highly qualified faculty that, while in a state of transition, is carefully assessed, openly and consistently evaluated, and shown to demonstrate an engagement with students and a commitment to teaching that is deep and pervasive. The College recognizes and rewards that commitment with extensive faculty development opportunities and by providing important resources for teaching and learning.

Collectively, these practices and accomplishments underscore three of the strengthening themes identified in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction: *strengthening student engagement*, *strengthening assessment*, and *strengthening liberal arts instruction*. Evidence of strengthened student engagement provided in this chapter includes increased immersion travel, review and revisions to all-college course offerings, increased attention to student retention, and improvements in student advising. There is additional opportunity for improvement in these areas and, significantly, Wabash has in place the structures and initiatives to continue to address these concerns.

Evidence of strengthened assessment efforts is plentiful in this Criterion chapter. Most notably, working from the Mission Statement, Wabash has enhanced its academic assessment efforts and, utilizing the resources of CILA, Wabash has collected and analyzed more data that it is using to make improvements. These efforts, along with revisions to faculty review processes and attention to assessment in a variety of forms (e.g., department reviews, EQ assessment, writing assessments) have established and are reinforcing a continuous culture of assessment at Wabash that can be further cultivated and refined in the coming years.

Finally, evidence of strengthening liberal arts instruction is seen in the many new programs and efforts being used to improve Wabash as a liberal arts institution where student learning is the primary priority. This has included the use of assessment data for improvement of course but, more specifically, is reflected in the expanding Asian Studies Program; establishment of a Faculty Development Coordinator position; strategic enhancements to the teaching faculty; expanded, systematic attention to student writing; and new academic offerings such as a biochemistry major, Chinese language instruction, and international partnerships with Fudan and East China Normal Universities. By tradition and character not settling for less than what is best for our students, Wabash staff and faculty seek continuous improvement and recognize that more can be done to improve

student learning and effective teaching. The good work done by the College in pursuit of teaching and learning excellence affirms once again the centrality of the Mission and Core Values.

## **Strengths**

- The College effectively uses department reviews to assist in the assessment of student learning. The range of department review activities reveals a faculty committed to improving student learning through reflective analysis of teaching and departmental practices and an interest in innovating departmental curricular designs so as to enhance student learning outcomes;
- The Freshman Tutorial program and FYESG serve as examples of systematic and reflective efforts to assess student learning and teaching effectiveness and to use the results of such study to further refine and improve those efforts;
- The process used to review C&T and craft the new EQ course demonstrate the reflective processes undertaken by the faculty in determining a curriculum that meets the needs of students as called for by the College's mission and stands as a good example of the College's efforts at assessing course impacts and student learning;
- Since the last self-study Wabash College has developed a coherent and comprehensive approach to improving student writing, committed resources in support of it, and encouraged increased community-wide reflection on writing instruction and expectations. These changes have made the teaching of writing more intentional through both more extensive assessment and the development of new initiatives as the result of these assessments. The work is an exemplar of an effective feedback loop that can be replicated in assessing other components and goals of the Wabash academic program;
- While more opportunities exist for the use of national survey data — and more will present themselves with the close of the WNS with the graduation of the 2012 class — there are exciting developments at Wabash in regards to the use of data to formulate strategies to improve student learning and teaching. CILA, along with HEDS consortium support, will continue to assist the College's assessment and improvement efforts;
- Wabash College has in place effective processes to evaluate and recognize teaching;
- Wabash College supports faculty development of improved pedagogies and innovative practices — development opportunities at the College are plentiful;
- Wabash College makes significant efforts to create a learning environment that respects all learners and the experiences they bring as well as to provide a diversity of learning opportunities;
- Wabash College employs technology to strengthen teaching and learning in creative and efficient ways.

## **Challenges**

- Department learning goals are unevenly publicized. More prominent placement and use of learning goals will underscore their centrality and provide visibility to students and other

constituencies;

- Going forward the College will have to determine how innovative designs for department reviews instituted in the last cycle — including site visits and release time — can be sustained given that funding support through the CILA grant will end in 2014;
- The ambitious assessment mechanisms established for programs such as EQ and fundamental skills such as writing will require sustained attention by the College in order to achieve the desired objectives;
- In the coming years and with the end of the inaugural version of the WNS, the College will need to consider more fully the import of the three years of data and seek to meaningfully use that data along with other data in assessing the overall educational program and prospects for additional improvements. The three-year data set will also allow for the consistency of the data — and the differences in it — to be more carefully scrutinized;
- While educational data points to positive outcomes for a significant number of Wabash students, they also make us aware that not all students have the same experience or report having high impact teaching practices to the same degree. In other words, the data are an invitation to probe the curriculum and our students' varied experiences, in particular minority and first generation students, so that improvements can be made;
- The College will have to continue to assess its position on and attitude toward the increased use of contingent faculty, which had been relatively unusual until recently, and is still minimal by many standards;
- In terms of the changing demographics of the faculty, the College will have to monitor the generational shift. This shift brings with it challenges, including maintaining expectations of teaching excellence, scholarship and service in a time of transition and providing effective mentorship, faculty development, and, most importantly, continued commitment to the College's mission;
- The financial crisis of 2008 put strains on traditional off-campus study that the College continues to work to address, including through the Challenge of Excellence campaign. To this end, the College needs to continue to assess its resource needs and complete a plan that ensures opportunities, particularly for OCS, that match the resources and expectations the College has established in its strategic plan.

## **Recommendations**

- The College should improve centralized data management by establishing an office of institutional research or similar structure;
- In order to facilitate more regular, systematic use of data the College should consider reconfiguring the Accreditation Committee into a broader Assessment Committee with a defined cycle of institutional assessment activities and responsibilities;
- While departments and programs have developed learning goals, those goals should be regularly revisited in considering their continued fit with the mission of the College, department offerings, and student outcomes. Doing so will allow departments and programs

to take advantage of institutional data where helpful in assessing how well goals are met, and engage in reflective revision of processes to improve student learning and teaching;

- While Wabash College has clear student learning goals that make assessment possible at the institutional, department, and course levels, the College should conclude its process of drafting and adopting distribution requirement rationales, which will further underscore the relationship of the distribution system to institutional level goals and also more directly articulate the goals and values of the specific distribution requirements;
- As department reviews continue in the next cycle, departments should do more post-implementation assessment of changes in order to more clearly evaluate student learning gains;
- At the time of the next Freshman Tutorial review, there are several program elements to assess including the move of all tutorials to the fall, the impact of increased writing instruction, the impact of changes in advisor training, the effectiveness of immersion trips, and the use of peer mentors;
- The College should consider how to build from its assessment successes to construct similarly comprehensive strategies for assessing quantitative skills and oral communication as well as foreign language development;
- The College needs to continue to monitor, review, and address staffing levels in all departments and majors. Specifically, the art and music departments are below three full-time faculty members (although there will be three FTE in the departments) as are programs in French, German and the developing program in Chinese language;
- Given that it has been several years since the College has participated in a survey designed to assess pre-tenure work-life, the College should participate in another such survey in order to assess current perceptions and the impact of changes to the tenure review process;
- The College should consider reducing the number of surveys students take on an annual basis and move to a new pattern of periodic data collection;
- The College should continue to investigate ways to enhance foreign language offerings, review all AOCs, and move forward in the consideration of AOCs in Black Studies and Asian Studies;
- The College should develop means for assessing the impact of diversity experiences on student learning and on the student body as a whole via evaluations of OCS and immersion experiences on the part of students and faculty;
- The College should monitor the MXIBS strategic plan progress and determine how to maximize academic and social support via the MXIBS and the necessary and proper level of staffing for the Institute;
- The College should continue with its retention efforts while monitoring the impact of new initiatives on overall retention and, in particular, for at-risk students.





## **CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE**

*Wabash College promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission*

## CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

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The mission of lifelong questioning and learning frames and permeates the Wabash student experience. In his [ringing-in speech](#), President White challenges all freshmen to turn to one another to find the teachers that they will teach and learn from during their time on campus. Citing Shakespeare's *Henry V*, the President proclaims that they are a "band of brothers" who will encourage and learn from one another throughout their Wabash days. A corresponding message — one underscoring that learning itself will never be complete — is offered at the [Deans' Breakfast](#) on Commencement Weekend, when Dean Phillips challenges all seniors to live with the open questions that a liberal arts education raises. Citing the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, students are challenged throughout their lives to learn to "...love the questions ...live the questions."



*President White "rings in" the Class of 2015.*

The importance of a life of learning is emphasized in Wabash's mission documents and institutional communications. Acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge responsibly are the expression of the fundamental Mission Statement of Wabash College "to educate men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely." The Mission Statement emphasizes that we do not view education as a commodity to be obtained, but rather as an approach to life, as a vocation, one that fosters "independent intellectual inquiry, critical thought, and clear written and oral expression" and "bring[s] joy in the life of the mind." The Core Values of the College further reinforce the continuous nature of learning in "a local scholarly community that creates lifelong relationships," with "a dedication to the serious pursuit of learning" and in the expectation that "a few years of residence, [will produce] a lifetime of loyalty."

Of the five strengthening themes identified in the Introduction to this *Self-Study Report*, three are particularly relevant to Criterion 4: *strengthening student engagement via expanded learning opportunities, strengthening liberal arts instruction through curricular review and enhancement, and strengthening staff and faculty quality of life by providing resources for professional and scholarly support and development.*

### **4A. WABASH COLLEGE DEMONSTRATES, THROUGH THE ACTIONS OF ITS BOARD, ADMINISTRATORS, STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF, THAT IT VALUES A LIFE OF LEARNING.**

Facilitating the habits of mind that nurture a life of learning is central to the work of Wabash and its relationships to its constituencies and the larger educational community. Here we discuss how Wabash promotes a community of lifelong learners, the professional development resources provided to foster that learning, the products of that acquisition of knowledge, how this work is publicly recognized, and the contributions Wabash makes to the learning and development of the broader higher education community.

## Wabash College promotes a community of lifelong learners

A rich array of campus events serve to support the pursuit of lifelong learning by all members of the Wabash community. Perhaps the seminal event in this regard is the annual [Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work](#). Since 2001, Wabash has cancelled afternoon classes on the last Friday in January so that the entire community can gather for the Celebration. (The cancelling of classes underscores its significance; Wabash almost never cancels classes, even for blizzards, since most of the students and a large percentage of faculty live within walking distance of campus.) In 2012, for example, 80 students representing nearly every academic program offered 50 oral presentations and 23 poster presentations, spanning topics ranging from “Characterization of a Metal Dependent Regulator Protein from *Thermobifida fusca*” to “Bomba Music: Evolution and Contextual Function.” In addition to faculty, staff, and students, [the event](#) attracts trustees, alumni, parents, and Crawfordsville residents. During the Celebration one is likely to see interactions such as a set of physics students explaining the chaotic motions of a high speed double-pendulum to an art professor, or an economics professor attending a philosophy student’s exploration of Heidegger’s view of death, or a diverse audience listening to a chemistry student present a project from a rhetoric class he took for distribution credit that critiques a documentary film promoting the virtues of charter schools. The Celebration both exemplifies lifelong learning in a liberal arts community and models it through the way it stretches students, staff, and faculty alike, moving them beyond their areas of expertise to learn something new from Wabash students, their teachers.

A parallel event celebrating faculty scholarship and creative work, the Ides of August, occurs annually just prior to the fall semester. In 2011, 18 faculty and staff presented their ongoing scholarship and research to peers and the occasional Crawfordsville resident. This event, like the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work, brings together diverse interests and exposes faculty to ideas far outside their normal realm of expertise. In 2011, presentations included “Genetic Testing in the Classroom,” “‘Bolt:’ An Essay about Sprinting,” and “Whose History is it Anyway?—Historical Interpretation at U.S. National Parks,” among others. Over the past five years, there have been [84 Ides presentations by 65 different presenters](#), a testament to the number and diversity of faculty and staff who participate. That faculty and staff come out to this event to exchange ideas and to learn about the new work of their colleagues — just as they are about to embark on another busy semester — speaks to the life of learning on the campus. The day ends with a reception honoring the creative work of the contributors and the character and ethos of Wabash as a community that learns from one another.



*Psychology Professor Karen Gunther presents her research at the Ides of August.*

Particularly given its size, the range of enriching events that occur at Wabash is astounding. Wabash’s development of lifelong learning is augmented each year by visiting fellows, lecturers, scholars, writers, artists, and professionals who bring diverse perspectives and experiences to campus to foster liberal learning. The Visiting Artist Series annually sponsors between four and six cultural events; the Lecture Committee brings [a slate of visitors](#) to campus each year; and the English department annually brings [a series of writers](#) to Wabash. Endowed funds allow most programs and departments to host one or more lectures each year involving prominent scholars from a variety of disciplines. Recent visitors have included Greg Petsko, past president of the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; author and Yale legal scholar Stephen Carter; Civil Rights Activist Bernard

Lafayette; *Time Magazine* Bureau Chief and Wabash alumnus Tim Padgett; and Holocaust survivor and painter Samuel Bak, among others. An impressive feature of the speaker and event series is the degree to which students interact with the visitors. Besides listening to speakers, engaging exhibitions, and attending performances, students almost always have meals with the visitors, providing a more informal and intimate context for exploring career paths, details of their craft, and other topics of interest; and the visitors nearly always attend a class.

In addition, departments and academic divisions host seminars on a regular basis, further enriching the campus. Student organizations and cultural groups host events such as a Mid-Autumn Festival, a Christmas Dinner, and a Kwanzaa celebration, well attended events that bring together students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Yet other examples of the life of learning exhibited at the College, such as the annual liberal arts symposium and the colloquia featured at Wabash alumni reunions, are addressed in Criterion 5B/5C. If there is a downside to the rich array of out-of-class offerings, it is that they are sometimes too plentiful and oversaturate the calendar, particularly from mid-March to mid-April. The College has made some efforts to enhance events coordination over all, but monitoring of the campus calendar by event planners is inconsistent, or event planners are sometimes slow to add information to the public calendar so as to make other planners aware of scheduled events. While these conflicts, some of which are no doubt unavoidable, might disperse the available audience, campus lectures and events are generally well attended, frequently impressing visitors from much larger campuses.



*Students celebrate their culture at the Mid-Autumn Festival.*

The emphasis on lifelong learning found outside the classroom is also embedded in course content, teaching methods, and curricular development. As explained in Criterion 3, freshmen take two all-college courses, a Freshman Tutorial and Enduring Questions (EQ). Freshman Tutorials have an explicit goal of fostering lifelong learning, as stated in the desire “to develop students’ intellectual curiosity that transcends departmental boundaries and fosters an appreciation related to the liberal arts.” Further, the course title “Enduring Questions” in itself represents a commitment to lifelong learning. The topics the course discusses are not meant to be answered in a semester; rather they are to be wrestled with for a lifetime, as Rilke’s sage advice suggests. The course introduction makes this goal explicit for students:

“A liberal arts education enshrines the question. Questions drive us to deliberate, to discuss, to investigate, to ask more questions. They are at the core of every class, research project, and creative work. They are the catalyst for and the evidence of a liberal arts mind. In this class they are the explicit framework for discussion over the course of the semester. As such, this course is a foundational part of your journey into the liberal arts at Wabash College: asking enduring questions; interrogating the questions and questioners; and generating new, enduring questions for yourself.”

In Freshman Tutorial, faculty choose topics of their own interest, often with a connection to popular culture and generally outside their area of regular teaching responsibility. The topics selected for

tutorials in fall 2011 give a sense of the broad perspective on learning adopted by these courses, using thematic topics to introduce students to college level reading, writing, and discussion skills while modeling how these skills can be applied to everyday interaction.

**2011 Freshman Tutorial Offerings**

9/11 and American Culture  
 Economics of the Popular Music Industry  
 9/11 and American Culture  
 Science and Pseudoscience  
 Fly Fishing: The Liberal Art  
 Winning World War II  
 Science Fiction and Philosophy  
 Get Up, Stand Up: Civil Rights  
*Lord of the Rings*  
 Speaking in Tongues: History of Language  
 Art and Religious Expression  
 Walking the Wasteland  
 Rebel without a Pulse: Horror Fiction  
 Theory and Lore of Running  
 Me, My Self and My Brain  
 Theology of C.S. Lewis  
 Global Health and Development  
 From Brasil to Brazil: Carnival  
 American Values and American Sports

**Instructor Area**

English  
 Economics  
 Theater  
 Psychology  
 Political Science  
 Political Science  
 Philosophy  
 English  
 Physics  
 History  
 Art  
 Associate Dean of Students  
 Chemistry  
 German  
 Psychology  
 Religion  
 Biology  
 Spanish  
 English

As outlined in Criterion 3A, EQ was first offered in the spring of 2011. Interestingly, the course’s development process and implementation itself exemplifies how lifelong learning means engagement by faculty and staff with fundamental liberal arts questions. While a committee with both elected and appointed representation (from all three divisions and including students) was charged with syllabus development, the committee regularly solicited ideas from the broader community, initially for the overarching theme of the course and later for relevant texts. In the course, instructors take on the role of discussion leaders and co-learners with their students. EQ thus provides a template for community engagement with enduring, life-long questions that extend through students’ Wabash career and beyond.

Two other examples from the curriculum illustrate further the broad way in which Wabash faculty exhibit a life of learning in their teaching. First, Wabash offers a Senior Colloquium course each semester. The course, limited to 15 students, addresses great works of historic and contemporary literature. Each week students read one text and engage in discussion, led by two volunteer professors or staff members (including President White) during a two-hour session. The discussion leaders change each week and are typically not experts on the texts, and they do not lecture on the material; instead they model for the students what it means to engage in critical reading and discussion of provocative texts, further preparing students for such engagement beyond Wabash. Finally, at Wabash professors teach a wide range of courses and are both generalists in their disciplines and specialists in particular areas. With that comes the ongoing process of learning new sub-fields, offering new electives (numerous “special topics” courses offered across departments every year), creating team-taught or dynamically connected course combinations, and engaging students in independent studies



*Students participating in Professor David Hadley’s tutorial, “Fly Fishing: The Liberal Art.”*

on new topics. In these ways, in their expression of course pedagogy, intellectual curiosity, and critical inquiry, professors embark on their own efforts at lifelong learning and lead students along that journey. Many Wabash faculty have seen their interests and their expertise evolve in just such a way, adopting new interests in the study of gender, sports, film, literature, and other topics across the arc of their career.

### **Wabash College supports professional development opportunities and makes them available to its faculty, administrators, and staff**

#### ***Faculty***

Wabash faculty members are “teacher-scholars”; as such, they not only teach, but contribute to the larger body of knowledge through their research, scholarship, and creative work. As was identified in Criterion 3B, this expectation is set out in the introduction to faculty responsibilities in the *Faculty Handbook* (p. 3). The importance of sustained intellectual growth and the expectation of continued scholarly or creative work are further reinforced through the tenure review process and annual evaluations, both of which emphasize and recognize continuing growth and development in teaching and scholarship. These activities enhance and complement teaching by engaging students, directly or indirectly, in the search for new knowledge. This is another way that faculty model to students and to one another what it means to be lifelong learners as they continue their own personal scholarly pursuits. Wabash encourages this continual growth of its faculty by providing professional development opportunities in multiple forms.

#### The Strategic Plan and the Challenge of Excellence Campaign

The degree to which Wabash is committed to faculty scholarly growth is seen in the current strategic plan, where attracting, developing, supporting, retaining, and encouraging faculty excellence as teachers and scholars is identified as one of the five plan goals. The point is underscored in the Challenge of Excellence [case statement](#) which, among the three “deep and enduring relationships” that are identified as being at the core of Wabash, points to “the relationship between teachers and their scholarship and creative activity” and its role as part of “the inspiration for student inquiry and engagement” (p. 4). To that end, one of the four funding initiatives for the Challenge of Excellence campaign is to provide “Support for faculty and faculty excellence in teaching, scholarship, and creative work.” The initiative clearly states that while engaging students through teaching is the first priority of faculty, faculty “also pursue a commitment to scholarship that is reflected in contributions of knowledge and research to leading peer-reviewed journals and major roles in their disciplines with colleagues around the nation” (p. 11). Thus, providing more resources to faculty to “sustain and expand their scholarship and research activities and to engage students in this work” is a central element of the Challenge of Excellence campaign.

#### Byron K. Trippet Summer Stipends and Research Grants

For their first two years, all tenure-track faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor are appointed as a Byron K. Trippet (BKT) Assistant Professor. The appointments are made at the start of their teaching appointment to underscore the expectation of development and continuation of research or creative work. The title comes with a \$2,000 summer stipend and eligibility for up to \$2,000 in funding for expenses related to scholarly work, including equipment, supplies, library fees, and travel. Importantly, the fund enables faculty who have just completed doctoral work to begin to establish a trajectory of scholarship or creative work appropriate to a liberal arts setting. Work completed with BKT funding often leads to preliminary data for grants, sample chapters for book contracts, new lines of research, and other initial work required for sustained scholarly activity. This is a valuable program, much appreciated by beginning faculty. The College may, however, need to revisit the level of summer funding support, as it has remained unchanged for at least fifteen years.

### Dean's Professional Travel Fund

All faculty members, as well as staff with associated faculty rank (e.g., some library staff and athletic coaches), are eligible for support to attend professional meetings through the Dean's Professional Travel Fund. The College supports costs associated with attendance at professional meetings up to a total of \$2,000 per faculty member per year, a level of support that, unlike at many institutions, was not reduced following the 2008 economic downturn. Covered costs include registration fees, transportation, and per diem for a maximum of five days per meeting. Earlier in the decade the per diem (which includes lodging and food) was increased from \$100 to \$150; in 2011, the per diem was adjusted to the [federal per diem rate](#) as determined by the U.S. General Services Administration. This improved support facilitates travel to more expensive metropolitan areas that are a common locale for large academic conferences. The College continues to supply a per diem of \$150 for those locations that are set to a lower default rate through the federal system. Faculty who are on sabbatical retain their eligibility for travel support to professional meetings under this fund. In addition, the College allows up to two additional days per diem in cases where faculty remain in a given location (where they are already present for a Dean's Office-funded professional meeting) that will advance their research, scholarship, or creative work. For example, an art professor who is attending a three-day conference in New York City may request two extra days in New York to visit the latest exhibits at art museums or to interact with collaborators. In 2010-11, 80% of eligible faculty used the Dean's Professional Travel Fund.

| Year    | Number of Faculty and Associated Faculty Using Fund | Total Spent |
|---------|---|-------------|
| 2007-08 | 84  | \$113,328   |
| 2008-09 | 92  | \$122,421   |
| 2009-10 | 91  | \$126,675   |
| 2010-11 | 79  | \$114,721   |

Thus, historically this is a generous and well-used resource for faculty development, and the increased daily per diem more closely matches the actual cost of attending meetings. Moreover, the \$2,000 allotment per faculty member is one of the highest among GLCA schools.

### Faculty Development Funds

Additional support for faculty development is provided through the John J. Coss Memorial Fund and the faculty development operating budget. The Faculty Development Committee (FDC), which consists of three elected faculty members (one from each division — with one of these serving as chair of the committee), the division chairs, and the Dean of the College, administers these funds. The Coss Memorial Fund was provided “for the use of the College by way of enabling members of the faculty to travel, to take leaves of absence, to engage in activities of writing or study, or to engage in other activities deemed to be conducive to the benefit of the College by advancing the professional capacities and attainments of the members of the faculty” (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 44). Applications are solicited and evaluated monthly, with a maximum grant award of \$1,800 per faculty member per year. While all continuing faculty and associated faculty are eligible to apply for funds, the committee's first priority is to tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Historically, this fund has maintained a surplus that rolls over from year-to-year, allowing the committee the flexibility to fund additional proposals beyond that supported by its annual budget. However, the loss of endowment value has reduced the annual budget and led to increased use of the surplus funds. According to the FDC's year-end report for 2011-12, the committee funded 42 of 54 proposals during the course of the year, in the process exhausting its regular annual budget and spending about one-third of the remaining reserve budget. Over the past four years, the

average annual allocation awarded by the committee has been approximately \$40,000. Thus, when combined with the Dean's Professional Travel Fund, faculty have utilized between \$150,000 and \$160,000 of professional development support annually. However, it is clear that the Coss Fund and budgeted allocation are under pressure to meet faculty need, making the additional funds for faculty development being sought in the Challenge of Excellence campaign all the more important.

### Sabbaticals

Since 1962-63, Wabash faculty have been eligible for a one-semester sabbatical at full-pay or a yearlong sabbatical at half-pay after six years of service and tenure. A tenured faculty member is eligible for an additional sabbatical leave every seventh year thereafter. Faculty are expected to use sabbatical leaves in a fashion that will enhance their contribution to the College when they return; most often, this manifests itself in time devoted to research and writing. Predictably, it is a well-used program with over 90% of eligible faculty participating in any given year, and the few who do not are usually delaying to accommodate departmental, College, or personal needs. Over the past six years, approximately 10 faculty per year have participated in the program with approximately half of those electing to take a full-year leave (51.5%). Faculty sometimes use research grant funds they have secured in order to support the second semester while from 2002 to 2009 a number of leave semesters were supported by the CILA grant. The sabbatical program provides evidence that Wabash offers important faculty development support while its utilization demonstrates that faculty are proactive in maintaining their individual scholarly growth.

In the spring 2007 Quality of Life survey (discussed in more detail in Criterion 5), the fourth highest priority for support identified by faculty was to increase sabbatical support to three-quarters salary for a full-year leave (this was prioritized after increased salary, increased flexibility in teaching load distribution, and reduced teaching load). The faculty engaged in discussion of this idea in 2007 and 2008 during strategic planning discussions, but with the financial challenges the College has faced since then, the idea has not been revisited. Similarly, the College does not have a formal pre-tenure sabbatical program, although a limited number of faculty were able to obtain some pre-tenure leave time through CILA grant-supported departmental and program reviews and development, and the College has supported unique faculty development opportunities for pre-tenure faculty when possible (addressed in Criterion 3B).

### McLain-McTurnan-Arnold Research Program

The most prestigious research award bestowed at the College is the [McLain-McTurnan-Arnold Research Scholar Award](#). This award provides a semester free of teaching and other College duties for the purpose of pursuing an original scholarly project. This is a competitive program open to tenured faculty who have not received the award in the prior ten years. The awardee is selected by a committee of three faculty members, one from each division. Salary and benefits are provided by the College during the period of study.

### Endowed Funds

Wabash is privileged to have several endowed funds which support faculty and student development. Many departments and divisions have access to these endowed funds to support faculty and, even more so, student research by funding student projects, recognizing student accomplishments, and supporting internships in academic departments. These funds are used for instrumentation, supplies, speakers, student stipends, student professional meeting attendance, travel, and other costs associated with conducting scholarly research. The amount available for



*Professor Ann Taylor holds the Haines Chair in Biochemistry.*

2012-13 is approximately \$400,000.

These funds are a significant strength of the College as they allow faculty to pursue ongoing research without the requirement of soliciting and maintaining outside funding. And for larger projects, the funds provide a means to gather the preliminary data required for successful grant applications. The concentration of these funds in more resource-intensive departments (especially the sciences and social sciences) is key to the maintenance of active research programs. However, endowed funds are not uniformly available to all such departments, most notably physics. The College should seek increased endowed funds support for comparatively under-resourced departments.

| <b>Endowed Funds that Support Faculty and Student Research and Teaching</b> | <b>Residence</b> |
|---|------------------|
| Anthony Barga Math Fund   | Mathematics      |
| Bill Linn Student Research in Chemistry                                     | Chemistry        |
| Calkins-Charles History Fund  | History          |
| Carscallen Biology Fund   | Biology          |
| Carscallen Mathematics Fund   | Mathematics      |
| Coons Public Service Internship Fund  | Division II      |
| Cummings Social Science Faculty Development Fund                            | Division III     |
| Daniel F. Evans Professorship   | Division III     |
| E.W. Olive Internship Fund  | Biology          |
| Ed McLean Law in the Liberal Arts Fund                                      | All-College      |
| Edward Krache Fund for History  | History          |
| Fox Economics Fund  | Economics        |
| Hadley Institute Fund   | History          |
| Haines Chemistry Fund   | Chemistry        |
| John Beeson Student Research in Chemistry                                   | Chemistry        |
| John H. Schroeder Interdisciplinary Chair in Economics                      | Economics        |
| Johnson Research Fund   | Biology          |
| Lloyd B. Howell Chemistry Fund  | Chemistry        |
| LaFollette Fund   | Division II      |
| Langstroth Fund   | Biology          |
| Parks Internship Fund   | Psychology       |
| Paul T. Mielke Fellowship Fund  | Mathematics      |
| Robert O. Petty Fund  | Biology          |
| Shearer Fellowship in Applied Economics                                     | Economics        |
| Special Chemistry Fund  | Chemistry        |
| Treves Research Fund  | Biology          |
| William and Wilma Haines Biochemistry Fund                                  | Biochemistry     |

#### External Funding

Wabash encourages individuals to seek outside resources to provide additional support for ongoing research and to supplement sabbatical funding. Faculty receive support from a diverse set of funding sources including private foundations, academic societies, and scholarship programs, as well as state and federally funded research programs (for examples see pp. 36-38 of the [Faculty Grants Manual](#)).

