

## STANDARD ONE: MISSION AND PURPOSES

### DESCRIPTION

What is today American International College began with the same purpose but a different name. In 1885, Reverend Calvin E. Amaron founded French Protestant College, providing the children of French-Canadian immigrants access to higher education, something they would not have otherwise been availed. The name was changed a second time in 1894 to French American College to better reflect a vision of inclusive and secular education. Finally in 1905, the College settled into its longstanding identity with the name American International College (AIC), emphasizing a steadfast commitment to inclusive education by providing educational opportunities to students from diverse backgrounds and specifically to serve individuals whose access to higher education has historically been challenged. At the time of the original founding of the institution in 1885, the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provided the charter for the institution and upon the naming of the institution as AIC it was authorized by the Commonwealth to “grant such honorary testimonials and confer such honors, degrees and diplomas as are granted or conferred by any university, college or seminary of learning in this Commonwealth”. The charter grants this permission and AIC is among 23 institutions outside of the purview of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education because of an early, initial charter date.

AIC’s mission statement was formally adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2007 and guides every facet of the institution to:

*prepare students for personal fulfillment, professional achievement, and civic engagement through educational experiences that transform lives. Academic programs founded on the knowledge, skills, and values of the liberal arts engage students in theory and emphasize applied learning, while preparing them for the challenges and opportunities presented in the global environment. Committed to the intrinsic worth of each individual, AIC prepares students for life!*

The mission statement has been reviewed and reaffirmed through the 2011 and 2019 strategic plans and remains relevant and consistent with a modern interpretation of the founding purpose and continues to inform operational and strategic priorities of the college. This statement can be found easily on the main website, in course catalogs, and in undergraduate and graduate regulations.

Throughout the typical institutional and organizational growth of the last century and amidst the sea of changes that have transformed the higher education landscape more recently, AIC has deepened the central commitment to the founding mission through many efforts to achieve that mission and an overall vision to advance the college and solidify its status as the premier private college in the region providing access, opportunity, and diversity.

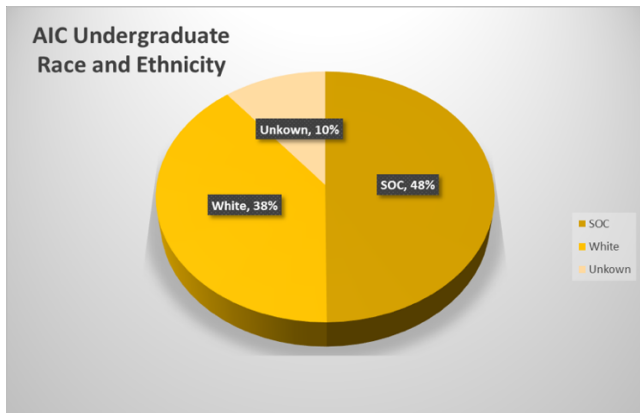
The college consistently looks inward to our students’ needs and interests, as well as outward to both the workforce and social needs of Springfield and Western Massachusetts. AIC believes its primary function is to engage students in the enterprise of learning and works to design curricula to serve this central purpose. As will become evident throughout the rest of this narrative, all activities, including curricular, co-curricular, and athletic, are consistent with this primary intention. The college is dedicated to a pedagogy that sees the centrality of a liberal arts education as providing the best foundation for lifelong intellectual growth and informed career and professional education choices. AIC’s graduate degree programs are designed to give students expertise that helps them advance their careers and increase their earning potential. The AIC community is committed to nurturing an awareness of intrinsic worth, a concern for other individuals, and, particularly at the undergraduate level, the needs and perspective of a first-generation college student, while developing an urban sensibility among all students – graduate and undergraduate. For this college’s mission and student demographic, such a sensibility reflects being acutely aware of and responsive to the environment surrounding AIC. For all AIC students, their faculty and their academic staff serve to instill a dedication and sense of responsibility to the private and public sectors of our community – from our urban neighbors to the broader society.

Table 1.1 AIC Student Demographics (Undergraduate)

|   | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Ethnicity</b>                          |           |           |           |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native            | <1%       | <1%       | <1%       |
| Asian                                     | 1%        | 1%        | 1%        |
| Black/African American                    | 25%       | 24%       | 24%       |
| Hispanic/Latino                           | 14%       | 16%       | 19%       |
| Pacific Islander                          | <1%       | 1%        | <1%       |
| White/Non-Hispanic                        | 39%       | 39%       | 39%       |
| Two or More Races                         | 3%        | 2%        | 3%        |
| <b>Non-Resident alien (international)</b> | <b>3%</b> | <b>3%</b> | <b>3%</b> |
| Race/Ethnicity Unknown                    | 14%       | 14%       | 10%       |
| First Generation                          | 46%       | 45%       | 45%       |
| Pell-Eligible                             | 57%       | 55%       | 54%       |

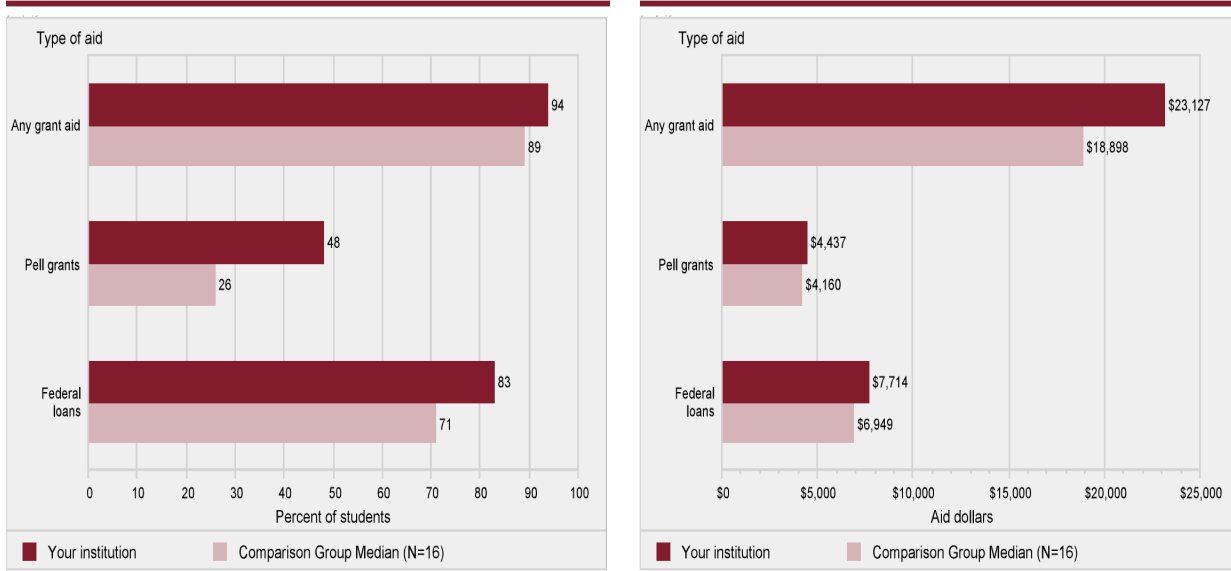
Located in the geographic center of Springfield, AIC’s highest current priorities build upon our history and center around providing access and opportunity to our diverse student body. In Fall 2017, 18% of the entering undergraduate class came from Springfield and 45% were from Western Massachusetts. As seen in the Table 1.1, many of AIC’s undergraduate students identify from minority populations, come from families of modest means, and require significant financial aid packages as well as additional academic support services. This minority population shifts into the majority on our campus (Figure 1.1 below) and is the intended population for our classrooms as well as for the outreach to the surrounding community, which is often students’ home community too.

Figure 1.1 Percentage of AIC Undergraduates Identifying as Students of Color, White



NOTE: Students of Color includes Black African American, Hispanic, two or more races, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan, Asian, or other.

Figure 1.2 Undergraduate Aid Comparison



AIC is committed to providing access to higher education opportunities and increasing student enrollment that reflect the local demographic diversity. This mission of access, opportunity, and diversity is reflected in AIC’s student populations. For the 2017-2018 academic year, of its 3,825 total enrollment, 72% of AIC students were women, 13% were African American, and 12% were Latinx. For AIC’s comparison groups in that same timeframe, 59% of all students were women, 7% were African American, and 8% were Latinx. AIC’s dedication to access also includes creating opportunities for students from lower economic backgrounds. For the 2017-2018 AY 48% of the undergraduate students at AIC received Pell grants, the institutions in AIC’s comparison group averaged 26%.

**APPRAISAL**

Given the distinct history of the institution, the administration today interprets the mission as a modern affirmation of Calvin Amaron’s founding intent and the cornerstone upon which AIC faculty and administration evaluate how the college can best support its learners. In the decade since AIC’s last NEASC comprehensive evaluation, the institution has undergone several campus-wide initiatives structured upon and intended to reinforce the principles within the mission statement. And serving as the embodiment of the beliefs that have shaped the college’s history and will continue to impact its future, AIC’s mission provides a clear and resolute declaration of the holistic nature of an AIC education while providing an unarguably important foundation for designing and evaluating all the academic, support, co-curricular, and athletic programs offered. However, with only informal affirmation of the mission, nuances of its meaning may not permeate new hires, or encompass our distinct graduate student identities or the general campus experience.

Since the drafting of the 2007 mission statement, AIC has changed significantly through the increase of graduate student populations (discussed further in Standard 4). AIC’s vision of providing access, opportunity, and diversity is organic to the traditional undergraduate student population but an understanding of what this means to our graduate student and programs is not as explicit. Prior to the 2018 strategic planning process, AIC underwent an institutional rebranding and marketing campaign that aimed to reimagine how the College presents itself to today’s students. Working with Simpson Scarborough Market Research and Forge Worldwide LLC, both nationally recognized marketing strategy agencies specializing in market research and brand identity, a baseline was determined to assess branding perceptions of current students and alumni. The firms researched how potential students and community stakeholders viewed AIC against its local competitive set, reviewed the brand development process, and web/social media functionality. The results of this research informed a brand identity

portfolio consisting of value propositions, new branding assets (logos, color palette, fonts), new branded materials (letterhead, business cards, electronic forms), a redesigned website that better featured strengths of AIC and more prominently displays the mission statement, and a new tagline - Higher Dedication - that speaks to the history of the institution and the ethos of its mission statement. Unfortunately, survey data were not disaggregated for undergraduate and graduate populations and this overgeneralized the student perception. The degree-level would inform identity discussions significantly because the demographics of continuing education and graduate students is not reflective of undergraduate demographics and financial challenges.

Two clear examples of mission-centric commitment are the Center for Academic Success (CAS), a one-stop resource hub for all students and the newly launched APEX undergraduate program – both designed to help students maximize their college experience by providing academic spaces to further develop college readiness skills and habits. CAS was launched in 2009 with initial funding from a Title III grant and fully absorbed in the operational budget by 2013. The center exemplifies comprehension of students' needs and academic programming. Many CAS activities allow students, faculty, and staff to experience mission-centric services and classroom activities: The Academic Resource Center provides academic coaching and guidance for low-performing students; the TRIO grant funded AIC Core Education Program (ACE) aids with first-generation college students with learning challenges or limited financial means; the Noonan Writing Center provides writing and editing instruction to all levels; and Supportive Learning Services is a fee-based, individualized learning program that provides academic assistance for all students from professional tutors. The peer tutoring program recruits strongly performing students with recent experience in multiple courses to tutor their peers; and in so doing, develop their own skills beyond simply content knowledge while simultaneously supporting their classmates' learning and success.

The AIC Plan for Excellence (APEX) represents how groups across campus have reflected upon institutional identity and revised an integrated undergraduate curriculum and suite of student services. In October 2013, the Provost established an Advisory Council for General Education to promote the former strategic plan's program development initiatives. This council was tasked to reimagine the AIC student experience in a holistic manner and to build intentional, scaffolded connections with curricular and co-curricular experiences. Out of that review came a focused critique of the first-year experience that was in place at the time. APEX evolved to meet first-year needs and embed continued support throughout four years on campus, with a curriculum that matures with the students. APEX had to have at its core the types of learning activities and opportunities that allow all AIC undergraduate students to develop the skill-sets that foster personal and professional growth. Using the College's mission statement as a starting point, the Advisory Council developed APEX into what has now been launched: a comprehensive four-year undergraduate journey that heightens students' academic, professional, and social experiences through academic, community, and leadership opportunities that help foster intellectual, personal, and professional growth and development.

Over the years, AIC's mission statement has effectively moved the campus' shared values of diversity, access, and opportunity into practice throughout the College's history. Overall, the mission remains undeniably relevant and is understood by faculty, administration, and students; it has been informally examined and reaffirmed through various efforts, including as the inspiration for a renewed vision statement that is based on AIC's history and vision statements for academics, student affairs, and athletics. As with any institutional statement, periodic reflection will help to strengthen, refine, and ensure each stakeholder group on campus can describe their experience on campus as mission-centric.

## PROJECTION

**Formal Conversation and Review of AIC's Mission:** AIC's mission remains unchanged: to prepare students for personal fulfillment, professional achievement, and civic engagement through educational experiences that transform lives. Yet, the way the college considers this mission for the changing demographics needs to be

continually revisited and affirmed. In order to elevate the distinct vision and purpose of AIC, the college community must periodically revisit to ensure the relevance of this statement in a formal and inclusive manner. With the recent adoption of and continued work on the general education learning outcomes and with continued reflection on the academic portfolio of undergraduate and graduate programs, the campus is positioned to examine the ways our programming is consistently in service of this mission. Building on the work of the recently completed strategic plan, AIC commits to a campus conversation about what the mission means today and how best to maintain alignment with our mission across the college.

## STANDARD TWO: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Planning and evaluation are essential characteristics of an effective institution. At AIC, the planning processes are evolving as the organization builds on and develops new strengths. Evaluation of services, processes, and the academic program is a shared endeavor that informs institutional goals. As a set of dual practices, planning and evaluation are areas the college has elevated considerably since the last self-study, in part to address gaps and to make better use of newly available data in support of evidenced-based decision-making.

### DESCRIPTION – PLANNING

AIC has placed considerable attention on developing an integrated planning process that includes input and leadership from various stakeholder groups (students, faculty, and staff) and the different units across campus (academic, student life, athletic, facilities, information technology, and finance). During the past ten years, the college has developed, followed, and grown upon two strategic plans, each spanning a five-year timeframe (i.e., 2007-2011, 2011-2016) and launched a third (2019-2024); all implemented under the leadership of President Maniaci. Between 2016 and 2019, the direction of the institution was maintained by the plan ending in 2016 and the focus ahead was to refine and ensure an inclusive planning process to establish the 2019 launch. The current plan supports AIC's efforts to advance the delivery of our historical mission and increase the demand for an AIC education by strengthening the college's brand, building institutional capacity to carry our mission forward, and developing new and enhanced programming reflective of inclusive approaches to access, opportunity, and diversity.

#### College Strategic Plan

The fundamental purpose guiding the college's overall direction is the AIC institutional vision: *to be the premier college for access, opportunity, and diversity in New England*. Today, the mission operationalizes this vision, guiding the ways AIC prepares "students for personal fulfillment, professional achievement, and civic engagement through educational experiences that transform lives". The 2019-2024 strategic plan was directed by AIC's mission and inspired by aspirations, needs, and accreditation recommendations. This plan outlines the goals and objectives to advance AIC's mission and vision through 2024. Several preliminary steps framed the process by which the goals and objectives of the current plan were established.

First, was the recent [rebranding initiative](#) in 2015 that began by asking the campus community, "Who are we?". The responses to that question shaped the Higher Dedication campaign that has reinvigorated AIC's history and mission: we have a "higher dedication" to serving one another across campus, and this tenet of AIC's identity is now depicted in corresponding logos, branding assets, and value propositions and characterizes the institution and divisional planning agenda.

Pursuant to the identity conversations, President Maniaci followed the rebranding process with an invitation for campus feedback on a new [Institutional Vision](#) for AIC. The President defined three supporting pillars that strengthen AIC's ability to deliver our historical mission: 1) Increase the demand for an AIC education, 2) build institutional capacity to carry our mission forward, and 3) develop new and enhanced programming reflective of access, opportunity and diversity. President Maniaci called on the campus community to think together about maintaining the generous level of financial aid and how best to give students and their parents compelling reasons to come to AIC, and about how best to maximize AIC's value propositions by creating pathways to meaningful employment through education supported by cultural literacy and urban sensibility developed at AIC and expected by employers. Functionally, this institutional vision and campus conversation outlined the interconnection

between academics, student life, and athletics in support of these pillars. The institution is further directed by newly refreshed visions for Academics, Student Life, and Athletics – each either established or recently refreshed during the 2016-2019 period, while preparing for the upcoming strategic planning launch.

These campus-wide activities mapped to the final strategic plan and together are the culmination of a high-level collaborative planning process. The strategic plan steering committee consisted of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs; Vice President for Finance; Senior Vice President for Human Resources & Chief of Staff; Vice President of Student Affairs; and the Dean of the School of Business, Arts, and Sciences who together developed broad goals culled from the visions and mission statements, as well as immediate needs and recommendations. The committee drafted initial goals that were shared with several subcommittees comprised of faculty and staff members who further contributed to and refined the goals. These groups developed the objectives through which the goals could be achieved, while the subcommittee recommendations were then re-submitted to the steering committee for feedback and dialogue. Once recommendations were finalized and integrated, the goals and objectives were shared with the broader campus community in Fall 2018. Community feedback sessions were introduced in the Fall 2018 Town Hall and subsequently held during October 2018 by the Chief of Staff. The finalized 2019-2024 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees at the October 2018 meeting. An operational plan is underway that further defines how the institution will achieve the objectives and goals of the strategic plan. This operational plan will be prioritized over the next five years and will inform the multiyear institutional budget. Both take into account area visions for new or expanded revenue streams and related expenses.

### **Area Visions**

Strategic goals for each area (i.e., Academics, Student Life, and Athletics) are developed and evaluated in support of the mission and for strategic planning purposes. Progress against goals will be reported annually and presented to the Board of Trustees in May. During the most recent strategic planning process, leaders and stakeholders in each divisional area collaborated to draft a vision for their unique scope, which was used as a basis for the strategic plan goals and helped maintain an appreciation for the complex interconnectivity among campus departments.

The Academic Vision (October, 2017) describes a portfolio of academic programs with curricula that revolve around the ideas of urban sensibility and cultural relevance and literacy. Re-envisioning the curriculum to deliberately align with our students will differentiate AIC from other small liberal arts schools and will emphasize the alignment between our targeted students and the College's mission. Over the last five years, Academic Affairs has established a process for program development, and this process continues to be adjusted while deliberately integrating mission-aligned opportunities, enhancing market research practices, identifying additional resources that are required in new initiatives, and preparing detailed financial plans. This 2017 vision originally stated goals of growing enrollments over the next ten years to 2,500 graduate and 1,800 undergraduate students. With new leadership in the Office of Academic Affairs, these goals are now being revisited, given growing pressures throughout the higher education landscape and a shifting emphasis across the college on better retaining AIC's largely first-generation student demographic – who are central to our mission and are more likely to stop out or leave altogether on the path to graduation. Furthermore, graduate programs provide an immediate and less complex revenue stream and open up possibilities for business partnerships and creative tuition programming. Within these updated strategies, enrollment projections instead favor stabilizing enrollments at 1,200 undergraduate and 1,500 graduate and continuing education/certificate students.

The School of Business, Arts, and Sciences' (BAS) vision includes projections related to increased collaboration across campus, expanded partnerships for internships and practicum experiences, and expanded research opportunities for faculty and students. In concert with the mission of AIC, the School of Health Sciences (SHS) prepares students to become culturally competent clinicians, leaders, and scholars by providing dynamic, interactive, and interprofessional learning experiences. The SHS is committed to academic excellence, community service, and the intrinsic worth of each individual, and prepares students to address the health needs of our diverse and rapidly changing society. The School of Education's (SOE) vision considers the PK-12 data from the National Center for Education Statistics to inform curriculum and program development so that graduates' skills and philosophies align with regional education systems and population needs.

Curriculum planning and changes are generated from program review reporting and, increasingly, market analysis. The curriculum development process begins with the faculty member and dean, moves through the undergraduate or graduate curriculum committee, faculty senate, and finally the executive vice president for Academic Affairs (EVPAA). For new programs, proposals are considered among deans, EVPAA, and subject matter experts in the faculty. Final approval is considered after a vote in the Senate and presented to EVPAA and VP for Finance before proceeding to the President and Board of Trustees. Budget projections for new academic investments are reviewed continuously by the VP for Finance. New course and program proposals take into consideration library resources as well, which feed into the library's overall planning. AIC's librarians assess the needs of each school with its programs' faculty and weigh collection decisions in light of the consortia resources. Departmental academic budgets from year to year support new initiatives at the School level. For instance, in AY2018-19, the SHS's expansions include a substantial capital investments and dedicated efforts to expanding programming and adding faculty – reflected in operational costs for new academic investments of \$375,000 for the new Exercise Science degree and additional faculty in Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy.

The Student Life Vision (October, 2017) emphasizes areas of need and opportunities for growth related to strengthening the student life, academic success, and health and wellness units as ways to positively impact the student experience, retention, and graduation rates. Action items are prioritized based upon various assessment tools such as the Student Satisfaction Inventory and College Student Inventory from Ruffalo Noel Levitz; department satisfaction surveys, such as those conducted in Residence Life and Academic Advising; and student focus groups and President's roundtable events. The results from these initiatives coupled with recent national trends identified by NASPA (2016), guide the direction in which Student Life progresses toward meeting the needs of the student population.

In order to coordinate the different departments, various regular meetings provide the framework for cross-institution decision-making. Ad hoc planning groups meet throughout the year to coordinate activities. One recent large-scale example is the lengthy collaboration between the Dean of Students and Dean of Academic Success on several projects related to retention, such as the onboarding of Starfish (branded as AIC|Connect) that began in Fall 2017 and phase one rolled out in Fall 2018. The Center for Student Engagement and the Office of Residence Life also recently merged to create the Department of Student Life, so they can better share resources and coordinate outreach and programming. And an enduring collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Life supports coordinated efforts to wrap around the student; most notably for the development and implementation of AIC's Plan for Excellence (APEX) to address incoming students' preparedness for higher education and support their persistence to graduation.

The Athletic Vision (October 2017), as part of the overall Student Affairs visions, positions AIC sports as a key driver to fuel undergraduate enrollment growth through an improved student-athlete experience. In



2007, Athletics transitioned from a model of mostly part-time coaches and dual sport student-athletes to full-time coaches and predominantly single-sport student athletes. This strengthened enrollment by having coaches on the road recruiting and improved the students' athletic experience through higher quality of play and greater mentoring from full-time coaching. Athletics also worked toward amplifying academics through the 3.0 Club (which recognizes GPA achievements) and by introducing a dedicated advisor, the Advisor for Student Athlete Success, to focus supporting student athletes' personal, educational, and athletic goals. The Athletic Vision outlines the optimal facilities required to support

facilities not only improve the student-athlete experience but will be designed to enhance and grow academic programs such as Exercise Science and Athletic Training. Revenue raised from college athletics will be invested in additional academic programs, facilities proposed in the *Academic Vision*, and in strengthening existing and growing new competitive opportunities for women. Such investment aligns with national trends and AIC's commitment to providing access and opportunity for underrepresented groups.

Financial planning is guided by a multi-year budgeting process that the Finance department has developed and managed in support of the above initiatives. Four-year budgets reflect priorities and guide expenditures for an initial year (approved in May by the president and board of trustees) and then revisited annually, with each budget cycle requiring a current year submission with three out-year projections. The out-year projections anticipate revenues and expenses for proposed items, such as new programming. The Board-approved fiscal year 2019 budget reflects \$54 million of revenue and \$55 million in expense. Net operating income is budgeted at a \$1.3 million deficit, largely based on anticipated undergraduate enrollment of 1,307 for Fall 2018 and 1,153 for Spring 2019 and graduate enrollments of 1,876 for Fall 2018 and 1,734 Spring 2019. The Standard 7 discussion of financial resources at the College demonstrates the financial modeling and analysis, with particular attention to the FY2019 budget's anticipate revenues, investments, and cash flow.

Budgetary goals are set annually, reviewed by the president and Vice President for Finance, and approved by the Finance Board committee and Board of Trustees as a whole. Quarterly reporting to the Board for the year begins in October, thereafter presented monthly to the president. Financial performance is tracked via the annual budget and integrated with a long-range strategic budget. The Finance committee meets at least four times annually. Annual financial statements are externally audited by O'Connor & Drew P.C., in addition to an annual single audit (i.e., Yellow Book Audit). Further state audits are conducted by the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Aid; the NCAA annual Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act survey, which is submitted to the NCAA and the Department of Education; and the NCAA Agreed Upon Procedures review, which occurs every three years. The annual budget plans for \$1 million in deferred maintenance and capital projects and contingencies are accounted for in areas such as enrollment, payroll, expense, and financial aid; the 2019 budget established \$1.06 million in contingency planning. Fiscal evaluation is held within the Finance department's careful calculations of its investments and financial viability in line with the strategic goals. The annual budgeting process rigorously evaluates the resource needs of each program and provides systematic monitoring of all variances. The college seeks to achieve a margin of operating cash surplus each year to ensure that money is available for contingencies and to meet bank covenants of 1.25 debt service ratio, which entails paying principal debt payments of \$1.73 million, and to provide for investment in future programs and facilities.

At the departmental level, budget monitoring is shared by department heads, who receive traditional monthly reports with budget versus actuals, including prior year actuals and current year-to-date budget and spending. The Vice President for Finance continuously reviews financial outcomes and metrics

related to accounts receivable, accounts payable, cash and cash flow, and net operating incomes, and shares this with the president monthly. The second quarter begins projections for undergraduate enrollments of new and returning students, developed in consultation with Ruffalo Noel Levitz reporting. Results inform upcoming financial aid offers, establish a baseline for assessing prior year, and shaping next fiscal year spending and investments. Beginning in January, for graduate and targeted undergraduate programs, the Admissions office works with academic deans and program directors to review current enrollments and new programs, historical attritions, projected enrollments based on marketplace, and Department of Labor reports. Departments submit budgets and additional funding requests to the Finance Office and discuss allocations with senior leaders.

The Technology Plan contains an inventory and replacement plan of the technical infrastructure investments in hardware, software and personnel that will be required to support the growth of the college. The technology plan includes a ten-year capital budget of \$551,000 in 2019 for replacing all technology by category and was proposed in 2015 by the Chief Information Officer, in consultation with the IT management team, the Associate Vice President of Budget and Planning, the Vice President of Finance and approved by the Executive Vice President of Administration. The document has also been reviewed and affirmed by the current AVP for Auxiliary Services, the Budget and Planning Analyst and the Vice President of Finance. The funds are broken down by desktop replacements, classroom technology, systems and storage, wireless and wiring, networking equipment, telephones and security cameras. Each grouping has a different number of years for scheduled replacement.

Oversight and planning for each of approximately 40 systems and data integration for the institution are detailed in a document referenced in the Technology Plan and updated annually. This report is sent to the President, communicated at Cabinet, and the tracking spreadsheet is posted for Cabinet in a SharePoint site. System integration and data flow, operational efficiencies, inter-office coordination, and reporting needs are overseen through weekly meetings chaired by the IT Manager for Systems and Projects. Each year, there is a recommendation for improvements to this plan as we engage departments about it.

The Land Use and Enhancement Plan was drafted to serve as a guide for facilities expansion over the next few decades. The survey and enhancement plan served as the first step in master planning. The process was announced by the president's office in conjunction with the drafting of the institutional vision and the plan was informed by priorities, new programming, and growth concepts identified in this and the three area visions. The consulting firm of Derck & Edson began visiting campus in 2016 to meet with academic, student life, athletic, facilities, finance, and senior leaders and created a detailed survey of the college's physical resources and directed the enhancement plan for construction of new facilities, overall land use, and upgrades to existing facilities (including deferred maintenance). As the plan was developed, some early projects were completed such as the 2016 debut of the Learning Commons, a 9,240 square foot renovation of the Shea Library and the modernization of the Dining Commons, both of which were significant steps toward the 2011-2016 strategic goal to *improve the quality of the campus environment by providing a living and learning environment*.

The first iteration of the Land Use and Enhancement Plan was presented to the President, Board of Trustees, and President's Cabinet in February 2017. It was ambitious in scope but has been critical in laying out the physical landscape required to actualize new programming identified in the area visions. Since February 2017, further feedback and refinements have taken place as academic and financial leadership transitioned. Derck and Edson is still retained by the College and has been in an on-going dialogue with senior leadership to revise and phase this plan into feasible and achievable steps.

Evidence of such initial steps is in over \$30m in capital investments across AIC's main campus and further described in Standard Seven.

#### DESCRIPTION – EVALUATION

Alongside the development of a more integrated and systematic planning process have been efforts to create a reciprocal culture of evaluation and continuous improvement. The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) reports to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and replaces the former Office of Institutional Effectiveness (effective Summer 2018). OIR is responsible for the ongoing review of the colleges long-term planning, and evaluation efforts and provides the administration, trustees, faculty, and other internal and external constituencies with information and research assistance. OIR will serve as the central repository of official data for state, federal, and other external agencies for reporting purposes. Data collections include enrollments, program completions, retention rates, faculty, staff, finances, tuition, and student financial aid and the Director is responsible for providing data collection and analysis to support informed planning, policy development, assessment, and decision-making. The IR office also responds to questionnaires and other requests from the internal campus community and external sources, while also providing data to fulfill federal, state, and other compliance reporting requirements.

Historically, evaluation was overseen by an Office of Institutional Effectiveness, as mentioned above. With changes to the academic administration in Summer 2018, the former office's activities were divided between two new positions - a Director for Institutional Research and an Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA). This split reflects an intention to define separate institutional practices for data reporting, compliance, and decision-making and to bring academic assessment closer to faculty. The AVPAA will in part focus on supporting faculty and deans' participation in building a culture of assessment and program enrichment specific to academics.

During the first year of working in this way, careful observations are in effect of data extraction, processes of sharing findings, and communication channels among data-handlers, and of the quality and reliability of information. Initial steps have been taken to align definitions with a data dictionary and increase communication among data-users. Staff from the Registrar's office, Institutional Research, and Information Technology are collaborating on developing this dictionary to establish consistency of key terms and metrics with definitions, as well as where data is stored and who has access to this information. Since AIC is a best in breed institution, it is essential to ensure that all of the data managers have common definitions for all of the elements in the system to ensure efficient, accurate, and consistent reporting. Additionally, Information Technology and Institutional Research are reviewing proposals from outside vendors to establish a data warehouse to develop an analytical database that layers on top of our databases and allows for analytics, data storage from multiple databases, and to generally make it easier to analyze information. With multiple student populations, degree levels, locations, and modalities, the need to disaggregate data is essential. Jenzabar, the college's student information system, allows student data to be disaggregated along the aforementioned variables. Codes are in place to differentiate populations and a data dictionary is underway to further aid in the consistency of data entered into the systems. In 2015, the information system was switched from CAMS to Jenzabar to increase functionality specifically with regard to academic calendars. Many nursing and education programs have seven- or eight-week terms and without this coding structure in the system, data were not easily or usefully sorted.

For enhancing institutional effectiveness, evaluative activities are conducted in both academic and non-academic areas of the college. Data sources include student surveys, academic assessment plans, five-

year program reviews, market research on new program opportunities, national surveys such as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Ruffalo Noel Levitz enrollment research, IPEDS, and the Common Data Set. Table 2.1 shows all the tools utilized and their administration cycles.

Table 2.1 Evaluative Tools Calendar

| <b>Evaluative Tool</b>                            | <b>Frequency</b>                | <b>Years Administered</b> |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Career Development (6 mo post Graduation)         | Every Year                      | 2014 -2018                |
| Undergraduate Exit Survey                         | Every Year                      | 2013 – 2018               |
| National Survey of Student Engagement             |                                 | 2011, 2019*               |
| Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory        | Every Two Years                 | 2014, 2016, 2018          |
| Residence Life Student Satisfaction Inventory     | Every Year                      | 2015, 2017, 2018          |
| School of Education – Faculty Survey              | End of Every Session            |                           |
| School of Education – 360 Survey                  | End of Every Semester           |                           |
| ACE Program Survey                                | End of Year                     | 2008 – 2018               |
| Advising Center Questionnaire                     | Annually-Spring                 | 2015 – 2018               |
| Your Advising Experience-Graduation Questionnaire | Annually-Spring                 | 2017 – 2018               |
| Advising/Major or Program co-hosted events        | Post-event Feedback             | 2017                      |
| Service Learning Experience                       | End of Every Semester           | 2017, 2018                |
| ENG1100 Course Survey                             | End of Every Semester           | 2017 – 2018               |
| ENG1100 Course Survey                             | End of Every Semester           | 2017 – 2018               |
| Writing Center Satisfaction Survey                | End of Every Session            | 2010 – 2018               |
| Writing Center Satisfaction Survey                | Randomly Throughout Semester    | 2010 – 2018               |
| Presentation Survey                               | After Faculty Presentations     | 2010 – 2018               |
| Presentation /Workshop Survey                     | After Presentations & Workshops | 2010 – 2018               |
| Tutee Satisfaction Survey                         | After all Tutoring Sessions     | 2011 – 2018               |
| Tutor Self-Evaluation Survey                      | Mid and End of Each Semester    |                           |
| Cram Jam Exam Review Session Survey               | End of Every Semester           | 2016 – 2018               |

Communicating the data that is collected is a priority for the Director of Institutional Research, and together with Information Technology, they are integrating Power BI into the portal to allow staff and faculty to drill into institutional data by graphs and tables. Power BI is a Microsoft business analytics tool that can connect to a wide range of data sources. At AIC, this tool is used to explore data, customized dashboards, and create interactive reports visually. During Spring 2019, the Office of Institutional

Research will conduct a formal presentation to the AIC community on how to navigate reports created in Power BI.

A comprehensive academic assessment plan based on measurable outcomes has been a significant focus in Academic Affairs since the last NEASC ten- and five- year reviews. Plans in each of the three Schools have evolved differently to meet the needs of different disciplines and course-level modalities of clinical and licensure programs. An Academic Assessment committee, formed of faculty, meets monthly with dean representation and the AVPAA to develop, review, and support assessment strategies. This group has also increasingly played a role in planning the assessment days on campus, a collaborative working day dedicated to reviewing assessment findings and plans themselves. The program review process includes assessment market interest, reflection on and analysis of enrollments, financial resources, and faculty and student achievement. Learning outcomes data is based upon program directors' familiarity with the curriculum to identify key assignments, course-level learning outcomes, and program-level outcomes. Since 2016 and with the assistance of funding from a Davis Educational Foundation grant, a collaborative approach has been taken to support faculty's development of their assessment plans. Through the grant funding, the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship (CETLS) partnered with Academic Computing and an external consultant to provide faculty development opportunities, technical support, and targeted workshops to assist in utilizing the learning management system and its integrated outcomes software.

The quality and effectiveness of non-academic areas are assessed against objectives and expected outcomes such as student satisfaction, efficiency, and customer service. Assessment of academic and student support programs has been based on the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. Beginning in 2017, the assessment of non-academic areas was taken on by the Vice President of Human Resources who has rolled out a process for relevant groups to begin assessing their areas. Learning from the first-year reports is informing how this process will continue to unfold and to best understand the findings from the reports. After two years of repeated assessment, findings will have greater validity and more use in planning efforts.

The Office of Institutional Advancement (IA) at American International College houses the Offices of Development, Alumni Relations, and Grants. IA is responsible for all institutional fundraising activities and engagement with alumni, students, faculty, staff, and the community. The office is committed to solidifying the reputation of AIC among our many stakeholders by demonstrating the value and quality of the college with an overall goal to increase the number of participants and donors and the total dollars raised. IA uses a variety of methods to communicate with alumni and other stakeholders. Lucent Magazine is the alumni magazine published bi-annually and distributed to all donors, alumni, community leaders, and friends of the college – an audience of over 25,000. The magazine includes interviews with successful and influential alumni, community partners, and current students. Electronic newsletters are sent through the Raiser's Edge database and Constant Contact to alumni and friends of the college approximately six times per year, in addition to any event-specific communications, such as grant awards or upcoming activities. The Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and AIC's President regularly travel to out of state alumni and contributors to the college. Along with in person and other communication tactics, the office of IA regularly utilizes services such as Wealth Engine and Blackbaud Analytics to measure the giving potential of prospects, where alumni are currently working, and what an individual's giving habits may be. When reviewing this data, the office is able to identify heavily populated areas to increase geographic engagement strategies and cultivation plans for major donors.

## APPRAISAL - PLANNING

Over the past decade (and last five years specifically), AIC has put forth concerted effort to align and integrate planning and activities across the institution resulting in a more inclusive approach to planning than had historically been the norm. Area visions are now being used to spell out what the strategic plan looks like on the ground and to more acutely inform the college's deferred maintenance, land use and enhancement, and technology plans. Furthermore, the visions constitute a road map for integrated growth based on discussions with stakeholders – current students and graduates, faculty, and staff. Whereas in the past, planning conversations were held by a select few in leadership roles, more recently mid-level managers and administrators have shared sentiments that decision-making today happens with greater inclusivity. This inclusion is leading to better coordination; however, there remains progress to be made in terms of building out the organizational capacity and systems integration for coordinated planning. The previous silos that characterized data handling and technology usage weakened coordinated planning. Increased bridges and system changes allow for more integrated planning with increasingly shared data, consistent definitions, and clear reporting functions. Completion of the 2019-2024 strategic plan was also a process of managing the effects of leadership discontinuity. With a number of senior leadership changes (VP level) in the past three years, there was an opportunity to shift the vision or methodology for leading an area. As such, departments and their mid-level managers experienced some disruption if goals were changed, but the direction overall is toward collaborative planning and shared decision-making. To characterize the strategic planning process once it was complete, the process was designed to be progressive with ample campus input and, yet, with any process there were critiques. As is typical with any campus-wide initiative, not all participate. Because the new communication flow to staff and faculty about strategic initiatives remains in its early stages, it is difficult to assess perceived versus actual inclusivity within these new planning processes.

AIC's financial status has dramatically stabilized since 2009, a timeframe characterized by a national recession, challenges in the higher education landscape, and internal, institutional financial difficulty. In practicing cautionary spending to reach today's stable resource flow, the college can comfortably plan with its system of yearly budgets and multi-year forecasts. When looking at the past few years, however, it is possible that conservative forecasting may have caused the college to delay some investment opportunities in new program development and some needed retention-focused strategies. Tight budgetary oversight led to cuts in operating budgets in order to submit a balanced budget, yet those funds have not consistently been restored in following fiscal years. Now, in transitioning to approved deficit budgets, the finance department is continuously assessing the college's financial situation and slowly beginning to tolerate greater risk by investment. In FY18, evidence of such long-term investments is in retention-based strategies including APEX, the Engage student engagement platform, the Starfish Retention and Advising platform, the Signal Vine academic success texting platform, an additional professional undergraduate advisor, a new advisor for student athlete success, and development of the Summer Jump Start program.

Steady financial planning has been exemplified in recent years' significant operating surplus, DOE composite scores (see Table 2.2), investments in infrastructure, and endowment growth. In order to accommodate planned new investments in academics for exercise science, a new science building, and significant software investments required the approval of FY 2019's deficit budget. Enrollments for Fall 2018 were shy of the goal; yet, the finances overall are within a comfortable margin of the planned, temporary deficit. Approval for the budget was based upon maintaining positive cash flows and follows consistent years of endowment growth and composite score increases. The strategy to build the endowment shifted from a traditional approach that used those funds for scholarships to, instead, a Board-proposed halt to drawing on the fund and providing scholarships from revenue. This approach

allowed for significant growth of the endowment fund over the past ten years. In fiscal year 2013, the Board established a quasi-endowment, investing \$3.5 million into the endowment. That initial investment has grown to roughly a \$4.5 million, which has not been drawn upon.

Table 2.2 Department of Education – AIC’s Reported Financial Information

| DOE         |                   |                 |                           |                  |  |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------|--|
| Fiscal Year | Operating Surplus | Composite Score | Infrastructure Investment | Endowment        |  |
| 2010 - 11   | \$ 2,330,320.00   | 1.7             | \$ 1,433,855.00           | \$ 9,048,349.00  |  |
| 2011 - 12   | \$ 4,431,310.00   | 1.6             | \$ 1,490,555.00           | \$ 8,901,421.00  |  |
| 2012 - 13   | \$ 5,089,519.00   | 1.9             | \$ 1,635,448.00           | \$ 10,199,296.00 |  |
| 2013 - 14   | \$ 4,834,007.00   | 2.2             | \$ 2,983,181.00           | \$ 15,195,268.00 |  |
| 2014 - 15   | \$ 3,149,304.00   | 1.9             | \$ 10,089,255.00          | \$ 15,500,858.00 |  |
| 2015 - 16   | \$ 2,025,649.00   | 1.6             | \$ 7,687,142.00           | \$ 15,669,086.00 |  |
| 2016 - 17   | \$ 1,364,280.00   | 2.2             | \$ 2,680,842.00           | \$ 17,994,847.00 |  |
| 2017 - 18   | \$ 1,626,848.00   | 1.9             | \$ 7,102,119.00           | \$ 19,500,413.00 |  |
|             |                   |                 |                           |                  |  |

According to the 2011 strategic plan goal *to develop the whole student and improve the quality of the campus environment by providing a living and learning environment*, numerous upgrades and renovations were made in the Dining Commons, Learning Commons, Center for Accessibility Services, Griswold Theatre, Center for Student Engagement, Registrar and Student Accounts areas. Many of these additions marked progress toward a goal to strengthen information literacy efforts and the library as a learning center. In line with an infrastructure goal to develop and upgrade existing infrastructure, upgrades were made to network and fiber infrastructure and security technologies.

Two new buildings funded through bond investments were constructed in 2018, demonstrating continued investment in the college’s physical plant to support anticipated academic program growth. The Colaccino Center for Health Sciences building, which was planned with a pro forma for \$10.5 million, was secured with a contractor bid at \$5 million, plus fees and the bank approved the revised proposal that included the original \$10.5 million proposal with a new bond for a graduate housing project. This state-of-the-art health sciences facility is the home to AIC’s new Exercise Science program, expanded Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy programs, as well as Nursing programs and the upcoming Athletic Training program. Completed with the same funds, the new Acorn graduate apartment buildings provide an on-campus housing solution for students pursuing their graduate studies. Previously, housing options appropriate for graduate students were not part of our campus housing portfolio. The new housing will meet the needs of 32 graduate students.

To address other short-term needs and to address goals and objectives within the strategic plan, the Finance and Auxiliary Service departments have launched a set of “adrenaline projects” (small-scale investment projects) based on input from campus constituencies about critical areas where minimally invasive renovations could have maximum effect. Through work with Derck and Edson, larger modernization needs were identified in spaces – such as outdated science laboratories, athletic training facilities, student-athlete locker rooms, student parking lots, and residence halls. Small and large projects are tracked along with general and deferred maintenance activities to ensure progress is defined by the plan. Putting into place the land use and facilities plan has taken coordinated effort and the implementation of the plan is a learning process for how to best align planning, decision-making, and resource allocation. For example, while the plan delineates demolition of two buildings, it has

become worthwhile to reconsider those as renovation sites, in particular to address immediate needs for undergraduate science labs. The Old Science Building, built in 1953, supports undergraduate chemistry and biology classes and labs, and requires updates on a more aggressive timetable than identified in the 2017 land use plan. The athletic facilities are also under consideration as they are over capacity, serving 250 more student-athletes than the original complex was designed to support. A financial analysis is underway to consider debt capacity and cash flows in order to support further investment in the college's physical resources. With the new strategic plan to guide initiatives, there is considerable support for reexamining the land use plan to better align the timetables of the plans.

The Information Technology plan averages approximately \$570,000 yearly except in three of the plan's ten years. In 2017 and 2018, budgets shrunk due to other capital projects, thus altering plans for classroom and desktop replacements during those years. In general, the budget increases approximately \$20,000 each year due to increases in buildings and improved infrastructure. There have also been two recent instances of unplanned capital technology projects – server room upgrades and the upgrade of the college's core security firewall, which was a software upgrade that was significantly costlier than its predecessor. These two projects (completed in 2016) cost over \$1 million dollars. The ten-year capital budget planning needs to be updated as changes occur in the infrastructure. As a department, sub-areas are not as good at manually adding these updates and subsequently, four years after approval, the CIO is in the process of refreshing the inventory and rebuilding the overall plan this year. IT planning is also informed by changes at other schools and comparing AIC against the Core Data Service available through the Educause membership. The Core Data Service is used to predict changes and trends in IT and, at time, for how to address problems common to higher education contexts.

#### APPRAISAL - EVALUATION

Central to evaluation is reliable data. The reliability and integrity of institutional data have evolved greatly over the past decade, as have data-based decision-making practices across campus and this baseline is providing many departments with a valid benchmark for new initiatives. Historically, responsibilities for monitoring institutional effectiveness were approached broadly and the outputs gathered were too general to be consequential; data gathering emphasized archiving and record keeping. The transition is now toward cultivating, exploring, and using evidence to close the data-loop, understand outcomes, and inform action. Evaluative activities are described here and related outcomes are discussed further in Standard 8.

The Board of Trustees evaluates progress at the institutional level through updates that are captured and shared in various dashboards at both the committee level and at the full BOT meetings. In addition, the BOT is updated annually on progress made towards the strategic plan. With the recent strategic plan approval, the opportunity is also present to identify key progress indicators and to launch the plan with established metrics against which to clearly measure and reliably report progress.

Significant inputs, specifically over the past three years, are evident in academic assessment; and outputs, as of Fall 2018, are that most programs across graduate and undergraduate programs have some version of an academic assessment plan in place. Most have gone through a full assessment cycle and submitted assessment reports. In an effort to improve evaluation of academic achievement, faculty leads in each program were charged with developing learning assessment and program review plans. Achievement of the plans for each program is monitored by Academic Affairs now (historically, by the academic dean and Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness). AIC programs in Education, Business, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy have professional as well as regional accreditation and as such, they undergo regular reviews to maintain accreditation and are required to meet accepted



professional standards in program design and content, faculty credentials, facilities and resources, and assessment of measurable outcomes.

One organization-level indicator of this aspect of evaluation is reflected in the additional personnel capacity in Academic Affairs and the organizational changes related to academic assessment and institutional effectiveness. However, the attention now is placed on achieving 100% of academic programs with high quality evaluative plans in place and on developing a system to ensure annual academic assessments are consistent and meaningful and are based on critical and well-crafted curriculum maps. Once achieved, attention will shift to ensuring findings inform instructional practices and program-level enhancements. Program reviews are in need of further distinguishing from annual academic assessment findings. A new calendar for program review is in order, which will assist in generating a clearer understanding of how annual findings are supplemented by enrollment data, market analysis, and an analysis of required resources.

Much of the progress made developing academic assessment practices took place alongside grant-funded activities to offer professional development on these topics, to introduce and build out the outcomes segment of BlackBoard LMS functions, and to evaluate the three-year review calendar that directed each School to undergo a full review of all programs. Mandatory days for faculty have been added to the academic calendar dedicated to building assessment understanding and practices. The quality of assessment practices varies among programs and the feedback loop to carry assessment findings back to the classroom continues to evolve. It is safe to say that programs with external accreditations or those with more rigid degree plans are further along in having extensive and useful assessment plans (e.g., Nursing, Public Health, Psychology, Sociology). Program directors for other programs, including new programs, are examining curriculum designs and critiquing delivery methods and assessment activities, with possible revisions to individual courses being proposed for next academic year. There are also committees that were formed to support this work throughout the entire effectiveness cycle – from the Academic Assessment committee to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Graduate Council that receive proposals to change curriculum or learning objectives. These groups, however, may consider meeting jointly to exploit opportunities and strengthen cohesive, rigorous curriculum planning and evaluation.

Evaluation is about continuous improvement, and one notable example is observed in the Office of Student Affairs, which commissioned an assessment of Health Services in 2013 to determine best practices in student-patient care. The assessment revealed that the services being offered were inadequate for the student population and were not meeting student and family expectations. Based on this assessment, the institution invested in a new staffing structure effectively changing the Health Services Office to an urgent care facility and upgraded the physical location to be more conducive to the level of care expected by the student population. The Student Satisfaction Inventory from Ruffalo Noel Levitz was conducted in Spring 2014, 2016, and 2018, and the staff of Health Services has consistently ranked as a top strength for AIC compared to the satisfaction expressed by students at other institutions that participate in this survey.

From the perspective of Information Technology department, as a best in breed systems environment, the campus must manage the ever-increasing amount of data bridging between systems. In 2013, data moved from one system to another in a manual and ad hoc way. Today, our data bridges are automated and flow between 23 key systems which are synchronized each morning (13 systems have yet to be automated). This has challenged reporting on data because report production occurs within a single system; therefore, reports that run at varying times of the day do not match up. For the Enrollment Management Council, the IT department collected data for and stores reports as a point-in-time

snapshot across systems for data analysis. The analysis tools currently in use are sufficient, but the CIO is exploring new analytics platforms and has recently added a Manager of Data Integration who will work with the Director of IR. These additions are both clear markers of progress toward greater analytics and integration.

Communication throughout the college with regard to resources and planning is increasingly more transparent. This is in part a side effect of cleaning up data and initiating new evaluative activities. The new Office of Institutional Research is modifying numerous practices and communication channels, such as the institutional data page (on the my.aic portal), which will have updated student profile, retention, and graduation data and faculty information such as the number of full time and part time faculty. The office is also using a business intelligence tool, Power BI, to develop dashboards to share with the AIC community. With an increase in such practices across the college comes increased needs of data management, organization, and dissemination of findings. Currently, data are not always utilized to their fullest extent and the learning that comes from evaluation could be amplified by more frequent joint review of findings and a broader understanding of which groups on campus might benefit from survey/assessment findings. Practically speaking, some collection tools could be better timed with one another to create a thoughtful institutional research calendar. The Director of Institutional Research is laying the foundation for better joint analysis, while building ties with stakeholders and leaders on campus to disseminate findings in meaningful and productive ways. Part of reworking this data foundation has included asking questions about patterns in the data about our students to better understand if the comparison and analysis processes currently used are the most meaningful and relevant. For example, the National Student Clearing House data that is used to track where AIC students transfer after voluntarily withdrawing from AIC showed that the top five institutions were geographically close to AIC and public institutions. This information has encouraged the director of IR to develop supplemental comparison groups to better understand, for instance, transfer patterns. New supplemental comparison groups consist of more urban, test optional, and social-economically diverse colleges and should provide more useful information in future comparisons. Additionally, in Spring 2019, the IPEDS comparison group will be updated with the same intentions in mind – better alignment between institutional characteristics.

The OIR and IT are also collaborating to develop a data dictionary and data warehouse. The data dictionary is a list of key terms and metrics with definitions that also directs where data is stored and who has access to which data. Since AIC is a best in breed institution with a number of systems in place, it is essential to ensure that all of the data managers have common definitions for all of the elements in the system. Common meaning will ensure efficient, accurate, and consistent reporting. On top of the college's databases will also be a data warehouse, the analytical database that allows for more powerful analytics. Once established, the warehouses will store data from multiple databases and empower more robust analysis. One step along the way toward the data warehouse will be the AIC Databook that will be complete in the Spring 2019. The AIC Databook will have disaggregated student profile, retention and graduation data and contain disaggregated faculty information. There will also be sections for revenue and expenditures, tuition and fees, financial aid, and a distance education section. With these numerous initiatives related to data integrity, the college is realizing goals for information management and evidenced-based decision-making.

## PROJECTIONS

**Developing a culture of planning and evaluation:** Planning and evaluation require a commitment to a long-term evolution, which takes perennial attention. The past five years have emphasized building the systems for planning; and now, with the recently launched strategic plan, departments across campus will develop tracking and evaluation practices to assess progress toward department-level goals and the strategic plan overall. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee have already begun tracking progress toward goals and objectives of the plan and, as they continue to dig into this work, they will provide guidance to departments across the college in order to understand the ways various goals intersect across departments. Vice Presidents and their departments have begun collecting data and tracking activities. With this growing foundational data set, departmental leaders are able to work with the Director of Institutional Research toward building a data warehouse and beginning to analyze data from key performance indicators longitudinally. Such analysis will be essential in forecasting and understanding retention rates, academic achievement, financial health, and enrollment trends.

**Building-out Non-Academic Assessment Practices:** Specific strategic emphasis will be placed on enhancing practices of non-academic assessment and embedding findings into decision-making. The Dean of Students has begun steering the implementation process to define activities to be measured and the metrics by which to assess progress toward outcomes. Particular emphasis will be placed on offices in Student Affairs, Student Accounts, Finance, and the security provisions on campus.

**Institutional Research Office and Practices:** For the first time, AIC has a dedicated institutional research position and, even within the first few months of developing this office, there is a growing repository of institutional data available for use and analysis. The Office of Institutional Research will continue to grow the overarching area of the college that houses a record of aspirations and goals, objectives and benchmarks, and the milestones achieved. The Director of Institutional Research will establish relationships with committees and Vice Presidents across campus to hold each group accountable to a broader, informed picture of the college. In so doing, this new office creates a pathway for informed decision-making and a trustworthy analysis upon which to base new initiatives. With the launch of the new strategic plan, the Office of Institutional Research plays an essential role in maintaining an accurate depiction of activity and progress toward that overarching institutional plan, providing the campus with a set of internal checks and balances, in addition to the general record keeping.

### **STANDARD THREE: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE**

#### **DESCRIPTION – GOVERNING BOARD**

The Board of Trustees (the Board) is the governing body of American International College, Inc., and has full authority over the operation and financial affairs of the college and is sufficiently independent, ensuring that it acts in the best interest of the institution. The Board appoints the president, approves the mission and purpose of the college, and ensures adequate resources are provided to support the institution's activities. In accordance with the mission, the Board sets and reviews all major institutional policy, including formation and discontinuation of academic programs, the setting of tuition, and other matters pertaining to its financial and strategic interests. The by-laws of American International College, Inc. were first adopted in the early 1900's and most recently revised in 2012. The Board adheres to the by-laws on all matters and, in accordance with the by-laws, delegates executive responsibility to the president and ensures the president is reviewed annually by the Board compensation committee. Each Board member signs an annual conflict of interest form to demonstrate a commitment to serving the college's best interests.

The Board currently consists of 23 members, which is aligned with the by-laws stating no less than 15 and no more than 36 Trustees. Each elected Trustee is expected to serve a three-year term that can be extended to successive terms with service on at least one of eight committees. The standing committees are: Executive; Academic Affairs and Student Life; Audit; Finance, Pension, and Insurance; Buildings and Grounds; Institutional Advancement; Enrollment Management and Marketing; Board Governance and Nominating; and Compensation. Each has a charter outlining its purpose, responsibilities, and composition. Each committee is staffed by senior administrative personnel and four have faculty representation. Committee motions go to the full board for a vote. The Student Government Association president attends full meetings of the Board.

The Board's integrity and enrichment are fostered by the Chair of the Board. Board members are selected by the Chair to serve on the committees based on their background, expertise, and interests. The conflict of interest documents are reviewed by the Senior Vice President for Human Resources and the Vice President for Finance, and reported to the Audit and the Board Governance and Nominating committees. Possible conflicts of interest are reported and acted upon through advice and counsel of the Audit committee, the Board Governance and Nominating committee, the board chair, and legal counsel. Currently, more than two-thirds of the board members are free of any personal or immediate familial financial interest in the institution. The Board annually reviews its membership and recruits new members who represent an appropriate mix of professional and community qualifications, personal values and reputation, availability of time and energy, and who bring individual characteristics and experiences that complement the board's activities. Membership aspirations also take into consideration financial capacity, experience within higher education, and general diversity. Board member responsibilities are clearly laid out in the Amended and Re-Stated By-Laws of American International College (June 2012), as well as the Trustee Statement of Responsibilities. Orientation to the Board includes the strategic plan, the most recent finance report, the faculty handbook, the by-laws of the College, the President's White Papers (2010 and 2016) and Vision Statement, the History and Educational Philosophy of the College, and other introductory materials, such as a roster, meeting schedule, and a member directory, among other items.

The Board reviews itself annually via an electronic survey with the results of the review shared with the full board in the fall. Periodically, board retreats are held for particular needs and led by an outside board consultant. The board and senior administrators are members of the Association for Governing

Boards (AGB). The Board reviews recommendations from the AGB that are sent monthly via magazines and periodically when task force recommendations are made. New Board members receive an initial publication from AGB titled, *Effective Governing Boards: A Guide for Board Members of Independent Colleges and Universities*. Similarly, the Audit committee of the Board reviews external audits and internal controls during its regular meetings. The Finance Committee meetings discuss compliance and contingency planning on a regular basis. Results are shared with the Chair of board governance and the nominating committee.

#### DESCRIPTION – ORGANIZATION

The President of the college is the official head of the administration and the chief executive officer and serves at the pleasure of the Board. The President is responsible for general superintendence over all the affairs of the institution in accordance with the policies of the Board and provides leadership and advice to the Board in carrying out its responsibilities. The President attends all board meetings, all Board committee meetings, and serves ex-officio on the Board of Trustees. The annual institutional goals are prioritized presented by the president to the Compensation Committee of the Board in the spring/early summer and are adopted by that committee over the summer. This committee reviews the President's progress towards the goals midway in January and fully over the summer, and informally through work brought through each committee.

Where appropriate, the president delegates authority to administrators with responsibility for specific college operations; the senior leadership of the college (i.e., vice presidents) provide guidance to designated Board members on matters pertaining to policy, strategy, new programming, and finances. All Cabinet members are responsible for submitting responsible budgets and requests for additional funds. After input from the finance department, the president prioritizes funding requests based on multiple factors, including the strategic direction of the institution and return on investment. The process is the same for capital requests. The organizational structure of the college is adjusted by senior administration and the board as needed, depicted in an organizational chart maintained by human resources. The overall system of governance was last reviewed in 2008 with the incorporation of the Statement on Shared Governance.

A senior advisory team meets weekly and consists of the President, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Senior Vice President for Human Resources and Chief of Staff (others by invitation per topic). Vice presidents meet weekly with the President. The President's Cabinet consists of department directors, deans, and positions above; this group serves as the president's formal means of communicating to senior and middle level management. Each member of the Cabinet is encouraged to add items to the monthly meeting agendas and all members sign a conflict of interest statement, renewed yearly.

As chief academic officer (CAO), the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (EVPAA) oversees the quality of all academic offerings on the main and extended campus locations, including bachelors, masters, doctoral, hybrid, in-seat, and online. The three Schools (Business, Arts, and Sciences; Health Sciences; and Education) are each led by an academic dean and organized by affiliated majors. The EVPAA, in collaboration with the academic deans and administrators, reviews goals to ensure alignment with the institutional strategic plan and establishes budgetary priorities with senior leaders. The EVPAA meets weekly with administrators who report to Academic Affairs: Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, academic deans, Director of Institutional Research, the Registrar, and the Director of Library Services to formulate and execute plans and to advance Academic Affairs' operational goals. Additional direct reports to the EVPAA include the head of the Center for Excellence in Teaching,

Learning, and Scholarship and the directors of Academic Computing and Adult Education and Degree Completion. To align strategies and increase awareness between academics and Student Affairs, the EVPAA also meets bi-weekly with the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, and Dean for Academic Success.

Faculty Senate has operated within a representative model since 2008 and with a formally adopted statement on shared governance since the same year. The faculty has primary responsibility for curricular oversight as well as policy recommendations to the faculty handbook to describe responsibilities of professional and campus service, research and scholarship, and promotion and tenure review. Under the shared governance model, faculty provide recommendations to the EVPAA for action, and the Board retains ultimate decision-making authority on academic and non-academic matters. Faculty Senate is led by a Chair and a Chair-Elect, each elected by majority vote and serving a two-year term that overlaps one year with the Elect. The EVPAA meets regularly with Senate co-chairs to discuss matters pertaining to curriculum, faculty retention, and promotion, and review. The full Senate meets monthly to conduct faculty business and includes members who are all full-time faculty with duties of a minimum of three-quarters time teaching. All faculty and administrators are invited to attend Senate meetings, while executive sessions of faculty senate meetings are for full time faculty only. The President and EVPAA serve in ex-officio capacity. Senate membership is a minimum of 14 and a maximum of 20 members, with each School having at least one representative member for every four faculty members. Senate members serve a three-year term with no more than a three-year extension and then are required to take a one-year hiatus before choosing to serve on Senate again. In the current organization and membership of the Senate, work is carried out through committees: Academic Standards and Policy, Academic Assessment, Undergraduate Curriculum, Graduate Council, Tenure, Library, Faculty Handbook, Cultural Affairs, Institutional Review Board, Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, and Academic Advising, as well as ad hoc committees as necessary. Recently, faculty senate requested changes to the senate charter including course release and in the sections on composition, annual elections, senate-chair elect, and work load release. These proposals were approved by the Board and included in the current handbook.

Specific efforts to increase and afford adjunct faculty with greater opportunity on campus have resulted in representative positions, professional development opportunities, and curriculum proposal opportunities. Each School has approached adjunct relations creatively since feedback from NEASC's interim response in 2015; and, while there is still room for greater inclusion and oversight, adjuncts have more opportunities today to be a part of advancing academics in their program.

The organizational structure of the college is adjusted by senior administration and the Board as needed and depicted in an organizational chart maintained by Human Resources. The overall system of governance was last reviewed in 2007 with the incorporation of the Statement on Shared Governance, which was developed in collaboration between faculty, administration, and the Board. The Faculty Senate periodically reviews and adjusts faculty governance structures according to the mechanisms provided in the Senate Charter.

There are numerous and diverse student leadership positions available to undergraduate and graduate students in various organizations, on the Board of Trustees, and select faculty committees. The associate dean for student life coordinates student participation on faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees committees. Membership of the Student Government Association is held in one of three branches: the executive committee, institutional representatives, and class cabinets. The Executive Committee is comprised of five positions: an elected student body president, and four appointed positions of student body vice president, student body secretary, student body publicity coordinator, and student body

treasurer. The Institutional Representatives committee is comprised entirely of elected representatives: one from each of the School of Business, Arts, and Sciences; the School of Health Sciences; one Residential Representative; one Commuter Representative; one Campus Relations Representative; one Graduate Representative; one International Student Representative; and one Athletics Representative. Class Cabinets total four members per class and are comprised of an elected Class President and the appointed positions of Class Vice-President, Class Secretary, and Class Treasurer. These bodies come together to form the Senate of the Student Government Association. In addition to periodic meetings with faculty, staff, and administration through meetings and committee appointments, both the SGA Executive Committee and the full Student Government Association (including the SGA Executive Committee) meet weekly. Every other week of SGA meetings is dedicated to collaborative meetings where the full membership of the SGA breaks into committees to work on various initiatives. The Associate Dean for Student Life advises the SGA and attends all SGA Executive Committee and full SGA meetings. A member of the SGA is also assigned to certain Faculty Senate committees: Academic Standards & Policy; Academic Assessment; Academic Advising; Undergraduate Admissions & Financial Aid; Library; and Undergraduate Curriculum. AIC does not have a specific student activities fee, which means there are no earmarked funds given to the SGA each year. In FY16, the SGA received \$300,000 to allocate to student organizations. In FY17, that amount was decreased by roughly 43% to \$171,000 and this amount has remained constant through FY19.

Typical agreements are established to increase enrollments in AIC's undergraduate population and to meet the needs of our external constituents while expanding relationship bases. The EVPAA and academic deans, Vice President of Admissions, and the Senior Vice President for Human Resources are involved to ensure adequate rigor, detailed review of course equivalency, and assure AIC's control over quality, including when agreements for credit transfer, course delivery, or student assessment are made with an outside institution. Agreements are in place for high school students looking for senior-year college-level credit, a strategy that will be reviewed and built upon to support strategic plan goals of increasing the demand curve. While coordination and oversight of the contract is held by the Admissions Office for undergraduates, greater consistency of point of contact and who is responsible for timely reviews of contracts is an area for graduate programs to tighten.

Under President Maniaci's leadership, there has been a considerable expansion, modernization, and professionalization of many of the resources necessary to effectively manage the college. These have shaped the evolution of the organizational and governance structures of the institution. Over the course of a decade, many changes have taken place in leadership and structure and each has granted the opportunity to reflect on organizational culture and practice.

#### APPRAISAL – GOVERNING BOARD

At the level of the Board, progress and efficacy are reflected in the findings of the annual surveys of its membership, a practice that began in 2015. Initial surveys show consistency among Board member feedback on topics to address, such as succession planning, increasing diversity of Board membership, and heightening fundraising and engagement. In response to survey responses indicating a desire for more campus-Board engagement, a trustee reception was held at the close of the new member retreat in academic year 2016-2017. The 2018 survey findings directed Board fundraising goals, expectations for giving, and an emphasis on succession planning in FY 2019.

Board members have shown tremendous dedication to AIC through their participation and engagement with the college vision and strategic plan. Areas where the Board could add to their engagement are full attendance and participation at regular meetings and individual board member gifts. Dedicated

succession planning efforts must also be prioritized. Increasing diversity among board members would support the college's efforts to better reflect the diversity of our campus and surrounding community within leadership positions as well. The Board has recognized this in its goals for the Board Governance and Nominating Committee in the past few years and in the current year's new members reflect successful efforts in increasing the diversity among board members in terms of gender, background, identity, and interests in the surrounding community. This year the focus is on inviting board members of Hispanic backgrounds, as well as increasing the number of women.

#### APPRAISAL – ORGANIZATION

With a mission such as the one that guides AIC, there are many dedicated and long-serving employees among all ranks. The dedication and insight cultivated through long-time service have benefitted the college during both anticipated and unexpected leadership change. As such, during the past ten years while the role of the chief academic officer has been in flux, certain leadership and organizational decisions were made to maintain forward momentum while stable and consistent leadership was sought in academics. During the six years between 2012 and 2018, AIC's academics were led by three separate permanent hires and two separate interims. While the senior leadership team and the faculty navigated the mis-alignment of hires and the subsequent national searches to fill the permanent role, internal leaders were asked to adjust and take on responsibility. The Dean of the School of Business, Arts, and Sciences held one interim CAO role, while certain academic supports were shifted to Student Affairs and others to the Chief Information Officer as part of student programming. During these transitions, it was inevitable to experience a lag in progress toward some academic goals or implementation of certain policies. Further, the absence of a stable CAO has hindered consistent communication and the ability to deeply manifest responsibility over the integrity of the academic program.

In Summer 2018, Dr. Nash began in her role of EVPAA and brings with her both academic and organization development capacities. Throughout 24 years in education, she has dedicated 18 years to leadership positions at large land grant, state, community college, private, and propriety institutions. Dr. Nash brings to AIC 13 years of culture-building and leadership capacity to oversee the recruitment, training, and creation of eLearning/instructional design areas and her expertise in building courses and programs to be taught in online, hybrid, and flipped delivery modalities. Of particular relevant to AIC's students and academic support staff is her experience creating a culture supportive of college readiness. As part of her start leading academics at AIC, the college signaled its concomitant readiness to expand and hone the Academic Affairs team by creating two relevant support positions in the Office of Academic Affairs: the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs (AVPAA) and the Director of Institutional Research. The AVPAA will support the EVPAA's academic leadership and focus on areas of academic assessment and faculty professional development. The Director of Institutional Research is responsible for data reporting to internal and external audiences and contributing analysis to strategic planning, retention, and success efforts. Additional reorganization of connected academic positions have followed throughout AY2018-19, allowing for an aligned leadership structure consistent. In addition to the new positions in Academic Affairs described above, in Fall 2018, the Director of Academic Computing shifted reporting lines from Information Technology to Academic Affairs and the Director of Adult Education and Degree Completion moved from Admissions to Academic Affairs. Further alignment changes are anticipated to enhance current programs and grow in new, promising areas.