#### Online Resource

### Faculty Grants Manual

Faculty are encouraged to consult with the Grants Coordinator and other faculty who have had grant-writing success for assistance in grant preparation. The [five largest active grants](#) held by Wabash faculty total nearly \$1.1 million. These grants, awarded by the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, are held by faculty from four different departments: biology, chemistry, physics, and psychology.

#### Electronic Resource

### Wabash Recipients of GLCA New Directions Grants

One way Wabash encourages post-tenure faculty members to explore new avenues of scholarly activity and professional development is through Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) programs and workshops. The [GLCA New Directions Initiative](#), in particular, provides grant funds to enable faculty members to begin new scholarship projects and revitalize their research programs, either as individuals or in collaboration with others (either at Wabash or across GLCA schools). New Directions grants also enable faculty to explore alternative career tracks, such as administration or foundation work. In the first three years of the grant, Wabash faculty members have received 21 New Directions awards totaling more than \$120,000. While some of the teaching implications of these projects were addressed in Criterion 3B, a number of these projects also advance new faculty research, including a religion professor learning Arabic to undertake study of the Qur'an, a classics professor studying street life as part of a book project, a modern languages professor exploring environmental geology in Guatemala, and a mathematics and computer science professor using support to undertake research in the dynamics of infectious diseases through the interdisciplinary connections of mathematics, computation, and biology.

Another source of external support over the past decade has come from two major grants to the College by Lilly Endowment Inc. The first in 2000 funded the creation of the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts (CILA) and provided direct support for faculty research sabbaticals that advanced CILA's national research agenda. A 2005 renewal grant provided substantial resources to support Wabash-focused projects that have been identified throughout this *Self-Study Report*, including immersion travel, departmental program reviews, semester leaves to advance curricular development, faculty/student research, and discretionary funds that were applied to support a range of activities such as the First Year Experience Study Group, African American student retention inquiry, Teagle Scholar Assessment projects, Modern Language study partnership with DePauw University, Writing Across the College Assessment, and SOTL development. In excess of \$1 million has subvented a range of activities to strengthen Wabash faculty research and teaching. The College has greatly benefitted from these funds, especially during the post-2008 period. Anticipating the end of grant funds in 2014, it is expected that the Challenge of Excellence campaign will provide important levels of future faculty research and teaching support.

#### ***Staff and Administration***

Staff development is also supported by the College. Staff members have access to professional travel support and staff with associated faculty rank (including library staff and some coaches) are eligible for the Dean's Professional Travel Fund described above. Other biweekly and salaried staff attend training sessions and conferences as approved by their supervisors and fully funded by the College. They also may take continuing education courses, a portion of the cost of which the College reimburses. Many of these training sessions and conferences were addressed in Criterion 2.

The College is also open to more innovative ways to implement continued growth and development of staff. For example, with College encouragement a group of Wabash administrative assistants organized a meeting of GLCA administrative assistants at Wabash in October of 2011. Sessions featured both occupational and personal growth topics, including time management, budgeting, technology, and memory training. Staff members also engage in lifelong learning by fully participating in the campus community, including attending faculty and guest presentations,

participating in campus and community music and theater performances, attending job candidate presentations, and traveling with faculty and students on immersion course travel. In particular, staff have accompanied immersion course travel to [Kenya](#), [Alaska](#), [Italy](#), and Ecuador, among others, as well as major tours by the Glee Club and Business Leaders Program travel. These opportunities are not only enriching personally for staff, but they also communicate to students and faculty that all who live and work at the College share in the teaching and learning enterprise. Similarly, staff and their families have had the opportunity to participate in Know Indiana grant-supported activities. This four-year Lilly Endowment Inc. grant (2006-2010) supported a range of on-campus cultural events and travel to locations around Indiana that exposed the Wabash community to the artistic, aesthetic, recreational, and cultural riches of the state, including the Indiana Museum of Art, the Indiana dunes, Conner Prairie, and the Exotic Feline Rescue Center.

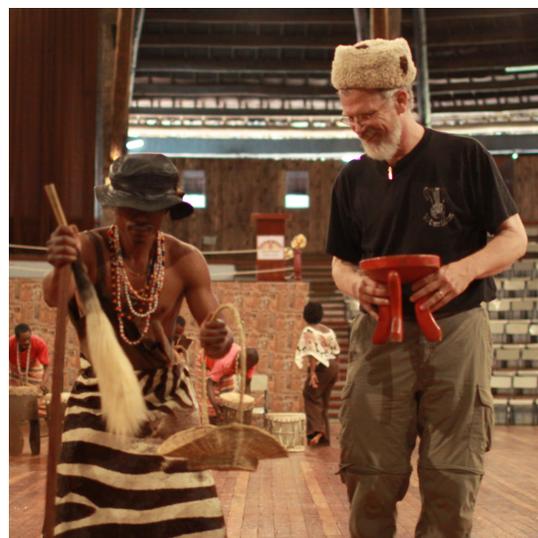
Like staff, senior administrators also attend professional development meetings and are engaged in professional peer networks (addressed in Criterion 2) and have, on occasion, been granted mini-sabbaticals, often over the summer months, to refresh and recharge their individual research programs. For example, in the summer of 2011 the Dean of the College pursued research at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. where he participated in a seminar, “Transforming Troubling Tellings: The History of the Deicide Charge and the Holocaust.” This provided an opportunity to continue a scholarship project on post-Holocaust interpretation of the Christian Bible.

Finally, lifelong learning is a feature of Board of Trustee life. Trustees actively participate in a broad range of teaching and learning activities including the annual Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship and Creative Work; Lilly Scholarship Weekend; Friday classes when on campus for trustee meetings; pre-matriculation Freshman Tutorial immersion experiences; academic year symposia; alumni summer [immersion study and travel](#); and occasionally as visiting classroom instructors. As was explained in Criterion 1, trustees also engage in learning through exposure to higher education-related materials prepared for Board meetings and in Deep Dive sessions at those meetings. Trustees, no less than faculty and staff, model the practice of lifelong commitment to liberal arts thinking and engagement.

### **Wabash faculty and students produce scholarship and create knowledge through basic and applied research**

Lifelong learning by faculty members both models such behavior to students and creates opportunities for students to adopt those values by participating in the process. Faculty scholarship is assessed not only in the tenure review process, but also in yearly salary evaluations. Faculty are expected to maintain active scholarly and creative lives and to disseminate this work through publications, presentations, and performances. The level of interest of the faculty in such work is demonstrated in the earlier discussion of professional travel funding utilized and external grant support received by the faculty. Scholarly production has increased significantly at Wabash over the past 30 years. This is a result of faculty turnover and heightened expectations for continued scholarly work that extends faculty beyond the Wabash campus into national and international professional circles, as well as increased ambitions for research and scholarly activity among younger faculty.

The faculty Table of Scholarly and Creative Work provides an indication of faculty scholarly



*Steve Charles of the Communications and Marketing Office traveled to Kenya with a class studying Christianity in Africa.*

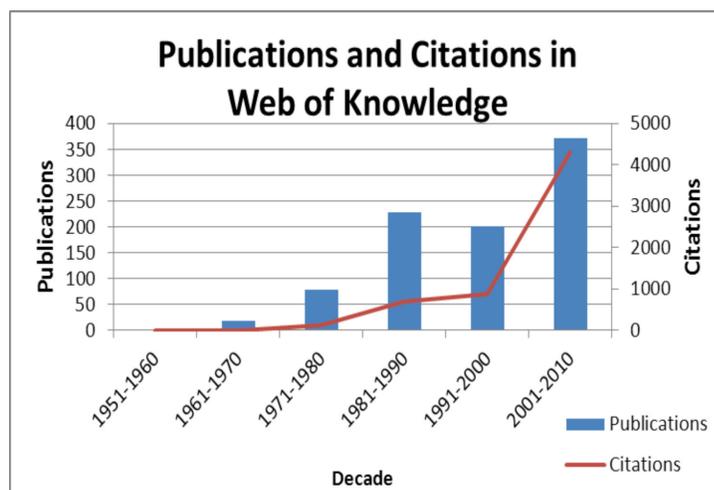
production and the range of methods used for disseminating that work. This data was derived from examining [curriculum vitae](#) submitted by 81 faculty members in spring 2012. For the purposes of cataloguing the work we limited examination to 2009, 2010, and 2011. The specific entries demonstrate that Wabash's faculty has made contributions ranging from scientific publications in top tier journals to curating national-level African art exhibits to books from academic presses. This demonstrates that the Wabash faculty is committed to their ongoing growth as teacher-scholars.

When considering the chart below, it is important to recognize that different disciplines value and emphasize different forms of creative work, therefore making any effort at categorization partial and subject to limitations.

**Table of Scholarly and Creative Work**

| Product                                   | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Artistic Exhibitions                      | 5    | 4    | 7    |
| Books Published                           | 5    | 5    | 3    |
| Book Chapters Published                   | 16   | 6    | 15   |
| Book Reviews Published                    | 16   | 15   | 20   |
| Conference Posters and Presentations      | 74   | 78   | 67   |
| Conference Proceedings Published          | 1    | 4    | 6    |
| Editorials Published                      | 2    | 1    | 10   |
| Encyclopedia Entries                      | 1    | 2    | 2    |
| Journal Articles Published                | 29   | 31   | 37   |
| Musical and Theatrical Performances       | 1    | 6    | 4    |
| Musical Compositions and Creative Writing | 13   | 3    | 8    |

One means, but certainly not the only way, to assess the impact of Wabash scholarly productivity is to consider both the number of publications by Wabash faculty over a longer period of time (by decade) and the number of citations they receive. While there are limitations to the data set and measure, one can see that the number of publications has increased significantly and that Wabash faculty have been increasingly heavily cited over the past decade, averaging more than 10 citations per publication (*Data from Web of Knowledge database*).



Another measure of scholarship impact is the engagement of Wabash students in the production of research, scholarship, and creative work. Students engage in research projects in collaboration with faculty members both during the academic year and in the summer. Twenty of 22 majors regularly conduct a senior seminar in which students produce a significant project that reflects professional work performed in the particular discipline. In history, for example, students construct a multi-part

project that culminates with a seminar paper in excess of 50 pages. In psychology, students undertake a literature review on a research topic of personal interest, which then develops into an independent empirical project that is completed over the course of the senior year including data collection and dissemination. In the spring semester each senior psychology major presents his research at a regional undergraduate psychology conference, shares his work through an on-campus poster presentation, and writes a final essay for his project advisor. Similarly, many upper level students undertake independent study projects with faculty members, with a number of these projects each year resulting in conference presentations and even publications. In 2011-12, for example, 78 different students enrolled in at least one independent study; these independent study projects were directed by 58 different faculty members, reflecting faculty commitment to teaching and student engagement.

Complementing these in-class efforts, Wabash students produce scholarship and create knowledge through out-of-class work and summer internships. Such projects are funded from multiple internal and external sources, including departmental endowed funds referenced in the previous sub-section; external grants to individual faculty members; grants to the College like those from Lilly Endowment Inc.; the [Dill Fund](#); and grants awarded by the Undergraduate Research Committee, which itself has been supported by the CILA grant and the Dean of the College's discretionary budget. During the summer of 2011, 35 students participated in on-campus academic internships, while 66 students held off-campus internships at universities, corporations, and institutions such as NSF-sponsored REU programs at institutions that included UC-Berkeley, University of Arkansas, and University of Illinois; Merrill Lynch; Embassy of Afghanistan; Bank of America; Planned Parenthood; the Indianapolis Museum of Art; and the Museum of American Finance. Taken together, more than 10 percent of continuing students had a summer internship in 2011. A [listing of internships](#) accrued over the past five years is available on the Schroeder Career Center website.

In addition to sponsoring the Celebration of Student Research, the Undergraduate Research Committee also provides competitive funding for student research and for travel to present research results (Guidelines and past awards are [available here](#)). The Committee views their work as developmental, and proposals often go through several rounds of improvement before being awarded. In 2011-12, the Undergraduate Research Committee [supported 14 students](#) presenting their work at regional or national meetings and eight students with funding needs for their research projects, totaling \$20,000. The range of projects were impressive, coming from students in areas including biochemistry, chemistry, English, mathematics, physics, psychology, and rhetoric.



*Theater major Jordan Plohr explains his research at the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work.*

In terms of sheer participation, the productivity of Wabash students in producing scholarship and knowledge through research is best demonstrated through the aforementioned Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work. Celebration projects are generally developed from students' classroom and internship work. Over the dozen years the Celebration has existed every department and program has been represented with [the total number of presentations, posters, performances, and exhibitions](#) exceeding 800.

| Year          | '01 | '02 | '03 | '04 | '05 | '06 | '07 | '08 | '09 | '10 | '11 | '12 | Totals |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Presentations | 26  | 34  | 42  | 27  | 34  | 41  | 49  | 58  | 48  | 40  | 50  | 50  | 499    |
| Posters       | 29  | 29  | 35  | 24  | 23  | 27  | 23  | 29  | 29  | 20  | 31  | 23  | 322    |
| Totals        | 55  | 63  | 77  | 51  | 57  | 68  | 72  | 87  | 77  | 61  | 81  | 73  | 821    |

*(Note: Presentations include musical and theatrical performances; Posters include artistic exhibitions.)*

It has been a wonderful program for Wabash and an important way to showcase the excellent work students are producing, to recognize them for that work, and to encourage students to excel by treating them like the colleagues they are capable of being. It is a concrete expression of the mission goal of fostering independent thinking and effective leadership as young scholars.

### **Wabash College publicly acknowledges the achievements of students and faculty in acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge**

The College also signals the importance of lifelong learning by acknowledging excellence of students and faculty in a number of ways. Students are recognized for their scholarly accomplishments through a range of awards, honor societies, and recognitions. Students who earn a 3.5 GPA are placed on the Dean's List, and the Communications and Marketing Office notifies hometown newspapers of these honors. Select students are inducted into [Phi Beta Kappa](#), the nation's oldest honorary society. The Wabash chapter, the 42nd in the nation, originated in 1898. Nineteen graduating seniors and two juniors were initiated into Phi Beta Kappa during the 2011 Commencement weekend while 23 seniors and two juniors were inducted in 2012. There are also disciplinary honor societies that recognize student excellence, including Alpha Psi Omega (theater), Delta Phi Alpha (German), Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha (speech and debate), Eta Sigma Phi (classics), Phi Lambda Upsilon (chemistry), Phi Sigma Iota (languages), and Psi Chi (psychology). Students who excel on comprehensive exams are recognized with "Distinction," which is necessary for a student to qualify for *summa cum laude* designation at graduation, where the range of honors offer yet another way of recognizing student achievement.



*Dean of Students Mike Raters presents Donovan Bisbee with an award at the 2012 Awards Chapel.*

On the Web

**2012  
Awards Chapel**

At the annual [Awards Chapel](#) (student honors chapel), the College honors the recipients of 70 student awards, prizes, and scholarships with one of these awards voted on by the entire faculty: the Salter Award (which recognizes the junior who best exemplifies scholarship, character, leadership, and service). The other major prize voted on by the entire faculty, the John Maurice Butler Prize (awarded to the senior with the best standing in scholarship and character), is awarded at the Deans' Breakfast the day before commencement. Other Awards Chapel recognitions honor College-wide accomplishments such as the naming of six Mackintosh Fellows, awards that exemplify how Wabash helps young men pursue a scholarly life and leadership, and recognition of College writing prizes.

And still others are given by departments or other units of the College to students who excelled in a department, organization, or contest. A [complete list of College prizes and awards](#), and brief descriptions of them, is published annually in the *Academic Bulletin*.

Scholarly accomplishments by faculty are also noted in a number of ways. In his bi-weekly reports to the faculty, the Dean of the College will acknowledge particularly noteworthy achievements such as the completion of a dissertation or the publication of a book. Departments often hold public receptions to recognize the [publication of books by faculty](#) and some [perform readings](#) from these works as part of the public celebration. As noted in Criterion 3B, the most prestigious faculty award, the McLain-McTurnan-Arnold Excellence in Teaching Award, is announced at the Awards Chapel in recognition of the College's outstanding teacher. At this same time public recognition is given to the year's McLain-McTurnan-Arnold Research Scholar recipient (although this prize is announced to the faculty earlier in the year). Finally, faculty — as well as student — achievement in scholarship are regularly highlighted on the Wabash website and a special "Faculty Notes" section of each *Wabash Magazine* recognizes faculty research accomplishments.

### **Wabash College contributes to a life of learning at other institutions through its Centers of Distinction**

Wabash's commitment to a life of learning is further demonstrated in the service it provides to the greater higher education community through the work of five Centers of Distinction. [The Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts](#), until 2014 supported by two generous grants from Lilly Endowment Inc., is a key national leader in the assessment of liberal arts education. CILA now performs much of its work in collaboration with the [Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium](#) (HEDS), which relocated to Wabash in 2011. Two more of these centers are the [Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion](#) and the [Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program](#), both of which are supported by external grants from Lilly Endowment Inc. The Wabash Center's primary mission is promoting excellence in higher education and professional development for faculty in religion at colleges, universities, seminaries, and divinity schools in North America. The Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program supports professional development of Indiana clergy through programs in community leadership. The fifth center of distinction is the [Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies](#) and is described in Criterion 3C. The College's Centers of Distinction encourage and promote lifelong learning not only at Wabash College, but at other institutions of higher learning and among many different regional, national, and international publics.

#### ***Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts and the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium***

The Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts (CILA) collaborates with colleges and universities from all over the country to gather and use evidence to strengthen liberal arts education. Founded in 2000 with the support of a \$21 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., the idea for CILA was embedded in the College's 2000-2005 Strategic Plan. CILA was originally envisioned as a catalyst that would convene liberal arts advocates, sponsor research on liberal arts practices, and create a national publicity campaign on the benefits of liberal arts education. In many ways the Center fulfilled this original intent but as it grappled with issues central to its mission — the view of the liberal arts outside of the academy, the lack of a unified vision among liberal arts colleges on the meaning of "liberal arts," and the findings of its early research — its work and mission evolved.

Over time, CILA has recalibrated its mission as being an institute that would (1) engage unflinchingly with liberal arts advocates and institutions about research findings, both positive and negative, and the actions those findings suggest, and (2) work directly with institutions to gather and use evidence to strengthen their impact on student learning. To that end, everything CILA does is directed at the

#### **On the Web**

**Center of Inquiry  
in the  
Liberal Arts  
at Wabash College**

**Wabash National  
Study (2006-09)**

**Wabash Study 2010**

**Teagle Assessment  
Scholars**

**Higher Education  
Data Sharing  
Consortium**

goal of helping institutions use data to make changes that improve student learning and increase the effectiveness of liberal arts education throughout the country. This work has been carried out primarily through three initiatives: the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS), the Wabash Study 2010, and the Teagle Assessment Scholar Program. (A more detailed explanation of the work of the Center and its history is [available here](#).)

The [WNS](#) was a large-scale, resource-intensive study that sought to help institutions gather high-quality data about their students' growth on a set of educational outcome measures, understand how students' experiences contribute to their growth and development during college, and to help enable institutions to make sense out of and use this data. Over the course of three cohorts, 49 institutions took part in the study with the first data gathered in 2006 and the close of data collection in spring 2012. In conjunction with gathering data, institutional site visits to schools in the study and multi-institution workshops have been key elements in the efforts to work with schools in analyzing the data. The study ultimately found four "high impact" practices that are central to student learning: Good Teaching and High-Quality Interactions with Faculty; Academic Challenge and High Expectations; Diversity Experiences; and Deep Learning. The study's findings have been used at institutions across the country to encourage these good practices and have been the subject of analysis at national conferences and research centers, including the annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. Accordingly, CILA has reported extensively on the [research findings](#) through presentations to higher education professionals and government policy makers from the AAC&U to the Department of Education. How the research findings have helped Wabash learn about its educational practices is in evidence across this *Self-Study Report* and, most particularly, in the Criterion 3 discussion of Wabash's WNS results and how those results have been used in various projects at the College.

In an effort to create a more cost-effective, less resource-intensive and sustainable method of achieving its goals, CILA created a new model of its study with the [Wabash Study 2010](#). This iteration of CILA's work shifted from focusing on new data collection to, instead, first focusing on helping institutions use data they already have. The point is that many institutions have considerable assessment data, but struggle with using it effectively to improve student learning. Consequently, through the creation of an Assessment Portfolio, Wabash Study 2010 aims to create a deliberative process for using evidence to improve student learning at 29 institutions.

#### On the Web

#### Recent Activities of the Teagle Assessment Scholars

Central to the effective operation of both the WNS and Wabash Study 2010 has been the Teagle Assessment Scholars Program. Established in partnership with the [Teagle Foundation](#) in 2006, this program identifies and equips leaders at institutions around the country to help both their home and other institutions use evidence to strengthen education. At present there are more than 75 Teagle Scholars from over 70 different institutions across the country. The Center of Inquiry hosts training for the Scholars, as well as organizing workshops and webinars for institutions and coordinating Teagle Assessment Scholar visits to campuses. In 2011, the Center of Inquiry coordinated 17 campus visits, three Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Workshops, and three workshops or webinars for institutions.

Although Lilly Endowment granted CILA an additional \$12.5 million in 2005 with a significant portion directed to Wabash curricular support (now extended through 2014), by 2010 the Center of Inquiry was facing a major transition in its work. Faced with dwindling grant funds and, consequently, staffing reductions, CILA has developed a business plan that will support its continuing work while seeking to maximize use of the endowment that had been established for future operations. It was decided that CILA would focus on the Teagle Scholars program and

assisting institutions through consultative assessment support. However, these plans were adjusted when in January 2011 the opportunity arose for Center Director Charles Blaich to also become the Director of the [Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium](#) (HEDS). The mission of HEDS, which has now been physically relocated to Wabash, is to “serve the needs of private higher education for institutional research, decision support, assessment, and the advancement of liberal learning.” This strategic junction of a data consortium with a service-providing center that encourages effective use of assessment data creates a synergy that will allow institutions to work more collaboratively on common institutional issues such as cost analyses, retention, and policy development. Thus, CILA will focus on developing Teagle Scholars and other consultative assessment services, and HEDS will continue to provide support for “planning, management, institutional research, decision support, policy analysis, educational evaluation, and assessment” but with an emphasis on multi-institutional collaborations that are aimed at improving student learning.

Thus, through the work of CILA, and now in its intimate collaboration with HEDS, Wabash serves as the home to a rich source of support to liberal arts colleges, indeed the entire higher education community. Just as CILA and HEDS are transitioning into a new relationship, so too is Wabash’s relationship to these entities. CILA and the grants that supported it will no longer be a funding source for significant Wabash activities, but it will continue to be a rich assessment resource providing knowledge of student learning practices, outcomes, and assessment to accomplish the College’s mission. To this end, the College will continue to utilize CILA, hopefully with even greater intentionality in the future, in its own strategic efforts to effectively use its existing assessment data.

### ***Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion and the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program***

While Wabash is not affiliated with any religious organization, it provides unique opportunities for lifelong learning by faculty, nationwide and here at Wabash, who teach theology or religion through the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, as well as to Indiana clergy through the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program. Both of these programs are funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. The Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion began in 1996; its work was extended through 2012 with an \$8 million grant from the Endowment and then extended again through 2015 with an additional grant of \$5 million. The Pastoral Leadership Program was founded in 2008 with a \$1.5 million grant, and in 2011 received a continuation grant totaling \$1.57 million.

The Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion supports teachers of religion and theology in higher education through [meetings and workshops](#), [grants](#), [consultation work](#), a journal, and other resources to make accessible the scholarship of teaching and learning. The goals for the Wabash Center include fostering pedagogical reflection by religion and theology faculty members, encouraging effective graduate school preparation for future faculty members, creating supportive environments for good teaching and learning in home institutions, and developing effective use of digital and internet media in theological teaching and learning. To further these goals, the Wabash Center publishes [Teaching Theology and Religion](#) and offers colloquies on “Writing the Scholarship of Teaching.” It also provides funding for individual and institutional projects through a re-granting program. Since its founding, more than 900 faculty members have participated in workshops and colloquies on the Wabash campus, and the Wabash Center has awarded over 1,000 grants to more than 275 institutions and 500 individuals totaling nearly \$12 million. It has held more than 90 conferences on issues of teaching and learning and conducted 135 pedagogical consultations on higher education campuses across the United States and Canada. The Wabash Center’s peer-reviewed journal, *Teaching Theology and Religion*, has published 374 articles from 479 authors. Another measure of its impact is that 75% of the faculty in mainline North American Protestant and Catholic

On the Web

**Wabash Center  
for Teaching  
and Learning in  
Theology and  
Religion**

seminaries and schools of religion have either participated in a workshop or colloquy or belong to a grant-receiving institution supported by the Wabash Center. Finally, the Wabash Center's extensive library serves as a rich resource for reflection on pedagogy for faculty and staff across the College.

On the Web

**Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program**

Every two years, the [Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program](#) selects 18 Indiana pastors who in their first five-to-10 years of pastoral work have demonstrated high potential for significant leadership. Those selected for the program reflect a broad spectrum of Indiana clergy, including regional, denominational, theological, racial, ethnic, and gender differences. The Wabash Pastoral Leaders participate in a series of meetings; conversations with outstanding civic, business, philanthropic, and religious leaders; and two study tours over a two-year period. The program provides occasions for the pastors to reflect and discuss how they serve their religious vocation effectively in contemporary culture and in their local contexts; engage Indiana



*Participants in the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program listen to a talk by alumnus Scott Himsel in spring 2012.*

civic leaders about the challenges and opportunities in the state, exploring with them resources in Christian thought and practice for ethical analysis and effective response to such challenges and opportunities; and receive honor for their calling and potential through reflection, renewal, stimulation, and leadership development as they build friendships and relationships across the state. Wabash Pastoral Leaders meet 12 times over two years, with each session providing opportunities for renewal, worship, and discussion about a selected topic that is relevant to pastoral leadership. In the second year, the pastors develop and implement a leadership project in their local communities. Both years of the program include an immersion learning experience, with study tours in North America during the first year and an international study tour in the second year.

While very different in their foci, these centers illustrate and advance Wabash's commitment to a life of learning not just by our internal constituencies, but also for the broader higher education community. They are 21st century manifestations of the College's founding commitment to strengthen teachers and preachers.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Evidence that Wabash actively encourages lifelong learning is seen in its many enriching campus activities, professional development resources, student and faculty research, and Centers of Distinction. The campus has a vibrant community of learners supported by in-class and out-of-class events. The impact of these events might be enhanced further by improved events coordination. Support for research, scholarship, and creative work is impressive, particularly in the support offered by the Dean's Professional Travel Fund, while there are select opportunities for support enhancement. There is merit to reviewing BKT support to ascertain if it continues to meet its goals given that the funding has remained constant for a considerable period of time. The additional support for scholarly activity provided by the Faculty Development Fund needs attention as the endowment for that fund and its operating support have been reduced. Importantly, however, the Challenge of Excellence campaign is poised to offer that support. While some professional development support exists also for staff and administration, the College intends to undertake a review of those resources to assess their adequacy. Faculty at Wabash are privileged to have regular sabbatical opportunities.

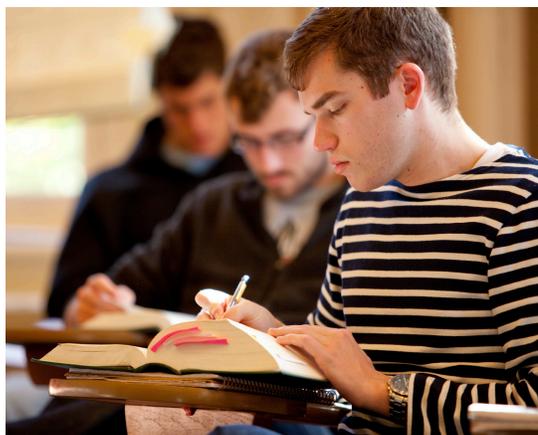
At a future point the College might elect to revisit adjustments to the level of support funding and possible pre-tenure leaves. At root these are challenges of funding and priorities. All of these resources stand to further support and encourage the growing scholarship in the service of liberal arts teaching and learning that is produced by Wabash faculty — and also by Wabash students. In terms of student scholarship, Wabash is fortunate to have a number of endowed funds that support academic internships, and also a faculty that works intimately and effectively with students in these capacities as well as through independent study projects. However, the College will need to address the permanent funding of undergraduate research as the important support provided by the Undergraduate Research Committee, and the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative work itself, has been provided by CILA grant funding. Finally, CILA will command further support from the College's operating budget on an as needed basis and from external agencies as it builds on the success of the last decade. Through CILA and the other Centers of Distinction, Wabash provides unique and significant contributions to the national higher education and Indiana religious communities.