Over a decade ago, AIC articulated a shared governance statement. Since that time, a series of pertinent changes have taken place in support of this model with faculty representation on Board committees and a communication channel opened between Board and senior administrators. AIC's Statement on Shared



Governance outlines clearly the structure of the governing board and its relationship to the administration, faculty, staff, and students of AIC. However, without the stability of a consistent CAO for example, the actualization of this leadership philosophy and commitment has been characterized by both normal learning curves and, at times, lacking in a mutually-shared understanding of shared governance in action, which entails faculty delivering information to the Board and the Board holding ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the institution. Dr. Nash has taken steps to use and reinforce communication channels and fully employ her role as faculty advocate. In her first few months, she has consistently communicated between faculty and the President and Board and navigated a complicated change in faculty performance review guidelines. Ultimately, there exists a mutual interest in shared governance; and for it to be an effectual way for this campus community to manage decisions, a shared understanding of this in definition is requisite prior to its practice. With new Board membership and academic leadership now settling, the Board and faculty are developing momentum in their work together with the President and EVPAA.

Ultimately, at the center of AIC and its mission are the students and their development as well-rounded citizens and leaders. This is the inspiration for examining academic programming and co-curricular experiences. At the student leadership level, the SGA has made changes reflective of a dedicated pattern of invested student leadership. In Spring 2017, bi-weekly collaborative meetings were instituted to give SGA members more time to collaborate on initiatives in smaller groups and during a time they were already available. This allowed students to communicate without following rigid and formal meeting practices and to make substantive changes to the SGA constitution and bylaws. During these collaborative meetings, the SGA committees proposed formal legislation that was voted on by the full SGA and later submitted as a formal recommendation to AIC administration. Examples of SGA initiatives that resulted in formal action are: the ability to charge parking fees to a student's account rather than to a credit card, shuttle stop locations and service feedback, and parking lot improvements. While the Faculty Senate committees reserve a space for student representatives, the SGA has not formally developed a process for assigning students to these positions. Each year, many of the Faculty Senate student representative positions go unfilled due to scheduling conflicts or lack of interest. The SGA is working on a policy that would link certain key SGA positions with certain Faculty Senate committees to give students running for these positions the service commitments upfront. A subsequent orientation between SGA and committee chairs would better fold students into the on-going committee work, as well. Regarding budget and the usage of student fees, the college may consider a student activities fee, which would give the students more ownership over how the funds are spent and would secure a dedicated allowance for student activities and better enable activity planning. Currently, the SGA's funding is flat and based on prior year's spending. At times, this has resulted in a stronger, more engaged student leadership group inheriting a reduced budget if they are replacing a less engaged SGA who might not have maximize their annual allocation. Student leaders have also expressed the desire for improved communication, which during AY 2018-19 is taking shape as end-of-semester follow-up emails concerning SGA actions and follow-up actions in response to discussions held during round tables and focus groups. Such intentional communication is a high-profile opportunity for faculty and staff to communicate actions spurred by student voice and will help inform resource allocation to nurture empowered, responsible student action on campus.

The opportunity for articulation agreements is valuable for AIC students, who typically come from the geographic region and for whom credit for prior learning or for courses taken elsewhere during summer and can assist with progress toward graduation. Articulation agreements were reviewed during the self-study and as part of the Admissions department's new leadership actions and approximately 17 agreements were found to be outdated or with infrequent usage. In such cases, agreements were cancelled with mutual understanding. Going forward, a standard process has been established that is

initiated jointly by Admissions and Academic Affairs and utilizes an agreement template. Moving forward, the goal is to articulate a shared understanding for external agreements and expressly communicate such agreements to relevant offices on campus, including a cycle to review agreements.

## PROJECTIONS

**Board Engagement:** The continued success and viability of American International College is a collaboration between the day to day engagement with students on our campus and the overarching guidance and long-term perspective of our governing Board of Trustees. The Board's progress in building culture and a hands-on approach to engaging with senior leaders makes it possible to share information, seek guidance, and build long-term strategy. With Board evaluations available to direct their efforts, Board members will maintain a fiscally-responsible approach to planning and decision-making that will support the overall wellbeing of the institution and provide the fiduciary oversight required of a sustainable organization. Committee engagement fosters essential relationships and the understanding of departmental priorities; Board member engagement with senior leaders will continue through committee meetings and regular reporting.

**Faculty Community:** AIC - and Academic Affairs specifically - are reaching a point in the institution's history where there is a call to start thinking very deliberately about institutional identity and how our faculty reflect and extend that identity. In our classrooms, it will become ever more important to expand the body of thinking and perspectives held across the faculty community, so that our faculty begins to look more representative of the student body. It is imperative that Academic Affairs strengthens its commitment to the mission through each outlet available.

**Incorporating Adjuncts:** Adjunct instructors continue to serve the college in meaningful and important ways. With increased attention on how to best incorporate adjuncts into the faculty community, the EVPAA (who has nearly two decades of experience supporting and developing adjunct faculty into highly engaged members of the learning community) will work with academic deans to help them continue to explore and formalize ways to support adjunct faculty and best utilize their experience and familiarity with the college. The deans, liaisons, and program directors who support adjunct instructors will create opportunities for this group to be involved in academic assessment work. Approaching this work thoughtfully and inclusively requires deans' intentional outreach to adjuncts, supported by the Academic Assessment committee and AVPAA.

**The Graduate Council:** The Graduate Council has served Academic Affairs and those who manage the graduate portfolio since it was established in 2016. Now that Academic Affairs is beyond the situational need that required its creation, the EVPAA has committed to sharing in the oversight of what the Graduate Council had taken on. To that end, for AY2019-2020, the Graduate Council will serve as the body to address matters pertaining to policy and process for graduate programs and the Faculty Senate will again oversee and support matters pertaining to curriculum changes, additions, and deletions. In this way, the EVPAA affirms Academic Affairs' responsibility for policy matters and the faculty's responsibility to maintain and evolve the institution's curriculum.

## STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

### DESCRIPTION: ASSURING ACADEMIC QUALITY

In line with AIC's mission to "prepare students for personal fulfillment, professional achievement, and civic engagement through educational experiences that transform lives," AIC's academic programming is central in this pursuit. The college offers liberal arts, general education breadth and employable depth through majors and advanced degrees. These programs of study are available for undergraduate and graduate students seeking degrees or certificates through residential, commuter, hybrid, and online modalities. Each degree exists within one of three schools overseen by the Office for Academic Affairs: The School of Business, Arts, and Sciences (SBAS); the School of Health Sciences (SHS); and the School of Education (SOE), as shown in the graphic below. In Fall 2015, the School of Education was formed, and funding expanded to accommodate a new organizational structure to better support the needs of the growing SOE portfolio and enrollment. Degrees awarded are AA, BA, BS, BSBA, BSOS, BSN, MA, MS, MSN, MBA, MAT, MSOT, OTD, DPT, and EdD. All of the college's undergraduate degrees aim to develop a set of shared college competencies in written communication, oral communication, information literacy, and critical thinking (adopted by the Faculty Senate in February 2017).

All academic programs have established policies and procedures for admission, retention, and graduation that are consistently applied to facilitate achievement of published learning outcomes. Additional documentation can be found in the undergraduate and graduate course catalogs and the undergraduate and graduate academic regulations. These policies are administered by various Schools and college-level committees to assure the academic quality and integrity of all programs. The committees are staffed by faculty, deans, and other academic personnel. In Fall 2016, the Graduate Council was established to oversee graduate curriculum matters and review/propose policies and regulations related to graduate programs only (see Graduate Council Guidelines). The academic oversight structure is such that these committees report to the Faculty Senate and the EVPAA.

The overarching structure for assuring academic quality is built into the Assessment Report, Annual Report, and Program Review processes, which were revised in 2016. These assessment reports, annual reports, and five-year program reviews incorporate evidence of student success and program effectiveness. They are appraised by the Program Review Committee that makes recommendations to the EVPAA. (More details are available in Standard Eight.)

AIC aims to address relevancy in pedagogy, learning outcomes, and employment markets relevant to AIC's vision and to maintain a curriculum that provides students with the critical capacities and practical skills necessary for today's society. This curricular commitment means increasingly emphasizing programs and pedagogy that cultivate an urban sensibility and cultural literacy. Toward this end, programs are added and sunset from the college's portfolio as an intentional practice to maintain vision alignment. Since 2009, 22 new programs have been added to AIC's portfolio overall, while 22 have been sunset. The development of the Master's in Public Health program, as one example of the proposal process, included consultation with internal and external stakeholders and a review and assessment of resources needed to launch a high quality, differentiated graduate program. The School of Education itself was established during this timeframe, separating the master's level education programs from the undergraduate Business, Arts, and Science curricula. Furthermore, within SOE, four licensure programs were retired in 2016-17 based on a review of completion rates and demand and the MEd in International Education that was offered in Cairo, Egypt since 2006 was taught out in 2018. Students in these programs were able to complete program requirements and earn their degree before the

programs were completely eliminated. Plans for new academic programs are vetted through appropriate committees and internal approval bodies. In 2014, the Committee on New and Enhanced Programs (CNEP) was established to provide oversight and ensure the quality of new programs being developed. The committee was led by the chief academic officer and included representatives from across the college such as (and as positions were named at that time) the academic deans, the Dean of Admissions, and the Vice President for Marketing and Communication. The purpose of CNEP was to ensure that all relevant internal stakeholders were informed about new proposed programs and could provide input at critical stages of program development thereby ensuring that programs have the necessary supports and resources for successful launch and implementation. Such a committee was deemed especially important at a time of leadership transition in academic affairs. With new leadership in place in academic affairs, the purpose of CNEP was reviewed in 2017 and it was decided that this additional oversight committee was no longer needed. The Academic Affairs Council, consisting of the EVPAA, Vice President of Admissions, the academic deans, the registrar, and the director of the library took the central role in planning new programs. As new programs are proposed, appropriate internal constituencies are still included in the planning and review process (e.g. marketing, admissions, financial aid) and new program proposals continue to be reviewed by the appropriate faculty committees (Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or Graduate Council), the Faculty Senate, and submitted to the EVPAA for final approval, before going to the Board of Trustees. Responding to various trends of professional fields, demographic changes, and marketability.

Improvements have been made to the planning and management of resources needed to deliver the off-campus graduate education programs at multiple sites across Massachusetts, in part prompted by recommendations coming out of NEASC's response to AIC's most recent interim report. A classroom technology audit was conducted at all remote sites in Spring 2016 that resulted in the development of a set of standard operating procedures and the enhancement of technological resources. Written agreements with each of the remote locations regarding classroom and technology use are in place to cover required materials and room set up, as well as accessibility and facility needs.

Given the student demographic at AIC, there are many languages spoken by our students and many undergraduates have a language other than English as their native language or primarily spoken at home. To assist AIC's Spanish-speaking students upon application and early navigation around the college, certain student/family-facing offices now require a fluent Spanish-speaker in their staff team. For classroom-readiness and regardless of their primary language, all students must demonstrate collegiate-level skill in English as students through the completion of composition courses, either at AIC or through equivalent transfer credits.

#### UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

American International College currently offers 34 undergraduate degree programs, all of which build upon the common general education foundation. Courses from each of the schools may be proposed for general education and, as such, provide students with an opportunity to be introduced to different majors and fields of study.

All baccalaureate degree programs provide students with a broad introduction to general knowledge, theory, and methods of inquiry through a general education program and more in-depth inquiry into one disciplinary area through the requirements of the major. Expected learning outcomes for every program are listed on the public website and the undergraduate course catalog lists the general education requirements along with the specific requirements of each major. Majors are defined in the Academic Regulations as a minimum of 36 credit hours in required courses in the discipline and related

areas. Program plans for every major and minor outline the normal progression through the program; these are available in the MyAIC portal in the Academics section. A major provides students an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge and skills within a defined disciplinary area. Majors' learning outcomes reflect mastery of disciplinary concepts, theories, and methods of inquiry, as well as opportunities for application knowledge and skills appropriate to that major. A typical undergraduate bachelor's degree distributes the overall 120 credits among major credits, 42-44 general education credits, and elective credits. Major credit requirements range greatly from 36 (e.g., Sociology) to 80 (e.g. Biology). In BAS, there are a fair number of students who elect to double major (Criminal Justice-Psychology is a common pairing, for example; or even Chemistry-Political Science). Other students add a complimentary minor, defined as a minimum of 18 credit hours. Undergraduates have 34 minors to choose from currently.

## GENERAL EDUCATION

General education requirements at AIC serve as the academic basis for lifelong learning and provide the framework for the acquisition and use of broad bodies of knowledge as well as the foundation for intellectual, social, and ethical skills and behaviors. In Fall 2018, the undergraduate faculty implemented the moderately revised general education requirements as part of a broader effort for a more cohesive undergraduate experience. Through the general education sequence, students are provided curricular choices to complement their major or explore other fields of interest and at the end of their program, student integrate their general education breadth of knowledge with their field-specific knowledge in a final capstone, practicum, or certification exam.

The revised 42-credit general education requirements focus on personal and professional development, core competencies, and developing breadth of knowledge through the following credit distribution: APEX, four credits (described below); civic and social responsibility, 12 credits; human culture and expression, 15 credits including two courses in composition; scientific perspectives and inquiry, eight credits including two lab credits; and quantitative literacy, three credits. The requirements shifted to strengthen students' knowledge-base of the traditional arts and humanities, as well as the physical and social sciences to provide a more robust foundation for specialized study in their major. These revisions (launched in Fall 2018) are still unfolding, as are the accompanying assessment plans to reflect the new general education requirements, the newly rolled out APEX program and the recently approved VALUE college competencies.

Contained within the general education sequence is the AIC Plan for Excellence (APEX), a comprehensive four-year experience for the undergraduate student body that scaffolds undergraduates' growth and development toward their highest point of achievement. The development of APEX, rather than a single first-year experience course, was motivated by a desire to better meet students where they are when they enter AIC and to continue to support their college- and workforce-readiness as part of AIC's general education requirements. One-credit APEX courses are taken each of the four years, covering:

- APEX 1 (freshman year): college expectations, time management, library and information literacy, civility and civic responsibility, career exploration and planning.
- APEX 2 (sophomore year): personal assessment and motivation, career decision making and goals, internship opportunities, leadership, developing portfolios, resumes.
- APEX 3 (junior year): enhancing portfolios and resumes, interview skills, multiculturalism in the workplace, post-graduation options.
- APEX 4 (senior year): implementing career goals, finding employment, understanding self through assessments, budgeting and financial literacy, networking.

Additionally, through coordinated co-curricular experiences, APEX reinforces service, leadership, financial literacy, cultural competency, and career development themes throughout the program. APEX is run by a dedicated director with an APEX teaching load who also supports curriculum development and assessment, and the pool of APEX instructors.

#### GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

Graduate education at AIC helps students build upon and further their careers in healthcare, education, psychology, and business through advanced application of knowledge and a deepening of specified skillsets required of professionals in those fields. Today, AIC offers 34 degrees, ten certificates of advanced graduate study (CAGS), and five certificates at a graduate level (certificates are defined as 30-45 credits). The School of Education enrolls the greatest number of AIC's graduate students, and as such the majority of students studying for advanced degrees are off-campus. Different modalities, locations, and calendars are used in response to content and needs of the students or field. Master of Education programs are offered during eight-week terms; the RN-BSN, MSN, and MBA programs follow a seven-week term. Two doctorate in Education programs (both offered in graduate psychology: the EdD in Educational Psychology and in Mental Health Counseling) are delivered on campus and follow the traditional 15-week calendar. The remaining EdD programs are structured as low-residency programs (90% distance learning/10% in residency) that consist of 100 hours in residence annually, which are held five weekends per year. During residencies, students meet with their faculty on AIC's main campus to attend workshops, hear guest lectures, meet face to face with their mentors, and share ideas among their peers.

Similar to expectations for undergraduate programs, program overviews and learning outcomes are stated on the public website and in the Graduate Course Catalog. A Graduate Council was established to serve efforts to delineate and closely review graduate-level policies, new program proposals, and assessment separate from undergraduate purview. Graduate program directors ensure that program learning outcomes are clearly stated and reviewed and ensure that changes to curriculum align with stated outcomes and any external accreditation requirements, when relevant. Program directors make every effort to ensure graduate courses are taught by faculty with terminal degrees in relevant fields and/or extensive practice to demonstrate depth of knowledge in the courses they teach. Research requirements at the graduate level are reinforced by faculty and upheld further by the college's Institutional Review Board and external accreditation standards (in programs where an external standard is maintained). Research competency and depth of knowledge are demonstrated in a portfolio review, thesis or dissertation of publishable quality, or licensure exam. For both the EdD in Educational Psychology and EdD in Mental Health Counseling, students complete and defend a dissertation.

Within in SOE's education master's programs, benchmark assignments require that students apply their comprehension to an assignment, which is also documented or captured in the portfolio. Students cannot pass a course without passing the particular benchmark assignment. Each program has its own benchmark assignments based on content areas and additional artifacts are generated throughout the degree, such as the integrated lesson plan. These benchmark assignments create the student's culminating portfolio, which is assessed by the program supervisor, who is also supervising final practicum fieldwork. Final assessment of student work examines areas that align with both expectations of subject matter knowledge and the professional teaching or administrator standards.

Graduate programs are designed with the resources (e.g. faculty, space/equipment, library holdings) and program requirements that are appropriate to facilitate graduate-level learning outcomes. Resources allocated to these programs exceed those provided to undergraduate programs. For example, all graduate programs have a program director who has overall responsibility for planning,

implementation, and oversight of the program. In recognition of the greater expectations required for graduate education, smaller class sizes are supported for graduate courses. Over the past five years, the Office of Academic Affairs and each of the Schools' deans have worked with Human Resources to increase recruitment and support of graduate faculty who hold terminal degrees and/or professional experience that directly reinforces their teaching and scholarly responsibilities. During this time, 1.5 fulltime faculty were added graduate psychology, both with terminal degrees; and eight adjuncts were hired within BAS, five of whom had terminal degrees. In order to further strengthen a culture of graduate faculty, in 2017 the Faculty Senate approved definitions of the role, workload, and scholarly expectations; and in order to further strengthen the culture of graduate admissions, acceptance standards are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure that admitted students are prepared for advanced study. Another example from SOE shows how they have revised admission policies and now include a writing sample and submission of MTEL scores in communication and literacy, thus ensuring that students have the requisite communication skills for success in the program. Across the School of Education, GPA application requirements were raised from 2.75 to 3.0. If a student does not have a 3.0 when admitted, the final 30 hours of undergraduate work will be reviewed and if, during that timeframe, there is a 3.0 GPA, the student is admitted, a practice that has replaced conditional admission practices. Further, SOE students must achieve a 3.2 and successful passage of MTEL tests by their second transition point in the program – the time when students enter their respective programs and this GPA needs to be carried until graduation. Looking at SHS, rigor is set by professional standards. The Physical Therapy program requires a 3.2 GPA at application, set by CAPTE. This move to increase the GPA requirement two years ago has improved graduation rates.

**Doctoral degrees.** While the above description of graduate degrees in general reflects standards held in the doctoral degrees, there are additional specific expectations maintained in the doctoral programs. The college awards doctorates in Education (EdD, overseen by the Dean of Low-Residency Programs, and two on campus overseen by a Program Director), Physical Therapy (DPT, overseen by a Program Director), and Occupational Therapy (OTD, overseen by a Program Director). The practice-oriented doctoral programs in Physical and Occupational Therapy require students to complete a prescribed curriculum that prepares graduates with the knowledge and skills needed for competent, field-specific professional practice. A substantial component of the curricula consists of clinical learning experiences and examinations. Although practice-oriented doctorates also include courses on research methods, the focus is on analyzing and synthesizing knowledge to improve practice rather than generating and contributing new knowledge. Alternately, the research-oriented EdD degrees offer students the opportunity to work closely with faculty while acquiring and demonstrating facility of literature and theories within a chosen sub-discipline. As a culminating experience, doctoral candidates complete a dissertation showing original knowledge development through qualitative or quantitative (or mixed methods) studies. The low-residency model for the EdD programs is evolving to ensure substantial and rigorous engagement; by more fully utilizing the learning management system in the low-residency programs and shifting students to engage in deep discussion with one another, students and faculty will be equally held to standards of excellence as learners or teachers. The current model for low-residency EdD programs leans heavily on one-to-one relationships between candidate and faculty; and, upon an informal but extensive review of the program by the incoming EVPAA, areas of need were identified, and a plan detailed to reorganize coursework so that clear milestones are in place against which progress can be assessed and faculty are used to their fullest capacity as assessors.

#### INTEGRITY IN THE AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT

The institution follows the generally-accepted practices in American higher education that require students to complete the amount of credit appropriate to their level and degree program. Credit

requirements are monitored through academic policy, curriculum development, advising, and degree audit. The college maintains authority and oversight of all degree programs and courses for which it awards academic credit, as stated in Section VII, A of the Undergraduate Academic Regulations. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council approve all curricula changes and are responsible for reviewing the rigor and appropriateness of new courses or programs. The Registrar and EVPAA further review curriculum changes for credit hour compliance. Admission policies for undergraduate and graduate students are published and consistently applied to ensure that students are qualified to participate in courses and programs. Faculty develop and deliver course content and are responsible for evaluating and grading student performance. Student progression is regularly reviewed by faculty, deans, academic advisement, and the registrar to ensure that stated course and program requirements are upheld. Similar oversight is maintained for courses offered at off-campus sites. Within the SOE's XCP courses, which are offered at multiple off-campus sites around the state, in order to ensure consistency in requirements, each course has a master course shell in the learning management system maintained by the program director. All sections of a course are required to use the master shell and the master syllabus. The regional administrator at each site has taken on more of this responsibility and today strives to ensure that course delivery is consistent and high quality.

When students enter the field for a practicum or clinical placement, faculty from their program hold most of the responsibility of ensuring the integrity of the experience. In nursing programs, fulltime or adjunct nursing faculty directly supervise students (as opposed to preceptors) and are responsible for assessing student's accomplishments. Nursing faculty meet state board requirements and the program maintains a 6:1 ratio of faculty to students in the field. Adjunct faculty are monitored and supervised by fulltime course coordinators who round at clinical sites weekly to assess and provide feedback. Public Health, Communication, Psychology, Criminal Justice, and several Business programs offer students internship opportunities with faculty and site supervisors. At the graduate level in SHS, both Occupational and Physical Therapy students have field work coordinators who are responsible for helping secure placements, maintain contact with the clinical preceptor, and general oversight of the clinical experience which could be anywhere in the country. Each site has a contract (as with nursing students' sites as well).

The Office of the Registrar plays an important role in ensuring integrity by overseeing the consistency in that award. Transfer credits are particularly relevant, and this office ensures that transfer credit policies are uniformly applied, and coursework accepted from other institutions is equivalent to AIC requirements. Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Regulations describe policies and limits on accepting transfer credits (including prior learning) and the types of institutions from which credits will be accepted to ensure transfer credits meet stated learning outcomes. For undergraduate programs, there is a maximum of 90 credits that can be transferred towards a baccalaureate degree program. At the graduate level, transfer credits may differ by program, but are generally limited to nine credits. For Physical and Occupational Therapy programs, no transfer credits are accepted.

Academic Regulations and the Course Catalogs include requirements for continuation in, termination from, and re-admission to the academic programs. AIC is committed to upholding academic integrity and clearly communicates this to students in the Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Regulations. Both documents include statements regarding the definition of academic dishonesty and include a description of the potential consequences in the event that academic integrity is violated and the process for a student to appeal such action.

Courses and programs offered through online and hybrid modalities meet the same academic requirements as courses and programs offered through traditional on-campus formats. In delivering



online programs, the Office of Academic Computing partners with subject matter experts to develop online and blended courses. All instructors who teach online or blended courses complete a program to learn about pedagogy, technology, and policies associated with online teaching. Prior to Dr. Nash joining AIC, Academic Computing had subscribed to Quality Matters (QM) and the Online Learning Consortium and applied standards from QM's rubrics and scorecards to courses as they were developed and maintained. All online and off-campus courses' have Blackboard shells, in which instructors can communicate with students, deliver course materials, and collect and provide feedback on assignments. Students can interact with faculty and one another via discussion boards, email, web conferencing, or phone. Because the LMS is being used more extensively with on-campus courses to encourage greater consistency across sections and with Dr. Nash's extensive experience developing online programs and learning environments, Academic Computing reports into Academic Affairs now – a shift which aids in ensuring best practices are adopted in ways that reflect AIC's needs and delivery modalities.

All students enrolled in online courses receive a unique ID and password for Blackboard. Only students who are enrolled in a course have access to that course's Blackboard shell. ProctorU is used to verify a student's identity verification in online courses. Students complete authentication challenges in which they are required to show a government-issued ID, complete a typing sample, and answer questions based on publicly-available data. ProctorU is also used to proctor online exams during which students also connect with a live proctor via webcam and is who monitors the test environment (both the room and the computer screen). Proctors and students can also interact via audio or the typed chat function.

#### APPRAISAL

AIC has maintained traditional liberal arts offerings coupled with degrees in health sciences and can proudly boast consistently strong outcomes in nursing, physical therapy, and occupational therapy which, along with the business degrees, have consistently maintained external accreditation. And the relatively new Exercise Science department will be seeking accreditation via the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). Application for accreditation will occur after AIC's first EXS cohort completes the full B.S. curriculum and sufficient data has been collected for submission.

Overall, AIC's programs have been maintained by long-serving faculty dedicated to the AIC mission. Over the last ten years at AIC, academic programming and curriculum could best be described as static. The curriculum has seen a reasonable number of additions and deletions, keeping pace with environmental changes and shifts in enrollment trends. This is more evident in SHS and SOE programs than in the BAS portfolio. The School of Health Sciences has been responsive and innovative in its degree creation and designs programs to directly support graduates' educational needs in the field. Since 2016, SHS has offered an RN-BSN degree online that admits students with a completed associates degree to an advanced standing status in order to fulfill the additional 30 credits for a BS in Nursing. Similarly, the Occupational Therapy program has been a long-running major; however, the master's and doctorate degrees were added so that students can take three years of pre-professional coursework for a bachelor's degree, followed by three years in professional coursework for the master's degree. The post-professional OTD was added in 2011 in response to the projected workforce demand for occupational therapists, the current and projected shortage of doctorally prepared faculty in occupational therapy programs, and the desire for the profession to advance the educational preparation of occupational therapists.

The general education collection has been harder to evolve. Professional standards set clearly defined requirements; while, discourse on general education programming has illuminated the need to bring

curricula into a new era, the complexities of re-imagining the foundation for undergraduate education can be paralyzing. In light of higher education conversation nationally, AIC's CAO recognizes that it is increasingly apparent that the core a transformative liberal arts or professional undergraduate degree, there needs to be a curriculum that offers students a holistic understanding of the world around them and which integrates historical, sociological, and political understandings of their local and global environments. For such an interdisciplinary approach to be effective on AIC's campus, this academic community must look closely at itself and imagine a differentiated curriculum; and that demands a truly distinct general education experience that holds currency with AIC's student demographic, mission, and vision. For AIC, having a mission with access and opportunity helps to frame the critical skill-set and knowledge foundation that every AIC student must receive. Students today need to see, understand, and critique their positionality and contribute to defining the roles they play in affecting the world around them.

A revised general education curriculum ideally goes further than shifting requirements and instead clarifies the intent of the courses and their relationship to one another and the college's vision. Most certainly, this is a long process of transformation and the recent work done to the general education requirements was a start. After a year of working within the revised requirements and with new academic leadership, reflective questions will be asked about the curriculum and how best to deliver timely and relevant higher learning and success in the workplace to AIC's particular students. Furthermore, as the force behind a student's foundational learning process, it is imperative that AIC's faculty promulgate a pedagogy that takes into account the students we teach and puts our students at the center of their learning experience: their histories, identities, interests, and futures. In launching this conversation on AIC's campus, this faculty community is encouraged to join campuses across the nation as the higher education community reconsiders values, knowledge bases, and even technologies in their curricula and classrooms.

Alongside the revisions to the general education offerings, were related discussions about retention and readiness of AIC students. The APEX program reflects an effective collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs offices. Some early data is available and shows that at the end of the first fall semester, a total of 298 students were enrolled in APEX 1 across 19 sections of the course. Students met with their fellow classmates during the Fall Orientation program and continued their connections through the fall semester. In APEX 1, students drafted academic success plans, were introduced to campus resources (e.g. Library, Career Development, Center for Advising), began creating an e-portfolio to highlight their work and progress, and engaged in weekly discussions about their transition and success on campus. There was a successful completion rate of almost 93% for the course with close to 70% of students earning a B+ or higher in the course.

For Spring 2019, the following sections of APEX Courses will be offered (see Table below). The program has generated a great deal of excitement and while, it is too early to assess the program's effectiveness in terms of effect on students, the Director of APEX is ready with questions to ask at the end of the program's first year about term-to-term persistence, the number of students who met with their advisor, and to review the assessments related to specific competencies.

Table 4. #: APEX Spring Offerings

| Course Name         | # of Sections | Anticipated Enrollment | Topics Covered  |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|---|
| APEX 1<br>(AIC1140) | 1             | 20                     | Academic success and transition skills; developing connections to campus; leadership and cultural competence development  |
| APEX 2<br>(AIC2140) | 3             | 60                     | Continued academic success skill development; strengthening leadership skills and cultural competence; focused career preparation (resume, cover letter); introduction to financial literacy  |
| APEX 3<br>(AIC3140) | 2             | 36                     | Developing a personal brand and professional network (LinkedIn profile, informational interviews); enhancing leadership competencies; focus on understanding diversity/social justice in a broader context; strengthening financial literacy skills |

When looking at the progress made in assessment practices across AIC, the faculty and program directors are collectively beginning to institute practices to manage their trajectory toward culture change and full internal compliance with assessment reporting. Academic programs reflect substantial gains over the last four years in program assessment efforts, with all programs now having established learning outcomes and plans for assessing those outcomes. The Academic Assessment committee meets monthly and with regular attendance of the AVPAA and academic dean representation to discuss issues related to assessment and to deepen the collaboration on assessment with the Office of Academic Affairs. In addition, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (as it was formerly known) and now the AVPAA/Office of Academic Affairs work with this committee to coordinate multiple events throughout the academic year to support faculty in their program assessment efforts. Most undergraduate programs are now in the process of collecting and analyzing assessment data to inform future curriculum decisions and programs with external accreditations (and those with stricter curricula) have regular assessment practices, tracking mechanisms, and reporting cycles. That said, when it comes to closing the loop and bringing the learning from assessments back into the classroom or to curriculum changes, there is progress to be made across most programs. In addition to the emphasis on encouraging greater compliance and more reflective and evidenced-based teaching, the AVPAA has begun working to improve and make level the quality of assessment activities across programs. For example, while some programs have curriculum maps, for example, they are out of date and not always reflecting changes that were subsequently made to courses. Others may benefit from being teased apart from external accreditors' outcomes. The AVPAA role was established specifically to lead the campus toward this end and the Academic Assessment committee's elevated participation will be essential in providing guidance and support to faculty from the perspective of a committee with expertise in this area.

In terms of assessment at the course-level, adopting the VALUE rubrics at the undergraduate level was a significant milestone and marks progress in terms of establishing the building blocks of systematic assessment. The Assessment Committee is currently working on establishing faculty groups to review artifacts for each learning outcome and to develop the norming practices necessary for valid assessment data. Lastly, beyond compliance with submitting annual reports and using review groups is to actually close the quality-improvement loop, an area addressed in the projections of this section.

In the area of online learning, the Center for Academic Computing and IT as a whole have built a structure that sets up the college to successfully extend the online environment across Schools, degree levels, and throughout the low residency programs and XCP off-campus sites. All courses have a master syllabus and, increasingly, courses have a master shell in the LMS where changes to the syllabus or assignments, for assessment purposes can be made and then copied over to multiple sections. In the School of Education, all courses have master shells, which assists greatly with continuity across regional sites and among adjunct instructors. In step with this foundation, the college has begun to offer more courses online. With the arrival of an EVPAA with extensive experience in online learning and online degree portfolios, the faculty and Academic Computing are now supported by the leadership required to build a high-quality online and hybrid academic experience. The Director for Academic Computing offers one-to-one support for faculty and is in the process of launching a lab space for instructors to develop audio and visual content for courses. Any instructor wanting to teach online needs to complete a training prior to the first time teaching online. Since 2016 when the training was first launched, 44 faculty have taken the course and are able to teach online. In Fall 2018, students and faculty benefited from a major migration for Blackboard to host the LMS in the cloud. The migration also brought numerous upgrades to the platform. In anticipation of an increased number of courses needing instructional design support, the Center is hiring an instructional designer and for a new position focused on academic computing. The online training course is also being revised to better prepare faculty as online educators and this course will be available for the 2019-2020 academic year.

#### THE MAJOR OR CONCENTRATION

During the preparation for this self-study and with the arrival of a new chief academic officer, an examination of the undergraduate majors surfaced some interesting patterns. Over the past five years and as a result of changes in academic leaders, control over academics was pushed down to the Schools and an overarching philosophical approach to curriculum development could not be maintained. Majors with strong external guidance, such as psychology and nursing, have a curriculum that is tuned to events in that discipline's field and maintain strong enrollments, retention rates, and clearly documented student success. External definitions of excellence have helped to refine objectives and propose clear methods of assessment. While programs without such external bodies have maintained their curriculum and continue to bring new content to their students, it is clear that when the burden of curriculum development was not consistently held by a long-serving chief academic officer, that coherence and relevance across all majors – and the academic assessment therein – is in need of restoration. Throughout the 2018-2019 academic year, the EVPAA has started conversations with academic deans and faculty members to explore alignment, relevancy, and opportunities to pair programs. AIC has emphasized the health sciences and, as a result, has many courses and faculty in these areas. As they relate to the healthcare industry, these are projected area of growth. The general science and many of the liberal arts majors, however, do not carry the same professional currency. The emphasis and professional contexts have changed since the time those programs were established and the institution must now reflect on its current portfolio. Many majors are tended by long-serving, tenured educators with many years at AIC who have seen the shifts over the years and who care deeply about their subject matters. With a number of faculty also continuing to engage in scholarship in their fields and aspiring to keep their curriculum fresh, the EVPAA and deans are working with program chairs and faculty in the majors to extend outcomes from professional development and deep program knowledge to form new opportunities of bringing the liberal arts and professional curricula to today's AIC students. It is imperative that AIC find ways to elevate urban sensibility and cultural relevancy in the curriculum so that students see themselves in their coursework and they are benefitting from a course of study that best prepares them for the world within which they grow as professionals – and the one where they will be called upon to reinvest their AIC education.

## GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

The college continues to enhance graduate programs in ways that integrate students and faculty, while reinforcing the distinctions between degree levels. As part of the quality improvement efforts for graduate programs, effort was focused on organizational and structural changes to enhance quality control measures. In 2017, definitions of graduate faculty were established to ensure that graduate programs are delivered by faculty who are engaged in scholarship and have either the terminal degree or extensive experience in the field that graduate-level instruction demands. Around this same time, the then-Provost, introduced an initiative for a separate governance body to oversee graduate programs. To this end, in 2016, the Graduate Council was formed to coordinate and implement policies specific to graduate programming; this body reports to the EVPAA and has proposed curriculum and policy changes to the Faculty Senate. The majority of the work by this council has been curriculum related and it has benefitted from a year-round meeting schedule, which has helped graduate programs make progress during the summer months when the undergraduate committees stop meeting. Having a separate council has also allowed for more conversation among program directors with similar field-based requirements and graduate-specific decision-making. Unfortunately, during the two years this group has been in existence, there have been three chief academic officers and six months of no leadership between CAOs, which has stalled progress on key issues, such as graduate academic regulation revision, dissertation guidelines, program continuation fees, and graduate core competencies. Thus, with some headway made but slow progress in other areas, the Council is being re-examined separate from the context-specific circumstances that established its creation. When looked at together with CASP and the undergraduate curriculum committee, there are redundancies across the three groups that can be minimized with a reorganization and shift in ownership. Separating curriculum from policy allows faculty to hold full responsibility of academics at undergraduate and graduate levels and returns full responsibility of policies to the CAO.

As we continue to institute differentiated standards for graduate programming, rich discussions have taken place about what a culminating experience should entail and what are the standards for graduate work versus creating a set of common standards for a final project. In an effort to refine and evolve the graduate capstone requirements to be discipline-specific, program directors are acknowledging that each culminating experience is unique to a set of expectations and requirements yet needs to reflect the rigor and challenge of advanced study. With such a range of graduate degrees – from Education to Business to Occupational Therapy and Psychology– each field informs what is typical and useful to students at the end of their studies. For example, within the School of Education, TaskStream/LiveText was adopted and helps those students build a portfolio that contains work and documentation of experiences, all of which is required and standard to educators looking to advance their careers.

Each graduate program director and the associated dean work are now working closely with the EVPAA to maintain oversight of their Schools, while ensuring appropriate supports are in place to offer students a meaningful experience. The School of Education deserves to be discussed independently, as it has a history as a recognized leader offering site-based graduate programs for practicing teachers. Historically, the education programs drew upwards of 2,000 students into the programs, conferring as many degrees as elite institutions in the state. The pace of this growth was quick and yet the organizational capacity was not developed at the same pace. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provides such standards to define the resources required by excellent programs and what quality looks like in terms of organization and outcomes. AIC's Education programs (as they were known prior to the SOE being established) strived to keep pace and achieve these standards; but in 2015, AIC's Education programs did not receive a favorable review from DESE, which was accepted as the necessary opportunity to address weaknesses in the three years to follow. The ensuing process was

multi-faceted, including hiring an interim dean to oversee the improvement plan and make recommendations for and to implement a reorganization. Under this leadership and after implementing the dean's recommendations, the School underwent a follow-up review in Spring 2018 and by the following fall, the School was moved out of the strictest status into a probationary status. The 2018 probationary conditions restrict growth and require that AIC does not enroll beyond the 2015 enrollment numbers (i.e., the highest enrollment rate) nor open new sites. This status also serves as a reminder to SOE to review its programs to ensure that AIC is delivering curricula of interest, that it is consistent across sites, and that the content and instruction are preparing students for licensure in their chosen areas. DESE's review process includes both qualitative and quantitative data, which also provides the SOE with a reciprocal opportunity to utilize the available data about students' performance as teachers (reported by the state from standardized test scores) and interpret it for actionable information to inform improvements. The SOE was required to submit an Action Plan and did so in November 2018. This plan constitutes the School's internal roadmap to address the areas of concern and serves as a useful, actionable support for the SOE team. During each of the next three years in July, DESE examines the relevant analytics to see how SOE students (who are themselves educators) are performing in their own classrooms.

In addition to these improvement efforts, general investments have been made in SOE's graduate programs to ensure that students and faculty have the same supports away from the main campus as do students and faculty in Springfield. To do this, SOE regional directors and information technology collaborate to develop classroom standards that need to be met at every off-campus site, such as wireless speed and signal strength, to ensure a quality learning experience. In addition, there is a site liaison at each location to address issues and communicate from off-site to the main campus. This assures that the technological resources available at the additional instructional locations are equivalent to those on the main campus and upheld through contractual agreements with each off-site location.

#### INTEGRITY IN THE AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT

In addition to the student learning milestones and GPA requirements for advancement and graduation, a significant amount of effort has been placed on policies to increase clarity and relevancy of the college's academic policies. It was evident the policies had not been updated in a long time and upon the EVPAA's arrival, she undertook a thorough review of the undergraduate and graduate policies. Together with CASP, the policies are updated to a changing student body that includes full time residential, commuter, and fulltime/part-time adult students, fulltime/part time on campus grad student. Previous language pertained to a narrower definition of just one type of student, namely a residential undergraduate. Additionally, with regard to credit awarded for transfer students, as we seek to bring in more transfer students and encourage more adult students to attend AIC, Academic Affairs is calling a different and more holistic approach to transfer credits so that AIC comes into alignment with best practices nationally in adult and transfer students.

To further support the ongoing maintenance of policy writing and adherence, the Registrar's Office is moving back to Academic Affairs after five years of reporting elsewhere, which will now enable a close working relationship with academics in order to build calendars and to think differently about intakes. Regular engagement and direct reporting invites conversations that have not been able to happen during prior reporting structures or leadership transitions. As but one of many relationships developing in Academic Affairs, there is a cross-campus period of assessment and reflection happening at a programmatic level examining the *raison d'être* of policy, programs, decisions, and organization. Each new conversation puts the student at the center and encourages the growth of the individual, role, and

program. Such work required a permanent academic leader and while it is premature to assess long-term impact, a culture of improvement and quality assurance is taking shape.

## PROJECTIONS

**Review Academic Portfolio:** In light of the broader conversations about ensuring mission-alignment, the EVPAA will review AIC's academic portfolio at both the undergraduate and graduate level to assess for currency and relevancy. The EVPAA will call upon Institutional Research and Admissions for data on enrollment trends and projections, and upon Marketing to ensure viability. Consistent with the plan to re-envision the general education curriculum, the EVPAA will guide AIC's three Schools and their program directors and faculty to review and appraise the quality of programs and the pedagogy by which they are delivered.

The decisions faculty make about course content will be supported in evolving to a place where they consistently take into account the student demographic, background, experience, and individual stories that might enable students to more deeply make the theories their own. There is room for growth with respect to methodology that is inclusive of the diverse perspectives and learning types of our students, while utilizing technology in ways that mirror what the majority of our students have experienced in their public schools for much of their academic lives thus far. Professional development will take into account new ways of teaching and thinking about areas of expertise so as to create classroom and subject matter specific learning communities, engage students more deeply, and enliven curiosity. Much of these shifts to pedagogy speak to the increasing attention AIC is placing on its mission and vision to provide access and opportunity to a diverse student body, but they also acknowledge the ways the world is changing and the need for more cultural competence among college graduates.

**Full Assessment of General Education Curriculum:** Through her efforts to ensure the delivery of a sound and rigorous academic portfolio, the EVPAA seeks a streamlined program of offerings, including adding new programs that speak to mission and sunseting those that no longer fit the institution. For the undergraduate population on campus, this work to best align with students' identities begins with redesigning the general education curriculum. As a college that knows its core mission and focus, the challenge for Academic Affairs is to navigate the examination of curriculum, pedagogy, and content and to ensure that each aligns clearly with the central purposes of engaging diversity and inclusion on our campus and ensuring access to and opportunity in our students' experience of higher education. In so doing, AIC can confidently differentiate itself and solidify its niche.

**Consistent and Supportive Oversight to the Extended Campus Program:** The School of Education will continue its progress in addressing items in the Action Plan submitted to DESE and, in so doing, enhance the supports, training, and oversight for the Extended Campus Program. With oversight of the Dean of the School of Education, the satellite campuses will work toward established metrics and expectations for high quality programming and consistent delivery of support services to students at those sites. Additionally, the Dean and Regional Site Coordinator will provide faculty with the information and systems to deliver high-quality programming.

**Refining and Expanding APEX:** With APEX off to a strong start, the evaluation and assessment process has begun. That work will include tightening and evaluating the curriculum and co-curriculum in order to ensure we are helping students to be mindful and deliberate in their development as learners and aspiring professionals. The Director of APEX and AVPAA will also seek to use data in a more directed way to process and track the effectiveness of the courses and the ways the co-curriculum is supporting the overarching objectives of the program. That data will also inform and address the intended interaction and reflection on their co-curricular learning that we expect students to be experiencing.

**STANDARD FIVE: STUDENTS****DESCRIPTION**

American International College has evolved a set of practices to best support our particular student body from entry to graduation. Various support measures are integrated into the student experience in order to reflect what is known about our students' needs. Through a series of strategies, admitted students are able to come to AIC regardless of their academic path and can access services, supports, and enabling opportunities to help academic and life-skills growth. AIC's culture is built around the central values of inclusion, empowerment, and higher dedication to our students. In addition to the traditional college catalog and student regulation handbooks for guidance on policies, procedures, and information pertaining to their academic program, faculty and staff strive to be supportive mentors that bring life to AIC's culture and values.

**ADMISSIONS**

Enrollment at American International College consists of both undergraduate and graduate populations. In the last ten years, the graduate population has grown dramatically, accounting for 56% of the current student population, based on Fall 2018 counts. Each student population reflects a diverse campus demographic. At the undergraduate level in Fall 2018, 37% of the student population are male, with 63% are female. While there are students who identify separate from the binary labels, the college does not ask students to formally disclose. With a median age of 20 years old (and 18 for first time first year), 71% of this Fall's undergraduate students enrolled in AIC directly after graduation as first-time students, with a majority of candidates (77%) residing in the New England area. The ethnic and racial makeup of the undergraduate student population continues to be exceedingly diverse, with 50% of students identifying as students of color. AIC currently offers a majority of our undergraduate programs in a traditional classroom delivery model, including one undergraduate program (RN to BSN) offered solely online. Most undergraduate students (93%) enroll with full time status to complete their degree, and 49% of those students opting to reside on campus.

The graduate population consists of 1,816 students, enrolling in 49 different programs. Unlike the undergraduate population, where students primarily enroll in a traditional delivery model at AIC's main campus in Springfield, MA, graduate programs have varied models of delivery (traditional, hybrid, online, low-residency). The School of Education solely offers graduate programs and enrolls students at the main campus and ten satellite locations throughout the Commonwealth. The demographics of enrolled graduate students vary by program, a reflection of their previous education and the program's delivery model. As a whole, the graduate student population is less racially diverse than the undergraduate population; 25% of students identify with a racial minority group. There is a wide range of age diversity as well. Some students enter their program within a few years of earning a bachelor's degree and others are further into their careers, boasting many years in the workplace.

Admissions activities are designed and carried out in ways to achieve admissions goals and remain consistent with the college mission "to transform lives...and be committed to the intrinsic worth of each individual." At both the undergraduate and graduate-level, admissions recruitment strategies attract and admit students who are inspired by and connect to AIC's academic programs, campus culture, and a tangible sense of community. At its broadest membership, the admissions and enrollment umbrella includes Marketing, Admissions, Financial Aid, and Athletics – coordinated this way to identify prospects most aligned with AIC's student body and the established services to support retention and graduation. New student goals are established annually by the Office of Admissions in conjunction with the Budget and Planning Office, academic deans (for all graduate programs), and athletics. Undergraduate goals are set each fall for the following fall. Graduate goals are set in February for the upcoming academic year.



The inclusion of multiple offices when setting goal standards has supported informed financial decision making, resulting in reasonable enrollment projections at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Recruiting primarily within the northeast, and recent recruitment efforts expanding to the mid-Atlantic region in the Fall 2018, communication for admissions events and recruitment outreach is distributed as print and email artifacts and personal connections. Admissions staff build relationships with regional high school counselors, community-based organizations, local businesses and universities, and on-campus recruitment activities include individualized meetings with members of our counseling teams, information sessions, private tours, open houses and program specific session lead by faculty. AIC has learned from what for many decades seemed to be the challenges of a college located in a socioeconomically challenged neighborhood, yet which are actually real-world opportunities for students to enter a higher education institution they are familiar with from their community. Or for students taking their coursework to the field, such circumstances present a range of opportunities that turn into learning experiences across diverse workplace settings and contexts. This emphasis on the surrounding area primes students' development of a core set of urban sensibility skills. This is truly a distinct advantage for students entering AIC as well as for those further into their studies, when field-based and experiential activities are central to their coursework.

Admissions criteria and equal opportunity statements pertaining to minority status, alumni affiliation, residency, or religious affiliation are stated in the undergraduate and graduate academic regulations, College Catalog, and website. Admission into the School of Health Sciences programs (i.e., Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Exercise Science) have greater selectivity in terms of minimum GPAs and course prerequisites. General admissions criteria are recommended and routinely reviewed by the Committee on Academic Standards and Policy (CASP) for undergraduates and by academic program directors and deans for graduate admissions. CASP is regularly attended by the EVP and AVP for Academic Affairs, each academic dean, the Dean of Students, Dean of Academic Success, and Admissions representatives, as well as others in relevant roles. Changes in admissions criteria recommended by the Office of Admissions are reviewed and voted on by CASP and sent to Faculty Senate for approval before being published. Additionally, Ruffalo Noel-Levitz has provided consultation for a predictive annual retention model that places students in success and retention bands. This model is based on four risk factors identified through the College Student Inventory (CSI) administered to first-time first year students.

Undergraduate admissions decisions are based on an applicant's academic success in high school, demonstrated through a review of required and optional admissions materials such as transcript(s), personal statement, recommendations, co-curricular resumes, and standardized test scores. Undergraduate applications are reviewed individually to assess readiness for the major to which they applied, if one was chosen. For the Fall 2017 recruitment cycle, AIC transitioned to test optional admissions, allowing the institution to veer away from a narrow view of a student toward an inclusive, more personal review of an applicant's experiences and potential. In alignment with a growing trend of optional submission of test scores, AIC chose this as an opportunity to demonstrate alignment with the strategic emphasis on diversity and inclusion. In the years before this change, applications were turned away because of no scores submitted while other applications were denied because of low scores. As an institution committed to developing the intrinsic worth of each individual, changing to optional standardized test scores is a means to extend admissions to students who demonstrate promise yet may not have tested strongly by those measures. Though AIC does not require scores for admissions purposes, all NCAA student-athletes must still submit test scores to the NCAA.

Transfer students are common at AIC and represent 24% of the undergraduate population. Upon application, prospective students submit transcripts and proof of high school graduation and have the same additional optional application items noted above. Trained transfer counselors or the Undergraduate Admission Director review all transfer applications before rendering a decision. If admitted, a preliminary analysis of transfer credits and potential credit for military experience and credentials is submitted to the Register for final decision on approved transfer credits. Once transfer credits have been confirmed, students are notified of their admissions decision and program plan.

Applicants to an AIC graduate program are reviewed on an individual basis and admissions staff similarly use a holistic approach to each application to assess readiness for and likelihood of successful program completion. This is assessed by examining academic preparedness, intellectual curiosity, and communication skills. Application reviews include an initial assessment of all submitted materials - academic transcripts, personal statements, recommendations, and professional license(s). A review committee makes a final decision and unlike undergraduate admissions (where final decisions are rendered by the undergraduate admission office), all graduate admissions decisions are rendered by program directors and/or academic admissions committees. If an applicant requests to have previous academic coursework transferred into a given program, this assessment and approval is completed at the time of acceptance by the program director, who coordinates transfer credit evaluations with the Register. The application cycle for programs varies, with a majority of programs following a rolling admissions process, allowing entry at both the fall and spring semester. Enrollment entry terms are determined by the academic deans and the registrar to support delivery of academic offerings for all graduate students. AIC works closely with external review boards and accreditors to ensure that students are meeting standards while enrolled at AIC thru graduation; programs with affiliated accreditations include the Doctor of Physical Therapy, Master's in Occupational Therapy, undergraduate and graduate Business and Nursing programs as well as the School of Education licensure programs.

## APPRAISAL

In the first half of the last decade, AIC has largely met or exceeded undergraduate enrollment goals, regardless of pressures associated with a declining market and increased competition for students, particularly traditionally underrepresented students in the northeast. In the last five years, however, undergraduate enrollment goals were missed, hitting performance goals just once during that timeframe. While negative ramifications on the institution were felt in relation to missed enrollment goals, the impact was mitigated as performance goals were not used when forecasting the budget. Instead, the institution used a lower budgetary goal to set institutional budgets and forecast institutional priorities. Performance goals were used strictly to create recruitment strategies and measure enrollment success. Both goals provide value; however, a closer alignment of the two types of goals needs to be determined in order to better inform budgetary needs.

Recent trends show continued enrollment declines for institutions like AIC and our peer institutions in the Northeast. Enrollment shifts within AIC's undergraduate admissions have been significant, seeing declines in both first-time full-time applicants as well as transfer students. The shift in transfer enrollment in the past decade has been the most dramatic (-39%) and shifts in first-time full-time enrollment have declined 6.6%. From an admissions perspective, AIC has been able to temper these anticipated declines in enrollment by expanding travel territories and focusing on our core population. This complex admissions landscape pushed the admissions team to enlist new strategies and pushed the marketing team to rebrand. Several new initiatives to keep undergraduate enrollment strong were introduced for the Fall 2017 class - for example, a texting platform in which 63% of undergraduate applicants participated. This tool updated communication practices and addressed a decline in

telephone and email engagement. Beginning in Fall 2017, AIC implemented an online deposit portal that resulted in 75% of deposits for the Fall 2017 class paid online. The test optional policy for 2017 resulted in 61% of applicants opting out of submitting test scores (53% in Fall 2018). Fall 2018 showed an 14.9% increase in first-time full-time acceptances, with an average high school GPA increase from 2.91 to 3.04 from the previous fall. Since going test optional, AIC has seen a 25% increase in application numbers (FA16 - FA18) and a relatively consistent acceptance rate, increasing marginally the first year (FA13: 68%, FA14: 68%, FA15: 67%, FA16: 69%, FA17: 72%, FA18: 68%). For Fall 2018, 1,276 of applicants opted out of submitting test scores (53% of overall applications and 51% of admitted students).

The application assessment process at both the undergraduate and the graduate level offers an opportunity for staff members to review and assess the academic preparedness and the ability for academic success. In some instances, students showcase academic preparedness, as well as a need for supportive services to ensure their academic success at the College. The Admissions Office works with these students to connect them with the appropriate office for support. This includes AIC's Center for Academic Success, Supportive Learning Services, the writing center, and the ACE program.

Financial aid staff in particular recognize the need to make the admissions process and financial obligations as clear as possible to students. Admissions counselors have close proximity to the challenge of recruiting and admitting students while providing a realistic picture of the financial obligation of higher education. This challenge – typical to any financial aid counselor – is amplified for the AIC's counselors who serve a demographic who averages less anticipated contributions. Marketing efforts were put into effect in 2015 to recreate AIC's billing and acceptance packets. Billing packets were updated to ensure that they are easy to follow and provide total cost and payment options to first time students and their families. A new acceptance package was also designed and clearly lays out the final steps of the enrollment process – selecting a school and making a deposit. The update was made in an effort to increase transparency by offering helpful instructions and information throughout this early stage when financial literacy seems is of utmost importance. With 49% (n=168 of 346) of new students identifying as first-generation college students, this type of early navigation support - as well as more required Spanish-speaking staff in numerous student-facing offices – is critical to helping all of AIC's students make informed decisions about finances and academics.

AIC's graduate enrollments increased in the last ten years (FA 2009 1,664: FA 2018 1816); much of the increase over this timeframe results from the rapid expansion of the education department's Extended Campus Program expansion. Increases within master's level licensure programs were linked to a greater number of off-campus sites for MEd programs, post-recession market shifts, and changes in the required state licensure for Massachusetts teachers. AIC worked closely with regional school districts to develop programs that would clearly support those schools' needs, identifying licensure requirements and establishing programs for local teachers. Through these efforts, the expansion of the Extended Campus Program was dramatic, resulting in 1,540 graduate students enrolling in the Extended Campus program at its highest point in 2015 (i.e., 75% of the entire graduate student population at that time. Today, the percentage sits at just over 60% of the graduate study body). During this time, AIC leveraged this additional revenue, stabilizing financially and returning to a time of infrastructure and program investment. This increase within graduate programs can be attributed to dedicated recruitment under a centralized admissions umbrella, market and economic shifts in the region, and new programming in other professional fields (specifically, MS in Nursing, MS and doctorate in Occupational Therapy, and the graduate psychology programs). New programs continue to be explored and some developed with the aspiration of expanding graduate level opportunities for non-traditional students. While additional attention to graduate programming is permeating admissions, curriculum, and governance practices, continued expansion and communication about academic supports for graduate students has not kept

pace. As AIC moves to enhance advanced degrees and certificates, the additional students must be provided the same quality and access to academic and operational support (addressed further throughout this standard).

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

The Division of Student Affairs commits to providing AIC's students with opportunities that promote intellectual development and lifelong learning, personal growth, social and cultural competency, and career and professional development. Since 2009, the Division has expanded significantly – adding athletics and enveloping the academic support offices in addition to the traditional suite of services. Units today include the Dean of Students Office, Student Life, Academic Success, Health and Wellness, Career Development, and Athletics. Each area is charged with strengthening and rounding out the academic experience through services that provide access to both supports and opportunities across campus, and which are equally enriched by the diversity that AIC students bring to campus.

**Academic Supports.** Academic support is provided to undergraduate students through the Center for Academic Success (CAS) in the form of tutoring and academic coaching, undergraduate academic advising, and access and opportunity programming. CAS was formed in 2009 through a Title III grant. The academic support unit consists of advisors, the Tutoring Program, Noonan Writing Center, and the Academic Resource Center. In 2013, the college assumed full budgetary responsibility for each of programs at the end of the Title II funding period.

As outlined in the College's 2011-16 Strategic Plan, a professional undergraduate academic advising model was implemented in Fall 2013. This blended model utilizes professional advisors assigned by alphabet to serve first and second year students who then, as rising juniors, transition to faculty advisors according to students' majors. This system acknowledges the diverse needs of students in different stages of their academic careers. At AIC, it is recognized that new students often need increased support as they transition from high school to college-level academics. The Advising Center employs a developmental advising model, providing prescriptive and holistic support to empower students with information, guidance, and coaching. Advisors support goal development, identifying major-related coursework and career pathways, invite critical decision-making, and help to navigate conflicts should they arise as well. From the relationship that advisors establish with many of their students, sometimes the greatest support comes simply from their encouragement for students to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of their persistence and success.

The Director of Undergraduate Academic Advising coordinates this advising system. Faculty are encouraged to work closely with the Director to maintain a complex network of relationships as part of student advising. Faculty engagement in advising contributes to student retention and, to further encourage this connection, an ad hoc committee was established by the Faculty Senate in Spring 2013 to provide guidance to the professional advisors while the new advising model was launched. The committee transitioned to a standing committee in 2015 and is the official means by which faculty remain connected to the advising process.

Peer tutoring can be especially beneficial in a setting where introducing new opportunities is important for long-term success. Several tutoring programs are available to students and peer tutors cover 35 courses. In addition to peer tutors, CAS offers professional and online tutors. The nursing program provides support for its upper level course utilizing professional tutors with at least a BSN and who are working in the field. Online, extended campus, and traditional students on campus, all have access to Smarthinking, an online tutoring platform providing access to subject-specific professional tutors at no additional cost, with both synchronous and asynchronous feedback options. The Noonan Writing Center

provides writing support for undergraduate and graduate students and graduate students also receive writing assistance in person, via telephone appointments, and Skype. Both graduates and undergraduates utilize the writing center's YouTube channel to view short videos that address common student questions related to writing skills. For students whose English composition needs are more significant and are part of an overarching college-readiness strategy, the Developmental Education team assists newly enrolled students to attain their general and writing-specific academic goals. This team also offers an enrichment course to help students reinvest in academic goals through service learning with Scholar Athletes, a Boston-based non-profit with mentoring zones in Springfield high schools.

At-risk students are served by a team of three academic coaches in the Academic Resource Center (ARC) who facilitate weekly study halls and bi-weekly meetings with undergraduate students on academic probation. These students may be at-risk because of poor midterm grades, are on academic probation, have received an academic warning, or who are on financial aid warning and are required achieve Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). Students may initiate contact with ARC for help with time management, study strategies, and general organization. Together with the Advising Center, ARC manages AIC|Connect's academic alerts.

The Center for Accessibility Services and Academic Accommodations (CASAA - formerly named Center for Disability Services and Academic Accommodations) assists students who disclose academic or ability-related needs and has been seeing steady growth in usage. CASAA supervises pre-arranged extended test time and quiet space, supplies test readers, and facilitates support for health-related accommodations, such as those associated with the Return to Learn program for concussed students. The number of unique students served has risen from 182 in AY2014-15 to 600 in AY2017-18 and this is reflected in an increase in the supports students access as well, most notably in exam counts, which have risen from 617 to 993 during that same timespan. Under the oversight of CAS, Supportive Learning Services (SLS) provides optional fee-based in-person tutoring to students who desire professional tutoring that includes content support, note-taking, organization, and time management strategies. Many students who elect to enroll in the SLS specialized program also receive academic accommodations through CASAA.

With the intention of serving students who are likely to be first generation college attendees, it is the responsibility of interconnected groups on campus to develop approaches to retention that meet the skills-gaps and social needs of these students. The ACE (AIC Core Education) program exemplifies such a modality and is a targeted intervention for AIC undergraduates, federally-funded by a TRIO-Student Support Services grant. Admission criteria for this program requires students face one of more of the following barriers: low income, diagnosed learning disability, or first-generation student, and often eligible students face multiple. ACE provides academic and social support for its mainly first-generation student demographic, with at least 67% of its participants each year identifying as both first generation and low income/Pell Grant eligible. They receive additional support in navigating campus services all the way through to graduation; have a specifically designed, more intensive first year APEX-1 course (3 credits); and attend special workshops, field trips, and financial literacy programming.

**The AIC Plan for Excellence (APEX).** In addition to the voluntary or referral services is the college's newly launched APEX program, designed to reach 100% of AIC undergraduates (including transfers) and to provide them with formal and informal education. This retention-focused program consists of four sequenced courses (typically one-credit classes except as noted for ACE participants), taken one per year, and integrated into the general education requirements. The name – APEX – symbolizes growth and development toward the highest possible point of achievement. With defined learning outcomes and monthly meetings among faculty and the director of APEX, the course series (APEX I – APEX IV) is

intended to help students develop and achieve educational, professional, and personal goals. Four major learning goals guide this program: intellectual development and lifelong learning, personal growth, social and cultural competency, and career and professional development. APEX I was rolled out during Fall 2018 as the first of the series and focuses on a successful transition to college. The course emphasizes academic and career preparation, understanding the learning and development process, and adjusting to the responsibilities of being an active, involved member of the AIC community. This course is required for all first-year students (and Fall 2018 transfers). For transfer students, the student's advisor and APEX director may waive one or more of the courses, depending on preparedness and life or prior course experience.

**Graduate Program Supports.** When a graduate student undertakes study at AIC, each of the aforementioned services is available to them; however, variations in the organization of graduate offices or their academic calendars require different approaches to some academic supports. Thus, in addition to the services discussed, graduate students are assigned a faculty advisor, who is responsible for advisement, consultation, and course registration. New student orientation helps students transition smoothly to graduate education by reviewing the curriculum, introducing students to program directors, faculty, and support staff. Library services staff introduce their school's liaison and the electronic collection. Once the term begins, faculty and program directors hold office hours each week for student consultation. Students requiring academic accommodations are referred to CASAA and accommodations are implemented by faculty as prescribed. For students in the School of Education programs, additional support is provided at the satellite location from the regional coordinator, through required practicum workshops, and from the chief licensure officer. In the online Nursing and Occupational Therapy programs, various tutorials about researching the literature and APA formatting are embedded in modules of each course. Graduate nursing faculty are required to hold virtual meetings at the beginning of each course to introduce themselves, review course content and expectations, as well as answer student questions. These meetings are videotaped to accommodate students who are unable to attend the synchronous session and additional meetings are scheduled as needed. Faculty in the doctoral Occupational Therapy program use Zoom video conferencing for virtual class meetings and office hours.

In the low-residency programs, the core faculty advisor serves as academic and professional mentor, beginning in the student's first enrolled term with a face-to-face meeting at the initial residency. Faculty advisors remain with their students throughout the program and foster close relationships as students grow as scholars, practitioners, and individuals. Regular contact with students between residencies is maintained with, at least, bi-weekly contact through email and phone. During residencies, students meet with their "core group" – a faculty convened group that provides ongoing, supportive peer learning among students at varying stages of their program.

**Other Services.** The Saremi Center for Career Development is committed to providing AIC students with outstanding career advisement and planning, career and major selection, and technical and skill-building support related to resumes, cover letters, job searching, and interviewing. The Saremi Center assists with job searches and facilitates over 250 work-study positions on campus, community-based internships, and 23 graduate assistant appointments. In these positions, students have been employed as mentors, tutors, and readers in both the Springfield Boys and Girls Club Family Center, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center. These federal work-study positions offer opportunities that are close to campus and are opportunities for our students to apply their learning and develop greater professional and social skills. In these nearby positions, students have a chance to turn the tables and become informal educators next door to their campus. Emphasizing a work-ready focus and professionalism, the center has served 885 students between 2016 and 2018. The Saremi Center's director and career advisor assist in career readiness through targeted programming of open workshops,

residence hall events, academic camps, and classroom presentations. In the past two years, these events have reached 1,358 students across 78 events in addition to over 630 students at career fairs since 2016. Saremi staff also work with students to strengthen resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn profiles. Placement rates are surveyed six months after graduation and show a trend of 40% of graduates securing full time employment and 20% continuing on to graduate school.

The Dexter Health and Wellness Center provides registered undergraduate and graduate students access to a full-service, walk-in clinic to meet primary and urgent care physical and mental health needs. The Center offers a variety of services at no charge, including care of common illnesses, immunizations, phlebotomy, STD testing, writing prescriptions, and ordering off-site lab work. Directed by a licensed family nurse practitioner, students are seen by nurse practitioners or a medical assistant, and may also draw upon the consultation of a general medicine or orthopedic MD. Counseling services deliver mental health assessments and interventions using a short-term therapeutic model that emphasizes intellectual and personal growth through either individual and group counseling or the numerous additional types of services the clinic provides, such as specialized workshops, student-athlete counseling, EEG biofeedback counseling, and substance abuse counseling. The Director of Counseling Services holds a PsyD, is a licensed psychologist, and provides care with a team of a mental health counselor, doctoral interns, and a consulting psychiatric clinical nurse specialist.

Behavioral and crisis intervention is mitigated and managed through the Concerns, Assessment, Resource, and Education (CARE) team. The CARE team launched in Fall 2014 and is comprised of eight professionals from across the campus and disciplines who review cases and implement timely interventions for student situations where behavior raises concern. All members of the CARE team are trained in crisis intervention, threat assessment using the SIVRA-35 tool, and have ongoing sensitivity training. In Fall of 2016, AIC invested in a student conduct software called Maxient, to assist with processing, tracking, and analyzing CARE, student conduct, and Title IX cases. This software replaced the previous manual systems and a diluted conduct system called Conduct Coordinator that did not have robust case management capabilities. The CARE team has managed over 200 cases since Fall 2016 and employed tactics and interventions ranging from general outreach to faculty and coaches, to performing assessments on students threatening to harm themselves or others. Adopting AIC|Connect adds careful and appropriate outreach or interventions for students who are struggling in or outside the classroom and to monitor students in need. AIC|Connect is used to flag classroom and minimally sensitive concerns, such as attendance, low grades, and remarks to withdraw; while the CARE team addresses sensitive concerns of private, health-related matters and all topics covered under mandated reporting.

**Privacy and Due Process.** AIC staff and faculty work diligently to protect student records and rights. Regarding the contents, retention, safety, security, and disposal of student information, the Registrar's Office adheres to American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) principles. The Registrar's Office staff also aligns its practices with its internal Policies, Procedures, and Operations manual. All new employees are mandated to complete online FERPA training before starting their work assignment. Students are notified of their FERPA rights annually through the academic catalog. Access to the student information system is regulated by the Office of the Registrar and data is reviewed daily through a series of reports that are analyzed and maintained by this office as well.

Issues of student conduct are treated within a system that safeguards students' rights and provides appropriate appellate processes. The Dean of Students holds primary responsibility for maintain the integrity of the conduct system, assisted by the Associate Dean for Student Life. The Student Code of Conduct is published in the myAIC portal page and the student handbook. Students are availed two levels of appeal: a conduct officer appeal and an appellate board. Additionally, the college offers

Designated Conduct consultants; these are employees separate from the conduct system who are formally trained in the conduct process and who assist students through the hearing and appeal processes. Grievances and concerns are submitted by a student to the Dean of Students via the myAIC portal for issues including harassment/discrimination, online learning, conduct appeals, sexual misconduct, behavioral intervention, and learning environment.

Academic integrity is addressed in both the Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Regulations, published on the website and in the academic myAIC portal page. At the core of this policy is the principle that one's education is compromised if the integrity of the grading system is violated, as is the case when academic dishonesty is tolerated. The student has the full responsibility for the content and integrity of all academic work and must perform their own academic work according to the standards set by the faculty members, departments, schools and the College. The Academic Integrity Policy defines academic dishonesty and provides appropriate sanctions and safeguards for any student suspected of academic dishonesty, including an appeal process with two levels (that is, with either the Dean of the School or the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs). In all cases, the burden of establishing the fact of cheating or plagiarism is on the person who claims the act took place, although the instructor may require additional information from the student (beyond that required from the class as a whole or for the purposes of the assignment itself) in order to evaluate the integrity of the academic work.

**Student Life and Co-Curricular Programming.** Student Life seeks to thoroughly identify and respond to AIC students' experiences and national trends in student affairs, which are more broadly identified by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Residence Life works to this end most intimately by creating a safe and secure living and learning environment and supporting the academic mission of the college through individual student development and fostering a community of inclusivity, personal responsibility, and compassion. Staff in this department receive trainings throughout the year about ethical decision making, Title IX, mental health, conflict resolution and mediation, and diversity and inclusion. The communities they strive to build in residence halls are characterized by civility, cooperation, and an appreciation for the differences each student brings to campus. Residence Life aims to foster an enriching residential experience that balances individual needs with the common good and affords students the opportunity to develop lifelong skills requisite of contributing members of society. Maintaining a low resident-to-staff ratio (~28:1) helps to foster close, engaged community relationships within each residence, while simultaneously providing care and response to student needs. Residence education contributes to retention initiatives through resident advisor programming and living and learning communities (LLCs).

The Center for Student Engagement is central to President Maniaci's vision of cultivating three specific attributes of AIC: a diverse, urban community; strong co-curricular, athletic, and academic connections; and student-centered, culturally aware programming. The Center oversees Student Activities and leadership development, diversity education, campus recreation, and the College Steps program and through this center students participate in 23 registered student organizations, a student government association (SGA), and Greek life. Fall New Student Orientation is also coordinated through this office and Center staff are now collaborating with the APEX director to link certain co-curricular experiences, such as building a transcript of informal educational activities. All such activities and communication about student programming, is handled through the Engage platform.

Campus Recreation offerings include the fitness center, approximately three group exercise classes per week, ten intramural sports leagues throughout the year, and extramural tournaments. Campus Recreation also helps promote health and wellness with events such as "BEE Fit Week," a week-long program designed to help students have the more information about making healthy choices. The



department is available to any students interested in starting a club sport or developing a new intramural initiative.

**Athletics.** A robust athletic program includes 19 programs that participate at the NCCA division two level in the Northeast-10 (NE-10) conference. Programs that participate outside of the NE-10 conference are men's wrestling (division two and part of Independent Super Region 1), and men's hockey (division one and part of the Atlantic Hockey Association). Women's rugby participates in the National Intercollegiate Rugby Association and is classified as an NCAA emerging sport and men's rugby is offered as a varsity club sport. Students participating in athletics are admitted to the college based on the same standards as students not participating in athletics. Student athletes must satisfy both AIC and NCAA academic standards to participate. Athletic eligibility is monitored by the Athletic Compliance office. Biannually, the Faculty Athletics representative, the Registrar, and Compliance Officer certify academic eligibility of all athletes. The athletic programs are managed by the Athletic Director who reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs. During fall preseason, incoming students participate in Academic Camp, which is organized by the Faculty Athletics representative to prepare student-athletes to be ready for classroom success by learning about college expectations and practicing time management strategies. Academic Camps is based on the philosophy that "eligibility isn't about playing; eligibility is about graduating". The Associate Director for Compliance monitors and reports any eligibility issue and serves as the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Athletics.

**Financial Aid.** AIC is committed to addressing financial barriers to accessing higher education. 58% of the 2018 incoming undergraduate cohort received Pell grants and, year to year, over 95% of undergraduates receive a federal, state, or institutional grant or scholarship through the Office of Financial Aid. Since AY 2013-14, total institutional aid has from \$25,401,424 to \$26,916,967 in 2017-18. The Financial Aid Director works with an analysis from Ruffalo Noel-Levitz to identify award parameters using a regression analysis to determine effective use of institutional aid. All federal and state aid sources are managed within the guidelines of each entity and fund source and are equitably distributed to students. Institutional merit scholarships and federal and state aid programs are outlined on the website and throughout multiple internal publications, such as the course catalog and student handbooks. Available aid for graduate study is available through federal or private loans. Academic and non-academic departments offer assistantships or fellowships to support graduate students in funding their education, (averaging 30 recipients annually of approximately \$20,000 per academic year).

Both undergraduate and graduate students receive the requisite federal-aid entrance counseling at the time of enrollment. Additionally, undergraduate in-person counseling is provided by AIC aid counselors during new student orientation. In 2017, the Center for Financial Literacy was established to provide informational sessions and workshops on such topics as FAFSA filing, scholarship searches, essay and personal statement writing workshops, credit planning and protection, and student loan debt. Financial literacy is also integrated in the APEX curriculum.

#### APPRAISAL

AIC has a valued and unique position in the landscape of northeast higher education institutions. The campus community has welcomed underrepresented groups for well over a century and is always finding new ways to supplement and build out students' academic experience. As pressures mount in the higher education landscape, it is also imperative that more is done to achieve the college's aspiration to be the premiere private institution of diversity, access, and opportunity. To assist students' access, AIC demonstrates considerable financial support: Looking back to Fall 2014, \$5,888,900 in aid was given to 302 first-time full-time students, with the average amount reaching \$19,500. This has grown in the two years following to \$7,543,235 in Fall 2016, which was awarded to 320 first-time full-

time students, averaging \$23,573 per student. The same increase in aid continues through Beyond the aid to come to the college, are the efforts to retain those students. And though challenged at times by shifts in retention rates, AIC has outperformed the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz predictor models in the recent cohorts but 2016. To maintain this and to continue providing the higher education opportunities that are central to AIC's identity, investments must continue in retention-based initiatives, thereby strengthening our students' preparedness to succeed.

Maintaining careful attention to financial wellbeing among our students is of both qualitative and quantitative importance. Pertaining to the college's discount rate and affordability, AIC's incoming freshman tuition discount rate has grown from 63% to 73% from Fall 2014 to Fall 2018. This is continued evidence of AIC's financial commitment to supporting students in both access and affordability. AIC has been able to maintain consistent pricing with a similar average net price when compared to local state public universities, and AIC's average net costs per student are well below regional private competitors. Despite the increase in discount rate and reduction in average net tuition cost per first-year student, AIC has not reduced the transfer students awarding. Therefore, this has been a true increase in scholarship funding year over year.

Evidence of impact from financial literacy efforts is starting to be observed in the institution's cohort default rates (CDR), which remain below our peers and the national average. AIC's three-year rate has dropped from 8.0% for cohort FY10 to 6.7%, 6.2%, and 5.8% for 2013, 2014, and 2015, respectively. This CDR is consistent with both IPEDS peer group and regional institutions; furthermore, AIC's CDR is approximately 50% of the average of our peer institutions who make up the 'Yes We Must Coalition', a voluntary membership of institutions who serve a similar population of high rates of Pell-eligible and first-generation students. This coalition has been perceived to be a more accurate comparative group for AIC vs. Regional and IPEDS groups by previous members of AIC's administration.

Much of a student's first few days on campus when they enter AIC is cradled by Student Affairs. Wanting to understand the importance of these first few experiences on campus directed the department to review the summer and fall orientation programs. Out of that review, came revisions that began in 2016 that were then launched as an exciting New Student Orientation program in August 2018. Previously, students would attend either a one-day or a two-day overnight session during the summer when they would complete many of the business functions required to orient and prepare them for the fall. However, under that model, when students would arrive on campus in the fall, they moved in without a structured orientation to acclimate them to campus, build affinity with the institution, or connect with other new students. For the incoming class in Fall 2018, however, students went through a one-day session during the summer to complete appropriate business items (e.g., placement testing and medical clearance) and returned for move-in with a new, comprehensive orientation that also introduced APEX programming. New students will now be arranged in orientation groups and brought through a two-and-a-half-day experience led by a returning student orientation leader. Orientation groups will continue now to be based on the student's future APEX I course and create structured time to establish connections with their upcoming, first semester APEX I classmates.

Student Affairs recognizes the role of their programming areas in retaining students and this staff has shouldered much of the expansion of programming directly related to retention work. When the Center for Academic Success transitioned from Academic Affairs to Student Affairs in 2013, a move that was made in order to bridge a stronger connection between academic and co-curricular experiences, it also greatly assisted in the creation of APEX. Student Affairs leaders have also carried much of the evaluative work and have begun assessing factors contributing to retention. Surveys, focus groups, and interviews are among the data gathering efforts employed to better understand student patterns and the

outcomes of student programming efforts. Data sources also include a biennial Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) administered through Ruffalo Noel Levitz; student focus groups; interviews with students interested in withdrawing, transferring, or taking a leave of absence, and an exit survey administered to graduating students. Such information gathering has informed the college’s understanding of programming effectiveness and how to identify retention leverage points. This information is largely what directs the appraisal herein.

Undergraduate advising continues to be a strength at the college and increases in retention coincide with SSI data from first- and second-year students showing advising as a strength. Assessment of the advising model is imbedded in the 2019-2024 strategic plan to include continued evaluation of the advising ratio, the methodology by which students are assigned to an advisor, and the overall strengthening of the stage when students transition to their faculty advisor and making better use of student advising files. Historically, advising files were still maintained on paper and transferred manually. With the change to AIC|Connect advisor comments are now digital and notes from any staff member are captured and stored to anyone in the student’s success network to work with. Professional advising has extended students’ access from the traditional academic year to year-round and breaks, which aides in course scheduling and planning. Overall, the impact of advising model change has not yet been formally evaluated, and evaluation will focus on the quality of major-specific advising. Catalyzed by new leadership in Academic Affairs, the Advising Committee of the Faculty Senate has started meeting with the Advising Committee again, bringing much needed engagement of faculty to better support the Advising Center’s major-specific advising activities. Greater coordination and use of this committee will inform upper-level faculty advisors as they reach out to their juniors and seniors. Use of AIC|Connect by both professional and faculty advisors is another early step in developing this consistency.

An additional professional undergraduate advisor was added in Fall 2018 to reduce advising ratios. The transition to professional advising coincided with first-year retention improvements. As a result, the first-year retention appears stable and improved (with some anomalies), as indicated through IPEDS data and SSI data, which reflects student perception of academic advising as one of the college’s major strengths.

Table 5.?: Retention Rates Reported to IPEDS 2011-2017 (2018 Internal Reporting)

| Entering Cohort | Full time, 1st to 2nd Year Retention | Relevant Concurrent Events Described in Self-Study Report  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2011            | 65%                                  |  |
| 2012            | 61%                                  |  |
| 2013            | 65%                                  | Student Affairs restructured. First cohort with professional academic advisors                                   |
| 2014            | 69%                                  | Interim CAO  |
| 2015            | 72%                                  | Interim CAO  |
| 2016            | 69%                                  | Interim CAO  |
| 2017            | 60%                                  | Center for Student Engagement, coaching, and professional advising staffing challenges.                          |
| 2018            | 64%                                  | % reported by IR, IPEDS report not yet published. Renewed investment in retention-based initiatives. Interim CAO |

The college's academic support services are in line with the campus-wide retention efforts and institutional strategic goals to support students' higher education access and opportunity. Additional retention investments are being made throughout Student Affairs. Since 2017, a working group has researched and introduced a student retention management system to coordinate, document, and link students with services and systematize faculty and staff interaction with students. The shift to AIC|Connect (Starfish, a Hobsons platform) described throughout this report, is a notable step toward predictive planning and in-depth evaluation and was an adoption process that entailed establishing a substantive and trustworthy database and rolling out information sessions to promote broad campus adoption. The rollout of the AIC|Connect platform was spread over one year (Fall 2018 - Fall 2019) and has been led by the Dean of Students and the Dean of Academic Success who facilitated group trainings, individual drop-in sessions, updates to the President's Cabinet, and developed a communications campaign to introduce students, faculty, and staff to the system. Initial features included in the roll-out emphasized classroom and retention-related topics (i.e., participation, low grades, intent to withdraw). By start of Fall 2019, all undergraduate and graduate students will be tracked in the system and faculty, academic staff, student services, and the registrar and financial aid will all be linked within the system. While it is too early to assess impact, usage is an important indicator that the Deans of Students and Academic Success are tracking. After the initial semester filled with foundational overview sessions and training, the team is using adoption rates and satisfaction measures as early indicators of success. In the first semester (Fall 2018), 1,205 flags were raised, including 90 related to "intent to withdraw". 100% of all flags were resolved, which at this initial phase of implementation, indicates that someone has taken action on it by reaching out to the student via e-mail, phone, text, or in-person, followed up on the concern, and offered resources. Related to the "intent to withdraw" flags, these flags are simply notifications if a staff member believes a student might be at risk for withdrawing and is not raised by the student to signal intent to withdraw. Regarding resolution of withdrawal-related flags, a resolved flag does not necessarily mean the student did not end up withdrawing, its resolved-status shows that the institution is doing its part to support the student through that major decision.

When looking at AIC|Connect usage overall, of the total 1,205 flags that were raised, 50 separate faculty and staff members used the system to do so. These notification types ranged from flags, kudos, referrals, and to-do items. Additionally, the system was steadily used to document meetings: 64 were related to career development, 67 pertained to Dean of Students, and 1,315 related to academic advising. Future phases of the AIC|Connect implementation include assessing the student outcomes after a flag is raised and resolved, rather than simply tracking the number of flags addressed.

Participation by APEX faculty also is imperative in the AIC|Connect initiative and, while the aspirational goal stated 100% of APEX faculty would complete progress reports, a laudable 80% was achieved. Ease of use perceptions are helping the AIC|Connect implementation team understand rates of student and faculty adoption. By the end of the Fall 2018 initial semester, 80% of students that scheduled an appointment felt the sign-up process was easy and 90% of instructors who submitted an alert found the flag, kudos, or referral was easy to enter. Similarly, 90% of staff members who were assigned tracking items found the process easy to use. At the end AY2018-19, initial success will be evaluated by assessing alert responses, use of notes in files, and record uploads.

In addressing academic support across all modalities, more must be done to engage our graduate and online student populations. Though our academic support resources do not exclude such populations - and modifications have been made to the delivery of some services to accommodate the needs of graduate students - more specific and intentional supports should be designed and funded. The rollout of AIC|Connect to capture graduate students is a key step in this investment and will connect graduate students more efficiently to their support network. While some faculty who teach in the evenings

remain on campus/regional sites or hold office hours just prior to evening class times, the service hours at the main campus continue to follow the traditional business day. Graduate students and regional site coordinators would greatly benefit from more flexible and evening hours for in-person support or virtual/video hours for distance support.

The Advisor for Student Athlete Success position was created and funded (Fall 2018) to focus on supporting student athletes' personal, educational, and athletic goals through advising, mentoring, and creating relevant programming. This new advisor works with coaches, athletic administration, and the Center for Academic Success to enhance the student-athlete's understanding, appreciation, and participation in a well-rounded educational experience. Outcomes for this position and its effect on educational effectiveness among student athletes will center on predefined outcomes pertaining to academic achievement, leadership, community engagements, formal concerns, life-skills, and preseason engagement.

In 2013, the Academic Affairs and Student Life also began to discuss a four-year undergraduate experience that eventually evolved into APEX. With the CSE stabilized to support co-curricular experiences required by APEX, the college invested in the Director of APEX position and launched the program in Fall 2018 with a goal to improve persistence, graduation rates, and career readiness. Separate from APEX but related as a four-year retention initiative, the ACE program has remained consistent in improving the odds of success for first generation and low-income students. The program is on its third five-year federal grant cycle and each Annual Performance Report (APR) submission shows outcomes that have exceeded the project's approved objectives (presented in Standard 8).

In an effort to serve our students in a more holistic manner, a merger of the Office of Residence Life & Student Conduct and the Center for Student Engagement formed the Department of Student Life to now operate under one direct supervisor and better maximizes human capital and budgetary resources in each of the areas. This merger has resulted in increased synergy between the formerly distinct areas and resulted in a more dynamic and comprehensive approach to student development and engagement. In this transition, diversity education was a primary area of focus for rebuilding. Coupled with APEX, several programs and series that had previously lapsed have been restored. The college invested in software (AIC|Engage), a Campus Labs platform, to support marketing of student events, registered student organization (RSO) roster and budget management, and most importantly the ability to track APEX Co-Curricular Experiences (CCEs) through participation paths, as well as the ability to create co-curricular transcripts.

In 2016, the college experienced challenges with vacancies in Student Activities and Diversity Education. Student programming suffered significantly and through focus groups and items on the SSI, it was evident that student perceptions were changing about the institution's concern for students as individuals. Since then, several diversity programs have been reconfigured and restored. Attendance and engagement during these events has been positive. Restored events and groups include: Dinner and Dialogue – a panel program with invited guests who speak/debate on relevant social justice topics; the Let's Get Real Series – a speaker program with students and staff who host special interest discussions on social issues (such as microaggressions, immigration, and privilege); and both the Latin American Student Organization as well as the International Student Club.

CASSA continues to see steady increases and has recently benefitted from physical improvements with the newly opened suite on the lower level of the Dining Commons. This major investment in 2017 transitioned the center from a two-office remote location to a central, fully accessible location. Yet, accommodations are still manually managed by the Coordinator of Accessibility Services. Increased

budgetary support would allow for more robust information management and services to meet demand. Additional personnel will be required to manage the caseload of testing accommodations and to ensure that accommodations are supported at the extended campus locations and when the site liaison's seek support. In addition to delivery of services, the facilities have received dedicated attention in recent years to address accessibility challenges that come with older buildings. As buildings are renovated or built on campus, accessibility standards are met during construction. Most recently in Fall 2018, \$40,000 was invested in door-assists for older buildings including Amaron Hall, the Campus Center, Hines Hall, and the Shea Library.

In the realm of student athletes, AIC continues to offer a unique attraction to student athletes: AIC is the only Division II school in Western Massachusetts with programs in the health sciences. Growth in student-athletes has made a dramatic shift in the student demographics – in 2005, there were approximately 250 student athletes, whereas today, there are over 500 today. This has largely come from investment in a full-time coaching and recruiting model and the expansion of health science majors, all of which has increased interest among prospective students and positively impacted retention. This population of students has also been a focus for student success efforts, including the motivational recognition of the Athletic Director's 3.0 Club. Through this club, the director showcases academic achievement (i.e., cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above) and in Fall 2017 was able to induct 42% of the 577 new student athletes into the 3.0 Club.

Since 2009, athletics has received personnel investment as well as significant capital investment in infrastructure, which were outlined in the 2011-16 strategic plan. Physical investments including the addition of the outdoor Hoyt Track and Field complex, MassMutual Soccer Field, the Varsity Club practice field, and upgrades to Abdow Field/Stadium, Groff Softball Field, and Bedard Baseball field. However, it is clear that growth has outpaced current facilities and continued investment must be made to modernize and expand the Butova and Metcalf Gymnasiums, Athletic Training Center, team rooms, and administrative offices. Intermediate improvements are being planned and additional facilities are detailed in the Athletic Vision and the Land Use and Enhancement Plans to support success of the athletic program overall.

#### PROJECTIONS

**Examine and Refine Admissions Strategy:** AIC Admissions staff give definition to the college's vision of supporting diversity and providing access and opportunity to higher education for traditionally underrepresented students. With graduate and undergraduate admissions under the same leadership, the Office of Admissions can now look broadly to the past and future for ways of developing recruitment and admission strategies for all populations. By evaluating and learning from the outcomes of changes in recent admission practices and keeping an eye on enrollment trends, the Office of Admissions seeks to refine its practices and maintain a holistic assessment of students as they apply to and enter AIC. Through such tracking and comparative analysis, the Vice President for Admissions, the EVPAA, and the VP for Student Affairs become partners in retaining our students from day one on campus. Careful evaluation of changes to admissions practices and increased use of AIC|Connect for all degree levels, will provide these offices with the required data for an institutional approach to retention practices.

**Strengthening Admissions' Internal and External Practices:** The Office of Admissions will hone its internal and externally-facing practices. Beginning with enhancing its centralized model, evaluation of practices will consider ways to foster better integration of program directors and faculty in the admissions process. The centralized model for graduate and undergraduate admissions has served the college well and helps in streamlining consistent admission policies and practices. Additionally, as the college evaluates markets and modalities to extend its vision, including the aspiration to become a

designated Hispanic Serving Institution, the Office of Admissions must also examine and update its traditional recruitment and application models in order to anticipate applicants' needs. The Office of Admissions will also work with Academic Affairs to enhance external partnerships including former and new institutions with which AIC has joint-articulation agreements.

**Continued Investment in Retention Strategies:** Continued investment in retention strategies remains a priority for the college's senior leaders. Specific to AIC|Connect, the next phases of the rollout will be led by the Dean of Students and the Dean of Academic Success to include the School of Education and identify additional markers for greater disaggregation among all student groups. The expansion of AIC|Connect to the Extended Campus Program sites, in addition to the continued isolation of additional student demographics, will elevate the quality and utility of information that the platform collects. By the end of 2020, students and faculty at all degree levels and across the three Schools will be connected to the system, along with staff from across the campus, thereby rounding out the process of transitioning to a fully electronic record for all students, all levels, all modalities and sites. Using the momentum and information generated from AIC|Connect, the Offices of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs will maintain their shared responsibility in providing consistent and equitable delivery of services and supports to satellite locations and graduate and evening students.

**STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP****DESCRIPTION**

**Faculty and Academic Staff.** In pursuit of the mission of the college, AIC's faculty and academic staff are focused on creating opportunities to access and thrive in higher education, while preparing students to be lifelong learners and critical thinkers. Faculty members fall into one of four distinct but related categories – undergraduate on-campus faculty, graduate on-campus faculty, hybrid instructors, or fully online instructors – and are housed in one of the College's three Schools. Program directors are typically administrators and most have faculty rank. This section will address the hiring, teaching, advising, professional development, and evaluation of AIC's faculty.

AIC has 78 permanent instructional faculty members, of which 71 are full time distributed across the following ranks: 13 professors, 27 associate, 26 assistant, and five instructors. Additionally, of those 71 fulltime faculty, 18 are non-tenure track, 18 are non-tenured tenure track, and 35 are tenured. With distinct student populations and academic programs with unique needs, the faculty makeup is different among the schools. Business, Arts, and Sciences employs the majority the college's faculty, with 43 fulltime and approximately 115 adjuncts, to achieve an average student/teacher ratio of 8:1. Of BAS's fulltime faculty, 24 hold terminal degrees. In the School of Health Sciences, students are served by 28 fulltime and approximately 72 adjunct faculty, achieving an average student/teacher ratio of 17:1. Of the SHS fulltime faculty, 19 hold terminal degrees in their instructional field. The School of Education has one fulltime faculty member and contracts approximately 250 adjunct faculty each term who are supported by a fulltime, regional coordinators and program directors. In the doctoral programs, all faculty are doctorally prepared and those faculty in the EdD programs act as both instructor and committee chair for students and candidates.

Teaching loads vary across the schools and undergraduate and graduate levels. A standard teaching load for fulltime faculty is eight courses per year, that is a 4:4 load. Two faculty have course releases for administrative duties, and it is not uncommon for BAS faculty to take on overload courses by request. Adjunct instructors are often long-serving and teach across the curriculum. In Fall 2018, AIC employed 36 adjunct graduate faculty and 75 adjunct undergraduate faculty, including two adjunct faculty members that taught both graduate and undergraduate courses. Contracts for adjunct teaching are extended on a per-course basis not to exceed 450 hours per 15-week course or 1,000 hours per calendar year. In order to establish load maximums, the Human Resource department uses the federal IRS guidelines for work hours per credit. Adjunct faculty are not required to participate in service for their school or the college.

Beyond faculty, there is a wide group of academic staff that is readily accessible to students to meet their research, tutorial, advising, and various other academic-related needs (fully described in Standard 5). Librarians are assigned to Schools and form close relationships with faculty and students, while tutors and advisors in the Center for Academic Success serve all programs and all degree levels.

**Hiring.** Across the faculty community, since 2014, the college decreased the number of full-time faculty and efforts to increase the overall percentage of diversity of employees are showing results. In general, posting, recruiting, and hiring for new faculty positions is managed by Human Resources, yet the process begins as part of academic planning and positions advance in conjunction with the CAO's priorities for academics writ-large. Maintaining a robust faculty has long been a commitment for the college and Deans interpret this within their School's disciplines. Faculty are hired for their academic credentials, teaching experience, a prospective faculty member's teaching skills and philosophy, their commitment to AIC's mission, and their pursuit of relevant professional endeavors. Indeed, faculty in most health sciences and education programs are required to have field experience beyond terminal degrees,



demonstrating to colleagues and students the professional applicability of degree programs and paths. All full time and part-time equivalent nursing faculty in the Department of Nursing at AIC are professionally and academically qualified and maintain expertise in their area and are prepared at the master's level, holding either a Master's in Nursing or a Master's in Science with a concentration in Nursing.

Faculty lines are allocated annually, and deans and faculty members are actively involved in the search process for full-time colleagues. Recruitment processes are managed by Human Resources and directed by a search committee comprised of a Chair and at least three others by invitation depending on the position. Hiring rubrics are created by the Chair and Dean to develop consistency for institutional-desired attributes while also allowing for expertise in the position. Committees recommend to the School's Dean who, in turn, makes a recommendation to the EVPAA. Part-time positions are handled in this same way.

When new faculty join AIC, the majority of their orientation is handled by the Dean, Program Director, and administrative support personnel. Each new employee receives an employee handbook and Human Resources orientation. Definitions for faculty ranks and degree-level appointment are defined in the faculty handbook, along with expectations for promotion and details about the tenure process. At the School-level, on-boarding information and opportunities to meet colleagues are promoted by the Dean and Program Director. Academic computing staff reach out to all faculty at the start of a semester with updates and information pertaining to the learning management system.

Over the past five years in particular, the college has attempted to rectify the gap between AIC's salaries and the salary study data that defines market midpoint for equivalent faculty positions and teaching and scholarship experience. Salary ranges are \$37-63,000 for assistant, \$40-65,000 for associate, and \$43-76,000 for full professor. Today's salaries reflect an increase that was given in 2015 as the first phase to bring pay rates to midpoint. Prior to then, there had never been an increase to faculty promotions. For many faculty, this was a welcome increase to their annual compensation. In 2015, faculty who had been promoted at any point in time until then received an additional blanket increase. Those moving from assistant to associate received \$2,500 and faculty who moved from associate to professor received \$5,000; both amounts were in addition to the increase associated with rank. This has helped the School of Health Sciences' faculty come closer to market mid-point; BAS faculty remain further from this measure.

Once in the classroom, faculty are able to demonstrate their knowledge and experience as they teach. Evaluation of faculty is an opportunity to examine and evaluate faculty performance in relation to defined standards and individually developed goals. Each year, faculty members gather teaching accomplishments and document their progress made toward previously articulated goals; based on this evidence, deans review teaching, scholarship, professional activity, and college and community service in order to provide feedback, recommend appropriate professional development, and to assign a performance rating. An effort is made during the review process to align goals and evaluation with continued scholarship or extensive attention invested in the practice of teaching as part of professional development. The current faculty performance review tool has been in place for one year, first used in Fall 2018 and is a living document that will continue to evolve.

**Teaching and Learning.** At a teaching institution such as AIC, the primary focus for faculty is their subject matter expertise, program's curriculum, and personal instructional practice. Ideally, faculty at an institution such as AIC are held to a set of standards regarding their pedagogical and ethical responsibilities to students and should be sensitive and responsive to the needs of the diverse student body that this college serves. Faculty actualize their role as educators throughout their interactions with students and through each varied delivery model employed in a program. Throughout the general

education courses, faculty collectively introduce a framework for the use of broad bodies of knowledge and, at the major-level courses, they welcome students into their chosen fields and hone their skills and ways of thinking deeply about a discipline. When students have less face-to-face time with their faculty (as in low-residency or online programs), the ways in which faculty convey their pedagogical and andragogical approach increases in importance. For online and low-residency instructors, the values that underpin instructional practice remain in sync with on-campus faculty and these instructors supplement in-class time with videos, synchronous Zoom sessions, and ample additional technological means of communicating. The Director of Academic Computing assists faculty with all LMS needs and brings over 25 years of experience in online learning. Support might be technical or more nuanced to assist with enhancements to online courses or to supplement on-campus instruction. Beginning in Fall 2019, faculty will be able to utilize a teaching lab complete with recording equipment and instructional design assistance to develop foundational material for a course or to add ad hoc additions.

When students progress from general education courses to their higher-level, major courses, they experience the breadth of AIC faculty expertise and pedagogy. At the undergraduate level, students who major in a BAS or SHS area of study engage with seminar-led courses, experiential learning, field-based activities, lectures, labs, exams, and portfolios. Graduate students' experiences expand upon those and call upon instructors' applied knowledge to contextualize their field-based learning. For Occupational Therapy doctorate students, this entails significant time in simulations and client assessment, while graduate students in Education are deepening their knowledge, comfort, and capacities as educators through rich relationships with faculty-educators in the field.

Faculty can use the professional development days or other, informal community events to ignite classroom innovations on their own, with their peers, or by calling on other academic staff. Twice annually in October and April, faculty professional development days are held, hosted by the Office of Academic Affairs. The purpose of these days is to emphasize pedagogy and tools to refine instructional practice. Over the past three years, the emphasis has been academic assessment and developing a common understanding of the need for and approach to assessment across the three Schools. This dedicated, mandatory time for fulltime faculty allows time to review curriculum designs, develop norming practices for assessing, learn from other departments, and generally emphasize a common ethos of consistency across AIC's teaching-college faculty. When course or program outcomes are not being achieved, the days provide space for colleagues to instigate discussions about useful measurements, changing assignments, and instructional approaches. In this way, faculty surface problematic or dated elements in the curriculum and commit to addressing them through assignment revisions or curriculum proposals, when necessary. Beginning in Fall 2018 with the recently added AVPAA position, the Office of Academic Affairs collaborated with the Academic Assessment committee and CETLS to plan the fall professional development day. In this capacity, the AVPAA role is designated to support faculty members' efforts to maintain evidence-based changes and enhancements to the curriculum.

Scholarship interests among AIC's faculty vary widely and add the required discipline-depth that programs require. In order to stay abreast of their fields, faculty can engage in scholarship, presenting at conferences and publishing articles related to content or educating in that discipline. In 2015 the faculty launched the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship (CETLS) with outcomes defined as professional development goals. CETLS was begun with the mission to provide all faculty members opportunities to achieve and be recognized for teaching excellence, be supported in scholarship, and grow through collaboration and community. The center is director by a fulltime faculty member whose position is divided between teaching responsibility and course releases to lead CETLS and who develops a calendar of events to enable faculty to: design and implement curriculum, instruction and evaluation that supports student success; enhance their instructional skills through

critical reflective practices; engage in scholarship, of teaching, learning, and disciplinary interests; and to grow and innovate through collaboration with colleagues. Participating faculty will gain knowledge of and experiment with the implementation of research-based principles of learning and student development through workshops, consultations, reading groups, classroom and peer observations, a mentoring program, and conference attendance. Through CETLS, faculty have access to resources to support their teaching through myAIC resources on the portal and through a Davis Foundation funded technology lab. To promote a scholarly community and one of evidenced-based teaching practices, CETLS aims to organize various activities (e.g., brown bag lunches, learning communities, instructional grants, and an annual publication of faculty research) to promote publications, presentations, and teaching innovation. Since it began, CETLS has hosted approximately six to eight faculty research presentations annually; workshops on FERPA, flipped classrooms, copyright guidelines, the impact of race and culture on teaching, among many other relevant topics. Two semester-long series were held for faculty to develop skills to support writing across the curriculum and active learning. Grant funds have been awarded for conference attendance, instructional development, and faculty/student research.

When research is conducted and a project is to be led by a student or faculty member, a research proposal must be submitted to AIC's Internal Review Board (IRB). Two faculty members coordinate the IRB, reviewing proposals and evaluating the ethical considerations of a research design or implications of findings. Over the past few years, an average of 28 proposals have been reviewed by the IRB annually. In AY2016-17, 22 were reviewed and accepted; AY2017-18, 35 were reviewed and submitted; and, as of January 2019 for AY2018-19, 32 proposals have been reviewed and accepted. Students are provided feedback or approval on proposals, and resubmissions are executed with additional faculty guidance. Changes to IRB procedures are communicated to faculty through Faculty Senate agenda items, such as the recent halt to National Institute of Health training on Human Subjects Protection training.

In SHS's Division of Nursing, for instance, scholarship activities include authorship, performing professional nursing practice, achievement of certification in one's area of expertise, working towards advancing one's education in nursing, and participation in continuing education meetings in areas which would further develop one's nursing knowledge base, as well as maintaining a clinical practice, including community-based activity. Participation in scholarly, professional and community activities as they relate to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing definition set at 50% for the BSN faculty and 100% participation in departmental meetings. Education faculty maintain similar professional standards and levels of activity in school settings for practice.

Each school offers professional development for their adjuncts to varying degrees. These offerings are largely specific and contextually relevant, such as on-campus and Zoom sessions about how to use Blackboard. The SOE is also developing 'adjunct appreciation' activities and recognizing efforts each semester. Adjunct faculty in BAS have put forth course proposals and have attended Faculty Senate meetings to present and vote them. The rise in adjunct involvement is largely ad-hoc to date and has reflective situational needs. From these experiences,

**Advising.** Academic advising practices differ for undergraduate, graduate, on campus, off campus, or low residency students. Discussed here are the practices for each student population and the relevant academic staff or faculty who support those students. Additional information is within Standard 5.