#### **4B. WABASH COLLEGE DEMONSTRATES THAT ACQUISITION OF A BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND THE EXERCISE OF INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY ARE INTEGRAL TO ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.**

As a liberal arts college, breadth of knowledge is a core element in the Wabash curriculum. The commitment to breadth is central in both the Mission Statement and the Preamble to the Curriculum. At the same time, the exercise of intellectual inquiry, in the form of depth of study in one or more disciplines, is integral to the Wabash College experience. Here we demonstrate that Wabash College curricular requirements provide breadth and depth of student learning in a rigorous liberal arts environment.

##### **Wabash's general education program provides breadth of knowledge, skills, and modes of intellectual inquiry**

Developing breadth and proficiency in core liberal arts competencies is central to Wabash's general education curriculum. To graduate, students must complete requirements for their major (seven to nine courses), a minor or area of concentration (typically five courses), and distribution requirements. Thirteen of the 34 courses a student needs to graduate are devoted to acquiring breadth of knowledge, including one course in language studies, three courses in literature and fine arts, three courses in behavioral science, three courses in natural science and mathematics, one course in quantitative skills, and two courses in history, philosophy, or religion. Students must also demonstrate proficiency in writing and a foreign language, either through placement or course completion, and complete two all-college courses during their freshman year.



*Developing breadth and proficiency in core liberal arts competencies is central to Wabash's general education curriculum.*

To introduce students to the power and lifelong relevance of learning in the liberal arts, every student completes a Freshman Tutorial and a freshman colloquium, Enduring Questions. As addressed previously, the fall semester tutorial is a discussion-based course that focuses on fundamental skills

of the liberal arts, primarily writing but also critical reading and oral expression, and assists with the transition to college. These classes are limited to approximately 15 students and taught by faculty from across the college. Tutorial topics are selected by instructors and address an array of subjects ranging from traditional academic fare to facets of popular culture. Enduring Questions has a common core syllabus, and examines fundamental questions of humanity and individual and communal identity through classic and contemporary works drawn from a variety of disciplines. In the course students confront the central questions about what it means to be human and how we understand ourselves, our relationships, and our world. Both courses serve as an introduction to the liberal arts.

Proficiency in English is required for all students. Proficiency is determined on the basis of incoming writing data. Approximately half of the incoming class is assigned to a full-semester course in composition (120 students). Until 2009-10 more total students (135) were assigned to composition, but 90 of these students were assigned to half-semester courses. However, the English department's last departmental review concluded that the half-semester courses were not effective enough. Consequently, these courses were eliminated so that students with the greatest need would receive a full credit course in composition and thus have the most sustained writing instruction possible during the first semester. Freshman Composition is not designed to “finish” or “fix” a student as a writer, but, instead, to help the student begin the process of life-long writing improvement, which is a common faculty goal and responsibility shared across the College. To that end, Freshman Composition — and the change in its offering — corresponded with three other significant changes in the approach to writing at the College, each of which was discussed in some detail in Criterion 3. First, as noted, Freshman Tutorial was revised and positioned exclusively in the fall semester to place more emphasis on writing skills, meaning that all incoming students receive additional writing instruction. Second, the College named a Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator to work with faculty on the teaching of writing. Third, and relatedly, in the “Year of Writing,” each department developed a writing statement that reflected on the teaching of writing in their discipline, and the College adopted a statement on writing that is placed in the front matter of the *Academic Bulletin*.

Proficiency in foreign language is required of all students who are native English speakers. A student meets this requirement either by passing an elementary sequence in a foreign language (101 and 102) or passing any single course above the 102 level. A change in the student placement process since the last self-study is that any student who wishes to continue a foreign language that they studied for two or more years in high school is expected to begin their course work at least at the 201 level. A single-semester option — Spanish 103 — also has been added for students who have two years of high school language instruction but are not yet prepared for the 201 course. These changes allow for more accurate placement of students according to developmental need, which benefits those students as well as other students enrolled in these courses.

The remainder of the general education system is the required distribution courses, divided by academic area or topic of study. These requirements are largely unchanged since the last self-study, and include:

**One course in Language Studies.** The language studies requirement ensures that all students gain experience in the explicit study of communication and language through direct and sustained instruction in the formal conventions of language use, writing, and speaking. In this requirement all students take one course credit drawn from a set of courses offered in rhetoric, English, or linguistics in a foreign language. The addition of foreign language linguistics courses, approved by the faculty in 2007, reflects a decision by the faculty to recognize the parallel nature of English language linguistics (which has always been part of the Language Studies requirement)

and foreign language linguistics and is based on the recognition that foreign language study enhances the student's knowledge of his native language;

**Three courses in Literature and Fine Arts, from at least two departments.** Courses in literature and fine arts focus on the study and creation of a variety of forms of expression — literature, visual arts, music, theater, speech — as means of achieving personal and cultural understanding. Included courses are drawn from art, music, theater, classical languages and civilizations, modern languages and literatures, English, and rhetoric;

**Three courses in Behavioral Science, from at least two departments.** Courses in behavioral science endeavor to provide students with a better understanding of human thought and action through systematic analysis, empirical scrutiny, and reasoned interpretation. Included courses are drawn from economics, political science, and psychology;

**Three courses in Natural Science and Mathematics, from at least two departments and including at least two laboratory science courses.** In courses in natural science students explore the structure and behavior of the natural world using the investigative methods of the scientific disciplines. In courses in mathematics and computer science students gain exposure to a variety of experiences, ranging from the examination of logical foundations to the study of meaningful applications. Included courses are drawn from biology, biochemistry, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, physics, and psychology (PSY 104 Introduction to Neuroscience). A biochemistry major was adopted in 2011. The faculty's spring 2011 decision to include Introduction to Neuroscience as a non-laboratory course in the area reflects that the content of the course is aligned with studies of biology;

**One course in Quantitative Skills.** The quantitative skills distribution requirement ensures participation in courses that help establish a broad exposure to problem solving through the application of mathematical models, the development of basic quantitative intuition, and the ability to represent and interpret quantitative information. Courses in the category come primarily from mathematics and computer science, but also include one course each from economics, political science, philosophy, and psychology;

**Two course credits in history, philosophy, or religion.** Courses in this area engage narratives and fundamental questions about human experience and beliefs.

Beyond the minor alterations to Language Studies (the addition of foreign language linguistics as an option) and Natural Science and Mathematics (the addition of Introduction to Neuroscience as an option), the substantive curricular change impacting the fulfillment of distribution requirements involves an alteration to the transfer credit policy adopted in 2005. After extensive discussions, occurring intermittently across several years, the faculty voted to limit students to only one transfer credit per distribution area (the limitation does not apply to study abroad). The change, which also increased from 17 to 24 the number of credits a student must complete at Wabash in order to graduate with a Wabash degree, was intended to underscore the value of the residential liberal arts experience and the distinctive character of a Wabash education.

The Wabash distribution system and requirements provide students with a broad, traditional perspective on the liberal arts. The systematic review of this system over the past decade is addressed in Criterion 4C.

## **Majors, minors, and areas of concentration provide breadth within one or more fields and in-depth intellectual inquiry**

In addition to distribution courses, students must complete a major and a minor or an area of concentration (AOC). Wabash offers [22 majors and minors](#) as well as a minor in computer science and four active AOCs (teacher education, gender studies, multicultural American studies, and international studies). Most majors require the completion of nine courses, while minors require five courses and AOCs range from five to eight courses. Majors provide the opportunity for students to study a subject in depth and to acquire the skills required for further pursuit of that area of study.

As discussed in Criterion 3, the most commonly identified goals for majors include “acquiring disciplinary knowledge” and “analytical thinking in the form of analysis and/or interpretation.” The depth of this learning is assessed both through evaluations in individual courses as well as in written and oral comprehensive exams. The shape of individual majors varies by discipline and department composition. Accordingly, majors have varying requirements and elective components while some majors have tracks for particular emphasis. Department learning goals and assessment practices were addressed previously in Criterion 3A.

Wabash has had periodic discussions about the shape of the major including the number of courses that are required and the possibility of “super-majors,” but the College has not pursued any specific proposals in the area, electing instead to complete discussion of distribution requirements. Presently a department may not require more than nine courses for a major, but collateral requirements from other departments are permissible. A student may not count more than 11 courses from a particular department toward his 34 courses required for graduation. Some faculty have expressed a wish to allow for larger majors to assist students with graduate school preparation and for new interdisciplinary majors in reflecting other curricular developments.

As was discussed in Criterion 2B, the commitment to depth and breadth in a major has presented an opportunity for interesting collaborations in light of recent faculty reductions. Every major has reassessed its program goals and expected outcomes as well as engaged in program planning. Departments remain committed to a high-quality experience in courses for the major, but also must offer courses for distribution and all-college courses. Increased departmental cross-listing has served to strengthen majors by illustrating links between and among fields and by giving students more options for completing the major. It also has strengthened affiliated programs by making more efficient and creative use of faculty resources. For example, key replacement hires in chemistry, history, and mathematics have led to a new biochemistry major, a program in Chinese language as part of an Asian Studies Program, and first-time offering of a course in Greek mathematics in support of classics. Guiding overall curricular and departmental planning are the strategic plan goals of increased interdisciplinary and global inflection in courses across the curriculum. Budget necessities and strategic curricular planning have come together in mutual support of College goals in ways that reinforce liberal learning.



*Majors provide the opportunity for students to study a subject in depth and to acquire the skills required for further pursuit of that area of study.*

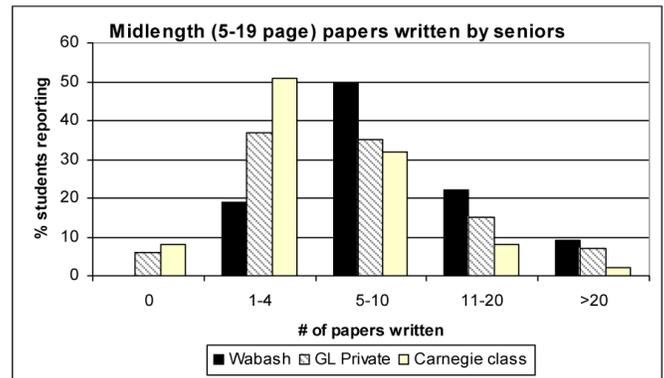
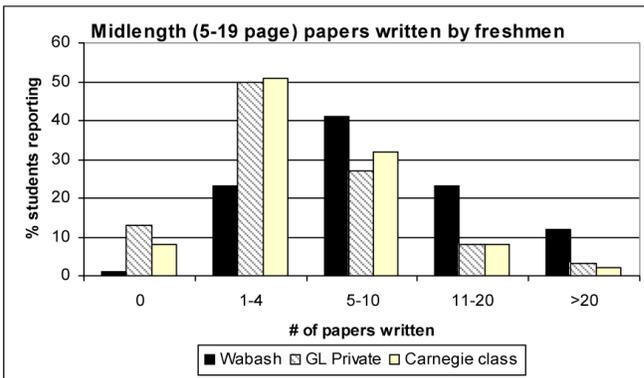
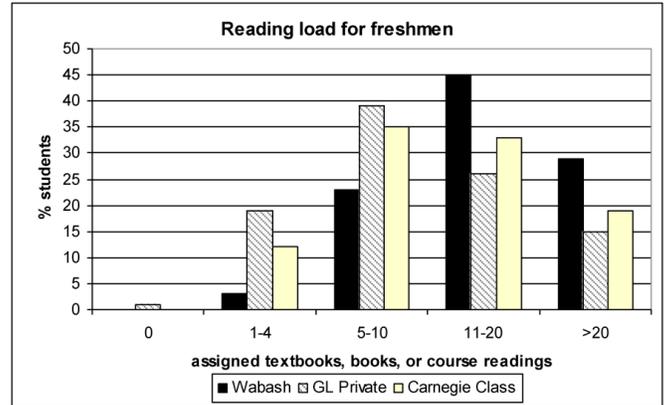
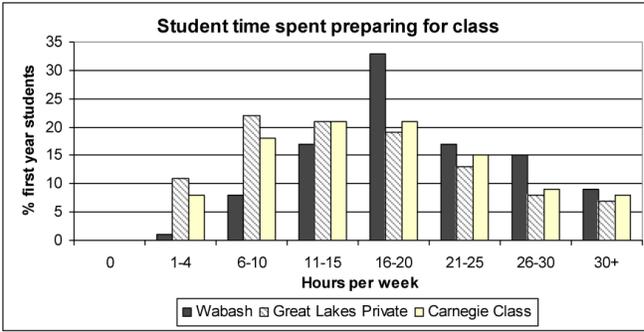
As stated above, the minor consists of five courses. As with the major, its requirements vary by department although it is usually prescribed in some fashion according to specific courses required and/or level of courses that must be taken. Additional assessment of the minor occurs during the all-college oral exam as part of senior comprehensive exams. An AOC operates similarly except that its courses generally come from multiple departments that teach in ways that overlap the area of study. AOCs may be as large as eight courses and frequently contain some sort of capstone experience for the student. The faculty has periodically discussed elements of both the minor and AOCs, including the possibility that minors be made optional, the requirement that AOC courses cannot be drawn from a student's major department, and the desire to develop additional AOCs (e.g., Asian Studies and Black Studies, as addressed in Criterion 3C). These topics remain under consideration although the faculty is not actively deliberating any specific proposals in the area.

### **Wabash College's course credit system provides an intellectually rigorous experience for students**

Since the fall of 1973, Wabash has operated on a course credit system. Each course credit is treated as equivalent to four semester hours; half-semester courses are equivalent to two semester hours. Courses meet for 14 weeks, either three times a week for 50 minutes or twice a week for 75 minutes, for a total time in class of 35 hours. Laboratory science, studio art, and foreign language courses all include additional course time for laboratory, studio, and tutorial activities but are also only one course credit. In order to meet Wabash's requirement of 34 course credits for graduation, students are expected to take at least four course credits per semester, with some semesters of 4.5 to 5 course credits to reach the required number of courses.

Some students, particularly double-majors and double-minors, elect to exceed this minimum requirement. For instance, in spring 2012, 31% of all students registered for more than four courses. In addition, each student must also pass a comprehensive examination over his major subject and an oral examination, which covers his major, minor, and overall liberal arts experience (discussed more in Criterion 3A). No credit is given for the comprehensive exam, although the outcome factors into graduation honors. While credit hours are a more common way to determine graduation requirements, a number of liberal arts schools use a course credit system similar to the one used at Wabash. Moreover, Wabash, with its requirement of 34 credits, equals or exceeds the number typically used by similar schools (e.g., Ohio Wesleyan University 34 credits; Coe College 32 credits; Colorado College 32 credits; Davidson College 32 credits; DePauw University 31 credits; and College of Wooster 32 credits).

The Wabash requirements also meet or exceed the standards at other institutions in our Carnegie class as judged by work required. According to 2011 NSSE results, Wabash students report spending more time preparing for class than students at other Great Lakes Private Colleges or at other Carnegie Class Baccalaureate II institutions, with the median first-year student reporting spending 16-20 hours studying at Wabash (compared to 11-15 hours at other schools). Similar trends are observed with data from seniors (with the median time spent preparing for class being 11-15 hours, while for Great Lakes Private Colleges or at other Carnegie Class Baccalaureate II institutions, it is 6-10 hours). Students also report reading more books than at other institutions (11-20 vs. 5-10) and producing more mid-length (5-19 page) and long (20+ page) papers. Collectively such information points to the rigor of Wabash College requirements and attests that Wabash meets the expectations set out by the Department of Education in federal formulas for credit hour and graduation requirements.



**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** While other models for distribution requirements have been discussed (this will be further explained in the next section), Wabash’s current approach exposes students to the breadth of topics represented in Wabash’s Mission Statement and is fitting for a liberal arts education. The requirements for a major and a minor or area of concentration provide for in-depth intellectual inquiry. Finally, Wabash provides an intellectually rigorous experience for students as demonstrated by its 34 course credit requirement and student reports on academic expectations.

#### 4C. WABASH COLLEGE ASSESSES THE USEFULNESS OF ITS CURRICULA TO STUDENTS WHO WILL LIVE AND WORK IN A GLOBAL, DIVERSE, AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Wabash has made many efforts to ensure its curriculum prepares students to live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society. Accordingly, in other sections of this *Self-Study Report* we have addressed the College’s assessment efforts (Criterion 3A in particular) and its planning and assessment pertaining to issues of globalization, diversity, and technology (Criterion 2A, 2D, and 3C). In this process, the College and its individual departments have adjusted the curriculum and offerings to meet the demands of the world, or in the 19th century language of the College’s founders to respond to “the wants of the country.” That, too, is the goal of the College’s strategic plan and its design to enhance the College’s ability to provide an education that allows students to thrive “in a constantly changing global society.” As a result, the College has adopted the new EQ course and has built a robust system of assessment for that course; immersion learning courses have been developed and are being expanded; and the College is pursuing diverse learning opportunities in the form of Asian Studies and Black Studies. To assist with such efforts, departments also consider the usefulness of their curricula. Such reflection is often embedded in departmental goals. For example, a stated goal of the

economics department is “to apply economic theory in a variety of real world situations;” the biology department seeks to “prepare majors for careers in science, particularly those demanding advanced training;” the department of modern languages and literatures “prepares students for citizenship in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual global community;” and the chemistry department has as a goal that “majors will find their Wabash chemistry training to be of lasting personal and professional value.”

Departments also have responded to the needs of students and future graduates by altering the content of existing courses, proposing new courses, and proposing new majors and major tracks. Such changes include the establishment of a biochemistry major, a creative writing track in English, Chinese language instruction, Asian Studies course content across several departments and all divisions, and math courses for students pursuing actuarial certification. A [dual degree program in engineering](#) was established with Purdue University, the first with an Indiana



*Courses in Chinese language and history are important additions to the Wabash curriculum.*

liberal arts college, and Wabash has partnered with the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University on a [“pipeline program”](#) agreement that will guide Wabash students through prerequisites for admission to the master of science in accounting program so that they may enroll immediately upon graduation from Wabash and sit for the CPA exam the following summer. Departments also have strengthened student research competency (psychology); increased cultural studies exposure and interdisciplinary coursework (modern languages); enhanced civic awareness and civic engagement (rhetoric); and strengthened licensure proficiency (teacher education and mathematics).

Further, the curriculum is animated by faculty efforts to improve teaching and learning that strengthens encounter with global society, diversity, and technology. For example, faculty from the political science, philosophy, and theater departments have taught summer courses in Chinese universities and have learned first-hand much about cross-cultural teaching and learning. As explained in Criterion 3C, through Mellon grant support of the development of Asian Studies as many as 16 Wabash faculty (approximately 20% of continuing faculty) will study in China, Japan or Korea over the next four years and will infuse their courses with Asian content; two dozen faculty and staff lead immersion study courses at home or abroad each year; many faculty gathered in workshop this spring and over the summer to explore diverse teaching and learning pedagogies in order to improve the frequency with which Wabash students encounter diverse pedagogies; and in fall 2012 faculty in three departments will experiment in a [pilot program with tablet-use pedagogies](#). These examples illustrate the effort to strengthen the curriculum and student learning through concerted pedagogical development responsive to the 21st century world.

These examples show the regular monitoring and assessment of the curriculum to assure its usefulness and demonstrate some of the ways Wabash offerings have changed as a result. They also show faculty-initiated initiatives to enhance teaching and learning responsive to 21st century needs. Here we consider the usefulness of the curriculum through efforts to review the College’s general education requirements, the experiences, successes, and perceptions of Wabash students and graduates, and how Wabash’s curriculum and co-curricular opportunities promote social responsibility or, in the language of the Mission Statement, “educate students to live humanely.”

## **Curricular evaluation involves multiple constituencies who understand the relationship among the courses of study, the curriculum, and utility of the knowledge and skills gained**

Considerable institutional energy has been invested in reviewing the curriculum since the last self-study. These efforts have centered on two specific studies of the distribution system. As is common in curricular discussions, the effort has not been without its difficulties, but the institution has labored thoughtfully to consider the character of the education it wants to offer Wabash students in light of its Mission and Core Values. In so doing the faculty has considered student learning, goals for the Wabash College educational program, and its usefulness to students.

### ***Academic Program Review***

Between 2004 and 2007, an ad hoc committee, the Academic Program Review (APR), led a variety of activities to prompt discussion about the curriculum, beginning with a [faculty workshop](#) devoted to generating a variety of broad themes and principles for the ideal Wabash Academic Program. Subsequently, the ad hoc committee invited faculty to participate in discussions about the history of the Wabash curriculum, solicited curricular ideas, and conducted discussions on the Academic Program, including inviting a series of speakers to campus in 2005. Also in 2005, six working groups were formed: Intellectual Curiosity, Structural Investigation, Distribution Requirements, Course Sequencing, Citizenship, and Interdisciplinarity. In 2005-06, the ad hoc committee continued its work by surveying faculty, including interviews with every individual faculty member during spring 2006. In May 2006 the committee distributed [an interim report](#) and issued [a call for a revised set of working groups](#) that would focus on particular areas of the curriculum, including all-college academic programs (freshman year, Cultures & Traditions, senior year, and comprehensive exams), Interdisciplinary Curriculum and Teaching Opportunities (e.g., models for multidisciplinary work, team teaching, and flex scheduling), the Major and the Minor (parameters of the major and the role and nature of the minor), and Campus Climate and its Impact on the Academic Program (e.g., the relationship of athletics and academics, the impact of living units on academic work, advising concerns, and minority student satisfaction).

In October 2006, the Academic Policy Committee (APC) asked the Dean of the College to invite a group of faculty to reflect on the structure of the curriculum as a whole. It was an effort at a more holistic reflection that would complement and extend the work of the APR. This “architecture group” examined the curricular structure and in January 2007 brought forward [a proposal for an alternative model](#). Faculty wide discussions of the model occurred throughout spring 2007 with the faculty divided on the proposal. Ultimately the faculty did not move forward on the proposal and the investigation of curricular change subsided. However, these discussions had important impact. For one, the APR launched the first extended reflection on the curriculum in almost three decades, meaning many faculty had not previously taken part in such a conversation. The discussions also raised the idea of curricular change, an idea that can take multiple, significant efforts to accomplish. And some of the ideas advanced in the Architecture Proposal were later adopted in different forms. For instance, all Freshman Tutorials were moved to the fall semester, an all-college course was moved from the sophomore year to the second semester of the freshman year, the placement of senior comprehensive exams was later altered, and half-credit courses in composition were eliminated.

### ***Distribution Committee***

A second, more formalized, review of general education began in spring 2010, immediately following the all-college course review that led to the adoption of EQ. For this review a committee of seven faculty was elected or appointed and two student members were also appointed. The committee’s charge was to examine the configuration of distribution requirements, their fit with the goals of the curriculum as stated in the Preamble to the Curriculum and College Mission Statement, the potential

desirability of reducing the number of requirements so as to increase student choice, and the prospect of increasing the coherence of the requirements.

To meet its charge, the Committee began its work in June 2010 and met nearly weekly through March 2011. The work provided a comprehensive review of the curriculum's approach to student learning and afforded the opportunity to reflect on the goals of distribution requirements, how well the present requirements meet those goals, and the perceptions of distribution held by faculty and students. In the course of the work, the committee undertook several efforts to assess the distribution system. These efforts included:

- Assessing the relationship of the present distribution requirements to the College's Mission Statement and the Preamble to the Curriculum. In so doing the committee found [a strong, consistent relationship](#) between the guiding documents and the curriculum, providing a positive assessment of the curricular requirements of the College;
- Examining elements of the [recent history of the Wabash curriculum](#) in order to understand its evolution and the rationale for present requirements. The committee observed [curricular change](#) and faculty discussion of those changes, but found little in the way of stated goals or outcomes for requirements;
- Reviewing the [general education structures](#) at more than 20 other schools to gain insight into how others address the distribution question and provide perspective on Wabash requirements. The committee found the Wabash system to be generally similar to these schools, more restrictive and cumbersome than some and less so in comparison to others;
- Constructing and administering a [faculty survey regarding the goals of distribution](#), its value, and a range of possible changes. The results revealed mixed faculty opinion on the curriculum. While the results might be reasonably interpreted as demonstrating a "rough consensus" that the present curriculum was adequate, there was also a desire expressed by a number of faculty for at least modest change. The difficulty faced by the committee and the faculty as a whole was that there was no discernible consensus on the nature or content of that curricular change;
- Constructing and administering [a student survey](#) to assess student understanding of the purposes or goals of distribution requirements. Student survey data revealed that students were largely supportive of the curricular requirements and expressed understanding of the goals of the distribution system;
- Engaging in broad ranging discussions on the goals of the present system, its strengths and weaknesses, and ideas for possible revision. These intensive discussions occurred among the committee, in a special meeting of faculty, and in division meetings;
- Examining department course offerings and student course-taking patterns to verify the feasibility of the curriculum going forward and to evaluate the potential impact of prospective changes. The committee found the present system sustainable even with anticipated changes to the faculty.

Beyond efforts to assess the present system, the committee undertook a series of actions to consider ways to strengthen the requirements. This included facilitating a process to develop draft rationales for the present distribution requirements so that their goals would be more explicit to students,

Electronic Resource

Distribution  
Committee  
Final Report

advisors, faculty, and parents; developing background materials on “cultural diversity” requirements and discussing how such a requirement might work at Wabash; soliciting suggestions for distribution models and course or area requirements as part of a revised curriculum; and issuing [a final report](#) with a recommended model for distribution requirements, [illustrative requirement rationales](#), and suggestions for future discussions related to the curriculum.

The committee was particularly moved by the importance of more clearly articulating the goals of the distribution system. As noted previously, among the present requirements, the *Academic Bulletin* provides only Freshman Tutorial and Enduring Questions with an explanation of purpose; the remaining requirements are simply listed. The committee found its work complicated by the lack of explicitly stated goals for requirements and the absence of a set of principles that bridge the Mission Statement and Preamble to the curriculum itself. Conversations with the faculty on these matters were often difficult with faculty sometimes divided on goals, sometimes objecting to the language of and need for goals, and sometimes contending that the content of the requirements needed to be decided before goals could be articulated. While found by the faculty to be only partially satisfactory, the development of [draft rationales for the present requirements](#) allowed for a better starting point for assessing what the system does and, in turn, consideration of whether or not it meets the faculty’s aspirations for a Wabash education. As noted in Criterion 3A, the process of completing requirement rationales has been moved to the APC, which anticipates advancing those discussions in the upcoming academic year.

The faculty’s mixed reception to the draft requirement rationales offered for the present curriculum also prompted the Distribution Committee to proceed with recommending a modestly revised distribution model along with its final report. The model was arrived at through consideration of the charge presented to the committee. The model largely retained the breadth of current requirements while recommending some restructuring to improve coherence and clarity. Additionally, the committee suggested adding a new Global and Cultural Studies requirement and offered a set of illustrative goals and rationales as a means of spurring further discussion.

Initial faculty reaction to the recommendation was mixed and the Distribution Committee [moved that the recommended model and final report](#) be referred to the APC for the purpose of organizing a series of faculty-wide discussions on the curriculum. This motion was adopted by the faculty and the APC oversaw continued discussion of the Distribution Committee’s recommended model in fall 2011. The [APC plan](#) facilitated extended faculty discussions over the fall semester. The conversations proved thorny at times but also generally productive as the faculty thought about what sort of curriculum it wants for Wabash students and what Wabash students need as 21st century liberally educated men. As was evidenced in the earlier work of the Distribution Committee, divisions were present in the faculty over what requirements should look like and the purpose of requirements. However, particular energy was expressed over a variation of the Global and Cultural Diversity requirement and a group of faculty began discussions of the concept. Similarly, multiple models emerged for how quantitative skills might be addressed (meeting notes and ideas generated from the faculty discussions [are available here](#)). At the conclusion of the discussions the APC administered a



*Art Professor Doug Calisch works with a student in a ceramics course.*

short faculty survey to assess the fall conversations and to determine next steps. The APC concluded that the results of the survey largely confirmed the earlier findings of the Distribution Committee in regards to the desire to limit change to the curriculum and, also, the lack of clear consensus on what changes might be most desirable. As a result, the APC offered [three recommendations](#):

- That faculty wide discussions of curricular change go on hiatus;
- That small groups of faculty be encouraged to pursue potential revision in areas where interest and energy were expressed, for instance in addressing quantitative proficiency and a possible global and cultural studies requirement;
- That the APC complete the process of developing rationales for the present curriculum as a means to clarify the purposes of distribution requirements.