For undergraduate on-campus students, the Advising Center is guided by a mission to engage students in the development of meaningful educational plans in pursuit of their life goals. Professional Advisors use a developmental advising approach, defined by the National Academic Advising Association, and deliver on this purpose with advising relationships with students during their first two years before transitioning them to faculty advisors in their major for their later years. Professional advisors maintain

communication with School deans to assure that programs are being followed accurately. A 2016-17 survey of first- and second-year students using the Advising Center indicated that undergraduate students felt their advisor was knowledgeable about academic policies and procedures, their respective majors, other campus resources, and their individual needs. Additionally, students felt their advisors were accessible and demonstrated respect for them. For the most part, notwithstanding reports of long wait times during peak advising times, students rated their advising experience as meeting or exceeding expectations. As of Fall 2018, the Advising Center staff consist of one director, one assistant director, and three professional advisors who, together, manage the undergraduate case-load by an alphabetical split. The myAIC portal provides resources to support advising processes such as degree audits and unofficial transcripts, School-provided program plans, general education requirements, course availability and college catalog, academic regulations, and registrar information. Advisors will enhance their one-to-one meetings through participation on committees and at events (e.g., academic camp, living learning communities, and financial literacy initiatives), while maintaining continuous communication with BAS and SHS deans about course offerings, seat availability, and various policies and procedures. Students transition to faculty/major advising in their third year (specific details for each School and graduate students are covered in Standard 5).

#### APPRAISAL

From a new faculty member's first day on campus, employee retention efforts should begin. Orientation is one way to signal collegial support and community; as such, new faculty orientation for full and part time faculty is a priority for the new EVPAA. Developing a collaborative and collegial culture is manifest from both logistical support and knowing whom to ask various questions throughout an academic term, as well as through experiencing an environment that welcomes and supports faculty. Without a long-serving CAO and vision to cultivate this sort of culture, onboarding of new faculty was reduced to institutional questions, rather than Academic Affairs culture, policy, and practices.

Hiring across the Schools has followed enrollment trends and as new programs have been proposed in high-growth areas, faculty positions have been added to meet additional enrollment projections. In the past ten years due to an uptick in students across all their programs, SHS has benefitted from new positions. As a result of enrollment motivations informing hiring decisions, programs (largely in the BAS) have not added additional positions at the same rate. The humanities majors are seeing a decrease in enrollments, not just at AIC but nationally; thus, the need for more fulltime faculty has decreased significantly.

With the decline of enrollment in the humanities and with an increased desire among parents of students for an institution to offer academic programs with what they perceive as clear professional pathways, the allocation of new faculty positions will likely continue to follow innovative and creative enhancements to such programs or additions to new, innovative interdisciplinary programs. As with many institutions nationally that deliver programming on a razor's edge, President Maniaci, Human Resources, and the senior leadership team are collectively aware that many of our faculty are below the market midpoint for their positions and experience. Additionally, as is the case at many institutions with long-standing senior faculty, salary compression is a living phenomenon in some of our programs on campus. All combined, the administration recognizes the need to continue improving in this realm. Such improvements in compensation have started and for the past three years, faculty increases have begun minimally and have been applied across-the-board. The greatest progress toward reaching market midpoint is seen in programs such as physical therapy and occupational therapy; but even still, other SHS programs such as nursing and the majority of BAS faculty remain below the midpoint. The initial increases that were given to full and associate professor ranks were a notable signal of a commitment to righting salaries. As a result of a recently rolled out faculty performance review process, the plan to use

merit as a mechanism to increase salaries did not take full effect until the January 2019. As the overall institutional budget allows, the President, Chief of Staff, and EVPAA are in conversation about addressing this situation comprehensively. It is anticipated that in 2018-2019 the issue of salary compression will begin to be addressed by the return to a merit system for evaluating faculty and determining salary increases.

Discussions about compensation and salary increases for faculty have to be discussed within the context of the recent changeover of the faculty performance review tool. Over the past several years, this topic and process has been a focus of both faculty and academic administration. Compounding this was inconsistent academic leadership and therefore no consistent faculty advocate and voice to the President and Board of Trustees, which eventually led to a conflict between the Board and faculty regarding the structure of the review system. Over the last six years, there was an extended exchange between these groups, who were in agreement that a new tool needed to be developed and the process needed to be revised and deployed anew. Both recognized the need to ensure constant quality improvement and salary adjustments to market midpoint. Yet, during this time, the examination of this tool stirred up questions about evaluation, excellence, and performance. The review tool went through many iterations and a great deal of emotional energy was expended in both developing tools and questioning their validity. Throughout this contentious time, tools were developed and presented repeatedly and in January 2017 a version was approved by the Board but not the faculty. In Summer 2018, the Board inserted the new tool into the faculty handbook, which did not go to the faculty for approval. In essence, there were two tools in effect: a faculty approved one from 2011 and the board approved one from 2017. With the permanent CAO on her way in, the Board instructed faculty via the interim EVPAA to use the new tool this term and the EVPAA is working with the faculty senate to review it and propose changes with the understanding that the EVPAA would continue to work with the Faculty Senate to ensure that the performance plan remained a living document. For some faculty, the insertion to the handbook was emblematic of a breach of shared governance, and that perspective may stem from the combination of a misunderstanding of shared governance and the common practice that faculty assessment lies in the purview of faculty. While faculty were certainly involved in the process of building this most recent tool, they did not vote for the final edits that spoke to activities that differ from their perspective of a teaching faculty. Among a small group of faculty, many of whom used the old tool, there remains anger and perhaps a sense of loss of control. However, ultimately in Fall 2018, virtually all faculty used the Board-approved measures and most expressed a desire to move forward. The Chair of the Senate has undertaken the faculty assessment initiative via one-to-one meetings with a number of faculty to develop the Faculty Plan for Excellence.

Given that AIC is a teaching institution, the understanding of scholarship is appropriately broad. Promoting scholarship and professional development as educators has been maintained for faculty through annual professional development funds. Each School has a professional development fund to manage and additional funds can be applied for through CETLS. In BAS, for instance, the total professional development budget is \$16,350; and over the past few years 56% was spent in FY2015, 88% in FY2016, 17% in FY2017, and 40% in FY2018. Between 2015-2018, four faculty (all from BAS) have taken sabbatical, which is offered along with an internal grant opportunity of \$2,000 from the Office of Academic Affairs. Recent sabbatical topics have included the economic aspects of the German occupation of France during World War II and Gothic novels from 1960s to the early 1990s during her sabbatical. The latter study resulted in publication of the book, [The Gothic Romance Wave: A Critical History of the Mass Market Novels, 1960-1990](#). A centralized process for tracking current and proposed scholarly activities would benefit faculty and encourage a sense of collective growth. Alongside the performance review discussions, the Office of Academic Affairs is developing a catalog and communication process to increase awareness and communication about professional development

activities and opportunities. The EVPAA is furthermore encouraging a broader definition of scholarship and of the ways students are involved in those activities.

Capturing all of the policy and guideline code for faculty is the faculty handbook. A formal review of all of the policies was last undertaken by the faculty senate and the chief academic officer in 2017. Since then, minor updates and revisions have addressed aspects in need of updating, and as with the Academic Regulation for students this year, the handbook will undergo a comprehensive review. The School of Education is introducing a handbook to their adjunct faculty and students in Spring 2019 to provide useful information related to classroom materials, academic calendars, and general information for the related Education programs.

Each semester provides the opportunity for classroom observation and student feedback of instructors. For adjuncts, formal procedures for classroom observation could assist with better integrating them into the teaching community, giving program directors and faculty peers a clearer opportunity to build connections with adjunct faculty and provide feedback on teaching methodology. A survey of adjunct faculty conducted in Spring 2018 revealed a desire for greater engagement with fulltime faculty and staff. Another opportunity to provide both all faculty more consistent and useful feedback is through student evaluations. Current practice is not consistent across faculty and courses and there is little in the way of observing patterns among quantitative ratings.

In general, deans in each of the three Schools have increased opportunities for adjunct faculty to be more engaged with colleagues and professional development. Much of this has been ad-hoc involvement and as the deans and faculty involved learn from these experiences, it is clearer that some opportunities could now become formalized, such as Faculty Senate meetings, which could be held at different times of day and be available by live stream for adjuncts. Annual workshops in SHS tend to have consistent attendance of adjuncts. In terms of contributing to the curriculum, there have been two recent course proposals that were submitted by adjuncts, both of which were approved and are now being taught. Each School recognizes the contribution of this instructor group and speaks to formalizing these activities in the projections for this Standard.

## ADVISING

The advising process – and especially the transition from advising center to faculty – should be enhanced by the implementation of the new software, specifically designed to promote inter-office communication via notes, alerts, and more automated follow-ups with students. The advising center has recently focused on intentionally linking advising with APEX I. In Fall 2018, 35% of first-year students met with the advisor as part of the APEX course, a surprisingly low rate given the activity was built into the course and presentations were given in all 18 sections of APEX I. In order to increase the rate of students meeting with their advisors, they choose to use academic holds that will be lifted after meeting, then allowing students to register. Additional measures to help increase these rates include newly added or enhanced communication methods (emails, texts, social media) to maintain communication throughout the semester. AIC|Connect will allow advisors and faculty to track how often major changes are being discussed and/or taking place. During the period of Aug 1, 2018 – November 30, 2018 there were 116 records of students who "Discussed major change-Held off" in the Advising Center. Related, there were also 63 meetings with a "Major change or addition" had been recorded. The transparency and ease of sharing this sort of information about a student from advisor to faculty member will have a marked impact on the advising relationship. As the systems is used more and students grow increasingly familiar with the activity and utility of AIC|Connect, as well, both faculty and advisors are eager to have more and more useful information about students they advise.

For graduate students in the low-residency EdD programs, students indicate their satisfaction with their first core advisor. Results from the annually conducted survey are shared in the annual reports for the Teaching and Learning concentration and the Leadership and Supervision concentration. Recent evaluations revealed that students felt their advisor keeps in contact (98% were highly satisfied), gives valuable feedback on written work (95% were highly satisfied), knows program processes (85% were highly satisfied), and is supportive of the student as a person and scholar (99% were highly satisfied). In the School of Education master's programs, the academic program staff carries the responsibility of reaching out to students and the related, traditional advising activities. When enrollments were at their highest, advisors travelled to each site. Yet this split the staff a great deal among and not all advisors could be at all sites. Last year, advisors began working more closely with the regional directors to distribute material to students and then followed up with a Zoom synchronous meeting for students to bring questions. Initial feedback from students was that the session was informative, and they appreciated having the synchronous time with advisors.

As advising is a set of activities shared by both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs (i.e., by professional advisors, academic staff, and faculty), there is also extensive description and appraisal in Standard 5.

#### PROJECTION

**Establish the Faculty Plan for Excellence:** The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Chair and Chair-Elect of the Faculty Senate will continue efforts that support faculty engagement and professional development. The Faculty Plan for Excellence (FPE) will define a strengths-based and discipline-specific faculty evaluation model that is grounded in the universal criteria for quality teaching and engagement and will be ready for Board of Trustee approval and anticipated use in 2019-2020 academic year. The EVPAA and AVPAA will devise a strategy to train deans, program directors, and departmental chairs to foster a developmental approach of working with faculty and their professional development needs and interests. The Faculty Plan for Excellence will provide the framework for faculty to develop their goals in partnership with their academic dean so that faculty can best develop as educators in the classroom as well as supporters of their students' growth in formal and informal learning environments. Informed by records of activity throughout the year, course evaluations, self-evaluation, and classroom observations, the FPE aims to provide faculty with the information to self-evaluate and shift practice, thereby creating a complete, annual cycle of performance and evaluation.

**Course and Faculty Evaluations:** AIC's current practices of conducting student evaluations of courses is not consistent or well-attended enough to offer meaningful information to invest in curriculum development or faculty instructional support. A comprehensive course and faculty evaluation tool required of students is necessary at the end of every class. To that end, the EVPAA will evaluate digital tools for this purpose and will begin utilizing them during 2019-2020 academic year. This will be in direct support of the work done to develop the Faculty Plan for Excellence.

**Expanding Activities Offered by CETLS:** As the Office of Academic Affairs solidifies and assesses areas of need and interest, the expectations of and opportunities for faculty to engage in professional development will take shape and become more deliberate, supporting themes for growth. The Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship (CETLS) must be held accountable to deliver a full calendar of both mandatory and optional strategically built trainings, incentives to participate, and to grow a true learning community on campus. The schedule of offerings will include topics related to academic assessment, as well as classroom practices to increase high-impact activities and reinvigorate a collective investment in AIC as a teaching college.

**Recruiting and Integrating a Diverse Faculty and Staff:** The college has dedicated efforts over the past five years toward cultivating a diverse faculty and staff community and can point to early results in recent new hires and mandated language fluency in particular positions on campus. Now, it is time to refine recruitment strategies and mentoring processes further. The Senior Vice President for Human Resources and the EVPAA will strategize ways to expand the scope for position listings and recruiting practices, in addition to specifically exploring innovative ways of inviting faculty of color to our campus. To that end, the EVPAA has launched an initiative with the Office of Institutional Advancement to create a post-doc opportunity for faculty from Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Broadening the recruitment practices supports the parallel culture-building efforts to elevate inclusion and belonging across faculty ranks for faculty of all genders, races, and identities. To this end, Human Resources is modifying its recruiting practices and Academic Affairs is developing faculty orientation and mentoring practices to welcome and better support new faculty in their crucial first year on campus.



**STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES****DESCRIPTION**

One of AIC's great resources is its visibility within the city of Springfield and on the State Street corridor. The college has increasingly reinvigorated the physical campus and is increasingly creating linkages between different campus spaces. With a dedicated faculty and staff, the college cultivates its employees who continue to serve students and enrich the institution and by refining the systems and structures that make up the physical backdrop and invisible technological supports for the student and employee experience, AIC has steadily renewed the campus and stayed in step with technological change.

**Human Resources.** As of November 1, 2018, AIC employs a total of 358 employees, including 69 part-time and 289 fulltime employees. Included in the part-time employees are eight faculty. There is one active union on campus, the facilities team. College policies and procedures are established by the Senior Vice President for Human Resources and updated annually with input from senior administrative leaders and outside counsel. Within the AIC portal, all employees can access policies, updates, notices, and forms. Employee annual evaluations begin in the fall with goal setting, are maintained throughout the year via supervision, and are finalized the following fall with a report on prior year progress thereby informing the next year's goals. Salaries are not yet on par with market mid-point but are increasingly meeting this goal. With that goal in mind, managers are able to use new positions or merit ratings to annually adjust, helping with the institution in making salaries competitive for the industry and region.

With a student body as diverse as AIC's undergraduate population, having an employee make-up that represents AIC students' identities has been a priority. Practices to recruit an increasingly diverse employee-base have included increasing the number of annual subscriptions on which to post open positions to a broader range of websites, specifically sites directed toward racial and ethnic groups that align with our student demographic. All postings have Equal Employment Opportunity statements and, as of January 2019, additional language was added to elevate our interest in recruiting applicants from underrepresented populations. Multi-lingual support in student and family facing offices was recently established to enable better communication with family members when English is not the primary language.

Professional development is offered annually to faculty and is typically a part of developing a practitioner or scholarly interest. In recent years, professional development funds have also been used for instructional development or for topics specific to academic assessment. Among staff, professional development funds are distributed to an individual staff member in support of a role-specific need, such as software training or to support new collaboration among institutional research roles.

**Financial Resources.** AIC today is a financially stable, tuition-driven institution and in reaching this stable financial picture, the college has navigated significant challenges and established a sustainable base and set of responsible fiscal practices to maintain this status. The Office of Finance and Facilities is led by the Vice President for Finance, who was promoted to this position in September 2017 after working in the role of Controller for five years. The Vice President was hired to the college after nearly 14 years of public accounting experience working with non-profit organizations, completing Yellow Book and retirement plan audits. The Associate Controller has been employed by AIC for close to 20 years and maintains a significant depth of knowledge of accounting and college operations. The Budget and Planning Manager has been with the college for five years, bringing previous experience from public sector financial planning and analysis. This finance team has brought together in-depth accounting, financial reporting, analysis, and management experiences from both the private and public sectors.

While the current financial leadership team is experienced and knowledgeable, a search to fill a vacant Controller position is ongoing. Once filled, this position will create the necessary redundancy and backup to support the finance office as a whole.

AIC is responsible for \$18 million of investments, \$19.5 million of which is endowment, as of the end of fiscal year 2018. Over the past decade, a stronger emphasis on drawing from revenue only and not from the endowment has translated to significant endowment growth and spending within the college's means. As such, 73.3% of spending between 2015-2018 has been from tuition-generated revenue only. Tuition for 2018-2019 was set for residential undergraduates at \$35,680. Online tuition is \$400 per credit for the RN to BSN program and low-residency programs range from \$18,900 per year in the Master's in Counseling Psychology program to \$24,100 in the Doctor of Education programs. Operating expenses for FY 2015 were recorded as \$51.5 million and in FY 2018 increased by 3.1% to \$53.1 million. During the same time period, revenue grew from \$52.6 million to \$54.7 million between those same years, net assets grew from \$40.7 million to \$47.3 million and total assets grew from \$68.4 million to \$76.2 million. Land and physical holdings (including buildings, equipment, technology) grew from \$44.3 million to \$51.6 million.

AIC's overall revenue stream flows mainly from tuition, with events and rentals contributing minimally. Tuition streams differ between on-campus, off-campus (i.e., XCP), online, and low-residency programs. A challenge to the revenue generating activities for the college is an inextricable link to the college's primary student demographic. Given the commitment to increasing access to groups for whom higher education has historically been difficult or unachievable, by definition, the majority of AIC students require significant discounts. As noted in the 2015 interim NEASC report and response, the discount rate for FY 2015 was 63.9%, which has increased to 65.1% in FY 2018. This is a challenge to AIC and requires significant coordination between Finance, Enrollment, the President, and the Board to determine enrollment goals, tuition, and a discount rate. Policies related to financial oversight and practices are maintained by the Vice President for Finance and utilized by the department to ensure clarity in decision-making and consistency across departmental processes. These policies are reviewed annually and are stored within the Finance office and available internally on myAIC.

Revenue is solely reinvested in the college, as evidenced in FY 2018 expense reporting shows the following reinvestments: instructional costs (34.1% of operating expenses), student services (22.4%), auxiliary services (5.8%), academic supports (2.0%), library (1.9%), and fundraising (1.3%). Revenue and enrollment goals projected as part of a multi-step collaboration between Vice President of Finance, the Budget and Planning manager and the Associate Controller for accuracy and is consolidated for presentation to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees for approval. The college's comprehensive budget process and timeline begins in the fall semester with the planning for tuition and revenue for the following academic year. Based on projected enrollment, historical figures, and discussions with members of the leadership team, revenue and expense budgets are developed. Once approved by the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees, it will be presented to the full Board who sets goals and institutional aid for the coming year, incorporating Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) award recommendations as well. The college utilizes RNL to annually work with senior staff to review the market landscape, historical enrollment data, and to set the matrix for awarding financial aid to meet the institutional goals for the incoming undergraduate class. Work with RNL has informed a four-year model to help the college understand how discount rate, financial aid spending, and revenue will assist in attracting and retaining students with improved selectivity of academically able students. The budgeting process culminates in a financial plan that includes academics, student services, and auxiliary services. Transparency and collaboration among the Finance office and various departments across campus is demonstrated through monthly budget versus actual reports that are disseminated to

department heads; quarterly meetings are held to address large variances of both surpluses and deficits. Forecasts are reviewed after each add/drop period and if necessary, resources are reallocated to cover resulting budget shortages. (Revenue and expenses, as related to financial planning, are also discussed in Standard 2.)

The Audit Committee oversees the external review of the College's audited financial statements, as well as risk management to include monitoring the internal controls. The committee annually reviews compliance of policies concerning ethical conduct and conflict of interest, solicits input from independent auditors regarding risk assessment and management, and solicits opinion regarding finance staff's skills, qualifications, and performance. The Finance Office prepares the college's financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and employs an independent auditor, currently O'Connor and Drew, a CPA firm that specializes in not-for-profit colleges. This independent auditor expresses an opinion on financial controls and prepared financial statements, with an additional compliance audit in accordance with single audit. The Finance, Pension, and Insurance Committee oversees matters concerning the development of investment policy, results, and plans and meets with investment and insurance advisory firms in regard to these policies. This committee is responsible for approving the annual budget, prior to the Board of Trustee review and approval, along with key compliance and financial ratio requirements such as DOE Composite Score and bank covenants and periodically reviews annual operating and capital budgets, cash flow, and other financial plans, to monitor progress and performance.

When new funding or revenue streams are considered, the administration and Board of Trustees weigh risks and market interest in an effort to uphold institutional identity and quality. For new academic programs, such as the recently added Exercise Science program, a financial proforma is presented with potential capital outlays, program costs, and standard operating expenses, weighed against findings of a market study. Additionally, the Master's in Public Health program is currently in approval process and will admit its first students in Fall 2019.

**Institutional Advancement.** The office of Institutional Advancement operates under the AIC gift policy drafted and approved in February 2014. *The Board of Trustees and AIC faculty and staff solicit current and deferred gifts from individuals, corporations, foundations and other private entities to secure the financial growth and fulfill the mission of the College. The purpose of these policies and guidelines is to define the practices and policies governing the acceptance of gifts by AIC and to provide guidance to prospective donors and their advisors when making gifts to AIC, so as to facilitate the gift-giving process. This policy statement is designed to ensure that all gifts to, or for the use of, AIC are structured to provide maximum benefits for both the College and the donor.* Comprehensive policies to cover donor privacy, gift acceptance, receipts, pledges, and gift restriction are all covered within the Office's policies.

The Finance office works with the office of Institutional Advancement in early spring of each year to determine a realistic goal for the upcoming fiscal year's fundraising, based upon a review of the past three years' fundraising goals versus actuals, the response rate to Fall/LEAD/Spring appeals, anticipated participation rates in the newly designed Yellow Jackets Booster Club, sponsorship programs and other athletic development initiatives. Typical revenue generated or gifts to the institution reach \$1.2million, with annual projected increases of 3%. The Yellow Jackets Club and sponsorship programs began formally in FY19 although neither has proved to be as strong as initially anticipated. Advancement goals are also made with consideration of major giving prospects, trustee and corporate giving, grant requests, and anticipated event revenue (e.g., golf tournaments).

**Physical Resources.** AIC's campus spans 72 acres split between what is referred to as the Main Campus for academic, administrative, and three traditional residence halls and Edgewood Gardens, which was originally acquired to support athletic fields and facilities and now also provides upper-division and graduate housing in traditional, suite style, and apartment configurations. The two campuses are separated by approximately ½ mile and accessible by a campus shuttle. The campus includes 29 buildings, which consists of seven primarily administrative buildings with 105 administrative offices and nine primarily academic buildings with 80 faculty offices and 38 classrooms. There are three athletic buildings and four buildings that support the facilities operation, three of which are storage. Campus housing has six student residences containing 862 beds, four houses/six units, nine large group spaces with capacities ranging from ten to 500, plus 12 other primarily conference/program spaces that total 31,574 square feet. The library is 26,345 square feet and includes study, tutor, office, and mixed-use spaces. The first floor has been newly renovated to reflect a learning commons environment. The newly renovated dining commons (DC) is 10,460 square feet and seats 351 people with food service provided through Chartwells, a 2014 change from Aramark. The DC building also houses Accessibility Services, conference rooms, and the Stinger Pub. The Esther B. Griswold Theatre for the Performing Arts seats 500 and is used for whole-campus events, stage performances, and other special events. Since 2013, the college has had a maintenance plan that aligns with the overall land use plan, and a yearly list of projects.

With the addition of the new Colaccino Center for Health Sciences in Fall 2018, AIC offers 65 instructional spaces, including 38 classrooms, 6 computer labs with an average of 24 computers per lab and 1 lab with 20 iPads, 13 science labs, and 7 other specialized spaces. The Colaccino Center enhances occupational therapy, physical therapy, exercise science, and nursing instruction with state-of-the-art classrooms and specialized learning environments. The simulation apartment features a fully-functioning space complete with a kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. In this realistic home-like setting, students apply the concepts they learn in the classroom about evidence-based and client-centered care. Students also gather in an adjacent observation room to learn about the simulated assessments and treatment taking place. Live video streaming into classrooms enables larger groups to participate in the active learning process. Adjacent to a large classroom is the pediatrics lab, which has a sensory play space consisting of a therapeutic swing, ball pit, trampoline, and mat area. This equipment allows students to practice sensory integration therapy techniques, such as providing vestibular input for self-regulation. Exercise Science students have access to state-of-the-art equipment and lab space for metabolic testing, body composition measuring, and a Velotron for testing anaerobic thresholds.

A typical classroom on campus is equipped with Wi-Fi, a teaching station, computer, laptop connections, DVD player and display system and a variety of seating arrangements, from traditional to the way that we envision a contemporary space. The intent is for the space to be conducive to the learning objective. Technological equipment is maintained by the information technology (IT) department and classroom planning to ensure adequate space and a supportive learning environment is a shared responsibility held by Academic Affairs, the Registrar's Office, and Auxiliary Services. IT has a long-term budget plan for classroom switching and display systems to be replaced every ten years and computers every five years. In 2014, ten classrooms were upgraded to an established campus classroom standard. Each year funding is evaluated, and upgrades and replacements are done to safeguard a stable working classroom environment. The college evaluates the expansion of both academic and non-academic spaces in conjunction with Derck & Edson as an ongoing component of the Campus Enhancement, Land Use, and Athletics master plan.

In order to address shifting needs and renovation plans, some spaces on campus were repurposed and others have seen full makeovers. The Registrar and Students Accounts areas were reconfigured and

renovated to accommodate additional support staff and better link services. The Center for Student Engagement was established in 2015 to consolidate the previously distinct offices of Student Activities, Multicultural Affairs, and Campus Recreation into one physical location and under one supervisor. In 2018, the Center for Student Engagement and Residence Life Office merged to become the Department of Student Life with direct supervision under the Associate Dean for Student Life. The Center for Student Engagement was relocated from the Dining Commons to the Schwartz Campus Center to a modern student-centric suite of offices adjacent to Residence Life serving Student Activities, Diversity Education, Student Government, and the College Steps Program. These shifts partially addressed a prior renovation plan for Student Affairs offices intended during the 2011-2016 strategic plan but which was deferred.

Beyond Springfield, AIC has ten sites for the Extended Campus Program in the School of Education. All sites are formally agreed to through an annual contract and sites are evaluated with a technology checklist generated by AIC's Academic Computing department to ensure teaching stations, Wi-Fi access, and technology support. In some instances for athletics, arrangements are put in place with external facilities, such as for the hockey and tennis teams.

Safety and security of AIC students and employees is of great concern. Emergency response plans (ERP) are up to date for the Springfield campus, and is most recently in the process of being revised in 2018 and will include ERP classroom posters, a pocket guide for Campus Police, and detailed action plans for emergencies. Emergency alerts, timely warnings, and other safety related campus messaging is disseminated using the Everbridge mass notification platform. All safety and security systems are maintained in line with safety compliance orders and reported in annual Clery Reports. With buildings pre-dating 1989, asbestos has been marked and is remediated during renovations. A comprehensive Asbestos Management Plan was developed in 2018 through collaboration with FLI Environmental, Inc. Security is handled through an agreement with G4S Secure Solutions USA, bringing tremendous benefit to campus security by dramatically enhancing the incident reporting system, security vehicles, radios, cameras, 24-hour dispatch, and additional residence hall security. At present, the campus is covered by 162 surveillance cameras and a robust access control system, present in 25 of 29 buildings. In addition, Facilities has installed Medeco dedicated keyway interior door locks in all residential buildings and the majority of administrative and academic buildings.

**Information Technology.** AIC's chief information officer (CIO) has 28 years of experience with systems and software and building a technology interface for an institution, 23 of which are specifically within higher education. Most of AIC's technology infrastructure is overseen by the CIO, namely the Network and Server Administration, Database Systems and Projects, Data Integration and Reporting, Helpdesk and Support Services, and Telecommunications departments. Academic Computing has recently changed reporting structure from IT to Academic Affairs. Network & Server Administration oversees the campus infrastructure; phone, fiber, and wireless technologies; and the 50 information systems, file servers and other internally hosted servers. This team maintains operating systems, the campus network, systems backups, as well as comprehensive regular updates. AIC has a fiber ring that connects across the greater Springfield area, linking five cooperating colleges of greater Springfield, among whom bandwidth is a shared service. Over the past five years, AIC's bandwidth has increased from 140MB to 1850MB and the number of network switches has also increased from 56 to 78 due to construction, staffing, and increased usage of devices on the network (wired and wireless). A separate wireless network was opened for guests and an additional secured network for labs and gaming. With the understanding that technology must be robust and current, IT resources are maintained with both capital and operational budgets and spending has averaged \$550-800,000 on IT resources between 2014 and 2019. Capital budget planning is established by a long-term plan for replacing IT equipment at

various times based on the life expectancy of the equipment, managed by the CIO. Approval and decision-making processes for software additions and deletions begin with the CIO who considers needs and overall budget and approves software, data integration, and any other changes to the hosting environment.

Reliability of our network systems is ensured through annual audits that rotate focus between vulnerability tests, phishing audit and education, network design and security review, and this year's dual-focus of firewall best practices review and update of policies and procedures. Currently, policies and procedures are in place to ensure reliability of service, security of data, and the privacy of individuals. Written Information Security Policy, which are part of Massachusetts data privacy information policies, form the basis of the college's formal information security policies. Policies are currently being expanded upon to cover internal policies and practices for disaster recovery, GDPR compliance and electronic signature best practices. Crisis planning is articulated in the institution's emergence response plan to specify physical and virtual host plans and two server room locations that require different environmental set ups for secondary data storage. Primary and secondary sites recently received upgrades in electrical systems, fire suppression, and air conditioning to improve server room redundancy and functioning for the future. At the level of an individual user, identities are authenticated through an active directory and single sign on (SSO). Annually, every campus member complies with the security, password, and acceptable use policies through the campus portal. Lastly, AIC uses industry leading firewall and threat prevention systems to manage the safety and security of the network, systems and individual computers. Over the past five years, IT has erased infringement violation and is both reactive and proactive in its security posture.

As planning and evaluation have matured across campus, so too have the information and data systems to support those practices. Across the 46 systems in use, a great amount of data is now available for those responsible for planning. Each area of the college reports on and tracks within their systems and with the new Institutional Research support, individual areas are better aware of and can better align data input and usage. The IT department is responsible for merging data between systems, thereby giving departments a more holistic view of students, programs, and the institution as a whole. Merging data remains a mostly manual process and with an increased reliance on data, a near term goal is to assemble a data warehouse and analytics platforms that will increase the merging threshold, and historical tracking capacity, as well as predictive data modeling capacity. AIC|Connect (Starfish) is the first product toward this end. In Spring 2019, predictive data analyses will be available from that system and, over time, IT's data warehouse will be utilized for these purposes.

Academic Computing brings IT to the classroom via the learning management system (LMS), Blackboard. The area's director has additional support of two permanent employees, four graduate assistants, and five work-study positions. In addition to the LMS, this team links faculty to Panopto for synchronous and asynchronous video content, Zoom for meeting management and recording, and two products for classroom polling programs. In addition to classrooms, students and faculty can access multi-purpose computer labs, an iPad Lab, and the financial literacy lab. When it comes to institutional service and enhancing the academic technology on campus, Academic Computing has chaired a distance education advisory group (no longer active) and produced AIC's Online Learning Consortium Scorecard (OLCS) to assess institutional readiness for delivering online courses. Significant progress has been achieved in terms of delivering courses online, as evidenced by the OLCS rating increases between the initial assessment in 2014 rating of 100 and the most recent 2017 rating of 168. In order to assure quality during the earlier stages of readiness, AIC adopted the Quality Matters (QM) standards in 2016 and subsequently all online classes were reviewed through these standards and have all gone through an institutional development process that adheres to QM standards. An informal review of six classes

informed an initial timeline for expanding the online portfolio and a plan to expand the offerings, adhering to QM benchmarks.

**Library.** Established in 1924 as the J. Frank Adams Library, the library was moved to the current location and renamed the McGown Memorial Library in 1949. Today's James J. Shea, Sr. Memorial Library was established in 1980 with a new wing that more than doubled the footprint, which has grown into a much-used space that invites study groups, socializing, e-resource research, and information literacy support. Housing the IT department, Noonan Writing Center, the Center for Academic Success and the Academic Resource Center, during the peak times in a term the library will see upwards of 1,000 visitors in a day. AIC's James J. Shea, Sr. Memorial library serves students' information, research, and study needs through physical and electronic collections, as well as with supplemental resources through consortium membership with Central & Western Massachusetts Automated Resources Sharing (C/W Mars), the Cooperating Libraries of Greater Springfield (CLGS), and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) Commonwealth Catalog. The library's collections and welcoming atmosphere has contributed to increased usage of library services and space since 2009.

Because information literacy is a core competency of the APEX Program, undergraduates are becoming increasingly familiar with library resources and services throughout their four-year program. As part of an effort to familiarize the graduate population and the rest of campus with the library staff as educators of information literacy, education sessions are offered through AIC's curricula on topics ranging from occupational therapy research to education; and the yearly calendar offerings have increased from 104 per year to 116. In step with the changing nature of the digital age, Shea Library has shifted emphasis to an electronic collection of books, journals, and audio/visual materials, and the physical space is on its way to becoming a traditional learning commons. To that end, a Visual and Digital Arts gallery and a café supplement the four newly installed printing stations and the individual computer stations, which have more than doubled in number to 53 today, up from 16 in 2016. Two additional study rooms were added in 2016, giving students numerous choices for the type of meeting and study spaces on campus. The physical library is open 100 hours per week, now with extended hours before and during exam periods. Four librarians report to the library director, three of whom are designated as Information Literacy Librarians and are embedded one of AIC's three Schools. This arrangement provides a designated librarian for discipline-targeted research assistance as well as collection management. The fourth librarian works in Technical Services.

Becoming an increasingly digital environment, Shea Library has been strategic in cultivating its e-resources and ensuring their security via EZProxy authentication. As programs change or have been added, Shea library has responded by seeking opportunities with vendors to enhance collections. To support necessary collections for new or growing programs, the library is embedded in program planning and program reviews. Students, faculty, and staff can search the library's collections from the main portal and additional library access points have been added to Blackboard. Library support needs are met by three and a half clerical staff positions and 15 work-study students. Reference and research questions are answered by the information literacy librarians via portal, phone, email, text, YouTube video, or in person.

## APPRAISAL

**Human Resources.** Without the capacity building and organizational development that has happened within the Human Resources department, much of AIC's development as a whole would not have been as dramatic. Since 2009, the structure of HR has been built out from an office of one person to what is now an experienced and engaged staff of four. The additional roles, including the broader institutional

new role of Chief of Staff, have permitted the office to strengthen the institutional human capital vision, as well as the policies and practices that all employees use to navigate their workplace. New to the Human Resources annual practices are improved onboarding and exiting as part of refreshed recruitment process, FERPA trainings and reviews, professional development for succession planning, and trainings on discrimination and harassment and dedicated efforts to assist the college in coming into compliance with Title IX.

In 2013, a compensation study affirmed the state of salaries at the college and marked the start of a concerted effort to bring payrates to market median. Greater progress has been made toward this goal with staff salaries than with faculty. In 2016, an initial increase was added to faculty rank promotions; yet, as discussed in Standard 6, faculty continue to experience compression as new members are brought on, but current and long-serving faculty have not been brought to midpoint – through blanket increase or by merit. With the Faculty Performance Review process in effect with the new tool, in January 2019 faculty will be receiving merit increases for the first time.

In order to achieve our goal of becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution, we have also increased the number of Spanish-speaking staff in student facing roles, including a mandate for English/Spanish fluency in the next hires in undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid, and Student Accounts. Additional efforts to increase the diversity across campus are noticeable in the job postings – all of which contributes to a building an inclusive campus community. Essential to AIC employees' experience of the college's mission are these efforts directed toward cultivating a diverse staff and faculty community; these efforts are prominent in current recruitment practice and will continue to be elevated in future hires and culture building.

**Financial.** The College has a positive net income from operations for the past eight years, through fiscal year 2018. This positive net income has allowed the institution to make necessary investment in technology and building infrastructure, academic enhancements, and careful financial management of the college endowment. This has further helped the college in fulfilling its academic mission and better serving students.

Institutional budgets are prepared carefully and conservatively; yet, while the FY2018 budget produced a deficit net income from operations of -\$1.0million, the college ultimately earned a surplus of \$1.6million. This conservative budgeting and planning process allowed AIC to plan for a difficult year and, without compromising operations, maintain or continue investments through prudent expense management that were tied to marginal changes in budgeted revenue expectations. The college has demonstrated success with positive change in net assets per the audit for the past eight years and added \$3.5 million into the Quasi-endowment since 2013. Further, a strategic goal of the Finance office is to achieve growth in the endowment via systematic fundraising and sound investment management. The fiscal year 2019 budget is the second consecutive year for which net income from operations is a planned deficit, with a positive cash flow from operations. The budget deficit is a result of declining undergraduate enrollments within the nation's northeast region coupled with additional in-house expenses related to new facility and academic investments. Typically with new programs, investments are not likely to be offset with new revenues within the first year of investment. This fiscal year 2019 budget has been termed internally as an 'investment budget', and contains additional expenses related to new facilities, including interest and depreciation expenses, salary administration planning, additional faculty, and operating expenses for expanded or new academic and retention programming. The increased expenses related to retention are showcased in Figure 7. # below and the planned academic programming investments include occupational therapy, physical therapy, and exercise science.



Figure 7.#: FYFY2019 Investment Budget Retention Initiatives



AIC's tuition revenues have increased nearly 6% within the previous four fiscal years, increasing from \$37,553,484 in 2015 to \$39,638,501 in 2018. While overall tuition revenue has only modestly increased, the mix of revenues has changed during this same time period. Undergraduate net tuition has decreased almost 2%, this is largely been a mix of nearly flat tuition revenue offset by increasing undergraduate discount rate. Similar to AIC's peer colleges within the New England region with similar size and offerings, minimal increases to tuition help to offset annual increases of auxiliary services contracts and salary administration plan increases. The approved fiscal 2019 budget included a \$25 per credit hour increase, bringing the credit per hour cost to \$735, this is in line with peer institutions within our region. Undergraduate tuition in fiscal year 2018 was 37% of overall revenues, while in fiscal year 2015 is represented just under 40%. AIC graduate program offerings can largely be divided into two different business operations: the traditional graduate and doctoral offerings and second, AIC's Extended Campus Program (XCP). Over this same three-years 2015-2018, the traditional graduate program offerings have grown as part of overall tuition revenues to 40% (fiscal year 2018) from 30% (fiscal year 2015); while the XCP has decreased to 22% of overall tuition revenues (from 28% in fiscal 2015).

Undergraduate tuition discount rate, as mentioned above, has been increasing. The discount rate (excluding fee's) was 63.8% in fiscal year 2015. In 2018, the same discount rate was measured at 65.1%. AIC engages with Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL), a higher education consultant, to award accepted students. This allows AIC to consistently award students based on their academic achievement and financial ability to afford college. Managing the discount rate begins with meeting with RNL in the fall of the preceding award year to determine award amounts for specific populations of students. This is coupled with reviewing the Athletic Scholarship budget and determining how available monies will be allocated. The marginal increase over the past few years can best be explained by a change in overall student population; AIC's incoming class for Fall 2018 had an average GPA of over 3.0 and in achieving AIC's vision of providing access, opportunity, and diversity, these populations of students have proven to be costlier for the discount rate. AIC is leveraging the continued relationship with RNL to analyze historical data to best implement an awarding strategy that leaves AIC in a position to achieve financial stability within the discount rate.

Other revenues have largely remained flat in the four-year period of fiscal year 2015 through 2018. The positive cashflow from operations allows AIC to continue planning and investment to better enhance the delivery of the colleges mission and positive cashflow is a strong indicator of financial stability.

Over the past ten years AIC has leveraged opportunities to develop the campus. The college also maintains an operating line of credit renewed annually for \$6 million dollars. When possible, the cash flow retained annually is used to self-fund capital improvement projects. Borrowing is also employed when necessary to fund capital projects. Outstanding debt as of June 30, 2008 was \$14.8 million, and debt as of June 30, 2018 was \$13.9 million. The college also maintains an operating line of credit renewed annually for \$6million dollars and a \$3million capital line of credit. As of June 30, 2018, \$3.7 million dollars had been drawn to supplement cash flow over the summer and those funds were paid down by the end of August 2018. In addition, debt was acquired to fund two capital construction projects in the amount of \$10,500,000, and those funds were drawn down completely in October 2018.

AIC management has positioned the college to have capacity for additional debt for future projects. Portions of existing debt are also coming to term and will create additional capacity above what is already available. One existing bond, with principal and interest payments totaling \$221,000 annually will terminate in fiscal year 2020, and a second bond with principal and interest payments of \$219,000 will terminate in 2022. With direction from the strategic plan and the Campus Master Plan, the Finance department is confident it will be able to provide the college the financial means to initiate and complete investment projects that create positive return on assets. AIC is currently in compliance with all of its debt covenants and has begun investigating the consolidation of some of its outstanding debt into more favorable terms, therefore creating additional capacity and creating a stronger financial picture.

For the past seven years, there have been no internal control findings from our independent auditor. The results of the annual audits are presented to the audit and finance committee of the Board of Trustees of the College. The Board will review the information to determine if there is any action to take.

**Physical Resources.** Many buildings on campus were built during the 1960's. Whereas renovation projects are typically fed by capital campaigns funded by alumni donations, at AIC gifts of that nature are less common. Certain classroom and physical space renovations have not kept pace. With the creation and implementation of the overall master plan, renovations have picked up in recent years and are beginning to make dramatic shifts across the campus. Recent extensive projects in academic spaces have mainly benefited health sciences, while other recent academic investment includes the new Visual Digital Arts lab. Discussions are in progress to renovate the Old Science Building. Within the science labs, the storage and lab spaces need renovations and new designs to accommodate today's technology, utilities, and safety requirements. Generally speaking, classrooms are adequate for teaching, yet many are outdated and do not consistently support adaptations for modern technology. With older classrooms, academic technology has been fitted into the physical space, but the technology cannot always be fully utilized in those classrooms that have not been designed for the specific upgrades. Additional technology could also greatly enhance instruction and disability accommodations. Overall, disability access is in varying stages of being addressed and ensured across campus and at the time of writing, 68% of campus is fully accessible (with 44% of campus spaces have near complete access, and 24% is limited to partial access). However, not all teaching spaces, such as science labs, can always accommodate different abilities. And, while any program's faculty can make sufficient academic accommodations by providing online labs, it is of course more desirable for the space to flex and accommodate physical ability.

The master plan identifies aspirations for classroom, office, housing, lab, and other physical locations on the campus. The land use master plan was developed with Derck and Edson and illustrates the college's capacity to support current enrollment and campus needs and proposes future enhancements to meet enrollment growth or modernization needs. Maintenance information contained in the plan details the physical infrastructure for pipes and access points as well as deferred maintenance priorities. Over the past ten years, new construction and renovations centered on updating, enhancing and repurposing spaces, as well as adding new, state of the art educational and housing facilities and ensuring compliance with all Americans with Disabilities Acts standards. Deferred maintenance costs are budgeted as capital expenses (approximately \$1million annually) and in the last five years, 611 additional projects have addressed over \$300,000 in projects, covered through the operating budget.

Each renovation project is an opportunity to examine work flow and to consider relocating groups to bring related offices closer together. The Center for Student Engagement was established in 2015 to consolidate the previously distinct offices of Student Activities, Multicultural Affairs, and Campus Recreation in one physical location and under one supervisor. In 2018 the Center for Student Engagement and Residence Life Office merged to become the Department of Student Life with direct supervision under the Associate Dean for Student Life. The Center for Student Engagement was relocated from the Dining Commons to the Schwartz Campus Center to a modern student-centric suite of offices adjacent to residence life housing Student Activities, Diversity Education, Student Government, and the College Steps Program. This partially addressed a renovation plan for Student Affairs Offices that had been deferred from the 2011-16 Strategic Plan.

**Library Appraisal:** As part of an emerging learning commons, Shea Library is redefining ways AIC students have accessed the collections, engaged with various types of information, and experienced the physical space. After an increase in purchases of electronic formats, e-book and e-serial use has increased to 35% and 18% respectively in the last year while monograph use has decreased 20%. Information literacy and library instruction sessions have remained consistent, around 110 sessions per year. The quality of the collection has been adequately maintained by each School's library liaison and the director. While financial resources have been readily available to accommodate new programs, additional non-restricted funds would benefit efforts to maintain currency and digital fluency across the collections. Such investment would also benefit online and remote/off-campus access. On-campus and local students have requested extended hours and all-night workspaces. To address this, a proposal to allow 24-hours access to the physical library and other student-centric buildings for late night study space is currently under review.

A strength of Shea Library is its internal appraisal of usage statistics such as circulation of materials and database activity, hourly patron activities, reference interactions, and information literacy sessions. With the assistance of C/W Mars, the library annually tracks all circulation activity of cataloged material. Databases and serials are analyzed for collection management and information literacy purposes annually. The library has a long-standing practice of monitoring, tracking, and assessing student activities within the library. Detailed counts of areas such as group study, individual seating, and computer usage are captured on an hourly basis all year long. However, due to the renovation and restructuring of library services in 2016, the method of tracking patron activity has been affected and cannot be consistently tracked anymore. This means comparing year over year counts is difficult; however, the director monitors and utilizes other library activities to inform planning. Reference and information literacy session statistics help inform decisions regarding outreach and promotion of library services. At this point in time, a critical evaluation of the library based upon cross-campus feedback and

an external perspective would showcase strengths and needs and would keep the library in line with best practice as the staff continue to evolve the learning commons culture.

**Technological Resources.** Looking back to 2013 when the current CIO began, the state of technology and systems were incredibly siloed. In the year prior to her joining AIC, the college reviewed a number of SIS systems, a process prompted by the difficulty in coding School of Education (SOE) terms within the CAMS system, which led to lots of manual processing because CAMS could not handle modules within a term, only semester-based processing. In 2013, the SIS changeover project brought in several departments (Continuing Education, SOE, and low-residency EdD programs) to come into alignment with practices across all areas of the college. Consistency with all the registrations and student enrollment reporting needed to be incorporated into one office. The institution needed a core SIS system to address bridging and communications among all academic programs and between administrative offices and students. As the new CIO came on board, her initial focus was placed on the SIS switch. These activities and additional information usage demanded an increase in skills and technology support across campus. Additionally, there was a need for the CIO to shift attention away from building systems and to helping employees collaborate and more easily access and utilize technology. In 2014, AIC went live with a new my.aic.edu portal using the Jenzabar technology and replaced the former email system while also incorporating single sign-on for other systems. The portal increased in usage immediately, as the former portal was only used for course registration. Now, students go to the portal for all announcements, forms, events, communications, and links to other systems. And the portal is the place for authenticated access and submission of forms between students and campus departments, as well as the outlet for most communication and archiving across departments and committees.

The database team is always implementing, authenticating and integrating new systems. In 2018 alone, six systems have been implemented, authenticated, and bridged between systems. Three of these systems were done for improving regulatory-related compliance needs, such as TimesheetX, which manages all work-study timesheets and ensures students are not working during class time. This was an important addition, following regulatory findings for which this practice was out of compliance.

The cross-function collaborative group that assesses data needs and information flows has evolved in rich ways as the technology capacity across campus has shifted. The data management team (DMT) was essential during the Jenzabar implementation and then in September of 2016 after we went live with our new SIS and new automated daily data bridges to eight different systems, new teams were formed based upon the needs and priorities of the administration. IT created the Morning Buzz meetings that kept offices up to date on key happening in other offices and what effect they have on bridges (e.g., registration). An ad-hoc team was called together to review and resolve inter-departmental issues that came up. Two other teams were created for strategic planning and analyzing retention in 2017. The Enrollment Management Council (EMC) evaluates and analyzes data around retention and coordinates a data analyst team who pulls data. In order to achieve and track many of our institutional goals, the CIO and Director of Institutional Research recognize the need to build a data warehouse and analytics platform for institutional data. Given the best in breed approach to its software systems, data must be brought together for institutional and longitudinal reporting. The CIO envisions that a data management team will also go through a new phase of restructuring as the institution begins to work on an analytics platform that would bring together various system data for reporting and decision making. Preliminary steps are in effect to build a data dictionary to support the reliability of data in the subsequent warehouse.

Across all areas of the IT department, constant comparison occurs against other schools, looking at security issues to address, addressing areas of single points of failure and cross-training IT and library

staff. For benchmarking, we use the Educause Core Data Services (CDS) to benchmark and compare us in staffing, budget, and services. Helpdesk ticks are monitored and appraised for length of time open, number resolved, and length of time to resolve. A more formalized evaluation could illuminate customer service issues and ensure IT support is evolving with technology use on campus.

#### PROJECTIONS

**Refreshing Risk Management Practices:** In an era of increased digital data, the college is continuously assessing ways to take a proactive posture for anticipating risk. Better utilization of data has provided the framework to appraise areas of institutional weakness. However, there remains work to be done in order to establish a comprehensive base of policies to manage risk in the areas of Finance, Information Technology, and Auxiliary Services/Facilities. In addition to reviewing, refreshing, and creating policies where needed, Vice Presidents in these areas are charged with ensuring the procedures are communicated across campus and well-understood. Specific to financial preparedness, the Vice President for Finance will establish a planning and analysis model that aligns with the Master and Deferred Maintenance plans and which considers long-term sustainability, exit strategies, and rates of return on investment. The financial planning will directly support the strategic planning process and be shared often with the President and Board of Trustees to ensure progress toward institutional goals through sound fiscal practices.

**The Information Technology Vision.** In support of our rapidly expanding technology needs and the pressures of an ever-increasing reliance upon data to track, report, and measure effectiveness, the Chief Information Officer will lead IT's efforts to refresh the IT Vision annually and measure achievements toward the planned goals for Spring 2020. The planned updates will address requirements for the next three years and align with the financial planning for the institutional Strategic Plan. Particular emphasis will be placed on data security and on coalescing the numerous systems and finalizing the changeover from manual bridging to a fully automated process.

**Tending to Deferred Maintenance & ADA Compliance:** AIC has made tremendous investments in the physical structures across campus to transform buildings and bring the college into compliance with ADA standards. Continued attention will be placed on the buildings that, while grandfathered into code, do not always meet all accessibility needs. The college commits to taking a proactive approach when looking for challenges and obstacles while addressed deferred maintenance items and in all new physical planning activities.

**Maintaining Efforts to Bring Faculty and Staff Compensation to Market-Midpoint/Competitive Levels:** Over the past five years, the college has invested in the salaries of full-time faculty and staff. This investment will continue and be supported by the merit systems in place and the College will continue to investigate additional ways to increase compensation and retain AIC's place as a competitive employee in Western Massachusetts.

**Adherence to the Strategic Plan to Inform Investments Across Campus:** In Fall 2018, AIC committed to its next strategic plan and in so doing, defined the pathways for investment and activity across campus. The Strategic Planning Committee will remain active in ensuring that the plan is understood and extended to all departments across campus to maintain alignment between departmental goals and this overarching plan. Prioritizing major investment in science labs and athletic spaces permits those academic and athletic departments on campus to build momentum in ways that they previously have not been able. Attending to these spaces also reinforces the academic program investment that has been made in the School of Health Sciences and is greatly needed if AIC is to realize the full potential of that curricular investment.

## STANDARD EIGHT: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

More than any other area, AIC has invested significant time and resources over the past decade into understanding how the college's activities lead to student achievement – from assessment activities to IT infrastructure to retention initiatives. In this section, educational effectiveness is discussed from a holistic perspective of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs and from a lifecycle perspective from first-year and graduate-level students to graduation. Each demonstrates an increase in evaluative practices, as well as use of that evidence to inform decision-making. AIC has proud traditions of student success when compared against similar institutions with high percentages of Pell-eligible students and wants to maintain this standing for each new cohort who enters the college. And across campus, departments are increasingly developing the skills and habits of utilizing data from student experiences so that information is consistently used to direct action across the campus.

### DESCRIPTION

Data are disaggregated to give the greatest insight into trends on campus. Important indicators for AIC's undergraduate population are decision on major, income, and first-generation status. Common factors to further disaggregate data include student-athlete, race, and gender. For graduate students, program, race, and gender are commonly used factors. Commuter and residence rates are also of interest when examined in the context of program. Rates of student success are determined by retention and graduation rates, and evidence of learning is ascertained at course and program levels by faculty-conducted evaluations. While each AIC faculty and staff role supports students' timely graduation, AIC's target demographic is such that faculty and staff are prepared to see longer terms of study and/or lower graduation rates. Students are more likely to stop out or study part-time when they are first-generation, hold jobs as they work their way through college, or have significant responsibilities beyond the classroom. In fact, at the Fall 2018 New Student Orientation an informal live-poll asked students about these intentions. The live responses revealed that 80% of that audience (all incoming students) affirmed they will hold a job while studying. 11% were not sure and only 9% did not intend to work while in school. This reality for AIC students has a profound effect on the culture of our campus and the story of our students. This story – of AIC's effectiveness as an educational institution – is further detailed below, largely through the lens of retention and graduation rates and learning outcome achievement.

**Retention and Graduation.** American International College has targeted retention goals for all students and has begun several initiatives to support student success. Fall to fall retention rates continue to affirm what AIC administrators and faculty know about AIC students: many students are first generation and arrive unprepared to navigate higher education, many are working while studying and have financial and familial responsibilities beyond the classroom. For some students, financial hardship does not make returning to campus possible. With these factors in mind, the fall-to-fall retention benchmarks are set by similar regional institutions pulled from IPEDS and goals for retention are established using the Ruffalo Noel Levitz reports. Retention at AIC is under 65%, and the four-year graduation rate is 35%. In recent years, there has been a drop in retention among first-time students (72% in 2014 and 64% in 2017) and the Enrollment Management Committee/ Retention committee (EMC) (composed of composed of deans from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Student Success, and the director of OIR) is charged with identifying immediate proactive measures to improve retention and graduation rates, along with longer-term strategies and budgets.

Table 8.1 Fall to Fall Retention 2014-2018 (First-time students)

| Incoming Semester | All AIC UG Students |        |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------|
|                   | Year 1              | Year 2 |
| Fall 14           | 72%                 | 53%    |
| Fall 15           | 70%                 | 50%    |
| Fall 16           | 62%                 | 41%    |
| Fall 17           | 64%                 | N/A    |

In order to understand the patterns of first-time students, the EMC has also initiated a deep dive into student data to identify the characteristics that correlate with student retention. The initial findings from this research led to several retention interventions: additional professional and student-athlete advisors and the texting platform, the summer bridge program, AIC|Connect, the overall APEX program, and organizational changes in Registrar’s Office reporting structure and organization and investments the institutional research department. This is enhanced by greater information sharing between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs pertaining to withdrawals and advising needs and processes and the campus is beginning to see some steady increases in both four-year and six-year graduation rates.

Table 8.2 Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates – AIC Undergraduate Students

| Cohorts | 4yr% | 6yr% |
|---------|------|------|
| 2009    | 25%  | 38%  |
| 2010    | 29%  | 44%  |
| 2011    | 26%  | 41%  |
| 2012    | 31%  | 47%  |
| 2013    | 33%  | 44%  |
| 2014    | 35%  | N/A  |

Curious to understand these trends further, the EMC conducted an analysis of attrition data. This longitudinal analysis of institutional data from 2014 through 2018 found that an important indicator for AIC student success is choosing a major. Data show that AIC students who have declared a major are more likely to remain at the institution. Over the past four years, students who have not declared a major show a 60% attrition rate. From Fall 2017 to Fall 2018, 13% of students who left AIC had not yet declared a major.

Table 8.3: Major/Undeclared Designation with Highest Attrition (Undergraduate)

| Majors                           | Attrition by Major |                   |                   |                   |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                  | Fall 14 - Fall 15  | Fall 15 - Fall 16 | Fall 16 - Fall 17 | Fall 17 - Fall 18 |
| Undeclared Undergraduate         | 48%                | 69%               | 58%               | 62%               |
| Biology                          | 23%                | 23%               | 41%               | 35%               |
| Sports and Recreation Management | 35%                | 25%               | 34%               | 33%               |
| General Business                 | 22%                | 33%               | 32%               | 30%               |
| Human Biology                    | 11%                | 34%               | 20%               | 29%               |
| Criminal Justice                 | 23%                | 19%               | 22%               | 25%               |
| Communications                   | 13%                | 23%               | 31%               | 24%               |
| International Business           | 40%                | 30%               | 13%               | 22%               |
| Psychology                       | 18%                | 20%               | 25%               | 21%               |

Looking only at 2017-2018 data, Table 8.4 shows attrition rates within a major or undeclared designation and that program/designation’s contribution to the total population of students who left during that year.

Table 8.4: Attrition Comparison – By Major and Total AIC Attrition Population

| Current Division/Major (Fall 17- Fall 18) | Attrit in Major % | Attrits in AIC % |
|---|-------------------|------------------|
| Undeclared Undergraduate                  | 62.30%            | 12.79%           |
| Criminal Justice                          | 24.82%            | 11.45%           |
| Sports and Recreation Management          | 33.33%            | 8.42%            |
| General Business                          | 30.43%            | 7.07%            |
| Psychology                                | 20.88%            | 6.40%            |
| Human Biology                             | 28.95%            | 3.70%            |
| Communications                            | 23.68%            | 3.03%            |
| Biology                                   | 35.00%            | 2.36%            |
| International Business                    | 22.22%            | 1.35%            |

The EMC also determined through notes from student success counselors, that 44% (17 out of 38) of the undeclared majors who attrited mentioned ‘nursing’ in their conversations with counseling staff. Nursing is both a program area with strong enrollments and a strict curriculum that can be challenging to students, which is often compounded by academic readiness and preparation needs that are often present in AIC students. The Nursing faculty has defined graduation rates based on four years from the beginning of the nursing curriculum and the table below depicts the graduation rates for the previous three years and includes details regarding those who choose to change majors or leave the school for financial or family issues.

Table 8.5 Graduation Rates for Nursing Pre-Licensure Track

| Year of grad | Original cohort in nursing courses | 4 yr. grad. rate | Students w/d from AIC | Student w/d due to finances, family issues | Completed in new major | Grad Rate Nursing | Grad Rate from AIC any major | Corrected Grad. Rate |
|--------------|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 2018         | 114                                | 71               | 25                    | 3  | 17                     | 62.2%             | 75.2%                        | 79.8%                |
| 2017         | 118                                | 72               | 22                    | 5  | 18                     | 61%%              | 76.2%                        | 80.5%                |
| 2016         | 111                                | 70               | 26                    | 4  | 15                     | 63.1%             | 76.5%                        | 80.1%%               |
| 2015         | 115                                | 70               | 33                    | 4  | 10                     | 60.8%             | 69.5%                        | 73.0%                |

It is noteworthy in this example that in 2015, a baccalaureate in Public Health was opened at American International College with the first students graduating in 2016. A number of students who initially struggled in the sophomore sequence elected to change to this major in place of returning to repeat one of the beginning nursing courses. This has resulted in an overall improvement in student retention at the college. The faculty also recognized in 2016 that there were issues with student progression from the junior year, when the students first encountered a full 12 credits of nursing course work. After a careful curriculum review, the two courses (Pathophysiology and Pharmacology) were combined and extended across the entire sophomore year. The same faculty member teaches both courses and has worked to include additional, innovative technology to support learning and knowledge retention. This change was implemented in 2017 and is currently being evaluated for changes in retention across the program. In all AIC programs, faculty strive to connect students with tutors and other supports from the Center for Academic Success. In health science programs, the faculty have worked to include professional tutors for health sciences courses specifically and to hold regular post exam review sessions. Across programs, AIC



has begun initiatives to promote student retention including the new APEX series with courses focused on student preparedness and professional portfolio development.

**Learning Assessment.** As a standard for all degrees and certificates, defined learning outcomes are published and are used to direct assessment plans for individual programs. As of Fall 2018, the majority of programs have learning outcomes that are tied to assessment plans. All Education and Health Sciences programs have assessment plans. In BAS, all programs have program learning outcome statements and all but three have assessment plans in place. (Liberal Arts, Social Sciences, and Liberal Studies do not have plans; however, Liberal Studies is currently undergoing a major revision and will incorporate those two programs and it will have an accompanying assessment and program review plan after curriculum approvals are completed.

Under the new organization in Academic Affairs, the AVPAA was created to work with academic deans and faculty to develop plans, conduct assessments, and analyze findings. Upon her arrival at AIC, the AVPAA inventoried the assessment plans and is evaluating them to ascertain which plans may need further attention, revision, or discussion. Clear markers of progress in the area of assessment have been made, largely within the past three years. Beginning in AY 2015-16, each school implemented a process and timeline for annual reports to be submitted and Schools are now in their third cycle. The goal of these reports is to evaluate the quality of the program based upon certain criteria (i.e. graduation rates, faculty qualifications, teaching effectiveness, student learning outcomes). In Fall 2017, a five-year program review cycle was established as well. A scheduled has been published on the portal to alert programs. Historically, procedures and standards for the Annual Report and Program Review of academic programs have been implemented and monitored by the Program Review Committee (PRC), which is comprised of the Dean of the School of Health Sciences; Dean of the School of Business, Arts and Sciences; Dean of the School of Education; Manager of Academic Computing; Director for Institutional Research (formerly VP of OIE); and the Director of Library Services. Coordination of assessment activities and technical support to departments scheduled for assessment are provided by the Office of Institutional Research within the Office of Academic Affairs, under the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (EVPAA). As originally designed, the Annual Report was submitted to the appropriate dean for review and shared with the EVPAA if there were concerns. The Program Review document has historically been evaluated by the PRC, which makes a determination as to whether the quality indicators have been met or not. In an effort to learn from and improve the process after using it for a few cycles, changes were made based on faculty/user feedback and the quality of information submitted in the reports. The review cycle for AY2018-19 will be overseen by the Office of Academic Affairs; whereas in prior years, the academic deans held primary oversight. With these processual revisions, continued use, and support from academic deans, the annual assessment reports will prompt greater detail and analysis – thereby making the reports useful to faculty and administrators wanting to understand learning and program impact.

Across undergraduate programs, the adoption of the VALUE rubrics for core competencies means program chairs now have a set of common institutional outcomes that programs must demonstrate success in meeting. Approved in Spring and Fall 2018, the awareness-building and usage processes of norming and collaborative reviewing have not yet begun. Each of these examples point to an academic assessment culture in its early stages of development with a number of inroads established to capitalize on the widespread awareness of the need to and value of assessing student learning and program effectiveness. Many programs with external accreditors are accustomed to the systematic process of reporting findings and have consistent evaluation practices. With changes in academic leadership, the philosophy and methodology for doing so has not held steadfast for long enough to set roots and to push faculty in any program to use their findings to enhance quality. At this point in time, the faculty are

anticipating guidance and support to maintain momentum with these practices and the AVPAA is charged specifically with this aspect of the Academic Affairs portfolio.

In courses with a field component, fieldwork is evaluated by practicum or clinical faculty based upon attainment of course objectives and meeting field requirements. Each program has particular rubrics and schedules for evaluation relevant to their discipline and field requirements. SOE uses Live Text to capture progress and artifacts, allowing students to build a portfolio of accomplishments. Often field faculty hold virtual meetings to review requirements and maintain connections with students.

At the graduate level, many health sciences and business programs evaluate academic achievement based upon course objectives and field-specific exams, although a variety of evaluation methods are used across the curriculum such as examinations, written assignments, case studies, presentations, discussion to enable faculty to best evaluate achievement of learning outcomes. Methods of evaluation for each course are available to the student in the course syllabus. Additionally, for all courses and levels, the syllabi contain course descriptions, course objectives, weights of each assignment used in the final grade calculation, and grading standard used to establish numerical grade along with ranges representing the final letter grade. Syllabi are available in each course within the Blackboard LMS.

At both the undergraduate and graduate level, assignments have an associated grading rubric so that students are aware of the weight of each component within an assignment. Students who are not performing satisfactorily are contacted at mid-term by faculty to discuss their status and to develop a plan for success. This is the goal for all programs and a significant motivator and goal for AIC|Connect.

In order to give faculty support and opportunity to collaborate while they embarked on assessment initiatives, annual "Assessment Day" events and supplemental workshops were organized by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). These days were designed to support faculty's collaborative analysis and reporting of findings. Annual assessment reports were then submitted to the OIE showing findings related to a specific set of learning outcomes. Program Review reports were submitted separately to the OIE to show a holistic assessment of the program's resources and outcomes. Upon the retirement of the VP of OIE and the hiring of the Director of Institutional Research and the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs (AVPAA), the responsibility for academic assessment has shifted to the AVPAA and with feedback from academic deans, the annual reporting process is under a moderate revision, as mentioned above. Increased institutional support now provides faculty with a dedicated member of Academic Affairs to ensure the skills and culture are developed for rich and valid assessment practices.

Beyond the classroom, co-curricular learning is assessed at the undergraduate level through the APEX program, which has an assessment plan prepared to be used with the program's second cohort in AY2018-19. To gauge the impact of the program on a student's overall success and learning at AIC, the Director of APEX is developing a collection of direct and indirect assessments, such as evaluating students' e-portfolios and key writing assignments using established rubrics, pre/post-tests of a student's knowledge, skills, and abilities, and graduating senior exit surveys.

The ACE/SSS program is a federally-funded program specifically for first-generation college students, aimed at helping them succeed in college and plan for after graduation. ACE has established strong, clear evaluative practices to demonstrate success. Eligible students are contacted to apply and receive additional support in navigating campus services. As participants in this program they are enrolled in a more in-depth first-year experience course and attend special workshops and programs. ACE offers personal mentoring, academic support, career counseling, disability referral services, financial aid

assistance, and graduate school preparation. Now in its third five-year grant cycle, outcomes are evidence of the project’s success.

Table 8.6: Individual Prior Experience Points Report, 2016-2017

| <b>Criteria</b>               | <b>Maximum Score Allowed</b> | <b>Approved Rate (proposed)</b> | <b>Actual Attained Rate</b> | <b>Standards Objectives Scores</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Persistence</b>            | 4                            | 70%                             | 91%                         | 4                                  |
| <b>Good Academic Standing</b> | 4                            | 84%                             | 95%                         | 4                                  |
| <b>Bachelor’s Degree</b>      | 4                            | 40%                             | 74%                         | 4                                  |
| <b>Funded Number</b>          | 3                            | 160                             | 100%                        | 3                                  |
| <b>Total Scores</b>           | <b>15</b>                    |                                 |                             | <b>15</b>                          |

APPRAISAL

Over the past ten years, a great deal of attention has been placed on understanding what infrastructure the college needs in order to understand its effectiveness. Following that foundation, work continued on developing the requisite data collection habits. Throughout the self-study process it has become evident that much work toward this end has been done and significant steps toward meeting prior strategic plan goals related to academics have been taken. Even throughout the leadership changes mentioned earlier in this report, these inputs are observable and noteworthy. Information technology investments were made to help position the college to begin systematizing institutional data collection and reporting. A top priority of the incoming Director of IR has been to utilize Microsoft Power BI for data visualization purposes. This tool will allow senior leadership and deans the ability to drill down into student trends and outcomes. Additionally, academic assessment initiatives have piqued faculty awareness and signs of culture change are surfacing. Graduation rates are better understood and advising changes and outreach to students are more targeted as a result. In all, progress has been made over the past ten years in diverse areas of campus to document activities and use the information to inform institutional learning and strategy. Students successes and challenges are, as a result, more likely to be better sources of information now.