In sum, over the past eight years the Wabash faculty has invested considerable energy reflecting on the curriculum. These conversations, while not easy, have proven valuable given the distance from the last significant curriculum review and the turnover in the faculty over the last decade. The conversations provided an opportunity for reflection and a chance to endorse the type of curriculum Wabash wants to offer its students. Moreover, regardless of the ultimate shape of the general education requirements, the decision to first develop requirement rationales will provide new, visible clarity to curricular requirements in the future and allow for more assessment of course offerings and requirement areas. The discussions were also valuable in suggesting broad agreement across the faculty in answer to the question: “What do you understand to be the fundamental purpose(s) of a liberal arts distribution system?” Most affirmed the importance of a broad exposure to areas of knowledge, methods of inquiry, a variety of disciplines and fields of study, and approaches to problem solving. This suggests fertile common ground among faculty in viewing the distribution system as a means of offering “myriad intellectual experiences” that will cultivate curiosity, create openness for continued learning, and foster wider understanding. Although a consensus exists on the general suitability and effectiveness of the present system, it is unclear to what extent and with what speed the faculty will wish to reengage the larger structural questions of the distribution system.

### **Graduates have gained the skills and knowledge they need to function in diverse local, national, and global societies**

The current strategic plan directly addresses the usefulness of Wabash’s curriculum in a global, diverse, and technological world and seeks to strengthen it further in this respect. For example, strategic plan goal 3 addresses how we live out our Mission Statement “in a constantly changing global society.” Many of the activities related to the plan provide opportunities for co-curricular activities to increase the usefulness of the curriculum through immersion experiences, internships, and research opportunities.

Thus moving forward, Wabash graduates will have had access to even greater resources in gaining exposure to a global society. Memoranda of understanding with Fudan University and East China Normal University will enable exchange of Wabash students, faculty, and staff and collaboration with their Chinese counterparts. A network of alumni living in Asia or with business and education ties to Asia support the Wabash/DePauw University Asian Studies collaboration funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. And already there are entrepreneurial Wabash alumni who have established thriving businesses in Shanghai and Beijing. Similarly, immersion study courses and traditional off-campus study programs will continue to allow students to experience different cultures.

Then there is also the [Business Leaders Program](#) (BLP), which provides a distinctive model for how

On the Web

**Mellon Asian  
Studies Grant**

curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities can be woven together to provide students with the skills and knowledge they will need for their desired careers. This program has added importance since nearly 20% of the students who consider Wabash express interest in a business career. This is not surprising given that approximately one out of eight Wabash alumni holds the title of CEO,



*Wabash students listen during a presentation at the College's Entrepreneurial Summit.*

president, or owner of a company. The BLP is designed to deliver a comprehensive introduction to the world of business by combining academic course work with experiential learning, regardless of a student's major. The required academic coursework consists of Wabash's Business Sequence, a transcribed program of seven courses including three in economics, two in accounting, a business writing course, and public speaking. The academic coursework is complemented with co-curricular and career development experiences to equip graduates with business and leadership skills necessary for their desired careers. Students participate in an eight-week summer Business Immersion Program course, co-taught by staff and alumni, that uses case studies and team projects to learn about leadership, project management, opportunity analysis, business plans, legal issues, marketing, presentation skills, networking, financial statements, and financing. Participants also take a marketing immersion experience over spring break, complete at least one summer business internship, and take part in industry focus group sessions, career development programs, and networking trips.

A "useful" or purposeful curriculum is also one that enables students to pursue post-Wabash opportunities that they desire. Wabash graduates have excellent admission rates to post-graduate studies, including 77% of applicants being admitted to law school and 83% gaining admission to medical school. Wabash alumni also earn 13.4 Ph.D. degrees per year, a remarkable statistic given the average size of the graduating class (generally 180 to 200 students per year).

| Year | Number of Ph.D.s Granted to Wabash Alumni |
|------|---|
| 2000 | 7   |
| 2001 | 20  |
| 2002 | 14  |
| 2003 | 14  |
| 2004 | 10  |
| 2005 | 15  |
| 2006 | 12  |
| 2007 | 9   |
| 2008 | 14  |
| 2009 | 19  |

*Source: [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#), accessed March 8, 2012.*

Another measure of the usefulness of the Wabash curriculum is feedback from alumni. In 2006, Burdenski & Taylor conducted an alumni survey in which more than 2,200 Wabash alumni participated (nearly 20% of living alumni). Using a rating scale of 2=strongly agree, 1=agree, 0=no opinion, -1=disagree, -2=strongly disagree, the highest rated statements were:

|   |      |
|---|------|
| “I have pride in my Wabash degree.”   | 1.69 |
| “My Wabash experience prepared me for a graduate degree or other post-graduate training.” | 1.46 |
| “I feel as though I am personally successful today.”                                      | 1.40 |

The strong feelings of personal and professional success extend across all class decades. The lowest rated statements were, “my Wabash experience gave me an understanding of the importance of supporting charitable organizations” (0.34), and “my Wabash experience helped me to clarify my life’s purpose” (0.63). When asked the reasons for alumni giving, the most important motivators were “the desire that Wabash remain a strong institution” (1.46), “my affection and affinity for Wabash” (1.32), and “my belief in the college’s mission” (1.23). These results demonstrate that alumni see their degrees as personally and professionally useful and that alumni believe in the mission of Wabash College.

### **Wabash College provides curricular and co-curricular opportunities that promote social responsibility**

Wabash articulates its emphasis on responsibility both in its Mission Statement (“act responsibly”) and in the Gentleman’s Rule, the one rule governing student conduct: “The student is expected to conduct himself at all times, both on and off campus, as a gentleman and a responsible citizen.” As addressed in this *Self-Study Report’s* Introduction and Criterion 1, while the Gentleman’s Rule gives students a great deal of freedom, it also elevates responsibility. Consequently, Wabash provides numerous opportunities to nurture reflection upon and inculcate responsibility.

One locus of responsibility is in Wabash’s unique student life structure. Rather than a dedicated, full-time professional student activities coordinator, activities are primarily originated by students, run by students, and funded by student activity fees as allocated by the [Student Senate](#). The Student Senate is comprised of an elected president, vice president, one senator from each living unit (with a second for living units with more than 80 residents), and four representatives from each of the three underclasses, as well as one representative appointed from students living in off-campus housing, the chairman of each Student Senate Standing Committee, and three additional Senate officers. Working in conjunction with the Senate is the [Senior Council](#), which serves to address issues of student life and to promote campus unity. The Student Senate meets weekly, and it is the primary legislative body of students, charged with allocating student activity fee revenues of more than \$400,000 to clubs and organizations. Student Senate also has regularly used its funds to support student transportation to athletic contests held off campus, to plan the “national act” concerts and performances, and, importantly, to support student-driven service projects. In this way, the student government at Wabash is given broad powers and discretion over a considerable budget, the overseeing of which represents a significant opportunity for students, and for the College to encourage social responsibility on the part of the student body. Our tradition of self-directed student activities expresses a Core Value of the College to educate men to be independent, critical thinkers responsible for their own actions.

Social responsibility is also promoted in a number of ways discussed elsewhere in this *Self-Study Report*, primarily in Criterion 5B/5C. This includes an impressive range of service activities encouraged by the College and supported by students and a range of mentoring programs hosted by student organizations. For example, all freshmen participate in a local community service project,

most fraternities have a service program, and numerous clubs and organizations at the College, including College Mentors for Kids, Alpha Phi Omega, Students for Sustainability, and the Wabash Acts Responsibly (WAR) Council, undertake socially responsible programs. As a specific example, Students for Sustainability, founded in 2005 as a reinvention of the Green Corps, a previous eco-friendly student group, has brought nationally known speakers such as Joel Salatin to campus, expanded the campus Community Garden, co-sponsored a recycling contest among living units, and encouraged “greening” of campus policies. Other specific examples of socially conscious student actions are addressed in the next Criterion chapter.



*Joel Salatin speaks to a packed house during his visit to Wabash.*

The importance of the Gentleman’s Rule merits a brief return to its consideration in the context of student self-direction and responsibility. It is a signature feature of Wabash culture and its ideal permeates student life at Wabash. The Gentleman’s Rule is as much a core value or philosophy as a rule in that it challenges students to live out the ideals in which they believe. It also calls upon students to hold each other accountable, a major step towards responsible living. One way it is manifested is the degree of trust and responsibility given to students in their living units. There are no professional staff that act as “fraternity mom” or resident heads stationed in campus residences. Fraternities manage their own house budgets and are responsible for housekeeping.

To facilitate effective and responsible leadership, Wabash provides training to student leaders in living units through the [HELP Program](#) (Wabash Housing and Education Leaders Partnership), a workshop held before the start of every semester. This educational program for fraternity leaders and Residence Assistants, students who are responsible for each independent living unit (addressed in additional detail in Criterion 5), provides training in both the technical details of their responsibilities, as well as issues such as wellness and illness, substance abuse, first aid and CPR, fire prevention and safety, and mental health issues. Ultimately Wabash places a great deal of trust in its students to be individually responsible, to care for and educate one another, and hold each other accountable. The Gentleman’s Rule is a central expression of Wabash’s educational mission.

Finally, the College also encourages personal wellness through programming supported by the Athletics Department and an on-campus health center. When a new Director of Athletics was hired in the summer of 2011, the President and Dean of Students enlarged his title and accompanying responsibilities to include Director of Athletics and Campus Wellness. In turn, the new Athletics Director invigorated and reconfigured the Campus Wellness Committee, which now includes the

College Nurse, the College’s Lead Counselor, the Human Resource Director, the Athletic Trainer, the Coordinator of Fitness Programs, a Personal Fitness Consultant, one other head coach who serves as the group’s technology support, and the Director of Athletics and Campus Wellness. The group meets regularly to consider the needs of the campus and ways to meet them. Recent initiatives led by the group include development of a [Wellness Webpage](#), a one-day health screening, development of a personal fitness



consultant program, a Biggest Loser program (with over 10% of the campus community participating in its inaugural run), and offering a variety of fitness classes, including a new CrossFit class. Criterion 5 discusses the Student Health Center and health services in more detail.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** The Wabash curriculum and individual department offerings continue to evolve to meet the needs of students and graduates in a diverse, global society. The College also has spent considerable time and effort evaluating the usefulness of its curriculum, especially the distribution system, in the last 10 years. The present challenge for the College in this regard involves bringing the discussions to resolution, while the effort to develop requirement rationales should also be completed. Wabash students and graduates are provided with opportunities and experiences that enhance their preparation for future success, while the achievements of Wabash students in seeking graduate and professional degrees and the evaluations of alumni on the value of a Wabash education affirm the usefulness of a Wabash degree. Through the Gentleman's Rule and the related ethos of maturity and brotherhood, Wabash provides students with significant opportunities to develop a defined sense of social responsibility within the context of the Mission to educate men "to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely."

#### **4D. WABASH SUPPORTS RESPONSIBLE ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE BY FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND STAFF.**

To aid all in the community in living out the Mission Statement — students through the Gentleman's Rule; faculty and staff through appropriate guides to conduct in the ethos of Wabash and the *Faculty Handbook* — over the past 10 years the College has developed policies and procedures that more clearly outline the expectations of responsible, ethical acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge with respect to research and scholarship. Although good practice was followed prior to these policies, there was an increasing recognition that while the ethos of trust and individual responsibility remains important, that ethos could be supported and informed by greater clarity. As such, the College, following best practices, has sought to regularize and communicate these procedures in order to make it easier for individuals to apply for grants and other external support without having to reinvent policies and guidelines each time and ensure that standards are both uniformly understood and applied. All Wabash College investigators are expected to carry out research consistent with the standards in the *Faculty Handbook* and all other applicable Wabash College policies. Moreover, Wabash is in compliance with standards that are required to apply for and receive federal grants. While these policies are more specific to the conduct expected in research and scholarship, like the policies addressed in Criterion 1E, they also help protect the integrity of the institution.

##### **Academic Honesty Policy**

As has been discussed elsewhere, the College's [Academic Honesty Policy](#) has been a focal point of consideration over the last several years. This culminated in 2010-11 with the development of new guidelines and a procedure for professors who suspect academic dishonesty, the consequences for academic dishonesty, and an appeals process for students. This has both clarified the expectations Wabash has for ethical student work and provides a procedure that better protects the rights and insures the responsibilities of students.

##### **Copyright Policy**

In the summer of 2008, the Dean of the College initiated implementation of a copyright compliance policy that balances the need to easily access and use information for scholarship and the right of the copyright owner to exercise reasonable control over its use. To that end a policy and [Copyright](#)

[Compliance website](#) were developed by a “copyright team” comprised of representatives from the Lilly Library, Bookstore, Media Center, and IT Services. The policy was reviewed and implemented by the Academic Policy Committee during the autumn of 2008, and the supporting website was launched in January 2009. This policy provides guidelines and procedures to students and faculty in the conduct of classes and their personal research.

On the Web

Faculty  
Handbook

Corresponding with this policy, the *Faculty Handbook* contains information and policies on “Electronic Media, Services, and Communication.” These policies establish guidelines for use of technical resources owned by the College as well as policies on copyrighted classroom materials and recovery fees and policies on downloading, use, and distribution of digital materials and printed materials (pp. 56-62). Further, IT Services, through electronic notices, periodically reminds the community of its compliance responsibilities with respect to the use and sharing of audio and video materials.

### **Institutional Review Board**

While the College has long had a Human Research Committee, the College’s Institutional Research Board (IRB) was formed in 2009. The IRB is the formal body charged with reviewing and approving all research proposals involving human subjects. Procedures for IRB review were developed in adherence to the regulations of the Department of Health and Human Services (45CFR 46, as amended and published in the Federal Register on June 18, 1991 and any subsequent amendments), and to the Assurances filed by the College with the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP). Development of IRB policy and procedures, as well as content for the [IRB website](#), was undertaken in cooperation with the Dean of the College and the Academic Policy Committee by an IRB Organizing Committee chaired by the Associate Dean of the College and including the Director of the Library, Chair of the Psychology Department, and a faculty researcher from the Psychology Department.

### **Research Conduct**

In 2011 the College established Institutional Policies and Procedures Relating to Ethical Standards in the Conduct of Research. This policy and procedures document is designed to safeguard the integrity of research against breaches in ethical standards or ethical misconduct. The Scientific Integrity Committee along with the Dean of the College are charged with overseeing this process of review and reporting required by law in support of the Personnel Conduct Policies of the College. The policy is included in the *Faculty Handbook* (pp. 62-68).

### **Conflict of Interest Policy**

In 2012 the College established a [Conflict of Interest Policy](#). This policy is intended “to assure the objectivity with which Research projects are designed, conducted or reported by managing financial conflicts of interest that occur between an Investigator’s personal financial interests and his professional Research interests” as required by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) in 42CFR Part 50 and 45CFR Part 94. The Dean of the College serves as the designated compliance officer for this policy. A link to the policy is posted on the College’s [Consumer Information website](#).

### **New Faculty Orientation**

New members of the Wabash community undergo a substantive orientation program that extends across their first year at the College. While that orientation consists of many different elements, it also serves to ensure that new members to the community are educated in the responsible acquisition, discovery, and use of information and made aware of other policies, procedures and standards through training events, written and electronic documentation, and an orientation binder.

A four-day [new faculty and staff orientation](#) is held every August, and covers practical elements of

campus work and life. In 2007, Wabash received a grant from the Mellon Foundation to further develop the faculty orientation program to better introduce new faculty and new associated faculty to the institutional culture of a liberal arts institution (details on that grant and Wabash's reports to Mellon about it are [available here](#)). These new faculty are introduced to College teaching and advising practices, nuts and bolts of syllabus and first-class preparation, student engagement expectations outside of class via student and faculty panels, Wabash National Study data profiling incoming students and their first-year experience, mentoring opportunities, legal questions regarding harassment, FERPA requirements, civic and cultural opportunities in Crawfordsville and Indianapolis, and more.

The new faculty cohort continues to meet monthly during the year to address work-life balance and calendar-driven matters (e.g., course registration, comprehensive exams). As part of the program, the Dean of the College holds monthly lunch meetings with new faculty to discuss issues that arise throughout the school year. The aim is to acculturate new faculty to institutional expectations and practices to help them to embrace the demands, rigors, and delights of a liberal arts college where connection to students and engagement with colleagues and students inside and outside the classroom are such essential markers of institutional life.

### **New Student Orientation**

New students also have an orientation period prior to the start of classes. As was discussed in the *Self-Study Report's* Introduction, discussion of the Gentleman's Rule and academic honesty policy play a prominent role in this orientation. Students are also introduced to College services and policies during orientation, through a [website](#) designed specifically for incoming students and via the Wabash College website.

On the Web

**Student Information  
and Resource Guide**

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Over the past decade the College has revised and adopted a series of policies and procedures that more clearly outline the expectations of responsible, ethical acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge with respect to research and scholarship. Policies such as the new academic honesty policy, development of an institutional review board, and the copyright policy bring Wabash up to current standards for ethical conduct. Expanded orientation and training for both new students and new staff effectively communicate these standards. While such policies are placed in the *Faculty Handbook*, the College should consider how to effectively communicate these policies and procedures to faculty and staff that pre-date the development of the policies and might be otherwise unaware of them.

## **CONCLUSIONS FOR CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE**

In this chapter we have provided evidence that the College promotes a life of learning by supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission. As should be expected of an institution of higher learning, Wabash embraces lifelong learning in a multitude of forms: creating a rich residential environment where the sharing of research, scholarship, and creative work by students and faculty is common; by inviting others into the community so that we may learn from and interact with them; by providing resources to students, faculty, and staff for their professional development and the pursuit of their scholarly work; and by serving as a resource to the larger community through the work of Centers of Distinction. These activities can be refined and coordinated in the future through better communication about campus events, reviewing funding for some professional activities, ensuring continued funding for undergraduate research, and improving our interactions with our own campus centers. The College demonstrates the importance of the

acquisition of a breadth and depth of knowledge and intellectual inquiry through its curriculum, while the usefulness of the curriculum is demonstrated in its commitment to thorough review, the successes of Wabash graduates, and the opportunities provided to students that promote social responsibility as a conscious application of the College's Mission and Core Values. Finally, the College supports responsible and ethical acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge through policies and procedures that provide ethical guidance and expectations so as to protect the integrity of the institution and its constituents.

These practices and improvements underscore three of the strengthening themes identified in the *Self-Study Report's* Introduction: *strengthening student engagement*, *strengthening liberal arts instruction*, and *strengthening staff and faculty quality of life*. Evidence of strengthened student engagement provided in this chapter includes increased resources supporting and opportunities for student-faculty collaboration in research, scholarship, and creative work and expanded learning opportunities. The annual Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work has been a source of impressive student engagement as a venue for displaying both student work and collaborative efforts between faculty and students. Similarly, endowed funds, undergraduate research committee support, and expanded internship opportunities have further strengthened student engagement at Wabash and the acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. Finally, student engagement has been strengthened through new learning opportunities that provide for additional experience in a technologically diverse and global society. These opportunities include the development of the Business Leaders Program and new curricular options such as biochemistry, a creative writing track, Asian Studies, a dual degree engineering program, and an accounting pipeline agreement.

Evidence of strengthening liberal arts instruction is seen through the extensive efforts to review and enhance the curriculum. This includes adoption of the previously mentioned programs and opportunities that have improved student engagement, and also thoughtful consideration of how to best shape and deliver the Wabash curriculum. Moreover, Wabash faculty have partaken in faculty development opportunities that have strengthened, refined, and retooled areas of teaching, such as those provided through CILA support and GLCA programs. Wabash's Centers of Distinction have strengthened liberal arts instruction at Wabash and across the country through important research that has been undertaken at CILA and support that has been offered to other institutions, faculty, and Indiana clergy.

Evidence of strengthening staff and faculty quality of life is seen in the impressive resources available for professional and scholarly support and development. This includes a range of resources available that support faculty scholarship and creative work as well as opportunities for professional development of staff and opportunities available to staff, as well as faculty, through Know Indiana programming and participation in immersion learning. Finally there have been improvements to new faculty orientation that allow better faculty knowledge of Wabash and hence ease the process of acclimation while providing improved support.

### **Strengths**

- On campus support for lifelong learning is strong as evidenced in programs such as the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship and Creative Work and the Ides of August, as well as the robust learning opportunities available through cultural events and visiting speakers;
- Wabash provides strong support for lifelong learning by faculty through professional travel opportunities, access to faculty development funding through College-wide and

departmentally endowed funds, sabbatical support that is available to all tenured faculty members, early career support through BKT funds, and a variety of external funding opportunities;

- Wabash students are highly engaged in the production of research, scholarship, and creative work. This work is publicly displayed and recognized on and off campus and often conducted in collaboration with faculty;
- Students are introduced to skills for lifelong learning through freshman level courses, further develop these skills through distribution courses, and have multiple ways to pursue their personal interests through scholarship, creative work, and research with faculty, diverse learning experiences, and graduate and professional study;
- The Wabash curriculum provides students with the breadth of learning expected of a liberal arts education while also requiring depth of learning in a major field, all within an appropriately rigorous environment;
- The Centers of Distinction located at Wabash have made substantial contributions to institutions and individual faculty members across the country, to the Wabash campus, and to wider civic life. The WNS has improved understanding of student learning and assessment, while CILA and HEDS work in innovative ways with institutions on how to make more effective use of assessment data. The Wabash Center and Pastoral Leadership Program have made noteworthy contributions to the enrichment of theology and religious studies faculty and clergy across the country in preparing them for their future work and supporting their development;
- The Wabash curriculum, individual department offerings, and faculty pedagogy continue to evolve to meet the needs of students and graduates in a diverse, global society;
- The College values and supports responsible student action through its embracing of the Gentlemen's Rule and has revised and developed a series of policies, procedures, and practices that more clearly identify the expectations on the part of faculty and staff for the responsible and ethical acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge with respect to research and scholarship.

## Challenges

- Given faculty demand, present levels of Faculty Development Committee funding are not sufficient, making the additional support for faculty development garnered by the Challenge of Excellence campaign all the more important;
- When circumstances permit, the College may want to re-engage discussions about adjusting the support given for full-year sabbaticals, increasing it from its current standing, and to further discuss the prospects of pre-tenure leaves;
- Wabash is fortunate to have many endowed funds to support faculty research. However, not all departments have access to such funds. In order to more uniformly support faculty and student opportunities, the College may want to explore endowment possibilities in additional departments and programs;

- The College must continue to be mindful of its advantageous relationship with CILA and HEDS, making better and more regularized use of their resources, skills, and knowledge in improving the College's understanding and continued use of assessment data to improve student learning;
- The College must find a way to move the discussion of distribution requirements to conclusion.

### **Recommendations**

- The speakers who visit campus are sometimes so numerous as to oversaturate particular areas of the calendar. Renewed efforts at events coordination would be beneficial in reducing conflicts between events and maximizing the available audience;
- The BKT program offers valuable support for new assistant professors, but the level of support may be outdated. Therefore, the College may want to revisit the level of summer funding support;
- While opportunities for the professional development of staff and administrators exist, they are not as regular and may not be as well-known as those for faculty. The College should review these resources to assess their adequacy;
- The College has a robust program of undergraduate research but must address the long-term issue of permanent funding as the important support provided by the Undergraduate Research Committee and the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work has been provided through grant money that will end in two years. This item is deserving of ongoing support as part of the College's regular operating budget;
- The College should complete the development of rationales for distribution requirements so that the goals of these requirements are clear to all College constituencies and so that the requirements can be more easily assessed.



## **CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE**

*As called for by its mission, Wabash College identifies its constituencies  
and serves them in ways both value*

## **CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE**

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Over the past 10 years, Wabash College has displayed an impressive record of attentiveness and responsiveness to the constituencies it serves. Of the five strengthening themes identified in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction, two are particularly relevant to Criterion 5: *strengthening student engagement* and *strengthening staff and faculty quality of life*. Across the discussion of this Criterion, we provide abundant evidence of the way in which these themes are acted out on campus. We also show how Wabash interacts with and serves our alumni and the broader community. Collectively these relationships and attentiveness to them provide a basis for understanding how Wabash College meets and exceeds the expectations for the Criterion.

Foremost among the College's constituencies is students, and thus considerable space in this Criterion chapter is devoted to discussing evidence that the College learns from and responds to the needs of its students, and that they value these efforts. This evidence demonstrates that the College is noteworthy for the respect and freedom it affords students, the seriousness with which it takes student perspectives, and the input that students have in a variety of academic and non-academic programs as well as in the overall operations of the College. As should be clear from previous sections of this *Self-Study Report*, at Wabash the student experience, both in the classroom and out, is at the forefront of all that we do; and thus attentiveness and responsiveness to student needs are critical components of our efforts to fulfill our mission.

There are also other constituencies to whom Wabash is sensitive and attentive and for whom we shape important programs. Faculty and staff are at the center of student academic and non-academic services, and thus the College works diligently to scan the needs and satisfaction of its employees so as to not only meet basic employment needs but also to provide a rich and fulfilling professional life. Our approximately 12,000 living alumni are the focus of attention for the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, and such focus reaches far beyond reunion weekend to include a variety of programs that span the full academic year and that engage alumni with different aspects of the College and its teaching mission. Finally, Wabash sits in the city of Crawfordsville and the county of Montgomery, 45 miles northwest of Indianapolis and 30 miles south of West Lafayette. The small size (approximately 15,000 people in the city and 33,000 in the county) and relatively modest socio-economic status of our community (median household income of \$47,000 with 12% of the population below the poverty line and only 18% of those above age 25 having earned a bachelor's degree) present both challenges and opportunities. Indeed, the past five years have included a renewed attention to social and economic relations between the College and its surrounding communities and collaborations between local officials and Wabash personnel that have led to new initiatives for our mutual benefit and strengthened the relationship between "town and gown."

### **5A. WABASH COLLEGE LEARNS FROM THE CONSTITUNCIES IT SERVES AND ANALYZES ITS CAPACITY TO SERVE THEIR NEEDS AND EXPECATIONS.**

#### **Students**

Wabash College's Core Values assert a commitment to provide a rigorous liberal arts education that fosters "individual responsibility and trust." Among the various ways that ideal is promoted is by

trusting students to inform the programs that shape their Wabash experience. Such information is both regularized and ad hoc and is collected both from large samples of representative students and small numbers of appointed or elected student representatives. Rarely at Wabash is a curricular or non-curricular decision made without actively seeking input from students.

One form of regularized assessment of student needs is through the sorts of national standardized surveys and individual interviews with students mentioned earlier in the *Self-Study Report*. As discussed previously, the College has administered the annual CIRP study of freshmen and senior students for the past 47 years and also annually administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at the end of each freshman year and senior year. The College also designed and participated in for three consecutive years the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS). In addition to these national assessments, all sophomores are interviewed by the Dean of Students to identify their major area of study, to gauge their experiences at the College to that point, and to enlist their suggestions about College programs. Seniors also complete a thorough “check out” process, one that customarily includes, among other things, the CIRP survey and an interview with the Dean of the College about the most and least favorable aspects of their Wabash experience.



*Dean of Students Mike Raters chats with a student outside his office.*

Student interviews are also a part of every faculty review. Indeed, for every fourth-year and tenure review, 30 students (half identified by the candidate and half selected randomly from the candidate’s class lists) are interviewed by the Dean of the College, a division chair, or a department chair. These interviews assess student perspectives on the candidate’s strengths and weaknesses both in the classroom and outside of it. Such interviews are synthesized, and that synthesis becomes an element of the candidate’s review file. In addition, and somewhat more broadly, these interviews provide information about what students value in their faculty and the classroom experience that those faculty provide. Likewise, it is common for academic departments to conduct senior exit interviews or surveys with their graduating majors in order to gain feedback on departmental offerings and environments. With such interviews and the use of national assessments, the College has sufficient annual mechanisms for informing itself about the attitudes, opinions, interests, needs, expectations, and experiences of its students.

The information gathered on the needs, interests, and opinions of students is valuable in shaping institutional planning from individual decisions on rank and tenure to more global understanding of aspects of the College that we might strengthen. However, as has been discussed previously, until recently there has been a lack of coordinated effort to use national survey (e.g., CIRP and NSSE) information in a more systematic and regular fashion. Fortunately, recent years have seen a shift to a more frequent utilization of this information and data. For example, the ad hoc Retention Committee (discussed previously under Criterion 3C and again later in this section) was convened partially in response to information from the WNS that suggested that African American and other students of color were having a less favorable Wabash experience than were their Caucasian counterparts.

As another example, small groups of faculty have attended two recent (December 2011 and February 2012) workshops at the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts (CILA) that focused on WNS, NSSE, and/or CIRP data to identify patterns that might inform pedagogical practices. As mentioned earlier in the *Self-Study Report*, one group focused on items related to students’ openness to diversity and

ideological challenge and subsequently recruited a small group of faculty for a series of lunches and a May 2012 workshop to collectively investigate the data, consider changes to existing courses, and/or develop new courses that speak to these diversity items. A second faculty group focused on freshmen and senior NSSE responses regarding student-faculty interaction. This group has recommended that the discovered information be shared with relevant faculty committees (e.g., the Teaching and Learning Committee) and be used in freshman advisor orientation. This group also urged that new information be collected (via focus groups) so that these data might be understood more effectively and that the College remain vigilant for any additional signs of decreases in the frequency or effectiveness of student-faculty interaction. Finally, it is worth reiterating that the Dean of the College used WNS results as the centerpiece of his 2012 assessment meetings with all departments. These three examples further demonstrate that Wabash is learning from the experiences of its student constituents in a robust fashion at various levels of the College.

Students also have been surveyed regarding a variety of specific academic matters. For instance, students have been surveyed about the quality of the freshman advising that they have received (during the work of the First Year Experience Study Group and the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations grant reporting process), their use of different computer laboratories on campus; the quality of wireless and wired internet access on campus; the wisdom of moving senior comprehensive exams to the beginning of the spring semester; the potential inclusion of “dead days” (class days on which no exams are given or major assignments are due) immediately prior to exams; the College’s distribution requirements; and the adoption of the new all-college course, Enduring Questions (EQ), among others. Open fora for discussions with senior administrators and faculty also have been held to give students opportunities to voice their perspectives on issues such as the College’s response to the financial crisis, changes under consideration in all-college courses, College hiring procedures, and the role of the Gentleman’s Rule. It is a reflection of the Wabash ethos of elevating student responsibility for themselves and the College that students have their voices heard on important College issues through ad hoc surveys, open fora, and the consideration of the responses that result.

Targeted groups of students also have provided valuable information about how to improve the curriculum and/or student services. For example, as the College was considering the move from three semesters of all-college courses to two, student focus groups were convened to gather student perceptions regarding the value and contributions of the College’s two all-college courses: Freshman Tutorial (1 semester) and Cultures and Traditions (2 semesters). [Students provided important insight](#) into the value of the Cultures and Traditions course and the student sense of variability in faculty investment in that course. Such responses were considered alongside other information to inform the Academic Policy Committee’s (APC) recommendation to reduce the all-college commitment to two semesters, to keep Freshman Tutorial in its current form, and to create a new one-semester all-college course (a process discussed in Criterion 3A).

#### Electronic Resources

**Retention  
Committee  
Progress Report**

**Retention  
Committee  
Focus Groups:  
Lessons Learned**

As a second example, [recent work by the ad hoc Retention Committee](#) included a series of [focus group conversations](#) between African American and Latino freshmen and upper-class students who were trained by CILA staff to conduct such conversations. These conversations served both a supportive and an informative role and involved discussion of the challenges and successes that students faced during their first few months on campus. As a specific example, one theme that arose during those focus groups was a concern over finances and a lack of understanding regarding options for stabilizing one’s financial situation. As a result, the Committee sponsored a session in which freshmen heard from a member of the Financial Aid Office about managing financial challenges and identifying and applying for different types of financial support. Also, the new peer mentoring program, which is funded by the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations grant, includes training sessions for the mentors and workshops for freshmen that are devoted to financial topics, such as how to

apply for and obtain an on-campus job and how to complete the FAFSA financial aid form. The early work of the ad hoc Retention Committee provides another important example of the way that students provide insight into student needs and expectations. This work included site visits to two colleges (Florida State University and Columbia College), and upper-class students were part of each site visit team. These students accompanied faculty members to the campuses, met with high level faculty and administrators of retention programs (e.g., the Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Florida State University), and contributed to the team's summary of the visit. Such direct student input into College decisions and planning is common.

Students are also often included as contributing and voting members on ad hoc committees. As examples, the College's on-going conversation about its distribution requirements (previously described) began with the work of an ad hoc committee that included two students. The ad hoc committee that crafted the new EQ course also included two student representatives. Those two students were nominated by the Student Body President and worked alongside the seven faculty committee members to decide upon the nature and timing of the course. Also, one of those student members assisted in the creation of the common syllabus for the course by reading multiple texts and considering with the committee the merits of each. In these two cases, the Distribution Committee and the new All-College Course Group, students brought to bear on important curricular initiatives an informed and intelligent student perspective, one that foregrounded student needs and expectations for all involved in these important decisions. In a similar fashion, a student representative is invited to sit on the APC, and there is a student visitor at Faculty Meetings and meetings of the Board of Trustees.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Wabash learns about the needs of its students in a variety of ways and uses student responses and insights to understand where it is providing effective programs. Sophomore and senior interviews, senior exit interviews, and student interviews during faculty reviews provide regular opportunities for students to express their views directly to high level administrators and faculty. More topic-specific surveys allow large numbers of students to voice their opinions, whereas focus groups and student inclusion in committees provides more direct and immediate student input on such initiatives. Wabash values student input and continues to search for quantitative and qualitative ways to gauge and learn from student experience. Student perspectives are not ancillary to the work of the College. Indeed, the College treats students as important agents of its educational mission to promote intellectual inquiry and leadership. Moving forward, the College should continue to work to establish routine study of national survey data and further refine mechanisms to put these data in the hands of decision-making groups that include students.

## **Employees**

Another important constituency to whom Wabash is sensitive and attentive is employees of the College, both faculty and staff. Here we consider how faculty and staff shape College decisions and also mechanisms by which they can voice their perspectives regarding how the College can best engender and enrich professional and personal life. The College has made significant advancements in a number of respects while additional improvements, particularly for non-faculty staff, merit attention.

## **Faculty**

Wabash works deliberately to learn from its faculty and to understand what policies and programs can best serve faculty wants and needs. This care is grounded in the College's long commitment, as voiced in the strategic plan, to attract and retain faculty who are committed to engaging with students and who see their lives and careers as shaped and formed by their college. Indeed, faculty are central agents to the life and work of the College.

Faculty members bear substantial responsibility for developing College policies and advising on decisions. As addressed in Criterion 1, faculty members hold seats on committees that address College-wide and non-academic elements of the College, including athletics, admissions, financial aid, budget, fringe benefits, student-life, and wellness. On average, faculty members serve annually on three standing College committees, while ad hoc committees increase greatly faculty opportunities for contribution and input into College initiatives and decision making. Faculty members also have opportunities for regular communication with institutional leaders, both informally and formally. A regular feature of the Faculty Meeting is the “question period,” which allows faculty to bring questions and concerns to some members of the President’s Staff. Faculty members also meet with members of the Board of Trustees during every trustee meeting weekend. These interactions include formalized inclusion of faculty members on the trustee Committee on College Life, reports by division chairs and other faculty as warranted to the Academic Affairs Committee, an elected visitor to the Board meeting, and special meetings and less formalized visits. For example, faculty — especially newer faculty and faculty who have just completed a stage in the tenure review process — are invited to trustee dinners, and trustees often spend the Friday morning of their meeting weekends visiting classes. Faculty are also significantly represented on the important and newly created trustee Strategy Committee, a group that will focus on continuing assessment of the landscape of higher education, Wabash’s place in it, and future options and actions for the College. In these ways, the College has mechanisms by which faculty can learn about and voice their opinions regarding both academic and non-academic issues at the institution.

Faculty members have also provided their perspectives on a variety of topics that are relevant to faculty work life. As discussed previously, faculty have been surveyed about their perspectives on numerous different curricular and non-curricular issues, including, but not limited to, the nature and number of all-college courses, the system of course distribution requirements, the timing of senior oral comprehensive exams, how to proceed with further distribution discussions, the fulfillment and frustration of faculty committee work, the need for and potential structure of [College-sponsored or supported childcare](#), the College’s use of technology, and the College’s grievance procedures. Thus, as with Wabash students, faculty take leadership in providing substantial input into important College decisions.

**Electronic Resource**

**Faculty  
Quality of Life  
Survey Summary**

In addition to providing input on existing initiatives, faculty take opportunity to evaluate their experience and to identify areas of faculty life on which new initiatives might focus. For instance, the College participated in a Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey of pre-tenure faculty job satisfaction in 2005 (discussed in Criterion 3B) and the 2010 ModernThink Higher Education Insight Survey. In addition, during the spring of 2007, the Dean of the College appointed an ad hoc committee on Faculty Quality of Life to assess the satisfaction and needs of all faculty. The committee distributed [a survey](#), one that was based heavily on the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) faculty survey, collected more than 90 responses, and summarized for faculty the major survey results by comparing our faculty’s responses to those of faculty at other colleges.

When compared to national data, Wabash faculty reported that they were happy with their relationship with the administration, felt involved in decision-making, and were



*The Wabash Community Garden*

happy with their laboratory and office spaces and compensation. However, in comparison to other faculty, the Wabash faculty indicated that they were less satisfied with their jobs and more likely to have considered leaving the institution in the previous two years. The Wabash faculty also reported greater perceived difficulties with faculty recruitment and retention, more incongruence between their personal values and those of the institution, and significantly more stress due to research or publishing demands and a lack of personal time. When asked to prioritize faculty wants, the dominant priorities identified were salary increases, more flexibility in meeting the required 3-3 teaching load, and a reduced teaching load.

Subsequently, with support from the Dean of the College, a senior professor of psychology conducted a confidential, focused survey of the quality of life of female faculty. Among other things, the survey reported on the specific concerns and experiences of women faculty teaching in an all-male environment, engagement with male faculty and staff colleagues, equity issues with respect to salary and support, and institutional policies and procedures reflective of a time when few women were present on the faculty. In response to these two examinations of faculty quality of life, in the fall of 2008 a standing Quality of Life Committee was created, and the [Dean invited faculty participation](#) in this work. The Committee is charged with studying further and coordinating programs targeting areas that the faculty regard as important and, in some cases, on which the Wabash faculty express less favorable responses than do faculty at other colleges. Among the conversations and/or changes that have come from this and related efforts are a renewed commitment to maintaining faculty salaries that are competitive with those at other GLCA colleges, addressing salary equity issues and greater transparency in salary determinations, efforts to organize convenient day care options for faculty and staff, the formal establishment of a [Parental Leave Policy](#), and adjustment to the time and coordination of faculty meetings. Additional initiatives have yet to come forward, but according to the chair of the Quality of Life Committee, the Dean is committed to revisiting the needs identified in the Quality of Life survey. Specifically, the committee will focus on ways to increase efficiency so as to give faculty more time for the teaching and learning to which they are committed. To this point, these conversations have touched on the need to optimize faculty committee loads given the decrease in faculty size, and the possibility of streamlining the College's pre-registration process. The coming years are likely to see further conversation about these and other topics identified by the Quality of Life survey.

### ***Staff***

The College has been less consistent and proactive in its efforts to learn from and analyze its capacity to serve non-faculty staff, and this stands as an area of opportunity and future action. On the one hand, staff members contribute to a number of College committees, including the Faculty Athletic, Community Service, Integrated Marketing, and Environmental Concerns committees, to name a few. Staff persons were key contributors to the 2009 Administrative Program Review and to the most recent strategic planning process with about 40% of the membership of the [planning teams](#) coming from the staff and 50% of the implementation teams consisting of non-faculty staff members. Staff also will play an important role in the trustees' Strategy Committee initiated in summer 2012. Thus, through such avenues staff persons have opportunities to contribute their voice to and to affect important institutional initiatives.

However, opportunities for staff to communicate formally thoughts and concerns about their own employment or personal needs are less numerous compared to faculty. Until four years ago, staff members were invited to a monthly "Community Meeting" at which they learned about and raised questions regarding College initiatives and could voice their own novel questions and insights directly to senior staff members and/or the President of the College. Attendance at these meetings, though, was not robust and the question/answer format became rote. Consequently the meetings

were discontinued, and there has been no program implemented to take their place. Though there is some disagreement among the President's Staff and staff members about the value of the meetings, individual conversations suggest that staff members regret the elimination of the meetings and having no regular means by which to speak directly to senior administrators, beyond their own areas. It is worth noting, however, that staff members did contribute responses to the 2010 ModernThink survey mentioned above (which included items relevant to job satisfaction). But, at the same time, their awareness of and access to the survey results is uncertain. A second employment-related need expressed by some staff is clearer guidelines and processes for performance evaluations and channels for discussion about this process and its results with area and higher-level supervisors.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Wabash College recognizes that the faculty, staff, and students are the College and, therefore, values conversation and leadership from these constituencies. Senior administrators regularly seek input from the faculty in shaping the institution and have made efforts to understand faculty needs in order to foster a rewarding professional life and to provide a fulfilling quality of life. The College should continue to pursue its efforts to address concerns raised in the Quality of Life survey and utilize the Faculty Quality of Life Committee to continue monitoring progress on relevant issues. The College as a whole has been less effective soliciting from staff persons information about their needs and experiences, though within each area and subgroup of the College, the culture of collaboration and informal exchange can be quite robust. Still, there is work to be done in order to understand better the experiences of staff and in what ways those experiences can be improved. This could include pursuing a parallel study of the quality of life of all levels of staff, and providing additional regular communication channels as well as clarifying or improving those communication channels already in existence. Such work will be an important additional step towards recognizing and affirming the vital role that staff members play in the life of the College and supporting the contributions they make to the education of Wabash students.

### **Alumni**

The College is also active in soliciting information from its alumni about how best to work with and for them and how best to make use of their time and talent in supporting current students. Such efforts are most obvious in the work of the Admissions, Communications and Marketing, Advancement, and Alumni and Parent Relations offices; however, there is additional evidence from a variety of sources, including the academic area of the College. For instance, even after students have graduated from Wabash, they may still be invited to provide formal and important information about the effectiveness of its faculty. Fifteen alumni are asked to submit letters of information regarding any faculty member up for tenure review. Such letters become a part of the faculty member's review file and play an important role in the tenure decision.

The solicitation of alumni perspective is most vigorous from Alumni and Parent Relations and Communications and Marketing. These departments consistently reach out to alumni, often through the "Class Agents" network, members of each alumni class who serve as conduits between the College and their class members. They also regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their practices and how to better serve alumni through programs such as reunion weekends, visits to the 40 regional Wabash alumni associations, and College publications. For example, the College hired the consulting firm of Burdinski & Taylor in 2006 to conduct an alumni survey to gauge alumni perceptions of their Wabash experience and what alumni services were most important to them. Among the findings of that survey was that alumni regarded staying in touch with current Wabash students and with other alumni as two of the most important goals that the Alumni and Parent Relations Office and the alumni associations should facilitate. Such information has contributed to new programs, like the Liberal Arts Symposium series and the Wabash Road Trip, both of which are addressed in Criterion 5B/5C.

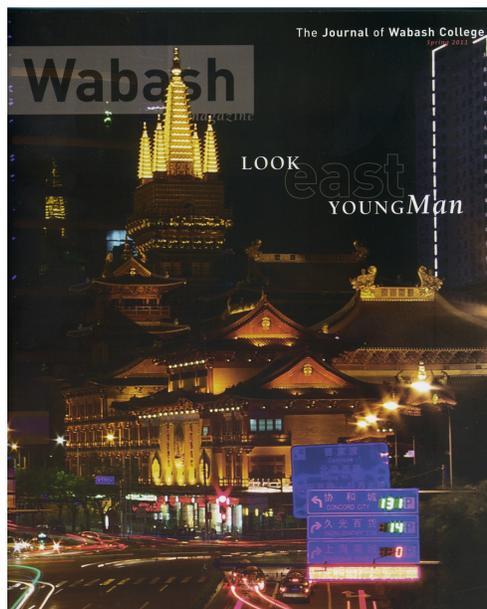
A significant change in alumni interaction has been achieved by altering the structure and timing of class reunions. Until 2004, 10-, 15-, and 20-year reunion alumni returned to campus during Homecoming weekend, and reunion classes 25 years and longer returned during Commencement weekend. However, anecdotal and systematic assessment suggested that there were too many activities on campus during those weekends to provide alumni with the kinds of programs they wanted. Consequently, in 2003 the College pilot-tested with the Class of 1953 a separate reunion the first weekend in June. The members of that class were nearly all positive about their “separated” experience, and thus, starting in 2004, “Big Bash,” was born: a single weekend, the first weekend in June, during which all reunion classes are invited back to campus. Such timing allows Alumni and Parent Relations staff more opportunity to organize and supervise reunion activities (as compared to reunions held during Homecoming and Commencement weekends), gives the President and other senior officers opportunities to meet with and learn from alumni, and gives alumni more time to engage in the social and intellectual activities they requested. For instance, reunion weekend now includes two days (Friday and Saturday) of [colloquia](#), during which alumni hear from one another and from Wabash faculty about a variety of personal and professional topics of interest, ranging from the new “Mythbusters” physics course to the economic impact of health care reform. In the past three years, between eight and 10 alumni have presented each year during these reunion colloquia, and Wabash faculty or staff have contributed an additional session annually.



On the Web  
**Big Bash  
Reunion Weekend**

Importantly, the Alumni and Parent Relations Office assesses the effectiveness of its reunion efforts each year by sending [an assessment survey](#) to every alumnus in a reunion-eligible class after the Big Bash weekend. In addition to asking reunion attendees to indicate which reunion events they found most and least enjoyable and asking for feedback about changes to Big Bash, the survey also asks non-attendees to indicate why they did not attend. Such information has led to important and specific changes in the reunion schedule and events. For instance, the College is now more active in coordinating with local hotels, has moved some meals indoors to avoid heat, and has established a richer reunion colloquium series, one of the highlights of the event. The office also has expanded its assessment efforts by sending two representatives to Amherst College and Mt. Holyoke College during 2010 to learn about their reunion giving programs, an example of the way in which the College uses external sources to understand how best to learn from and engage its constituencies.

Communications and Marketing consistently monitors and assesses alumni satisfaction with Wabash publications and the College website. [Wabash Magazine](#) is an award-winning quarterly journal mailed to 16,000 alumni, parents, and friends of the College. The magazine, which is guided by an editorial board comprising alumni, faculty, and professional writers, celebrates the achievements of those in the community, and also the voices — in words, photos, and artistic expression — of the students, alumni, faculty, and staff of the College. In consultation with the editorial board, the Communications staff responds to survey results and conducts alumni focus groups to refine the magazine on a regular basis. As a specific example, the ease of electronic information transfer has changed the focus of the magazine from a “news from the College” publication to a journal that includes excellent feature



writing, stunning photography, and award-winning design.

Concurrently, the College has enhanced the management and analytics of its website, refining content and delivery based on annual surveys of students, faculty, and alumni. In response to market research conducted by George Dehne and Associates Integrated Services in 2010-11 (described previously in Criterion 2), the website has been redesigned to be more useful to prospective students and their families, while creating better navigation and resources for on-campus constituents and alumni. It also is the practice of Communications and Marketing staff to use tracking analytics to measure the effectiveness of the website and to adjust the nature and timing of web stories based upon such analytics; regular reports are generated on the number of unique visitors to the site and the number of “hits” stories receive. In addition, such enhancement of the electronic delivery and tracking of information has allowed the College to reduce the number of regular printed pieces mailed to alumni and friends and increase the email delivery of such messages. In turn, the College uses software to determine the number of alumni who open email messages and measure the links they click. Each of these steps allows Wabash to better engage with alumni and assess the effectiveness of those efforts.

Supplementing the alumni relations efforts of campus offices is the work of the [National Association of Wabash Men](#) (NAWM), the College’s national alumni association, and the work of individual Class Agents, both of which were referenced briefly above. As stated in its Constitution, the NAWM’s mission is to “support the interests of Wabash College through encouragement and development of relationships which will help the College achieve its mission.” All alumni are members of the NAWM; membership is perpetual and has no dues. The NAWM acts principally through a 27-person board of directors, one-third of whom are elected by the alumni body, and the remainder either *ex officio* or selected by the Board itself. The Board has a committee structure that parallels and aids offices of the College. Its Recruiting Committee works with the College’s Admissions Office to obtain alumni referrals of future applicants; its Campus Life Committee aids in connecting alumni with current students and with faculty; its Career Services Committee generates externships and provides interviewing workshops in conjunction with the Schroeder Center for Career Development; and its Alumni Advancement Committee oversees such events as WABASH Day and the annual faculty-alumni symposium (both of which are addressed later in this Criterion) and supports and generates interest in regional alumni groups located across the country. In addition to the work of these committees, the NAWM also selects Honorary Alumni of the College, recipients of the Alumni Awards of Merit, and has established the College’s [Athletics Hall of Fame](#), all of which recognize the accomplishments of alumni and keep them connected with the institution. Individual members of the NAWM’s Board of Directors serve as career mentors to current students. Finally, the NAWM nominates candidates to run for the three Alumni Trustee positions on the College’s Board of Trustees.



*Allan Anderson is inducted in the Hall of Fame.*

The [Society of Wabash College Class Agents](#) works to support the College and its alumni through individual representatives — Class Agents — appointed to each Wabash class. A Class Agent is responsible for perpetuating a personal relationship among alumni within a class while, at the same

time, serving as the personal interface between the College and the alumni of that class to stimulate alumni participation in not only the daily life of the College but also the long-term efforts to achieve the College's mission. With respect to the College, Class Agents are expected to stimulate new admissions referrals, communicate directly with the College and its alumni, and provide fundraising leadership. Class Agents are selected based on their leadership and service and the resulting desire to serve their class and their College. The Society of Wabash College Class Agents, in conjunction with the NAWM and the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, hosts annual symposia to discuss the constantly-evolving role of the Class Agent and how the Agent can best serve the needs of the College and its alumni through effective communication and leadership.

One of the most important ways in which alumni interact with the College and serve its mission is through the Admissions Office. As at other colleges, alumni are important in recruiting students; we know that, year in and year out, between 30% and 50% of an entering class is connected to at least one alumnus who played a role in alerting the student to the College and recruiting them. As a result, Wabash has been particularly active in cultivating alumni volunteers to assist in Admissions' efforts. Through this process, alumni are engaged in reaching out to individual students and their parents, attending receptions and high school and community college fairs, either with Admissions staff or on their own, and supporting staff in their efforts throughout the country.

Admissions has recently made special efforts with alumni teachers to help them become more effective recruiters to students in their classes and schools who might become excellent Wabash men. This includes hosting them on campus and visiting them at their schools. Alumni also play an important role in all prominent admission visit days, including Honor Scholarship and Top Ten programs; they serve on panels, have lunch with parents, and follow up in conversation and support of the students' decision to attend Wabash. Each year at Homecoming the NAWM honors one or more Alumni Admissions Fellows for distinctive meritorious service to the College's Admissions effort.



*Alumni doctors returned to campus in fall 2010 to network with students and provide career advice.*

Importantly, alumni support of students does not end with matriculation. They also support students by accepting and often financially supporting internships in their businesses (addressed more in Criterion 5B/5C), and in the many ways in which they interact with students in leadership in fraternity affairs and clubs and organizations, in offering lectures and serving as guests in class discussions, in mentoring new students, and in supporting students and alumni who are new to their communities or areas of the country.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Wabash College engages in active and productive communications with its alumni about how it can best serve their needs, meet their expectations, and engage them in the life of the College to their own and the College's profit. The College makes multiple efforts to engage and learn from alumni and serve their needs as is demonstrated by events such as Big Bash weekend, communications such as *Wabash Magazine*, activities such as engaging alumni in admissions and career services programs, and systematic efforts to obtain feedback from alumni via survey research, web analytics, and alumni networks.

#### **Crawfordsville and Montgomery County Communities**

The 2008 Strategic Plan expressed Wabash's commitment to community engagement quite explicitly. Strategic Goal 5 reads, "In furtherance of Goals 1 through 4, study and formulate recommendations

concerning the applications of intellectual capital in support of Crawfordsville and Montgomery County.” Given that the previous strategic plan included no such commitment to the local community, the presence of this goal, in and of itself, reflects a renewed commitment to College-community relations. In addition, following the adoption of the 2008 Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees conducted a survey of 10 GLCA colleges (to which nine college presidents and one emeritus trustee responded) regarding how their colleges have worked with, contributed to, and emphasized connections between their college and the surrounding community. As with the other strategic plan goals, a committee of faculty and staff also worked to explore the implications and possibilities for this initiative; however, the economic downturn of fall 2008 impeded the pace for realizing this goal. Fortunately, President Patrick White has since catalyzed a recommitment to this community effort. As evidence of this, President White made community involvement and support the focus of his [October 7, 2011 comments to the Board of Trustees](#), providing information to the Board about not only how Wabash is already engaging the community but also how we might work to engage it more effectively in the future.

Wabash faculty, staff, and students are, in fact, highly involved in the community in positions that promote awareness of community needs. Indeed, approximately 30 Wabash faculty, staff, and students serve on the boards of directors of local organizations, including the Montgomery County United Fund for You (the community’s version of the United Way), Crawfordsville Public Library, Montgomery County Community Foundation, Crawfordsville Main Street, Crawfordsville School Board, downtown’s Vanity Theater, League of Women Voters, Art League of Montgomery County, and Boys and Girls Club of Montgomery County.

The Wabash impact upon the Crawfordsville community has been significant. For example, several College members have been deeply involved with the establishment of the new Montgomery County Free Clinic, with nearly one-third of the [Free Clinic’s officers and board](#) having a connection to the College. The clinic will provide urgently needed medical and dental services to uninsured residents of Montgomery County based on income level.

Members of the Wabash community also worked on behalf of the successful May 2012 referendum to fund the construction of a new middle school to replace the outdated and unsafe Tuttle Middle School (named after an early Wabash President, Joseph Tuttle). As President White expressed in a Letter to the Editor in the *Journal Review* newspaper and in an all-campus email message supporting the measure, the effort is emblematic of the College’s strategic plan effort to build a stronger relationship with Crawfordsville and to “do our part to ensure that Crawfordsville continues to be a vibrant city with opportunities to work, learn, shop, dine, play, and volunteer. A new middle school — built to department of education standards with improved technology — will help push our community forward.”

In addition to these efforts, President White’s work with local government officials, including Crawfordsville Mayor and Wabash alumnus Todd Barton, provides a regular mechanism by which the College learns from and informs community officials about needs and resources of both parties. As one example of the impact of such interaction, meetings between Wabash and Crawfordsville



*Nearly one-third of the Free Clinic’s officers and board members have a connection to Wabash.*

administrators led the city to pursue a Stellar Communities Grant from the state of Indiana. President White and his wife Chris are heavily involved in the community, with one, the other, or both serving on the boards of and/or actively advocating for the [Montgomery County Free Clinic](#), Crawfordsville Main Street, [Montgomery County Economic Development](#), [Montgomery County Community Foundation](#), and Montgomery County United Fund for You ([MUFFY](#)). Such investment in community organizations by the President and by other Wabash faculty, staff, and students provides the College numerous opportunities to learn about the ways that the College and its surrounding communities can benefit one another and through service to advance the College's Mission of living humanely.

This commitment and connection to community is also manifest in the work of the College on issues of safety and security, efforts that were also noted in the Introduction of the *Self-Study Report*. The College's Safety Committee has worked closely with local police and fire departments to ensure the safety of Wabash students, visitors, and employees. With the help of the local fire department, the Safety Committee has organized fire drills in academic buildings during each of the last four years, has improved the visibility and clarity of emergency signage, and has, in conjunction with IT Services, implemented an emergency alert system by which students and employees receive cell phone calls, text messages, and/or emails in the event of campus or local emergency, including severe weather. The Safety Committee, Director of Safety and Security, and President's Staff have also worked with Crawfordsville safety officials in emergency management drills — one that focused on a shooter on campus and another that focused on a hazardous waste spill — as well as a number of table top exercises. Finally, three members of the College staff are active participants in the County Crisis Team, which is a multi-agency group comprising schools, emergency management personnel, and various agencies. Such efforts reflect the College's commitment to learning from the local community and to understanding and meeting the safety needs of its students, employees, and surrounding community members.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Wabash College is heavily invested in the Crawfordsville and Montgomery County communities as is demonstrated by the work of its constituents in community organizations and for community causes. This investment has been formalized in the College's strategic plan and promises that Wabash will continue to be engaged in efforts to better the local area while, at the same time, it embodies two prongs of the Mission Statement: to be an educational community that acts responsibly and lives humanely.