The clearest way to appraise the progress made in this area of the college, however, relates to the organization and communication of effectiveness data. When there has been a lack of consistent philosophy guiding progress in Academic Affairs, reporting data or survey data have not been shared in the most useful ways; and, with each different CAO has come a different assessment philosophy. Coming into AY2018-19, the EVPAA and AVPAA have worked with deans, the Academic Assessment committee, the Director of APEX and the director of OIR to learn how best to build on prior initiatives to use the best of what has been done and continue to evolve this aspect of institutional effectiveness. From an institutional research perspective, this work is continued through the data dictionary initiatives and in developing a schedule of evaluative activities so that data is trustworthy and shared with appropriate constituencies. From a learning objectives perspective, this work is continued through closer relationships between Academic Affairs and the Academic Assessment, Undergraduate Curriculum, and Graduate Council committees. Throughout the Spring 2019, faculty will also have the opportunity to work more closely with Academic Affairs on their annual reporting or program reviews. Prior years have emphasized learning the LMS and generating reports. Now with the program review calendar laid out, the emphasis will shift to deepening the analysis of student work and use of findings

to affirm or alter instructional practices. Reaching this point comes after a great deal of work done toward the strategic goal (#2 – Program Development), which stated faculty were to “develop outcomes assessment plans for each program and use that evidence generated to improve performance of students in relation to defined learning objectives.” Tremendous energy has been invested in supporting faculty’s efforts to achieve this goal, much of which was in the form of external support funded, in part, by a Davis Family Foundation grant; faculty’s participation at New England Educational Assessment Network and other such meetings; launching the college’s Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship, which has spotlighted assessment in its offerings; adopting Live Text in the School of Education to capture outcomes; and maintaining professional accreditations in Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Business programs. During this time, the LMS Blackboard has received a great deal of attention; however, until all programs have solid assessment plans in place, the input of plans into Blackboard Outcomes is on hold. Additionally, alternative software may be examined.

The related goal to “Streamline curriculum via systematic program review” prompted the five-year program review cycle and in 2012 SHS put through all of its programs, followed by Business programs in 2013. This process of one school every three years has since changed as that cycle was not sustainable and presented too much burden on the School and review committee and did not equally distribute programs. Emerging out of these early reviews was the recognition that the general education requirements needed to be revisited and a process to assess them needed to be established. The recent general education revision process included examining the undergraduate student academic and co-curricular experience and at the end of the prior strategic plan (2011-2016), the APEX program had been formally approved but the general education courses were still under revision. Faculty Senate delayed approval until the two could be voted on together. Both programs were launched in Fall 2018. A parallel initiative took form as a goal to “reduce duplication in course offering and to take into consideration the potential for interdisciplinary approach.” This housekeeping work has led to much less confusion among students when choosing classes and courses have clearly numbered and sequenced names now and new minors have been added to more closely reflect student interests in African American Studies and in Advocacy for Social Change. Further exploration is now directed at Spanish language minors and a minor that blends communication and marketing. These actions are outcomes for our faculty and students. Having the stability of a permanent leader allows for useful analysis, and until recently actions against the strategic plan were the outcomes to which academic leaders could point.

Surveys of recent graduates have been sent over the past decade but not yet with a consistent calendar; therefore, comparison data is not available. For the past several years, graduation surveys have been conducted as exit surveys conducted by OIE, while the Office of Career Development has conducted six-month post-graduation surveys. The most recent survey data show that out of approximately 200 respondents, 90% report that they have achieved their desired career outcome.

Table 8.7: Graduate Survey

|                               |     |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Career Outcome Achieved       | 190 | 90% |
| Employed Full-Time            | 101 | 48% |
| Employed Part-Time            | 27  | 13% |
| Accepted Into Grad. Education | 59  | 28% |
| Military/Service Position     | 3   | 1%  |
|                               |     |     |
| Seeking Employment            | 11  | 5%  |
| Applying to Grad. Education   | 9   | 4%  |

Exam passage rates speak to effectiveness of a program and a recent major achievement were exam results showing the first cohort of Family Nurse Practitioner students, who graduated in May 2017, all successfully passed an FNP certification examination (100% passage rate). In Occupational Therapy, passage rates for the OT certification exam the first year after graduation were 96% in 2017, 100% in 2016, and 96% in 2015. Physical Therapy boasts similarly high passage rates: 97% passed their certification exam within one year in 2018, 89% within one year in 2017, 94% in 2016, and 100% in 2015.

Student Affairs contributes to educational effectiveness in important ways, while holding the related responsibility of evaluating student satisfaction as well as other efficacy indicators. Using Ruffalo Noel Levitz’s Student Satisfaction Inventory for undergraduate students, the survey is administered by Student Affairs staff once every other spring semester. During 2014, 2016, and 2018, students ranked quality of instruction on a scale of 1-7, with 7 being the highest; and overall, responses show that quality is an important factor for them and faculty efforts in the classroom influence satisfaction. The gap between importance and actual satisfaction is shrinking.

Table 8.8: Student Satisfaction Data: Quality of Instruction

|   | Spring 2014          |              |      | Spring 2016                 |              |      | Spring 2018                 |              |     |
|---|----------------------|--------------|------|-----------------------------|--------------|------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----|
|   | Importance           | Satisfaction | Gap  | Importance                  | Satisfaction | Gap  | Importance                  | Satisfaction | Gap |
| The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent | 6.20                 | 4.81         | 1.39 | 6.34                        | 5.20         | 1.14 | 6.32                        | 5.36         | .96 |
| The instruction in my major field is excellent                          | 6.30                 | 5.12         | 1.18 | 6.42                        | 5.37         | 1.05 | 6.27                        | 5.49         | .78 |
|   | N= 411, paper survey |              |      | N= 234, administered online |              |      | N= 194, administered online |              |     |

“Gap” indicates the difference between student satisfaction and the importance on that item.

Beyond satisfaction data from the SSI, course evaluations could be used to give additional depictions of students’ perceived experience. However, without a consistent practice of classroom evaluations being conducted, cross analyzed, and used to inform change, it is hard to drill down into the instruction and classroom experience.

Also, within Student Affairs’ remit, the Center for Academic Success (CAS) maintains a suite of programs and services aimed toward enhancing students’ academic experience. Beginning in Fall 2018, each department developed measurable objectives to be accomplished during the course of the year, of which will be reviewed during intercession in January 2019 with final reports with supporting documents of programs and surveys are due in May 2019. This process will begin a regular assessment cycle of goals, objectives, and outcomes – versus reports of programming. Two departments have already begun this type of reporting in prior years– Noonan Writing Center and the Tutoring Program.

Within CAS, the Advising Center welcomed its first cohort in Fall 2013. The centralized model it operates provides both prescriptive and developmental advising to incoming freshmen and transfers, retaining them until they transition to their faculty advisors as rising juniors during the spring. This change to advising practices assists students in the exploration, clarification, communication, and implementation of realistic choices they must make for their education. In this arrangement of professional advisor first then faculty advisor, professional advisors provide individual support for topics, such as major exploration, navigating through major program plans, assisting with course selection and registration, monitoring academic progress each semester, helping to establish personal and career goals (both short term and long term), helping to arrange career assessments, supplying knowledge of campus resources, and making referrals when appropriate. Professional advisors have been able to use the space of the first two years to enhance the advising relationship with increased accessibility and outreach to students

when they are still new and the impact on retention is more dramatic. This targeted outreach is through social networking, texting, residence hall programming, late hours during peak periods, group information sessions, and online calendaring. Faculty are able to build on this relationship and the campus knowledge students gained from the developmental approach and can help students navigate their advanced-level major courses.

The classroom is the clearest place to measure academic effectiveness and, as mentioned previously, learning outcomes assessment has been an elevated focus for AIC's academic community for the past few years. The progress exhibited is creating habits, developing the systems and processes for assessment, and identifying opportunities to assess and the institutional rubrics to do so (i.e., VALUE rubrics for general education and core competencies). However, as described above in this standard, overall learning assessment practices are inconsistent across campus and in the absence of learning outcome data, it is worth questioning how changes to curriculum, academic supports, or co-curricular services have been made. Generally speaking, these investments and changes have been based upon curriculum alignment for transfer pathways, prerequisite changes based on the English curriculum revision, creating more teamwork and project-based learning outcomes on the advice of the Business Program Advisory Committee, updating student learning outcomes to meet new professional standards (Psychology), and the Nursing program changes to the definition of a passing grade to C+ based on performance on licensing exams. Decisions to change or update curriculum and programs are still primarily based on factors other than the results of the assessment of student learning outcomes, and this is an area of concern for the EVPAA and a priority to address.

As relatively new outputs for Academic Affairs, the assessment reports and program reports are still evolving, as evidenced by the AY2017-18 report submissions. In Fall 2018, a review of submitted reports showed that while all programs have assessment plans, there is a range in quality of the complete plan (that is, in both the template faculty are asked to follow and which dictates the information submitted and the depth of analysis and action planning that faculty propose). From that same review, it was apparent that there is some confusion about terms (curriculum plans vs maps/matrices), annual reviews and program reviews, and assessment plans. There is also a range of comfort across faculty in planning for and conducting assessment of learning outcomes. The AVPAA has begun meeting with faculty as they prepare curriculum proposals to review whether and how the proposed change may affect the curriculum map or assessment plan. Additionally, when revisions were made to the curriculum committee forms, the EVPAA and AVPAA reviewed and collaborated with the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee chair on the new forms to elevate the aspects linked to assessment planning as part of the forethinking of curriculum changes. Further attention to the culture of assessment was evident during the Fall 2018 faculty professional development day focused on assessment practices. The day's events included collaborative time for program colleagues, as well as an afternoon set of discussions on either the new VALUE rubrics, graduate level assessment and learning outcomes, and literature from the field of academic assessment. As part of this emphasis on assessment practices, some faculty have taken the opportunity to explore new and additional ways of examining teaching and learning in their program area. Yet, it remains difficult to state a clear number of complete, thorough plans, including at the foundational level of curriculum maps, which are not consistently distinct and the related assessment cycles do not promote a generative understanding of the program. With the new core competencies adopted recently as well, all undergraduate curriculum maps need to be updated to reflect these.

Once those foundational elements are in place, more robust analysis and curricular action are anticipated. Currently, some programs, such as psychology, sociology, and nursing have begun using their data and analysis to make shifts in course structures or in assignment activities. Such pockets of consistent assessment practice provide the evidence that those faculty and deans need to direct the

programs. For instance, in the BS in Nursing program, program outcomes are evaluated through the assessment of student achievements on the Kaplan Secure Predictor, evaluation of the Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET) for NUR 4940 and NUR 4941, the Senior Simulation, the NUR 4540 Community Focused Clinical Journal, and the Quality Improvement Project in NUR 4941. A rubric was developed in 2015 and revised in 2016 and 2018 to reflect the current tools used to assess program outcomes. The same program outcomes are evaluated using a rubric and data collected based on the NUR 4999 Capstone Project in the RN to BSN program. Aggregate data for both tracks are reviewed and analyzed as part of the Annual Program Review process during the annual spring workshops for curriculum and evaluation.

As this re-accreditation self-study progressed, it became apparent that documentation of inputs and outputs across Academic Affairs and academic support services are increasingly documented and tracked, which demonstrates progress supportive of a larger culture shift and the readiness to begin collecting and examining outcomes. While the holistic vision for quality curriculum at all levels was not able to flourish with leadership changes in Academic Affairs. This is an area of focus and expertise for the current academic affairs team, and the culture is shifting.

#### PROJECTION

**Leveling the Quality of Academic Assessment & Using Results to Improve:** Understanding the impact of classroom activities is central to an academic institution's ability to evaluate its educational effectiveness. AIC has made minimal progress in establishing the baseline needed for consistent evaluation of instructional practice and student learning regarding program-level learning outcomes. In order to bring each major's assessment practices to a consistent level of quality, the AVPAA will work with academic deans and the Academic Assessment committee to develop a common philosophy that accounts for diversity and a vision for inclusive, empowering academic assessment at AIC. Such a philosophy and set of ensuing practices must align with ancillary changes to the academic portfolio as well. Throughout, the 2019-2020 academic year, the AVPAA will lead the effort to define characteristics of sound curriculum mapping, identification of key assignments, and creating a helpful assessment cycle of each program's learning outcomes. For graduate degrees, mapping and developing key assignments will occur in collaboration with program directors to ensure that graduate-level assessments take into consideration the degree-level rigor and variety of students' learning activities. And, in order to launch this work, a refreshed annual assessment report template and process will be introduced for the 2019-2020 academic year.

**Solidify Core Competencies and Developing Accompanying Assessment Plan:** The Academic Assessment Committee launched the work to adopt a common set of competencies for undergraduate students at AIC. In an effort to build on this base, the AVPAA will support the committee in designing the artifact gathering, reading groups, and norming practices to conduct the assessment. Additionally, the AVPAA and AVPAA will bring together the various discussions of AIC's curriculum and the urban sensibility and cultural literacy and relevancy that we are promising and our students expect. As the general education curriculum is examined, the AVPAA will extend this work to those courses and learning outcomes as they are ready in order to establish a philosophy for assessment that aligns with the central values of diversity, access, and inclusion at the undergraduate level, (anticipated 2020-2021 academic year).

**Evaluating Learning Management System and Assessment Technologies:** Academic Computing manages a growing number of courses for the college's faculty and students. As the college increases its readiness for delivering a greater percentage of its portfolio through hybrid or fully online modalities, Academic Computing will be called upon for both a broader and more detailed amount of reporting than

the current LMS can provide. As such, the EVPAA, Director for Academic Computing, and the Chief Information Officer will evaluate the viability of moving to a new LMS. This review and decision process will extend to the AVPAA and Academic Assessment committee in order to maintain an understanding of the dual role an LMS can play in supporting instruction and assessing student work.



**STANDARD NINE: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY,  
AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

**DESCRIPTION**

American International College strives to foster a professional culture committed to honesty, openness, clarity, and fairness among all members of our community. This commitment stems from our mission and is the foundation of each of the college's Strategic Plans over the years. Institutional integrity is carefully developed in numerous ways and affirmed through review systems, both internal and external. Various expectations and policies designed to instill professionalism and ethical management of the college are published in institutional and departmental documents and handbooks. These are all available through the [aic.edu](http://aic.edu) (public) and [my.aic.edu](http://my.aic.edu) (internal) websites.

**Integrity**

The College's initial charter was issued by the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1885. This charter and its subsequent revisions, as authorized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1894 and 1905, give AIC formal authority "to grant such honorary testimonials and confer such honors, degrees and diplomas as are granted or conferred by any university, college or seminary of learning in this Commonwealth." This charter is particularly significant and permits AIC, as one of 23 independent institutions in the state, to function independent of the purview of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.

At its highest level of governance, the rights, responsibilities and expectations of members of the Board of Trustees are set forth in the Amended and Restated By-Laws of American International College. In addition to defining Board purposes, authority and structure, this document explicitly provides an ethical standard to be followed with respect to possible "conflicts of interest."

AIC's upholds both institutional and professional external accreditations and articulation agreements, all of which are listed on the public website. The college was initially accredited in 1933 by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and has maintained this accreditation through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) through its transition to the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE). AIC ensures that all communications and relationships with NECHE and other specialized accrediting/certifying bodies adhere to the letter and spirit of the standards and policies set forth by each and works with diligence to respond to all requests and/or concerns in an accurate, factual, and timely manner. The college has maintained openness and transparency with NECHE, providing notification of any concerns, such as the September 2018 notification from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that changed the status of the Education Preparation Program to Probationary Approval. Specific academic programs are additionally accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE).

The President's Office tracks compliance with the Higher Education Act (HEA) Institutional Disclosure Requirements annually via a spreadsheet that lists the agency/regulating body, description of the regulation, department responsible, date of last review, review outcomes, changes since last review, and date of next review. Vice presidents, along with support from other members of the President's Cabinet, are responsible for maintaining and documenting compliance.

[Nicolle: I'd like one brief paragraph about Office of Title IX]

Documents updated annually or biennially include the *Undergraduate Course Catalog*, *Graduate Course Catalog*, *Undergraduate Academic Regulations*, *Graduate Academic Regulations*, *Nursing Student Handbook*, *Physical Therapy Student Handbook*, *Occupational Therapy Student Handbook*, *Teacher Education Practicum/Practicum Equivalent Handbook*, *Student Handbook/Code of Conduct*, *Student Athlete Handbook*, *Residence Life Office Policies and Procedures*, and *Campus Police Policies and Procedures*. Such standards and expectations are also emphasized additionally through student and employee orientations and trainings.

**Students.** Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Regulations clearly communicate admissions standards, academic requirements, credit and grading systems, academic progress, classroom behavior policy, academic integrity, graduation requirements, and the processes for appeals and grievances. The Undergraduate and Graduate Course Catalogs, Student Handbook, and Employee Handbook clearly articulate policies on non-discrimination and sexual harassment, along with other relevant legal notices that are all centrally compiled on the College's webpage. Several program-specific handbooks or policies exist in specialized non-academic and academic areas such as Residence Life, Athletics, and programs within the School of Health Sciences and School of Education.

All college employees adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) that governs privacy of student records. Employees are trained during onboarding orientation about FERPA and the protection of student information. Students are advised of their FERPA rights during Summer Summit and New Student Orientation programs. The Center for Accessibility Services and Academic Accommodations (CASAA) educates students of their rights and responsibilities with regard to obtaining reasonable accommodations, including course accommodations and assistive technologies to which they are entitled under federal law.

The Student Code of Conduct is located online as part of the Student Handbook. The Code of Conduct outlines expectations for all aspects of student integrity. The student grievance procedure is available on the Dean of Students my.aic.edu page and redundant in the Student Handbook. AIC provides clear instructions to students about filing a grievance in the Student Handbook - filed by going to [www.aic.edu/reporting](http://www.aic.edu/reporting) and filling out the Student General Reporting Form. The my.aic.edu page imbeds a webform where students can click the applicable concern (including harassment/discrimination, online learning, conduct appeals, grade appeals, sexual misconduct, CARE report, learning environment, and other). This form is routed to the appropriate person to address the grievance. Contact information for NECHE, professional accrediting bodies, and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education is provided as well in the event a student thinks their complaint was not adequately handled by the college staff.

The College requires all student programming and events to be approved by the Department of Student Life to determine appropriateness and ability to use AIC's name, logo, or branding. The Center for Student Engagement maintains a student engagement platform called "Engage" that can be accessed at [www.aic.edu/engage](http://www.aic.edu/engage). This platform allows students to see upcoming events and view active registered student organizations to assist students in getting involved on campus.

Title IX Educators from Student Life routinely offer programs regarding violence prevention and education of rights under Title IX. In addition to educational programming, the college adheres to Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. After the Office of Civil Rights issued the "Dear Colleague Letter of 2011", the Student Code of Conduct underwent extensive revisions to ensure compliance and is now reviewed annually and updated as appropriate. Faculty and staff who serve Title IX compliance activities are selected and trained to be either a sexual misconduct investigator, hearing board member, or appellate board member and receive annual training on their role. All members involved in the sexual

misconduct process ensure a fair and equitable process for all parties involved in the process and the Title IX Coordinator works with those involved to determine appropriate supports and interim measures.

The Associate Director of Athletics for Compliance, SWA serves as the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Athletics and works closely with the Faculty Athletics Representative following NCAA's established recruiting, eligibility, and controlled substance guidelines. Beyond the general Student Code of Conduct, the Student-Athletes have established their own set of core values known as AICommitted. Hazing compliance is monitored by the Dean of Students.

The Assistant Director of Diversity Education focuses on diversity and inclusion education campus-wide and in recent years has grown from solely multicultural programming to areas of social justice, inclusion, and identity education. Diversity Education collaborates increasingly with Academic Affairs in support of APEX and often in partnership with the Faculty Senate Cultural Affairs Committee addressing social issues affecting college campuses including racial tension, appreciation of difference, respect, inclusion, and accessibility while preserving and strengthening open expression/dialogue. Two marquee programs include the Let's Get Real series and the Dinner and Dialogue panel forum.

Persons Ready in Defense of Ebony (P.R.I.D.E), one of the College's oldest/continuous student organizations, was founded in 1968 as a civil rights organization. It continues to program and educate on issues of social justice, expanding the group's scope beyond its historical African-American base. The Latin American Student Organization (L.A.S.O.), founded in 1996, focuses on celebrating and supporting Hispanic students and culture and the co-founders were recently inducted into the Co-Curricular Hall of Fame for their forward-thinking leadership as students and their personal and professional accomplishments as alumni. PLUS brings people of every sexuality and gender together creating a safe/brave place to socialize, build friendships, support one another, encourage open-mindedness, and promote diversity. Political Opinions Will Encourage Reaction (POWER) is a non-partisan organization that promotes awareness about political issues.

**Employees.** AIC's employees are the individuals who carry the mission into their work every day and give it a face on campus. Commitment to the purpose of this college is what fuels a campus culture committed to supporting inclusive approaches to an increasingly diverse student body and creating access and opportunity to their higher education goals. From a Human Resources perspective and pertaining to creating a safe and ethical campus environment, all faculty and staff undergo mandatory, annual Title IX and FERPA trainings (as described above). Faculty and staff rights, responsibilities, and expectations are documented in both employee and faculty handbooks, include non-discrimination policies for the recruitment, hiring, evaluation, promotion, and tenure advancement for all positions. Each of these documents also sets forth processes for faculty or staff to raise concerns through a grievance process without fear of prejudice. The employee handbook identifies the College's Open-Door Policy for grievances as well as whistleblower protections. Policies regarding conflict of interest and ethical conduct are also included in the employee handbook.

Additionally, AIC provides clear instructions to faculty about filing a grievance in the Faculty Handbook. Faculty grievances are handled using a "Committee of Five" approach where five full-time faculty members are appointed by the Faculty Senate to collect evidence, study the case, and hold hearings if appropriate. The Committee of Five then makes a recommendation to the appropriate college authority, usually an academic dean, to resolve the case.

Faculty's academic freedom is defined in the Faculty Handbook, originally adopted by the Board of Trustees as official college policy on January 14, 1955, as taken from the 1940 Statement of Principles on

Academic Freedom of the American Association of University Professors. The statement tends to a faculty member's full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of other academic duties. Research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution. Within a classroom setting, an instructor is entitled to freedom when discussing subject matter but should be careful not to introduce controversial matters that have little or no relation to the class topics. AIC views its faculty as citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of this educational institution. When such members write as a citizen, they are free from institutional censorship or discipline. When faculty use their status or position, it should be understood that certain obligations must be upheld. As a member of a higher education community and an educational officer, faculty should remember that the general public may judge an individual's profession and institution by such personal, individual commentary. Hence, faculty should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that an individual faculty member is not an institutional spokesman.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is an active standing committee established to protect the rights and welfare of the human subjects that participate in research conducted by any person affiliated with the college. The function of the IRB is to review research proposals submitted by investigator(s) and to ensure that the proposals are in compliance with state and federal regulations (45 CFR Part 46). The authorities and responsibilities delegated to the Committee are to review and approve all research projects and modifications prior to the principal investigator(s) conducting research and to determine when research is exempt or requires a review. Certain broad categories of research projects that involve human participants that do meet the definition under the regulations are "exempt" from IRB review. The Committee meets face-to-face at least twice a year and functions on a year-round basis, with most of the committee's work conducted electronically. A report is submitted to the Faculty Senate prior to its last meeting of each academic year. The Committee is composed of five elected faculty-at-large with at least three graduate faculty members, and at least one faculty member representing each of the Schools. The chair will be elected from the graduate faculty members. During the most recent completed academic year, 35 proposals were reviewed by the committee and all were accepted. The majority of the proposals were eligible for exempt status based on the Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations. During the current academic year, this committee is continuing to revise and development any needed new forms and reviewing the proposal submission process.

**Other Constituencies.** AIC has an opportunity and a commitment to serve the communities within which the campus sits. As an urban campus in a city that is often home to our students, our graduates and current students alike are eager to share their growth with this community and to reinvest in the local school and business communities. To this end, a number of mission-driven partnerships have been established with a range of external constituencies including numerous articulation agreements for academics and other such programming including the College Steps Program, Cooperating Colleges of Greater Springfield (CCGS), Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. The college is proud to be listed as one of 2017's Military Friendly® Schools - a comprehensive resource for veterans that helps service members and their families select the best college, university, or trade school to receive their education and training needed to pursue a civilian career. Each partnership AIC holds is vetted for core principles such as nondiscrimination and respect for the privacy rights of students; and to preserve and strengthen these relationships, the relevant vice president or senior administrator routinely reviews these relationships to ensure integrity.

Students play many roles in the surrounding community and are engaged in several ways, the most

prominent of which include the Scholar Athlete's Program, College Steps Program, and our neighborhood community centers. In conjunction with Springfield Scholar Athletes, AIC offers a one-credit service learning course for AIC students to mentor students in three Springfield high schools to overcome hurdles in their paths for education. Scholar Athletes helps high school students to build skills and confidence, shape character, and enhance opportunities for success. AIC students that serve in this program embrace the opportunity to help high school students and often become enthusiastic cheerleaders, while simultaneously learning more about and challenging themselves. In their roles as mentors, AIC students develop readiness and preparedness strategies while developing career goals.

College Steps is a partnership that employs about 20 students annually as peer mentors to provide individualized college support for students living with social, communication, or learning challenges. Peer mentors provide customized social, academic, and relevant vocational training support to College Steps scholars, who are classified among three groups of students: high school transition students; enrolled students who have social, academic, or independent living barriers that affect their ability to navigate higher education; and returning students who are interested in a two-year certificate program. Each group is managed by an on-campus program coordinator who interfaces with faculty and staff while overseeing the network of student peer mentors.

Community engagement and professional relationships are central to certain curricula as well. Students can become members of registered organizations such as the Lion's Club and Student Nurse Association, or through Residence Life and Athletic Department programming. The Division of Student Affairs also runs community service events, such as the Action in the Community (AIC) Day and Red Cross blood drives. The Department of Physical Therapy sponsors pro-bono neuro-exercise groups in fall and spring semesters and, as is the case with many programs, physical therapy courses often include a community outreach element in the curriculum.

### **Transparency**

Openness and honesty are central to institutional communication practices with the public. The college's website and print publications are the primary means of communicating with the public and the Web Content Manager assumes technical responsibility for ensuring functionality, content accuracy, and availability of necessary information. All electronic information is maintained to uphold standards in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Content updates to the website are monitored and tracked using a Web Update Request Form that allows faculty and staff to notify the Web Content Manager of necessary updates and the Manager, in turn, works with individuals across departments to ensure information is accurate and not duplicated.

The external-facing website includes, but is not limited to, the following sections: Fast Facts, Legal Notices, Course Catalogs, Academic Calendars, Student Handbook, Academic Programs, Tuition and Costs, Financial Aid, Admissions, Common Data Set, Contact, and Employment. Within these and additional sections of the website, public users and prospective students can find information on the process for admissions, employment, grading, assessment, the student disciplinary process, the complaint and appeal process, campus safety, information on academic programs, tuition and costs, financial aid, student loans, archives of past and current catalogs, student outcomes, student body makeup and statistics, and student enrollment and persistence. The Contact section of the site allows public users and prospective students to contact offices and departments on campus as well as the Web Content Manager to provide feedback on any inaccessible or inaccurate information. Legal Notices are posted in summarized form and can be found from a link anchored in the footer of each webpage, along with Consumer Information pages. The process for requesting information, general inquiries about the college, and audited financial statements can be found in the About section of the AIC webpage.

Statements and promises regarding such matters as program excellence, learning outcomes, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty are routinely updated and searchable.

The internal-facing my.aic.edu portal is the primary online home for providing information to students, faculty, and staff. Much of the contents of these pages require AIC login credentials and then are searchable once in the portal.

### **Public Disclosure**

American International College makes every effort to communicate complete, accurate, timely, and accessible information to its external and internal audiences. And the availability of more information, comes the ability to be more forthcoming. As such, transparency of information related to institutional effectiveness has increased alongside the aforementioned practices. Public statements about programs outcomes, student success, and related passage rates are more available today than in the past. AIC's public website clearly communicates federal reporting requirements and safety compliance information, as well as internal indicators of success such as program learning outcome metrics and passage rates for licensure, clinical, and business programs with professional accreditations as well. In 2015, as part of the rebranding initiative, the public website for the college was redesigned. And beyond just branding changes, both the redesign and continued appraisal of the site is making it easier for prospective students and their families to find program information. For information relevant to current students, faculty, and staff, the internal portal was developed as the primary sharing mechanism and dedicated space for departments to publish policies, forms, data, and to collaborate. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness historically shared success data for persistence, retention, and graduation rates in addition to academic assessment activities and until Summer 2018, this work was organized by the Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness. Leading into Spring 2019, the Director of Institutional Research and AVPAA are considering ways of reorganizing their related areas of the portal to distinguish between campus-wide reporting and specific data requests and other portal usages related to academic assessment.

Our public website navigation can be customized to feature information for various constituencies including prospective students, accepted students, current students, alumni, faculty, parents/families, and veterans. The "About" section was designed with this wide group in mind and has several sub-menus that include common topics of interest for each population, including the mission and character of AIC and quick facts about our size, locations, student body, president and board, the accreditation statuses, and the Common Data Set/IPEDS data. Academic programs, academic support, and opportunities outside of the classroom are also presented in this section. The marketing team works with a committee to increase search engine optimization and elevate the most relevant information for key word searches, such as: transfer policies, tuition, fees, net price, student debt repayments and default rates, general education, degree and academic program requirements, educational/learning outcomes, and the success of our graduates including job placement and license passage rates. Legal notices can be located using the footer link at the bottom of each web page.

In addition to these searchable and navigable pages of the website, the annually published College Catalog, Undergraduate Academic Regulations, Graduate Academic Regulations, Student Handbook, and Student Athlete Handbook are available to the public as PDFs. Together, these publications outline the obligations and responsibilities of students and the institution and include all pertinent information regarding academic and support programs, policies, rules and regulations; accreditation and certification agencies; faculty, professional staff qualifications and trustee affiliations.

The Student Accounts Office publishes a Student Consumer Information web page, that maintains a variety of financial aid-related items. Upon graduation or separation from AIC, all financial aid recipients are counseled on federal student loans and exit interview information which informs the students of their federal student loan indebted obligations and responsibilities. Information on student loan debt and cohort default rates for the three most recent years are also posted on the Student Consumer Information page.

## APPRAISAL

AIC constituents have upheld the integrity of the institution through numerous efforts and publications. The numerous avenues for the campus and community to be intertwined help to strengthen and reinforce the central purpose of this institution – to support diversity and develop opportunities and access for higher education. The policies and practices that ensure the rights and safety of every individual on campus are in place and available to be called upon when needed. In the case of students, however, there is a lack of understanding about how to report a grievance and how it will be handled. This is evident by the common redirection students receive when they go first to the President’s Office with a complaint. Similarly, with regard to the Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Regulations, the policies are in place and maintained by committees (CASP and Graduate Council), yet the process to change or add a policy is long and cumbersome and only completed during the academic year. This leads to inconsistent language and missed connections between policies that may be related. Furthermore, as policies are updated throughout the year, this can lead to missed communications or, in the changes needed for a summer term, delays in approvals and misalignment between terms and committee schedule. At all levels (college, school, and program) handbooks have not had a consistent calendar for updating and changes to policies have not consistently been carried into other, related handbooks. A universal timeframe for revision and a common format would help ensure current information is on display and solely used.

In light of national discourse about truth and scholarship, there is a need to revisit the policies surrounding academic freedom to ensure they are salient in today’s climate. The current academic integrity policy was last updated in 2004 and does not capture the technological advances of digital innovation or social media. A faculty senate sub-committee has begun reviewing the statement and will present new language to the Senate and EVPAA. A statement for students’ academic freedom has not been established; although, the statement on freedom of speech and expression in the Student Handbook has been used when an incident of this nature has arisen (mostly related to demonstrations on campus).

A new faculty grievance committee was proposed and approved by the Faculty Senate during the 2016-2017 academic year to replace the current “Committee of Five”. At the time of this writing, the committee has not been approved by administration and the role of the committee has not yet been agreed upon between Faculty Senate and senior administration.

When reviewing elements of handbooks that are relevant to the public and which need to be public-facing, there are points of confusion because it might not be clear which policies are in summary form and which are complete. The transition to digital formats for handbooks will alleviate some of this concern because a link can be provided instead, and one single document will only ever need to be maintained. Beginning with the 2019-2020 catalogs, academic regulations will no longer be published in the catalogs and, instead, will be replaced by a statement directing users to a link with the current handbook or set of regulations. All prior versions are to be archived. Alongside this needs to be better communication and familiarization for students about how to find, become familiar with, and use the

regulations that most directly pertain to them. As these are their forms and policies to be used when called upon, this opportunity to empower students is not one that Academic and Student Affairs can miss.

The College website was fully redesigned in 2015 with the mindset that it primarily be public facing and an internal portal would be launched to manage information-sharing for AIC's internal users. myAIC is a content management system that makes it accessible for an end-user to update information in a timely manner, but the interface and sharing capabilities are not always as robust as a complex organization today demands. With the flexibility to add many users (e.g., committee chairs, operations managers, department leaders), comes the increased complexity of extensive information to manage. Each area of the college has a section of the portal and holds the responsibility to manage and maintain that information, but a fluid use and refresh of information on the portal has yet to be organized, leaving the central repository of information somewhat disorganized and not always easily navigable.

The institution clearly indicates those programs, courses, services, and personnel not available during a given academic year. Each School consistently reviews the catalog offerings to ensure these are accurate. Course housekeeping practices include reviewing the catalog and utilizing faculty input to correctly identify courses that need to be removed via curriculum committee. During the course renumbering process in AY2013-2014, many courses were sunset during the renumbering process and the transition from CAMS to Jenzibar provided another opportunity while renumbering to four levels to move this culling forward as well. Since those broad sweeps, faculty and program directors use the curriculum committee to process course deletions.

## PROJECTIONS

**Systematic Review of Internal and External Websites:** The Communication and Marketing team will work with key members across campus to understand how the internal portal is being used and will assess the usage and functionality of the portal, as the campus' main mechanism for archiving and communication. Key collaborators will be department heads, the Director of Institutional Research, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs. After this review, any reorganization or follow-up will take place during the 2019-2020 year. Parallel to this, will be a collaboration between Marketing and Institutional Research to ensure that all public disclosure information is maintained on the website and the production of a Fact Book is kept current, thereby providing external and internal audiences with information that must be shared and could be used to inform various audiences of key institutional identity data. By the end of these projects, the named departments will also initiate a formal process for documenting the required information that must be shared in accordance with public disclosure requirements and will correct gaps as they are identified.