## **5B. WABASH COLLEGE HAS THE CAPACITY AND THE COMMITMENT TO ENGAGE WITH ITS IDENTIFIED CONSTITUENCIES AND COMMUNITIES.**

## **5C. WABASH COLLEGE DEMONSTRATES ITS RESPONSIVENESS TO THOSE CONSTITUENCIES THAT DEPEND ON IT FOR SERVICE.**

The College's capacity and commitment to engage with its constituencies and communities are evidenced effectively by its demonstrated responsiveness to these constituencies. As such, we have combined consideration of these two Criterion components and discuss programs and evidence that speak at once to both components.

### **Students**

The College's capacity and commitment to meeting the needs of its students is evidenced in curricular policies and enrichment efforts, student services, and extra-curricular opportunities.

### *Curricular Policies and Partnerships*

In terms of curricular policies, the College's transfer policy allows students flexibility in how they complete the 34 course credits needed to graduate. Though the vast majority of Wabash students spend four years at the College (transfer students comprise 1% of the student body), approximately 20% of Wabash students transfer in at least one credit from another accredited institution. Approximately another 20% of students study abroad and receive course credit during that time (though such credit is not considered "transfer" credit). The College also exerts substantial control over the quality of the work and courses for which students can earn credit. For instance, students must earn a C- or better to earn transfer credit (and grades for transfer credits are not calculated in a student's GPA), and wholly online courses are not accepted for transfer credit. Also, transfer courses whose credit students wish to apply towards specific major, minor, foreign language, or mathematics requirements must be vetted by the relevant department in order for transfer credit to be granted; and a student may use no more than one transfer credit to satisfy the requirements of each distribution area.

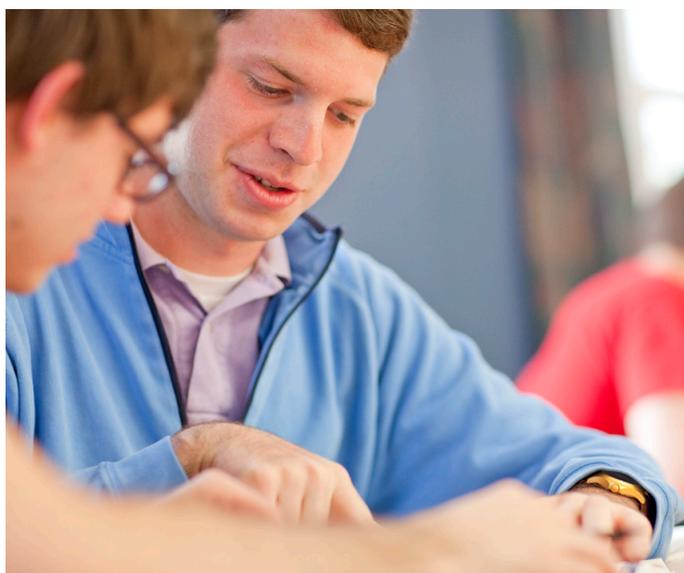
The College also has forged multiple academic partnerships to serve the curricular and professional needs of its students. Specifically, Wabash has partnered with three institutions (Columbia University, Washington University in St. Louis, and Purdue University) to establish dual degree engineering programs. In these programs, students who are interested in an engineering degree complete three (or alternatively four) years of course work at Wabash, during which they must complete all requirements for Wabash graduation, and then spend two years at the partnered school, taking engineering classes that meet the engineering degree requirements. As noted previously, the most recent of these partnerships was finalized with Purdue in 2010 and provides students with the opportunity to pursue one of five different engineering degrees: mechanical, chemical, electrical, computer, and multidisciplinary. Another useful academic partnership is the "pipeline program" with the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University for a master of science in accounting, discussed in the previous Criterion.

Other prominent examples that show the capacity of the College to form productive partnerships that are responsive to student needs involve efforts at bringing diversity to the curriculum, which were discussed more broadly in Criterion 3C. For example, the department of modern languages and literatures has collaborated with DePauw University for nine years on two different programs: the Summer Study in Ecuador Program (begun in 2003) and a collaborative course enrollment agreement (begun in the fall of 2008) that allows students at each college to take foreign language courses that their College does not offer. These credits are transcribed as credit from the home institution (rather than as transfer credit from the attending institution). To date, 15 Wabash students have completed 20 course credits under this arrangement, including courses in Russian, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese. The Summer Study in Ecuador program, described previously in Criterion 3C, involves a relationship with *Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador* in Quito, Ecuador and gives Wabash students and faculty the opportunity to study in Ecuador for an entire month, spending part of that time in intensive language training and cultural study and part engaged in other discipline-specific work with Wabash faculty and staff also present in Ecuador. Finally, in conjunction with the introduction of Chinese language study and the expansion of Asian Studies offerings, the College has newly established relationships with Fudan University and East China Normal University in Shanghai that now permit intensive student language study and travel as well as faculty research and exchange.

In sum, the College has academic policies and programs that demonstrate Wabash's capacity and commitment to engage with students and to be responsive to their needs. Wabash thereby expands the range of students' curricular and professional horizons so as to provide the most enriching curricular experience possible in support of its liberal arts mission.

### *Student Services*

In addition to offering curricular programs that meet students' needs, the College offers extensive support services that assist students' academic, personal, and social functioning. The [Office of Academic Support Services](#) is led by a director whose education is in English composition and rhetoric and who oversees three services — Peer Tutoring, Study Skills, and Disability Services. The tutoring services include writing and quantitative skills tutoring by both undergraduates and by the director. The Writing Center tutors are faculty-recommended juniors or seniors who work in one-hour collaborative sessions with the students who visit the Center. Such visits are often “one-time” and at the encouragement of a faculty person (especially when a student is in a composition course or Freshman Tutorial), but students may also set up regular appointments with the tutors. During the 2010-11 year, 23% of the student body and 45% of the freshman class visited the Writing Center at least once; and a fall 2011 survey of freshmen suggested that 53% of the Class of 2015 visited the Writing Center at least once during their first semester on campus.



*About 30 faculty-recommended tutors work with students in the QSC.*

The Quantitative Skills Center (QSC), a second branch of Peer Tutoring services, serves a slightly smaller percentage of students but does so more times per student than does the Writing Center. Specifically, the Center offers tutoring every Sunday through Thursday evening in mathematics, chemistry, biology, physics, and economics. Approximately 30 faculty-recommended tutors provide assistance, with extra tutors available prior to exams in entry-level classes (e.g., BIO 111). While student use of QSC services is difficult to track due to the way students visit, it is estimated that QSC tutors are visited between 500 and 600 times (often by the same student multiple times) during the fall

semester and 250 times in the spring semester. Freshmen are the most frequent visitors to the QSC. The QSC is particularly important at Wabash given the number of students who begin their Wabash careers in calculus and entry-level “for majors” natural science courses (e.g., BIO 111 and CHE 111) but find themselves overwhelmed by the rigor of the classes. Overall then, the Writing Center and QSC are important and well-utilized resources that support the academic work of Wabash students and their engagement in the College's academic life. This importance is confirmed by the 2011 CIRP senior survey in which 63% of graduating seniors reported they were satisfied or very satisfied (and only 5% dissatisfied) with the tutoring services provided. Such evaluations were reliably more positive than those by male students at four-year private non-sectarian colleges who participated in the same survey.

The Academic Support Services Director is solely responsible for the Study Skills and Disability Services components of the Academic Support Services office. She offers an annual time management workshop for freshmen students during the third week of classes, one that is attended by, on average, 50 students per year, and works one-on-one with students throughout the year on many different study skills elements, including note taking, test taking, and reading skills. According to the Director, these sessions are often voluntary but are sometimes mandated by the Dean of Students and/or

#### Electronic Resources

**2011 CIRP  
Freshman & Senior  
Surveys**

by faculty advisors and instructors. Approximately 10% of the student body avails themselves of assistance with study skills during an academic year.

Finally, the Director takes lead responsibility for working with students who have identified disabilities (approximately 5% to 7% of the student body). The Director contacts all students who self-identify as having a learning disability and works with them to file the appropriate documentation and to educate them regarding their responsibilities and rights, though most of these students do not pursue service beyond the initial meeting with the Director. Among the various ways that the Director helps meet the needs of these students are (a) facilitating conversations between the students and their instructors, usually with a student-approved letter of information to each instructor; (b) arranging for an alternate space in which to complete exams, should extra time be needed; and (c) assuring that Wabash classrooms and faculty are equipped with technology that affords all students equal access to a Wabash education. Overall then, the Office of Academic Support Services provides valuable resources for students to meet the rigorous demands of a Wabash education.

The College also provides extensive health services to students. Wabash's [Student Health Center](#) employs two medical doctors, both alumni of the College, who each spend 7.5 hours per week on campus and a full-time nurse who coordinates appointments, offers appropriate care, and manages services. The Student Health Center provides illness examinations (diagnosis and care for the everyday illnesses that students confront), wellness examinations (including athletic physical examinations, blood pressure screening, immunizations for students' international travel), rehabilitation services (via the College's two Athletic Trainers), and counseling services (described below). The doctors and nurse also make referrals to specialized care when necessary. Importantly, the full-time nurse keeps careful record of immunizations and visits to the Health Center. This record suggests that first-year students visit the center more often than their upper-class counterparts with upper respiratory infection being the most frequent diagnosis while more than 100 students each year receive the influenza vaccination. The 2011 senior CIRP survey suggested that more than 80% of graduating Wabash seniors were satisfied or very satisfied with the Student Health services the College provides.

Students do not, however, have the same positive view of the College's mental health services ([Counseling Center](#)). Indeed, in the 2011 senior survey, only 48% of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with these services, and such responses are consistent with those collected in previous years. It is also important to note that, according to recent surveys, approximately half of Wabash freshmen and 60% of seniors reported feeling depressed at least "occasionally," and approximately 15% and 25% of freshmen and seniors, respectively, reported that they "frequently" felt overwhelmed. Also, approximately 20% of Wabash freshmen arrive on campus taking regular medication, and 17% are at high or very high risk (according to family history) for substance abuse problems (such risk is assessed via the pre-matriculation AlcoholWise survey, required of all freshmen). These findings suggest a need for effective, possibly more extensive mental health services.

From 2002-2010, the Counseling Center at Wabash was staffed part-time by licensed psychologists who were available during evenings and weekends. Starting in 2011, however, the College fully staffed its Counseling Center with two half-time counselors. As such, students have greater access to the counseling services they may need, and faculty are being made more aware of the nature and availability of those services. Indeed, during fall 2011, for the first time in recent memory, one of the counselors met with all freshman advisors to discuss the counseling services the College provides and how faculty and students can access those services. The counselor also discussed at length the legal and ethical obligations and restrictions limiting advisors in working with students who may need or seek counseling services. In sum, in the past two years, the College has focused greater attention and

resources to meet student counseling needs and has been intentional about improving student access to and experience with the services provided; however, the College will continue to monitor student mental health needs to make sure it is meeting those needs as effectively as possible.

Relatedly, the College works to assess and educate students about substance use on campus. National surveys (e.g., CIRP and HERI) suggest that Wabash seniors spend less time “partying” than do men at other selective liberal arts colleges; only 6% of Wabash seniors (compared to 15% of men at other private non-sectarian colleges) spent more than 11 hours per week “partying.” However, Wabash freshmen and seniors are as likely, if not more likely, than other male students to drink alcohol at some point during the academic year. More than 80% of 2011 seniors admitted to drinking beer or wine at least occasionally; this percentage was not reliably different from the percentage of men at other private non-sectarian colleges that reported such “at least occasional” use. As such, College personnel, including students, faculty/staff, and administrators, remain highly mindful of substance use on campus. For instance, the WAR council (Wabash Acts Responsibly, a student organization) is devoted to helping students make informed and wise decisions about substance use, and it does so by sponsoring educational and social events that are alcohol and tobacco free. In addition, the Dean of Students’ Office sponsored in 2009 a campus visit by and conversation with a research analyst in the field of college-aged alcohol use and prevention, and also requires all freshmen to take the AlcoholWise on-line survey before they can begin classes. This survey is an educational assessment of the students’ substance use and risk for substance use problems. The Dean of Students’ Office also educates leaders of fraternities and independent men’s living units (during the HELP Program described more below) to identify and respond to problematic substance use. The two Student Health Center physicians guide this educational session, which involves consideration of the signs of both acute and chronic substance use as well as appropriate responses to different levels of such use. Consistent with efforts explained in the *Self-Study Report’s* Introduction, programs like these reflect the College’s continued effort to maintain and, where needed, increase awareness of the substance use by Wabash students and its consequences for those students and the broader Wabash community. In addition, such programs are meant to equip our students to be effective responders to problems, should they arise.

Somewhat more broadly, an [educational program for living unit leaders](#), titled Wabash Housing and Education and Leaders Partnership (HELP), facilitates the College’s goal of fostering leadership in its students by providing information they need to be effective living unit leaders. The program is conducted for a single day in advance of each academic semester, and each living unit sends a team of representatives to the program. All Resident Assistants in independent men’s living units are required to attend the program, and fraternity representatives typically include the President, Vice-President, Risk Manager, Pledge Educator, Social Chair, and Scholarship Chair.

The program typically includes opening remarks by the President and Dean of Students and as many as eight different “breakout” sessions. Among these sessions are opportunities for senior administrators and other key staff members to talk with students who serve different roles in the living units. For example, in the fall meeting fraternity Presidents and Treasurers meet with the College’s CFO and his assistant, and Risk Managers and Social Chairmen meet with the Director of College Safety and Security. Afterward, living unit teams disperse into concurrent sessions, simultaneously offered presentations about a variety of topics, including “Wellness

Electronic Resource  
**HELP  
Program Agendas**



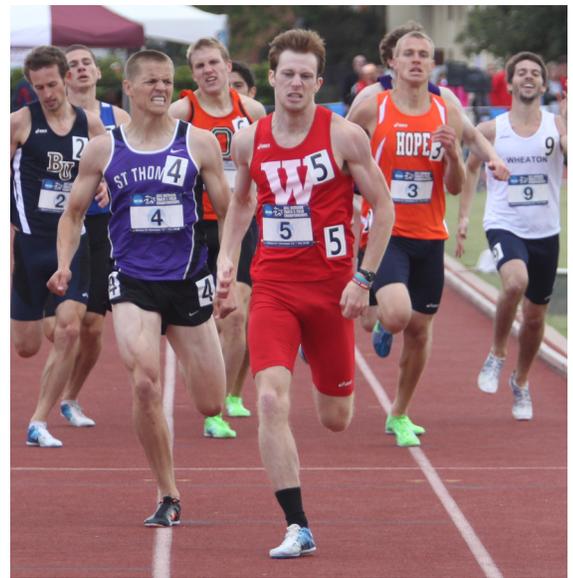
*Hal Utterback of the Crawfordsville Police Department presents at the spring 2012 HELP program.*

and Illness” (led by the College Nurse), “Assisting students with academics” (led by the Director of Academic Support Services and Coordinator of Student Retention and Engagement), “Financial Aid and Student Accounts” (led by the Director of Financial Aid), and “Alumni Board Relations” (led by the Dean for College Advancement and Dean of Students). The day concludes with teams from each living unit meeting together to share information from these sessions and to strategize ways to disseminate the information to students in their living units. These sessions are noteworthy for a number of reasons, including the contact they provide between student leaders and College administrators, the collaboration they promote among student leaders within and across living units, and perhaps most importantly, the information they provide to student leaders so that they can effectively serve the needs of fellow students, who depend upon them for guidance and support. Indeed, the program reflects the College’s responsiveness to the needs of its student leaders and, in turn, the needs of the general student body.

### ***Extra-Curricular Opportunities***

In addition to demonstrating capacity and commitment to responsively engage students through curricular experiences and beneficial student services, Wabash offers students substantial opportunities for extracurricular involvement, including athletic participation, student-funded and student-led clubs, and a robust Schroeder Center for Career Development.

Wabash participates in the North Coast Athletic Conference ([NCAC](#)) and fields 11 teams in NCAA Division III intercollegiate athletics. In 2010-11, 309 students participated on these teams, meaning that more than 35% of the student-body participated in intercollegiate athletics. The larger number of students participating in athletics is an accurate indicator of the athletic investment and athletic pride exhibited on campus. In recent years varsity teams in football, baseball, cross country, and track and field have won conference championships. Football and cross country have had notable national successes as well, and in 2012 Wabash boasted the [Division III Indoor Track and Field National Champion in the mile](#) and the national runner-up in the 800 meter run, as well as the [National Champion in the outdoor 800 meter run](#).



*Jake Waterman won the 2012 national championship in the 800-meter run.*

With such a high percentage of student-athletes, Wabash must be mindful that the athletic and academic communities collaborate effectively to facilitate students’ learning experiences. Such mindfulness is reflected in multiple communication and information gathering efforts. For instance, the Athletic Department tracks carefully the [academic performance of student-athletes](#), and coaches take an active role in encouraging students to meet both athletic and academic demands. Data suggest that Wabash student-athletes do so admirably. During fall 2010, Wabash student-athletes earned an average GPA of 3.044, with 70 members achieving Dean’s List recognition and 120 earning a 3.25 GPA or better. A notable inclusion among academic performance by student-athletes is that in 2012 the cross country team was named a Division III Men’s Cross Country [All-Academic Team](#) selection. The academic achievements of these student-athletes compare favorably to Wabash’s non-athletes, and the results are similar to a systematic assessment of the academic performance of Wabash

athletes in 2003 and 2004. That assessment suggested that lettered athletes were more likely than non-athletes to graduate from Wabash, but that they did so with lower GPAs. Despite these lower GPAs, however, there was no evidence that athletes were performing less well academically than one would have expected given their college entrance exam scores. This report was disseminated to the Athletic Department during a meeting of the Faculty Athletic Committee and has driven continued conversation on campus about the important balance between athletics and academics. Indeed, whereas the College did not, before this report, track the athletic status of each of its students, it does so now so that the academic performance of student-athletes can be assessed each year.

Another example of the way that the Athletic Department assesses and governs itself is its recently completed [self-study](#) in which coaches and staff examined all aspects of the department and its connection to the broader College community. Such an effort is consistent with the department's goal to serve student-athletes as effectively as possible in accordance with the College's mission and reflects the College-wide ethos of assessment leading to improvement.

Electronic Resource  
**Athletic Department  
2011 Self-Study**

In addition to efforts by the Athletic Department to gauge its connection to the academic community, the academic community is active in conversations about athletics. The Faculty Athletic Representative works closely with Athletic Department staff and meets annually with freshmen student-athletes to discuss ways to balance athletics and academic demands. This faculty person also accompanies the Athletic Director and President to the NCAA convention and to the NCAC meetings that are part of that convention. In addition, faculty members sit on the Faculty Athletic Committee with coaches and the Athletic Director and have a role in vetting and commenting upon team travel schedules. More specifically, these faculty discuss missed class time with coaches, disseminate the schedules to other faculty, and solicit comment from the wider faculty body on these topics.

The Athletic Department staff are also recognized as vital College educators. Most head coaches enjoy associated faculty status and, as such, serve as Wabash teachers, who, like faculty, are responsible for the full education of students as young men. Coaches and staff with associated faculty status, including the Director of Athletics, have faculty meeting eligibility, participate on standing, ad hoc, and grant-supporting College committees, and participate in formal mentoring and informal advising roles. For example, the head basketball and track and field coaches serve on the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies (MXIBS) advisory board and have organized an alumni mentoring program for African American students and peer-to-peer conversational groups.

Wabash also offers 21 intramural sports, ranging from flag football and basketball to table tennis and cornhole, and participation in the program is strong. In the last four years, participation numbers have ranged from a low of 955 total student participants to a high of 1,112 student participants (this number counts multiple times those who participate in multiple intramural sports). Even with repeat participants, such numbers suggest that a significant portion of the student body makes use of this program. Indeed, participation in intramurals, as well as Wabash's long and storied tradition of intercollegiate sports, is likely why students consistently identify Wabash as a "Jock School" in the annual Princeton Review survey.

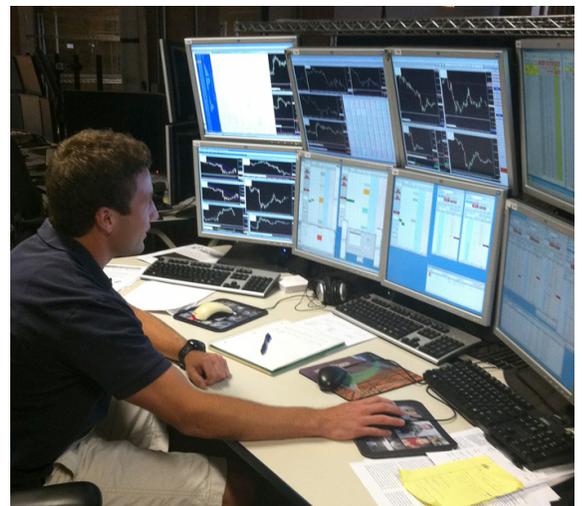
In addition to athletics, students have their pick of 70 different [student clubs](#) in four different areas of student-funding appropriation (student life, student issues, recreation, and academics). As examples, student life clubs include the students' Board of Publications and WAR Council; student issues clubs include Students for Sustainability and 'shOUT (a club devoted to support of gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgender individuals at Wabash); recreational clubs include those devoted to running, cycling, ultimate disc, volleyball, and hiking; and academic clubs include Pre-Law, Pre-Health, and Pre-Dental

clubs, among others. To start a club, a student needs only 10 student signatures of support and a signature from a sponsoring faculty representative. Funding for all clubs is determined solely by the [Student Senate](#), whose budget is approximately \$400,000 each year, and is distributed in accordance with [formal guidelines](#). It is a testament to the student-centered nature of the Wabash culture that student clubs are completely student-organized, student-run, and student-funded, a reality that originates in the commitment to educating leaders who think critically and independently.

Finally, the College's [Schroeder Center for Career Development](#) and a new grant-funded set of business immersion and leadership programs serve Wabash students as they look towards their post-college futures. The Schroeder Center is fast becoming one of the most frequently utilized resources on campus: a fall 2011 survey of the Class of 2015 suggested that more than 60% of freshmen had visited the Schroeder Center at least once during their first semester on campus. The center's two full-time professional staff and one administrative assistant provide a full range of job, graduate school, and internship search and selection services for students. For instance, the Schroeder Center has produced a thorough guide to jobs, internships, and graduate school, in which students can find a wealth of information from advice for how to choose a career path, to descriptions of Wabash internship programs, to sample resumes and cover letters. The Schroeder Center also provides all students access to interest and personality inventories (e.g., StrengthsQuest, the Strong Interest Inventory, and FOCUS inventories) that help them identify career paths, assists students with the writing of resumes and cover letters, and even gives students the opportunity to borrow business suits, shoes, shirts, and ties (donated or purchased by alumni and staff) for interviews. To facilitate networking and to educate students and alumni about appropriate contacts for careers, the Schroeder Center manages social media groups for students and alumni on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) and provides a number of on- and off-campus networking events, workshops, immersion travel opportunities, and seminars. For instance, students can attend Schroeder Center events that address dining etiquette, effective interview strategies, and "What you can do with a major in . . ." different academic fields.

It is also worth noting that the Schroeder Center devotes a portion of its website to providing information meant for [companies who may recruit](#) at Wabash. Indeed, this section provides a rationale for why companies would want to recruit Wabash men, and that rationale invokes heavily the College's Mission Statement and its Core Values, references college assessment efforts (e.g., National Survey of Student Engagement), and makes note of the diversity of experiences students enjoy, including study abroad and immersion courses, even before mentioning the impressive statistics regarding students' career and graduate school outcomes. In short, the Schroeder Center for Career Development effectively provides information to Wabash students about both professions and graduate schools and is assisting them in achieving their career goals.

The Schroeder Center's efforts to promote internships and student-alumni networking dovetail with the College's new Business Immersion and Business Leaders programs, some of which have been explained in earlier portions of this *Self-Study Report*. These programs are currently funded by a Sustaining Grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. (approved in 2008 and active until 2013) in the Initiative to Promote Opportunities through Educational Collaboration



*The Schroeder Center promotes a broad range of internships.*

Program, which was funded by an initial 2003 grant; both programs are coordinated by a single, full-time staff person. The programs include efforts to connect students to internship opportunities in Indiana in hopes that they find fulfilling and meaningful employment within the state upon graduation. To date, the internship program has placed 71 students in positions within the state. The Business Immersion Program, which accepted its first class of students in 2004, includes eight weeks of summer work during which students learn from Wabash alumni and local business leaders foundational knowledge in a variety of areas of business and also how to move a business idea to start-up status. As they learn such information, students work on a consulting project and write a complete plan for a new business. Somewhat similarly, students in the program's Marketing Immersion component spend spring break week visiting marketing and advertising firms to learn about the elements of a marketing plan and then crafting such a plan for a local business. The business and marketing immersion programs to date have served 40 and 36 students, respectively, with goals to reach 72 and 60 total students served by the end of 2013.



*Alumni volunteer to work with students to polish their interviewing skills.*

In addition to these immersion programs, the Lilly Sustaining Grant also supports student work for community businesses. Since this community program began in 2010, the grant has helped fund 19 students in community Education Self-Help (ESH) positions, with a goal of 35 such placements by 2013. In this program, Wabash students receive a salary from the College to work in select non-profit organizations in the community. Finally, the grant has enabled Schroeder Center staff to provide "industry dinners," meals during which students learn from alumni about opportunities in a specific professional field, networking opportunities, and externship possibilities around the state. Such programs and those described above are providing intensive and novel opportunities for students to position themselves effectively for their post-Wabash careers. It is not surprising then that more than 76% of Wabash seniors in 2011 said that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with career counseling and advising, percentages that were reliably more favorable than responses by students at other private non-sectarian, four-year colleges who completed the CIRP survey.

The Business Immersion and Business Leaders programs, and the efforts of the Schroeder Center as a whole for that matter, have benefitted greatly from generous alumni who have contributed lectures, internship positions, and invaluable mentorship. Wabash alumni participating in the Schroeder Career Center Alumni Network offer advice to students thinking of a career in their business, profession, or industry.

An interesting intersection is that some of the work by the Schroeder Center and the Sustaining Grant, especially the facilitation of connections between student and alumni, grew out of the College's LEAD (Linking Education and Alumni Development) Program. The LEAD Program, launched in 2005, works to educate Wabash students about the privileges and responsibilities of being a Wabash College alumnus. The program grew out of the Advancement Office's sense that the distractions that come with being a new college graduate were causing Wabash to lose contact with young alumni too quickly. Thus, the College implemented a series of events, originally intending to schedule two for each alumnus class (sophomore, junior, and senior) during each academic year,

to engage these young alumni more quickly and effectively. These events included guest speakers (e.g., to talk about marketing oneself after college), a “welcome to the ranks of the alumni” dinner for sophomores, a senior cookout with the NAWM, and a dinner with trustees and NAWM board members (a dinner to which all juniors and seniors were invited). Assessment of the program has allowed the Advancement Office to focus on the more popular events (like the trustee dinner and senior cookout, which have been well-received and well-attended), to cede responsibility of others (like the etiquette dinner and entrepreneur summit) to the Schroeder Center, and to discontinue others (like the sophomore cookout).

Among the more recent inclusions in the LEAD Program is an annual Chapel Talk by a prominent alumnus (in 2011 it was the president of the NAWM) about the responsibilities of Wabash alumni. An important aspect of the orientation program involves alumni in discussion with freshmen about the booklet *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants*, which describes briefly the history and traditions of the College (and which has been evaluated favorably by freshmen in surveys conducted by the First Year Experience Study Group). Overall then, the LEAD Program represents one of the College’s stronger efforts to prepare its students for life after Wabash and also to provide alumni an additional point of contact, engagement, and re-entry with the College.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Wabash College exhibits a capacity and commitment to engage students and to be responsive to their needs. This capacity is demonstrated through curricular guidelines and opportunities, student services, and extra-curricular opportunities. Wabash has multiple forms of evidence that students appreciate the services provided and that they are useful and effective. The College uses this evidence to strengthen further its services. Moreover, the opportunities provided express the mission of the institution to develop independent, well-rounded young men. Wabash should continue to strive to provide enriching educational opportunities and partnerships and monitor and build its student services and extra-curricular offerings. One area in particular that merits continued attention is the Counseling Center and the mental well-being of students; the College must assess the impact of improvements to counselor availability and monitor student satisfaction with those services.

### **Employees**

One measure of the College’s commitment and responsiveness to its employees is embodied in the variety of programs for faculty and staff development that were discussed in Criterion 4. In this section, we discuss further how that commitment and responsiveness is also manifest clearly in the College’s financial investments in employee salary and benefits.

On the Quality of Life survey (described previously), faculty rated salary as the single most important priority that the College could pursue in order to improve their experience. As stated in the 2008 Strategic Plan, the College is committed to “competitive salary and benefit packages that allow Wabash to continue to recruit and retain exceptional teachers and scholars.” While the difficult financial times that began in 2008 temporarily inhibited the College’s ability to provide salary increases to faculty and staff, in 2011 the Board of Trustees and senior administrators initiated the [\*William C. Placher Fund for Faculty Support\*](#). This novel fund was catalyzed by the generous gift by beloved Wabash alumnus and professor William C. Placher Jr. of his entire estate to the College to be used at the discretion of the institution. The established fund allocates designated endowment dollars to boost salaries of all ranks of tenured and tenure-track faculty so that these salaries are even more competitive with our counterparts in the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) and Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM). The fund was valued at slightly more than \$5 million initially, and the Trustees have committed the College to raising, during the Challenge of Excellence campaign, another \$5 million. Importantly, and as [\*explained by the Dean of the College\*](#), this fund

does not replace annual salary raises, budgeted at 3% over the next four years, that are part of the operating budget; rather, the Placher Funds are an addition to annual budgeted raises. In its first year of allocation, the Placher Fund supplement provided approximately \$212,000 for faculty salaries, and the regular salary raise pool budgeted for operating expenses was approximately \$148,000. As a result, according to an analysis of GLCA/ACM salary data for 2011-12, the average salary gain at Wabash this past year was the highest among this group of schools. This also places Wabash eighth in average faculty salary across the 24 institutions and saw an improvement of two spots for each academic rank. The creation of this fund in support of faculty salaries is evidence of trustees' long-standing commitment to faculty support and the College's commitment to attracting and retaining excellent faculty, as articulated in the strategic plan, and to its acknowledgement that keeping salaries competitive is an important component of that effort.

With regard to staff salaries, recent GLCA and other consortial comparative data suggest that salaries lag behind our counterparts. As an example, only one of the College's senior administrators, including the President, earns a salary that places him in the top 50% of GLCA colleges, though all of these administrators are in the top 50% of years of service in their current position; some of these salaries are in the bottom quartile. The salaries of other administrative and staff positions are similarly unimpressive relative to their counterparts. Comparisons of IT Services staff salaries to those of individuals at similar positions at other GLCA and Consortium of Liberal Arts Schools (CLAC) schools (discussed in Criterion 2) reveal the same troubling picture. To date, the College has not systematically or effectively addressed this relative weakness in competitive staff salaries.

On the other hand, the College's health and financial benefits provide evidence of responsiveness to both faculty and staff concerns. In short, the overall package of benefits is generous. The College continues to pay the full premium for employee health insurance and 60% of dependent coverage. Employee coverage also includes life insurance, short-term disability, and long-term disability, while employees may purchase additional supplemental life insurance and accident coverage. In addition, employees can make use of Flexible Spending Accounts allocated to medical as well as dependent care costs. Recently, the College partnered with providers so that employees could enroll in dental and vision coverage, plans to which employees had long requested access. All full-time College staff are also eligible for paid vacation time, either four weeks (for salaried employees) or up to four weeks based on consecutive time of employment at the College (for hourly employees). In addition, any College employee who has worked at the College for five consecutive years is eligible for one of four tuition benefit programs. That is, children of these employees may attend Wabash tuition free; may participate in the GLCA tuition exchange program; may participate in the Tuition Exchange, Inc. program; or may receive the lesser of \$2,500 or the tuition charge at the university or college the child attends. As many as two children may participate in one of these programs. Also, in the fall 2011 the College instituted a [parental leave benefit](#) for all staff. Staff may elect 15 weeks of paid time away from work if they are the primary care provider for newborn or adopted children. Individuals may also elect an additional 15 weeks with no salary. Finally, the equivalent of 10% of full-time employees' monthly salary is placed into a retirement account, the allocation over which the employee has full control. All employees also have the option of contributing to this retirement account via monthly payroll



*Wabash spends about 18% of an employee's salary on benefits, including retirement and healthcare.*

deduction. All told, the College spends approximately 18% of employees' total compensations on retirement, disability, FICA, and medicare payments (benefits that are paid by percentage of employee salary) and another 7% (approximately and on average across all College employees) for health care costs, life insurance premiums, and child tuition benefits, benefits that cost a similar dollar amount for all employees. Overall then, benefits are adequate, and even generous, in meeting the needs of employees.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** Wabash College is working to serve the financial, medical, and retirement needs of its employees. It is noteworthy that the College has continued to pay employee health premiums and to contribute 10% of employee salary to retirement accounts even during the financial crisis that shocked the College in 2008 and led some institutions to reduce benefits as a cost-cutting measure. With regard to salary, the Placher Fund supports the goals of the current strategic plan by providing explicit commitment by the College to faculty salary improvement. While staff benefits have been maintained and improved, competitive compensation deserves continuing College attention, always with the goal of attracting, retaining, and supporting faculty and staff committed to the students and the College's mission.

### **Alumni**

The Office of Alumni and Parent Relations is staffed with four full-time employees — a director, assistant director, a database administrator, and a coordinator of communications whose primary tasks are to engage with and meet the needs of the College's alumni. The office uses both standard and distinctive methods for engaging our approximately 12,000 living alumni and for keeping them informed about the College. To start, all living alumni receive a copy of *Wabash Magazine*, the quarterly alumni magazine produced by the Communications and Marketing Office; the office maintains and updates (along with the Communications and Marketing staff) the alumni page on the College website; and alumni are invited back to reunions with their class every five years (discussed previously) and to Homecoming weekend each year. However, the office is also exploring novel ways to reach out to alumni.

One such unique strategy is the Wabash Road Trip. As noted previously, alumni surveys revealed that alumni wanted more contact with current Wabash faculty and students and that alumni networking was an important reason for attending alumni functions. As such, during the summer of 2011, the College piloted a [Wabash Road Trip](#) that hoped to facilitate contact with alumni in a somewhat less formal way than had been explored previously (e.g., in the context of dinner conversation with faculty and students) but still in a way that would keep alumni informed about their alma mater and would provide opportunities for alumni and student-alumni networking. The trip involved two junior Wabash students driving a Wabash-decorated College van to six stops: Lafayette, Merrillville, South Bend, Fort Wayne, and Evansville in Indiana and Louisville, KY. They met with alumni in restaurants, homes, and the University of Notre Dame bookstore, gave out Wabash Road Trip t-shirts, and chatted with alumni informally. According to the Director of Alumni and Parent Relations, the alumni attending these events were almost uniformly positive and excited about this new opportunity to meet with other alumni and to talk with students. Attendance numbers at these events were impressive, reaching a high of 50 alumni in Northwest Indiana and averaging approximately 35 alumni across the six stops. Viewed a success, the program was [repeated and expanded](#) during the summer of 2012.

While the Road Trip emphasizes student-alumni and alumni-alumni contact, the recent on-campus series of Liberal Arts Symposia facilitates alumni-faculty interaction, interaction on which alumni had requested more emphasis in alumni events. The NAWM, the Indianapolis Association of Wabash Men, and the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations have now sponsored three annual Liberal Arts

Symposia, each focused on addressing a common topic from a variety of different perspectives. The first, titled “Wally at the Bat,” focused on baseball as a liberal art; the second focused on food; and the third focused on the automobile. In each case, this quintessential liberal arts event included a series of presentations by Wabash faculty and alumni about the topic and from the perspective of their discipline or expertise. The [“Wally at the Bat”](#) symposium featured, among other presentations, a Wabash chemistry professor discussing the chemistry behind the perfect baseball bat, a history professor discussing how he uses baseball in his teaching of American History, and Wabash alumni and trustees discussing the counseling of professional baseball players to optimize their performance and experiences with Negro League Baseball. Twenty-five alumni attended this first symposium, and the number of alumni attendees doubled in 2011 when the topic was food — [“Wally Bon Vivant.”](#) In 2012, attendance soared more than 50% for the [“Wally at the Wheel”](#) symposium, one focused on the automobile and that featured Jim Davlin, Wabash trustee from the class of 1985 and current Vice President and Treasurer of General Motors, as the keynote speaker.



*Wabash alumnus and General Motors Treasurer Jim Davlin keynoted “Wally at the Wheel” in 2012.*

Finally, in 2011, at the direct request of the NAWM Board, the College initiated a “Wabash Wednesday” program during which members of the Communications and Marketing staff interview a faculty or staff person for a short, interactive conversation about a topic of interest to Wabash alumni and parents. This conversation is broadcast live on the Wabash website and allows viewers to ask questions via Facebook chat and Twitter. The conversation is also posted on the College’s [YouTube channel](#) quickly after completion. Though in its first year, the program has already included a conversation with Wabash’s new Director of Athletics and has addressed the College’s off-campus study programs, the new all-college Enduring Questions course, and undergraduate research. The audience for these events has averaged approximately 100 live viewers each month, and the program will continue as the College aggressively explores new models for increasing alumni access to and interaction with Wabash faculty, staff, and students.

**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** Wabash College has both traditional and novel approaches for engaging its alumni and fulfilling their requests for more contact with current students, with faculty, and with one another. Such approaches are appreciated by alumni, evidence for which is provided below, and have been recognized with a “Circle of Excellence” Award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

### **Crawfordsville and Montgomery County Communities**

The College’s capacity to serve the needs of the greater Crawfordsville and Montgomery County communities is by committee and programmatic structures that facilitate connections with these communities. To start, Wabash supports a College-wide Community Service Committee, comprised of three faculty persons and one staff member, whose primary role is to support service projects by other Wabash groups. For instance, in recent years the committee has supported and hosted six

Montgomery County Relay for Life events and four Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks, and has helped to fund three trips by a Wabash professor and Wabash students to rebuild houses in the wards in New Orleans most damaged by Hurricane Katrina. In addition, Freshman Orientation includes a day on which all freshmen and their advisors complete local community service projects. These projects have included a wide variety of experiences, including rebuilding the stage at the Vanity Theater, cleaning and painting at the Family Crisis Shelter, playing cards and other games with residents at a local assisted living facility, spreading mulch on the playground at the Boys and Girls Club, helping the local Youth Services Bureau clean their storage facility, and cleaning the grounds of and helping to paint the interior of a local church (Wabash Avenue Presbyterian Church, which was founded by the same ministers who founded the College).

In addition, Wabash students, typically freshmen, take an active role in residential fund-raising for the Montgomery County United Fund for You (MUFFY), canvassing neighborhoods around campus for donations to this fund, collecting within their living units, and delivering their proceeds to a reception at the President's home. The College also allows faculty and staff to contribute to this fund via payroll deduction, and in 2011-12 employees contributed more than \$17,000 to the fund. The College also supports students' work at local non-profit organizations through the College's Community Internship Program, which is funded by the Sustaining Grant discussed previously. Indeed, 19 students have worked for these local non-profits and have been paid via Wabash financial aid dollars. Such programs, and others like them, are likely reasons that "participation in community service or volunteer work" is among the NSSE items on which Wabash freshmen rate highest relative to their peers. Moreover, it may be why Wabash freshmen report that their education has contributed effectively to their knowledge, skills, or personal development in "contributing to the community." It is also noteworthy that Wabash seniors report that being a "leader in my community" is more important to them than it is to men at other liberal arts colleges (53% vs. 45% report that becoming such a leader is at least "very important" to them).

There are a number of other programs by which the College and/or its faculty, staff, and students provide access or services to the surrounding communities. For example, the College opens its athletic facilities to local organizations to host events such as high school track meets, Olympic development soccer training, and Special Olympics basketball competitions. In all such cases, facilities are provided in exchange for, at most, a nominal cleaning fee. Similarly, all performances sponsored by the College's theater, music, and art departments or that are part of the College's Visiting Artists Series are now free and open to the public, as are most intercollegiate sporting events and all events that are part of the Lecture Committee's Speaker Series. In addition, each year, on Community Day, all community members are given free admission to a home football game, and on the same weekend, members of the team and coaching staff offer a free [football clinic for community youth](#) (pictured above). Such open access to programs was not always the case. As recently as 2003-04 community members were required to pay



*The Youth Football Clinic annually attracts more than 200 boys and girls.*

a modest fee to attend both theater performances and Visiting Artists events. This change in policy is a reflection of the College's renewed interest in facilitating connections between the College and enriching the lives of the communities of which Wabash is a part.

The College's Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC) and IT Services department have also worked with community organizations to promote environmentally-friendly practices. The ECC established and maintains a community garden that provides fresh vegetables to faculty, staff, and students (via the College's food service company, Bon Appetit) and also to a Lafayette, Indiana organization, FoodFinders Foodbank (an organization funded by the United Way and devoted to advocating for the hungry and educating the public about hunger related issues). The ECC delivers food to the food bank twice weekly during the growing season until supplies run out. This committee also collaborated with IT Services to organize three annual community computer recycling days. These events, which were held from 2006 to 2008, invited all Montgomery County residents to drop off old computers, printers, faxes, and printer cartridges so that they could be recycled in an environmentally friendly way. This recycling day collected, on average, 10 tons of equipment each of the three years it was held. The recycling day was discontinued after the City of Crawfordsville developed a free recycling center at which community residents can recycle equipment.

Student organizations are similarly active in working in the local communities. The Wabash chapter of College Mentors for Kids involves 40 Wabash students working with the same young person for each week for the entire academic year. During the 2010-11 year, the chapter was recognized as [Chapter of the Year](#) by the national organization. In a similar effort, students who are members of the MXIBS tutor local middle school children as part of the KQ&K tutoring program (named after three MXIBS students who established the program in 1989). Every semester this program reaches approximately 18 local school children, who are tutored by MXIBS members twice a week in individual sessions that last two to three hours each. In full, this student-run program involves more than 1,200 hours of academic tutoring each semester by the members of Wabash's MXIBS.



*Patrick Garrett is one of the students involved in Wabash's award-winning chapter of College Mentors for Kids.*

Broader efforts at philanthropic work are engaged in by the College's service fraternity and living units. Wabash's chapter of the Alpha Phi Omega national service fraternity (APO) was recently awarded a certificate in recognition of 65 years of service. APO features, on average, approximately 35 Wabash students plus sponsoring staff members who undertake a variety of service projects and charity work. Annual events include hosting a local Easter egg hunt and pumpkin carving event for area youths, assisting in the organization of events such as Relay for Life and regular blood drives, and assisting special community projects. APO volunteers also run the concessions for Wabash football and basketball games with proceeds funneled to area charities. In fact, over the past five years these efforts have raised almost \$55,000 for charitable organizations. Similarly, students also are actively engaged in the broader community through service efforts done in Wabash fraternities. Information provided by six (of nine) fraternities reveals that each fraternity commits, on average, approximately 1,500 hours per year to community service. These efforts have assisted Juvenile Diabetes Research,

Breast Cancer Awareness, the Special Olympics, food drives, and the education of children in Africa, in addition to other non-profit programs.

Finally, Wabash regional alumni organizations take an active role in serving their local communities nationwide. In 2003 the NAWM organized the first of what has become an annual community service day for all alumni chapters. In the past three years, this [Wabash Alumni Benefitting and Serving Humanity](#) (W.A.B.A.S.H.)

Day has involved, on average, more than 400 people and 200 alumni working at 38 different sites around the country, from an animal clinic in Mississippi, to a food bank in Austin, Texas, to an apartment at an emergency shelter in Madison, Wisconsin, and including multiple sites in Crawfordsville (the Lew Wallace Study, the Animal Shelter, the Vanity Theater, and the Family Crisis Shelter). Indeed, 45% of the W.A.B.A.S.H. Day sites and participation are in Indiana, and 20% are in Montgomery County. It is worth noting also that this program, though targeted specifically to engage



*Alumni volunteers build a playground near Evansville, Indiana.*

Wabash students and alumni in their surrounding communities, also provides an enjoyable social event during which Wabash alumni can connect or reconnect with one another each year. Overall then, the College and its members have the capacity and drive to respond in a variety of different and humane ways to the Crawfordsville and Montgomery County communities, a reflection of the College's founding goal echoed in the strategic plan of "meeting the needs of the nation."

These communities, though, also provide substantial benefit to the College and its people. For instance, each international student is paired with a local family who serves as that student's community "host" while he is at Wabash. These families, [Community Friends](#), provide students another "home away from home" and a welcoming environment that makes their transition to and experiences in Crawfordsville and the United States more fulfilling. In addition, community members contribute actively to the fine arts program by serving as Friends of the Fine Arts by volunteering their time to usher at theatrical and musical performances. At one time, such service brought with it free admission to performances; however, now that all shows are free and open to the public, the "friends" program is completely voluntary. Relatedly, the College hires local retirees to be drivers who, most often, transport College faculty, students, and visitors to and from the Indianapolis and Chicago airports. Though a seemingly small role, these drivers have become College ambassadors as they transport the scores of individuals who visit, in particular, the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion and the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts. In sum, community individuals greatly enrich the work and life of the College.

In addition, local organizations serve the College and help it fulfill its mission. For instance, the community schools provide invaluable opportunities for teacher education students to observe and learn about middle school and high school students and to test and refine their pedagogical skills in the classroom. As part of the introductory teacher education courses (EDU 101 and 201), approximately 35 students each year observe and write reports about local students and their learning

environments. The more advanced teacher education methods courses then send approximately 20 students each year into the county's junior high schools and high schools to observe teachers and also to implement and assess lesson plans that they craft. Finally, approximately 10 teacher education students each year are placed into Indiana schools to complete student-teaching assignments. In short, the local and state schools provide an important way for teacher education students to gain professional experience on their way to a life devoted to education.

There are also additional ways that community organizations serve the College. Local non-profit organizations, such as Character Counts and Crawfordsville Main Street, reserve spaces on their boards of directors for Wabash students, faculty, and staff. Such spaces provide Wabash students opportunities to live out the College's Mission of leading effectively and living humanely, and provide for faculty, staff, and students an important chance to invest in the lives and work of the people in these communities. The local Habitat for Humanity's connection to the College and its work on housing projects in the community have provided similar opportunities for students. In addition, local churches have opened their doors and their arms of welcome to Wabash people and have provided not only opportunities to continue their spiritual development but also to work alongside community members on philanthropic projects, such as a recent campaign during which five local churches collaborated to raise money to drill a fresh-water well in a drought ridden area of Eastern Africa. Such opportunities are representative, but hardly exhaustive, of the benefits that Crawfordsville and Montgomery County provide in partnership with Wabash and its people.



*Wabash students rebuilt the stage at the historic Vanity Theater in Crawfordsville.*

**Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.** Wabash College and the surrounding community enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship. A host of committees, programs, and peoples from Wabash participate extensively in Crawfordsville and beyond in fulfillment of the College's mission. Likewise, the Crawfordsville community embraces the students and employees of Wabash in participating in the life-work of Crawfordsville. The vitality of the College and the community of Crawfordsville are intimately intertwined. Accordingly, the College will continue to explore ways its intellectual and human capital can enrich and be enriched by Crawfordsville.

## **5D. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES VALUE THE SERVICES WABASH COLLEGE PROVIDES.**

### **Students**

Responses to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) suggest that students value the education Wabash provides, both in general and specific terms. For instance, the ratings of Wabash seniors and freshmen on the measure of "supportive campus environment" are [consistently in the top 10% of all NSSE schools](#) for a given year. A closer look at the items that comprise this scale reveals that Wabash freshmen and seniors have, for the past five years, evaluated the College's support of their academic needs, including academic advising services, more favorably than have students from comparison schools. Wabash students also have evaluated the College's support of their non-academic needs (e.g., work and family) more favorably in the last four years than have students at

Electronic Resource

**2011 NSSE  
Comparisons  
Report**

other institutions, though the mean value of such responses suggests a less favorable sense of support in these domains than in academic ones. On the other hand, Wabash students do not consistently evaluate the College's support of their social needs more favorably than do other students; such ratings by Wabash students are not reliably different than those by students at other colleges. The table below displays average responses (with a range of 1-4) by Wabash freshmen on the four items mentioned here and for the last five years.

|                                      | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Support of Academic Needs</b>     | 3.68* | 3.59* | 3.58* | 3.66* | 3.62* |
| <b>Support of Non-Academic Needs</b> | 2.35  | 2.49* | 2.54* | 2.61* | 2.76* |
| <b>Support of Social Needs</b>       | 2.53  | 2.54  | 2.60  | 2.75  | 2.90* |
| <b>Quality of Academic Advising</b>  | 3.42* | 3.46* | 3.39* | 3.58* | 3.53* |

*(Note: Asterisk indicates reliably more positive than mean of the NSSE category of Great Lakes Private Colleges.)*

Such specific responses are also consistent with more general assessments of students' satisfaction with the College. According to NSSE reports, on the past five (2007-2011) freshman surveys, between 92% and 95% of freshmen have evaluated their overall educational experience at Wabash favorably. Further, 95% of Wabash freshmen in 2006 and 2007 evaluated their overall educational experience at Wabash as either "good" or "excellent" with 65% evaluating the experience as excellent. Wabash seniors express similar satisfaction with the College. From 2007-2011, between 83% and 88% of seniors each year reported that they would choose Wabash again if they could make their college choice over. Further, 72% of seniors in 2007 and 2008 evaluated their educational experience at Wabash as excellent, and half of the seniors from 2005 to 2008 were "very satisfied" with their overall college experience (with another 34% saying that they were "satisfied").

It is worth considering how Wabash students' responses differ from those of students at similar colleges. Such comparison of [student evaluations of overall educational experience](#) are quite positive in the aggregate. Indeed, according to NSSE reports, Wabash freshmen have, for the past eight years, evaluated their experience more favorably than have students at Great Lakes Private Colleges, students at other national private liberal arts colleges, and students within the entire sample of NSSE schools. Wabash seniors have evaluated their overall experience more favorably than each comparison group in seven of the last eight years (with the lone exception being 2006, in which Wabash students responded on par with students at Great Lakes Private Colleges and national private liberal arts colleges but more favorably than the total NSSE sample). On the other hand, students' thoughts about whether or not they would choose Wabash again, if they could start over, are less comparatively positive. In the past 11 years, Wabash students' responses have never been reliably less favorable on this item than have other students'; however, in only five of these years have our seniors' responses been reliably more favorable than their Great Lakes Private Colleges counterparts. In only three of these years have responses from freshmen been reliably more favorable than this same comparison group. In fact, none of the last five freshman classes have produced scores on this item that are statistically more favorable than Great Lakes Private Colleges freshmen. Overall then, the NSSE survey suggests that students are, in general, satisfied with their experiences at the College and with the resources the College provides. At the same time, however, the data comparing Wabash responses to those of students at Great Lakes Private Colleges suggest a more balanced, and humbling, perspective, one about which the College should remain aware.

These same surveys also have reflected important differences (mentioned previously) between the

experiences of Caucasian students and African American students at Wabash. African American students report less satisfaction with Wabash and are less likely to say they would definitely or probably enroll at Wabash if they could start over. It is also noteworthy that the lower satisfaction that students of color feel is also expressed in the way they evaluate their interactions with faculty, staff, and other students, including their assessment of the quality of teaching they receive and faculty devotion to their development both in and out of the classroom.

|                  | <b>Overall Satisfaction</b>               | <b>Evaluation of Entire Educational Experience</b> | <b>If You Could Start Over, Would You Choose Wabash Again?</b> |
|------------------|---|--|--|
|                  | % Responding "Very Satisfied" on CIRP CSS | % Responding "Excellent" on NSSE                   | % Saying "Definitely Yes"                                      |
| African American | 29  | 50   | 38   |
| Caucasian        | 56  | 74   | 65   |

Such comparatively less positive views of the Wabash experience, combined with the lower persistence rates for students of color, led the College to mobilize the Retention Committee and to create the position of Coordinator of Student Engagement and Retention. These efforts, along with securing external grant funding to support a range of activities that assess in particular why our students of color report lower satisfaction rates and less frequent experiences of high impact teaching practices, are dedicated to improving retention and overall success rates.

### **Employees**

One measure of the value faculty and staff place on the resources Wabash offers them is their willingness to donate money to the College. For the fiscal year 2011, 41% of current faculty and staff donated \$41,817 to the school. Further, the percentage of faculty/staff giving has been relatively consistent (hovering in the low 40 percents) for the past five years.

An even more direct and compelling snapshot of faculty satisfaction with the College comes from of the 2007 Faculty Quality of Life Survey, which was developed as part of the administration's general initiative to be aware of and sensitive to faculty needs and desires. While we previously addressed points of concern this survey raised regarding Wabash faculty's satisfaction with the institution, many of the items on this survey suggest that Wabash faculty are highly satisfied with the College. For instance, Wabash faculty are more likely than faculty at other non-sectarian liberal arts colleges to report being satisfied or very satisfied with their salary, their office or lab space, and with their relationship to the College administration and to indicate that they intend to stay within academia. Also, nearly 70% of Wabash faculty surveyed indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their current job.

With regard to staff satisfaction with the College, the only systematic information available is the 2010 ModernThink Higher Education Survey. The results of that survey, though, combine responses from staff members, faculty persons, and administrators. Still, the results are relevant to the question of broad staff evaluation of the College. Overall, the 152 respondents to the survey gave favorable ratings of the College, with 66% of the respondents expressing overall favorable views. [Evaluations of specific components](#) of their experiences, though, confirm areas of challenge for the College. For instance, only 52% of respondents evaluated "Senior Leadership" positively (as compared to 60% of faculty/staff at other colleges in the survey doing so). On the items assessing "Policies, Resources, and Efficiency" a smaller percentage of Wabash faculty and staff (55%) expressed favor as compared to

faculty and staff at other colleges (60%). This general construct included items related to faculty/staff review processes, adequate number of staff to achieve goals, and institutional emphasis on diversity in its faculty, administration, and staff. One way of interpreting such responses is that the survey occurred in the midst of economic challenges and just as the College was implementing adjustments, including faculty and staff reductions, in response to those challenges. In light of the College's size and character, these reductions and their impact may have been experienced in more personal terms. Nevertheless, this survey identifies areas of challenge as the College moves forward. Given that this survey is the only one in recent memory to assess staff evaluations of the College's performance, the College would benefit from undertaking additional efforts to understand to what extent staff members value the work and experiences the College offers.

### **Alumni**

As suggested above, donation rates to the College's Annual Fund provide one marker of the extent to which a constituency values the services Wabash provides. In fiscal 2011, 3,799 alumni donated to the College, which is 34.2% of the solicited donors (which include alumni, those who attended two or more semesters at the College, and widows of alumni if the alumnus had given to the College in the past) and is consistent with recent years of giving. That is, the alumni giving percentage has hovered in the mid-to-high 30s during the past seven years, after regularly pushing into the 40s during the beginning part of the last decade. Given the recent economic downturn, these numbers reflect impressive and persistent generosity, especially when one considers that the 2011 Annual Fund was the second largest on record in terms of dollars donated. It is also noteworthy that the two-year average of percentage of four-year graduates who gave to the College (a metric used by *US News and World Report* for its "Best Colleges" rankings and calculated at 35% in 2011 and 39% in 2010) places Wabash 39th in the category of National Liberal Arts Colleges for alumni giving. Using this metric, only Kenyon and Oberlin have higher alumni giving rates among the 13 GLCA institutions. Overall then, alumni giving rates suggest that alumni value their past and current experiences at and with the College.

Reunion attendance and responses to the previously-mentioned alumni survey provide additional evidence of alumni appreciation of their Wabash experiences. The Alumni and Parent Relations Office reports that the changes to reunion timing (described previously) have had a positive impact on reunion attendance, such that each of the seven "Big Bash" weekends ranks among the top 10 attended reunions all-time at Wabash. In June 2011, 349 alumni from 10 reunion classes (700 total people, including spouses and family) returned to campus to enjoy reunion events. In interpreting alumni survey results, the consulting group Burdinski & Taylor concluded that the College's alumni report satisfaction with their college experience and a profound interest in staying connected with the College, credit Wabash for some part of their post-Wabash success, and express a marked affection for the College, an affection that the consultants found particularly noteworthy among older alumni. Indeed, the consultants remarked that the typical drop-off in college affinity that one sees as a function of age and distance between residence and college is less pronounced for Wabash alumni than for other colleges' alumni they have sampled. In short, alumni value their connection with Wabash and the efforts the College makes in facilitating that connection.

### **Crawfordsville and Montgomery County Communities**

One way of gauging the extent to which the community values the programs Wabash offers is by tracking attendance at College events, which has been robust. As noted previously, the Wabash Visiting Artists Series, music events, art exhibitions, and theater productions are offered free of charge, as are most athletic events.

Individuals not associated with Wabash must purchase tickets to football games and to playoff games,

but other athletic events at the College are free to the public. The Wabash football and basketball programs have welcomed more than 200,000 and 75,000 fans, respectively, to their games the past 10 years. Football attendance, which averaged 5,789 fans per game, ranked fourth in all of Division III in 2010 and has ranked in the top 10 in Division III for four of the last five years. Basketball attendance also ranks highly within Division III, ranking 14th in 2010 (at 998 fans per game) and 30th (at 821 fans per game) the year before. Given that the Wabash community is comprised of approximately 1,200 faculty, students, and staff, such numbers reflect a substantial community involvement with and presence at these athletic events.



*Nearly 12,000 fans packed into Hollett Little Giant Stadium for the 2010 Monon Bell Classic football game.*

Similarly, recent evidence suggests that there is broad community attendance at fine arts events hosted by the College. In the last eight years of the College's Visiting Artists Series for which we have reliable data, almost 8,000 guests have attended these events, of which 29% (2,287) have been Wabash students and 71% of which have been either Wabash faculty/staff or broader community members. Further, for the most recent series (2011-12), 77% (331 out of 428) of the non-student attendees were community members. Given Crawfordsville's and the surrounding county's small size, such community attendance is encouraging.

***Strengths, challenges, and recommendations.*** The evidence in this Criterion component is consistent with the whole of Criterion 5 in that it demonstrates the depth of the relationship between Wabash College and its various constituencies. Wabash is valued by its students for the education that is provided and the culture of connections to classmates and friends, alumni, faculty, and staff created at Wabash. The College should continue to assess fulfillment of social and non-academic needs of students. Wabash employees value the College as demonstrated by their support in money, time, and effort while, as documented previously, the College should continue to evaluate quality of life issues that have been identified in employee surveys (particularly in issues pertaining to staff). Alumni engagement with the institution demonstrates substantial pride in and satisfaction with their alma mater, and community interactions show that a high value is placed by community members on the services the College provides.

## CONCLUSIONS FOR CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

The College's analysis of and responsiveness to the needs of its constituencies is multi-faceted and extensive, though also somewhat uneven across these constituencies. Unsurprisingly, students represent the constituency about and from whom the College spends the most time and effort

to learn and to whom the College is most vigorously and obviously responsive. Such efforts reinforce the theme of *strengthening student engagement* that was identified in the Introduction of the *Self-Study Report*. Being responsive to the needs of students in a manner that has strengthened student engagement is manifest in the curriculum, via student services and across extra-curricular opportunities, and is consistent with the College's student-centered philosophy. Of particular note in this regard are the important developments in career services and related opportunities and the engagement with student-athletes.

The College also devotes substantial resources and time to understanding and working to fulfill the needs of its faculty. In this way the theme identified in the Introduction of *strengthening staff and faculty quality of life* is demonstrated. Many of these needs are financial, and the College has responded admirably, even in times of economic challenge, to maintain if not enhance its contributions to faculty and staff benefits and to work to strengthen the level of faculty salaries through the establishment of the Placher Fund. Further attention has been and will continue to be paid to non-financial components of faculty quality of life, including exploring child care options and considering committee workload. The College has also addressed staff and faculty quality of life through the development of a new parental leave benefit and other changes that assist the work-life balance. On these fronts, work remains to be done, but the College has made significant strides in meeting its strategic plan commitment to attracting and retaining high quality faculty. The efforts to meet parallel needs of non-faculty staff have been less consistent. To be sure, Wabash values its staff as seen in benefits available and recognitions bestowed, but more can be done to address quality of life challenges and compensation levels as well as to improve communication.

The College's alumni also enjoy careful attention and responsiveness from the College, attention that is focused on their engagement and satisfaction with (a) the connections that they make and maintain with current students and with other alumni and (b) the information they receive about the College via College publications and its website. Finally, Wabash has strong community bonds, and the College serves an active role in contributing to and bettering the Crawfordsville community, contributions that have increased markedly in recent years, notwithstanding the overall economic environment, and portend future investment as part of upcoming strategic planning initiatives.

### **Strengths:**

- Wabash uses multiple forms of information gathering in order to survey students about their experiences and perspectives related to the College. Moreover, students are included in important decision-making processes at the institution;
- Faculty perspectives and leadership are both sought and valued by the institution, as shown by the practice of surveying faculty about curricular and non-curricular matters and providing broad opportunities for faculty participation in the life of the College;
- The College has excellent alumni communications with multiple means for seeking how it can best serve their needs and multiple, systematic efforts to assess whether or not alumni expectations are being met. When alumni needs are discovered, the College has a record of being responsive to them;
- Wabash has developed academic partnerships that expand student educational opportunities;
- The College provides a range of effective student services that are highly valued by Wabash students;

- Wabash provides opportunities for extra-curricular activities and fosters student independence in these activities;
- Wabash provides a range of beneficial career service opportunities and effective support through its Schroeder Center for Career Development;
- The establishment of the Placher Fund contributes to the College's commitment to maintaining and enhancing faculty salaries;
- The College offers an attractive and improving benefits package for its employees;
- Wabash is heavily invested in the Crawfordsville community and seeks opportunities to better that community while also providing resources for community use.

### **Challenges:**

- The institution can make more regular and systematic use of the bounty of national survey data that has been collected from students;
- The College can be more effective in learning about and responding to the needs of its non-faculty staff, including quality of life issues;
- Staff salaries, at all levels, are not competitive with other GLCA schools and should be a College concern;
- Non-faculty staff lack clear avenues for regular communication with the senior staff, beyond their own direct area supervisors.

### **Recommendations:**

- Student satisfaction with the Counseling Center has been lower than for other student services, while a meaningful number of students report experiencing mental stresses. The College should continue to assess the impact of the recently expanded counseling services;
- The College should continue its efforts to educate students about the impacts of problematic substance use;
- As part of a plan to add a dedicated institutional researcher and reformulate the Accreditation Committee into a broader Assessment Committee, means for the routine use and dissemination of national survey data should be developed. This should include reviewing data on a regular or patterned basis in institutional assessment and developing a centralized location for data storage and distribution;
- The College should re-examine communication channels available for staff (and consider reinstating the "Community Meeting" or replacing it with an alternative venue) as there are no regularized mechanisms by which non-faculty staff members can voice their concerns about the College to senior administrators. Conversations with staff members suggest that the absence of such mechanisms is regarded by some as regrettable;

- As the College moves forward into the next decade, it should provide additional opportunities for staff to express their thoughts regarding job satisfaction and quality of life and, subsequently, should consider ways to engage staff in improving effectiveness and satisfaction;
- The College should seek to clarify guidelines and processes for staff performance evaluation;
- Consistent with actions taken thus far, the College should continue to address faculty quality of life issues identified in study of the topic;
- The College has demonstrated that it is heavily invested in the Crawfordsville and Montgomery County communities. In working to meet its present and future strategic plan goals, the College should continue to seek ways to improve tangibly the local community and, with it, the prospects and attractiveness of the College itself.



## **CONCLUSION**

*Tradition, Change, and Extending  
the Excellence of Wabash College*

## **CONCLUSION: TRADITION, CHANGE, AND EXTENDING THE EXCELLENCE OF WABASH COLLEGE**

The Wabash College 2012 *Self-Study Report* demonstrates that the College satisfies the Higher Learning Commission's five criteria for continuing accreditation. Across these criterion chapters, we have marshaled evidence of our institutional practices over the last ten years, identifying what we have done and continue to do as an excellent liberal arts College committed to educate men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely. Meeting these important standards enables the College to show its many internal and external publics the ways in which our liberal arts teaching and learning mission is being met and, just as importantly, to identify areas for improvement that call for us to do more and to become better. It is in this College's nature not to be content unless we have done our utmost for our students. Again recalling the words of Wabash's first President, "Our purpose is, never to rest while Wabash College shall lack any advantages for the student, which are offered by the highest class of American colleges." Or as we continue to say, "Wabash Always Fights."

In this self-assessment process we have met our internal goals identified in the Introduction: to reflect on and assess the entire institution with particular focus on achievements and changes since the 2002 *Self-Study Report*; to involve the campus in the process and raise awareness of the value and importance of reaccreditation; and to produce a document that will help guide the campus's ongoing assessment and strategic planning work over the coming years. Consistent with the reaccreditation self-study aims identified by the Higher Learning Commission, the introspective nature of this self-study has helped us identify areas of strength, and it will help guide institutional planning as we go forward. In short, the self-study effort is itself a reflection of our commitment to Mission, Core Values, and to one another to strengthen liberal arts teaching and learning at Wabash College.

As the *Self-Study Report* documents, the last 10 years have brought significant change to Wabash as to all of American higher education. Through all of these external forces and changes, the College has maintained a tradition of excellence: transitions in administration and trustee leadership; one strategic plan completed and another adopted, implemented, and now nearing completion; two highly successful capital campaigns finished; a new business model necessitated by a deep economic recession that exposed the vulnerability inherent in relying too heavily on endowment revenue; demographic change in the faculty and downsizing and reallocating of staff and faculty; subsequent redefining of staff and faculty work and the introduction of new benefits; new facilities and student living units constructed; the emergence of the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts as a national leader in education assessment; a deepening culture of assessment across the College that recognizes the need to employ data to effect change; strategic thinking as an ongoing activity; professionalizing administrative operations and codification of procedures following best practices; new initiatives to internationalize the curriculum through increased immersion learning and establishment of collaborative educational partnerships with institutions in Indiana and China; new efforts undertaken to enhance the success of students of color and first-generation students; elevating student responsibility through enhanced focus on the Gentleman's Rule; affirming and describing the vitality of learning inside and outside the classroom; and an increasing clarity in understanding and articulating the character of Wabash as a college for men. It is a thick story of tradition and change that has both energized and unsettled. One consequence has been to call the Wabash community to heightened attention and accountability to its Mission Statement and Core Values as anchors and guides for institutional action through a period of significant change.

While Wabash remains committed to its traditional strengths, this period of transition and change continues. After a successful seven-year presidency, Patrick White will leave the College after the

2012-13 academic year. The Board of Trustees has begun a search process to find a new president and has also initiated a strategic thinking effort that will involve the community in planning for the future. The timing of a presidential search, long-term strategic planning, and reaccreditation review is propitious in that we have identified a number of key issues and challenges that College leadership over the next years will need to consider and address.

Each Criterion chapter of the *Self-Study Report* concluded with an assessment of strengths and challenges at the College and included many individual recommendations to be considered. In this conclusion we note some of the most significant of those ideas while stopping short of a comprehensive restatement of those conclusions. We have categorized the issues and challenges according to the strengthening themes identified in the *Self-Study Report* Introduction:

- *Strengthening liberal arts instruction;*
- *Strengthening student engagement;*
- *Strengthening assessment efforts;*
- *Strengthening budgeting, staffing, and infrastructure processes; and*
- *Strengthening staff and faculty quality of life.*

These themes allow us to understand the successes of the College, how it has not only continued to be a strong institution but has improved in significant ways in the past decade. These themes also allow us to identify particular challenges and opportunities and to offer preliminary recommendations that a new president and administration will face now and in the years ahead.

### ***Strengthening Liberal Arts Instruction***

Over the past decade, the College has strengthened its already excellent teaching and learning by developing new programs and undertaking new efforts to improve Wabash as a liberal arts institution while maintaining the best of Wabash's teaching and learning traditions. This has included the use of assessment data for improvement but, more specifically, it is reflected in the emerging Asian Studies Program; establishment of a Faculty Development Coordinator position; strategic enhancements to the teaching faculty; expanded, systematic attention to student writing; and new academic offerings such as a biochemistry major, a creative writing track, Chinese language instruction, dual degree engineering opportunities, an accounting pipeline agreement, and international partnerships with Fudan and East China Normal Universities. Evidence of this strengthening is seen through the extensive efforts to review and enhance the curriculum; the development undertaken by Wabash faculty that has strengthened, refined, and retooled areas of teaching; and verification of student learning impact through the WNS. Finally, Wabash's Centers of Distinction, particularly the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts and the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, have strengthened understanding and practice of education at Wabash and across the country through important research and the establishment of networks of faculty and institutions in shared discourse.



*Mathematics Professor Chad Westphal works with a student in an advanced mathematics course.*

Challenges and recommendations in this area include:

- The College needs to continue to monitor and address as needed staffing levels in all departments and majors. Specifically, the art and music departments have fewer than three tenure lines, as do programs in French, German, and the developing program in Chinese language. Relatedly, the College will have to continue to assess its position on and attitude toward the increased use of contingent faculty, which is still minimal by most standards;
- The College will have to monitor the generational shift in the faculty and maintain a robust program of faculty development and faculty mentoring. Changes to the teaching faculty bring many opportunities and also challenges, including maintaining expectations of interconnected teaching excellence, scholarship, and service in a time of transition and providing effective mentorship, faculty development, and, most importantly, continued commitment to the College's mission;
- As will other small liberal arts colleges, Wabash will need to continue to explore institutional partnerships both at home and abroad for innovative curricular and pedagogical opportunities for Wabash students and faculty. The Mellon Foundation-funded Asian Studies development grant with DePauw is one example; GLCA consortial projects focused on pedagogy, faculty development, hybrid instruction, and the GLCA's Global Liberal Arts Alliance offer others;
- The financial crisis of 2008 put strains on traditional off-campus study that the College continues to address, including through the Challenge of Excellence campaign. To this end, the College needs to continue to assess its resource needs and complete a plan that ensures opportunities, particularly for off-campus study, that match the resources and expectations the College has established in its current strategic plan. At the same time, the College should develop means for assessing the impact of diversity experiences on student learning and on the student body as a whole via evaluations of off-campus study and immersion experiences on the part of students and faculty;
- The College should continue to assess its all-college course offerings, consistent with previous reviews and assessment plans, to ensure that they are meeting their identified objectives. This includes carrying out the ambitious plan for assessment of the all-college course Enduring Questions and reviewing the impact of changes to Freshman Tutorial implemented after the work of the First Year Experience Study Group. At the time of the next Freshman Tutorial review there will be several program elements to assess, including the move of all tutorials to the fall, the impact of increased writing instruction, the impact of changes in advisor training, the effectiveness of immersion trips, and the use of peer mentors;
- While continuing to assess its more intentional and systematic focus on the teaching of writing, the College should consider how to construct similarly comprehensive strategies for assessing quantitative skills and oral communication as well as foreign language development;
- The College should continue to investigate ways to enhance foreign language offerings, review all areas of concentration for efficacy, and move forward in the consideration of AOCs or appropriate alternative curricular forms for Black Studies and Asian Studies; and
- The College should conclude its process of drafting and adopting distribution requirement

rationales, which will further underscore the relationship of the distribution system to institutional level goals and also more directly articulate the goals and values of the specific distribution requirements. The College should move the discussion of distribution requirements to conclusion.

Wabash is committed to providing outstanding liberal arts instruction and has a highly qualified faculty that makes teaching its first priority. Evidence of the effectiveness of teaching practices is plentiful while the College continues to strive to offer new, enriching opportunities to students and through recommendations such as these will continue to expand, refine, and assess those opportunities.

### ***Strengthening Student Engagement***

High levels of student engagement will always be a hallmark of Wabash's commitment to educating young men in a close, residential community. Perpetual engagement with students over the meaning and performance of the mission of the College has resulted in a mission that is widely-known, prominently publicized, and central to the work of the institution. National survey results from instruments such as NSSE and CIRP demonstrate student perceptions of and appreciation for high engagement with Wabash faculty and staff. Wabash has in place the structures to continue to strengthen student engagement through attention to best teaching and learning practices, increased immersion travel, a robust student retention initiative, and improvements in student advising. Increased resources and opportunities for student-faculty collaboration such as the annual Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work, endowed funds, Undergraduate Research Committee support, and expanded internship opportunities have further strengthened student engagement at Wabash. Similarly, appropriate staffing in athletics and rigorous attention to the role coaches must play in mentoring and developing the whole student continue to have a positive impact on the recruitment, retention, and success of the large percentage of Wabash men who participate in intercollegiate athletics. Finally, student engagement has been strengthened through new learning opportunities that include the development of the Business Leaders Program, improvement of career services, and new curricular opportunities.



*Students work collaboratively in a second-level Chinese language course.*

Challenges and recommendations in this area include:

- Given its unique nature and the high degree of individual student responsibility necessary for its success, persistent education and communication about the Gentleman's Rule will always be required. Such effort will maintain a strong culture of student responsibility grounded in the Mission Statement and the Gentleman's Rule;
- The College should continue to examine elements of student life related to substance use and counseling services. It is important that the College continue its efforts to educate students about the impacts of problematic substance use. Given that student satisfaction with the Counseling Center has been lower than for other student services while a meaningful number of students report experiencing mental stresses, the College should continue to assess the impact of the recently expanded Counseling Center services;

- The College must monitor the impact of its new retention initiatives on overall student persistence and, in particular, for students of color, first-generation college students, and at-risk students. These efforts will build on educational data that has made us aware that not all Wabash students have the same positive experiences or report encountering high impact teaching practices to the same degree. The Wabash National Study data are an invitation, one that the College must accept, to assess students' varied curricular and co-curricular experiences so that improvements can be made;
- The College should monitor the MXIBS strategic plan progress and determine how to maximize academic and social support provided to students via the MXIBS and the necessary and proper level of staffing for the Institute;
- Faculty and a wide range of staff, including coaches, play an important role in the development of Wabash men and the life of the College. Wabash must continue to recruit, develop, and support at appropriate levels faculty and staff, including coaches, who are committed to engagement with students inside and outside the classroom to foster student growth; and
- The College has a robust program of undergraduate research but must address the long-term issue of permanent funding as the Undergraduate Research Committee and the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work have been supported through grant money that will soon end. This item is deserving of ongoing support as part of the College's regular operating budget.

The identification of these needs acknowledges that student engagement is a continuing strength and priority and not something that can be addressed once and considered complete. Wabash is reflective about student engagement, and it will remain a central focus of the work the College.

### ***Strengthening Assessment Efforts***

The College has a deepening culture of assessment and has refined its assessment processes, including more consistent use of institutional data and more systematic assessments of programs and goals leading to improvement. Working from the Mission Statement, Wabash has enhanced its academic and administrative assessment efforts. Utilizing the expertise and resources of CILA, Wabash has collected and analyzed more data that it is using to make improvements. These efforts also have included using national survey data for assessment; departmental reviews; annual department assessment meetings with the Dean of the College; reviewing curricular requirements (e.g., writing assessments, all-college course assessments, and distribution requirements review); and revisions to the faculty review process. Assessment and evaluation



*Charles Blaich, Director of CILA and HEDS, drives assessment efforts through the work of both organizations.*

occur beyond academic departments and have become a more deeply embedded part of the culture of nearly every area of the College as is demonstrated in the work of Advancement, Admissions, Lilly Library, IT Services, Alumni and Parent Relations, Communications and Marketing, and other areas. Such efforts have established and are reinforcing a continuous culture of assessment at Wabash that underscores public accountability to Mission and Core Values.

Challenges and recommendations in this area include:

- The College should continue to ground planning and strategic thinking in all areas of the College in the College's Mission Statement and Core Values. This includes increasing the use of regular assessment practices across all College departments and programs, academic, administrative, and student life. While assessment and evaluation are central to the culture of most areas of the College, such practices are not consistently coordinated across all areas and are not always perceived as leading to change. Further broadening and deepening of the culture of assessment to include all areas of the College through effective coordination will enhance student development and support student success, and enrich faculty and staff development as well. The full coordination of these efforts remains a challenge for the future;
- Assessment work occurring at the departmental and program level is effective and reflective while there are opportunities for refinement in the use of department learning goals and the structure and use of department reviews. Academic departments and programs should regularly revisit their learning goals in considering their continued fit with the College mission, department offerings, and student outcomes. Doing so will allow departments and programs to take advantage of institutional data where helpful in assessing how well goals are met and engage in reflective revision of processes to improve student learning and teaching. Moreover, department and program learning goals should be more prominently communicated to students and other constituencies. Similarly, departments should continue to engage in a range of departmental review activities while undertaking more pronounced efforts to assess on-going post-review changes in order to more clearly evaluate student learning impacts. Going forward the College will have to determine how innovative designs for departmental reviews instituted in the last cycle — including site visits and release time — can be sustained given that funding support through the CILA grant will end in 2014;
- One of the recommendations running through this *Self-Study Report* is that while the College has significantly improved its use of assessment data in the service of change, such efforts can be more coordinated, regularized, and centralized. Responsibility for assessment often falls to departments, but College-wide mechanisms can improve and encourage these opportunities. This includes continuing to consider the improved centralization of data management by establishing an office of institutional research or similar structure. Such an office should report directly to the President or Dean of the College and work in conjunction with the Accreditation Committee. Relatedly, the College should consider refashioning the current Accreditation Committee into a broader Assessment Committee. This reconfigured committee would contain broader College membership including a dedicated institutional research person, the Faculty Development Coordinator, a member of the Teaching and Learning Committee, and administrative staff. The Committee could develop a regular cycle for coordinating review of College-wide processes and activities (e.g., general education goals and outcomes; proficiency goals and outcomes; senior seminars; senior comprehensive exams; and department goals) that work in parallel to the department

review process. Finally, the College can refine the means for routine dissemination and access to national survey data while also engaging in broader faculty and staff education and training of assessment practices;

- The College must continue to make use of CILA and HEDS resources, skills, and knowledge in improving the College's understanding and continued use of assessment data to improve student learning. CILA staff have expertise in working with institutions in data use, and the College must be more deliberate in employing CILA to assist with institutional planning and strengthening curricular and co-curricular planning at the College; and
- In the coming years and with the end of the inaugural version of the Wabash National Study, the College will need to consider more fully the three years of collected data and seek to use those data in assessing the overall educational program and prospects for additional improvements. The three year data set will also allow for the consistency of the data — and the differences in it — to be more carefully scrutinized.

Assessment is part of the culture of the College with many examples of data use leading to change found in evidence across the *Self-Study Report*. These recommendations speak to ways the College can build on those good practices in the coming years in using assessment to improve institutional processes, further enhance student engagement, and articulate and further enrich student learning, all in service of our Mission and Core Values.

### ***Strengthening Budgeting, Staffing, and Infrastructure Processes***

This *Self-Study Report* also has demonstrated that the College has effectively and significantly revised key processes that have enhanced operations of the College. Most significantly, the College thoughtfully and reflectively responded to the 2008 financial crisis in ways that minimized or contained the negative economic impact on the institution. The actions demonstrated the responsiveness of the institution and its ability to engage a community-wide effort to effectively address resource challenges in pursuit of its mission. At the same time, the College has significantly upgraded many facilities including a number of academic buildings, student residences, IT Services, and select athletics venues. The College's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes in advancing the mission of the College. The Board of Trustees works effectively and has constructively reflected on its practices.

The College has increased attention to processes that protect the integrity of the institution including new safety and research policies and practices. The decade also has seen comprehensive administrative and academic program reviews; the adoption of a new budgeting model and process; and a new marketing study and production of new marketing materials. Finally, the College has made significant progress towards achieving the key goals of the present strategic plan, *The Liberal Arts at Wabash College: Serving the Needs of the Country*.



*President Patrick White chats with Ryan Lutz in Lilly Library.*

Challenges and recommendations in this area include:

- Wabash must continue to explore ways to manage its endowment resources by reducing the draw and generate new revenue streams that will shift the College away from being as heavily reliant on the endowment. Relatedly, the College must decide on the proper role of the endowment in budgeting, both in the short-term and long-term;
- As the College continues to locate its proper tuition pricing point and seeks additional net tuition revenue, the percentage of students taking out loans and the rising debt burden of Wabash students represents a challenge and a concern that the College must address;
- The College will need to monitor the combined impact of changes from efforts to increase net tuition revenue, changes in pricing and student aid, and new market initiatives in student recruitment on the academic and demographic profile of incoming students;
- As Wabash initiates a new, continuous strategic thinking process and prepares for its next capital campaign, it will need to contemplate additional infrastructure and building needs. Foremost among these needs is addressing independent men's housing in a comprehensive fashion and finalizing a decision on a potential new student center;
- The high demands placed on some administrative offices, including the President's Office, the Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, and the Chief Financial Officer, merit monitoring. The broad areas of oversight and thin staffs could eventually threaten to compromise performance of necessary tasks and limit assessment capabilities. Similarly, the College will need to consider the implications of expanding assessment expectations and demands for faculty and staff workload and responsibilities;
- The College should continue to consider issues of governance — what the faculty's role in governance is, what it means to have meaningful influence in decision making, and the faculty's capacity and responsibility for such work. Addressing several related issues can assist with this effort including the completion of a Committee on Committees review of committee effectiveness; considering implementation of a more formal and standardized year-end reporting process for committees; potentially formalizing the role of the department chairs group in the institution's organizational structure; and completing review of grievance procedures for faculty and staff and making process changes based on the findings of this work; and
- While student diversity is reasonably strong and faculty diversity has improved, trustee and staff diversity remains limited except in some key leadership positions in athletics and admissions and financial aid. The College should continue to address this matter.

The human and physical resources of the College are strong while continued consideration and assessment of budgeting, staffing, and infrastructure processes will fortify the College for the future and allow for evaluation of changes to budgeting and recruitment strategy.

### ***Strengthening Staff and Faculty Quality of Life***

Wabash has committed resources to understanding and improving the life and work experiences of its employees. Faculty have available to them impressive resources for professional and scholarly support and development. The College also has devoted substantial resources and time, in the form of quality of life and workplace satisfaction surveys, to understanding and working to fulfill the needs of its

faculty and, to a lesser extent, staff. Many of these needs are financial, and the College has maintained its contributions to faculty and staff benefits, expanded fringe benefits options including a new parental leave benefit, and worked to enhance the level of faculty salaries through the establishment of the Placher Fund. Further attention has been and will continue to be paid to non-financial components of faculty quality of life, including exploring child care options, considering committee workload, and other changes that affect the work-life balance.

Challenges and recommendations in this area include:

- Wabash should take steps to be more effective in learning about and responding to the needs of its non-faculty staff. Such efforts could consider several issues and involve several measures including: providing additional opportunities for staff to communicate regarding job satisfaction and quality of life and, subsequently, considering ways to engage staff in improving effectiveness and satisfaction; addressing staff salaries at all levels; providing clearer avenues for regular communication by staff with the senior administrators beyond their own direct area supervisors; and clarifying guidelines and processes for staff performance evaluation; and
- Consistent with actions taken thus far, Wabash should continue to address faculty quality of life issues identified in study of the topic over the past several years. Relatedly, given that it has been several years since the College has participated in a survey designed to assess pre-tenure work life, the College should participate in another such survey in order to assess current perceptions and the impact of changes to the tenure review process. Finally, the College should build on its strength in faculty development by garnering additional resources to ensure continued support for robust faculty professional and scholarly development opportunities.



*Brent Harris, Director of Sports Information and Marketing, works with a student statistician just before kickoff of a home football game.*

Wabash College recognizes that the staff and faculty are at the heart of the College's mission. The College will continue to strive to provide staff and faculty with a rewarding professional life and with the means to support a fulfilling quality of life.

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The identification of these challenges and opportunities further demonstrates the conclusion that Wabash College has satisfied the five criteria for continuing accreditation. The *Self-Study Report* demonstrates the great strengths and successes of the College and the process of this work has led us to a recognition and understanding of areas for continued improvement and how to pursue those improvements. In fact, in many cases the value of the evaluations and recommendations developed

in the *Self-Study Report*, large and small, have been recognized already and there is a desire to move forward with prioritizing plans of action. It will, however, take time and resources for many of the ideas to come to fruition, another challenge for an institution of our size, one that is in many ways stretched to capacity. At the same time, our capacity and willingness to stretch and adjust arises from a shared commitment to Mission and Core Values and are among our greatest, enduring assets.

Thus, Wabash College is an institution with a good understanding of itself, its strengths, its challenges, and a deep desire to improve itself as the excellent liberal arts college for men our students deserve. Since its founding in 1832, Wabash has been committed to continuous improvement. The last ten years have seen enormous changes for all of higher education and perhaps especially so for Wabash. The College has been tested in significant ways and has responded to these challenges with our Mission and Core Values guiding our efforts. The College remains strong and constantly attentive to ways in which we can improve and enhance the value of a Wabash education. Under the leadership of the Board of Trustees, the administration, faculty, staff, and our students, we are committed to educating young men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Higher Learning Commission continue the accreditation of Wabash College for an additional ten years.





**Wabash College**  
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